

Los Altos Church of Christ

*"...being of the same mind, maintaining the same love,
united in spirit, intent on one purpose." Philippians 2:2*

Volume XLI, Issue 43

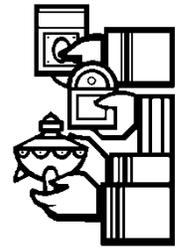
December 9, 2020

This Sunday...Extra Righteousness

In this series Rick Atchley wants to add some extra characters to the typical Nativity Scene. This week we focus on one who is there but who is kind of an extra...and that's Joseph. He's part of the story but in a sense he isn't. The story can take place without Joseph. Yet he was chosen for a purpose and seeing why will expose us to a little extra righteousness.



Bringing Our Gifts To Jesus... One of our great traditions each year is our Christmas service and the part we know as "Bringing Our Gifts To Jesus." While we will be unable to meet this year, we feel it is so important to continue this tradition. You can bring gift cards by Jeff and Karen's house or mail them. You can even order cards online and email the cards to them! We will be sending them again to Southeastern Children's Home and to Mountain States Christian Home. (Links to both works can be found on the church webpage.) Ideas for gifts cards: Target, Walmart, Kohls, JCPenney and Amazon (why not?).



PRAYERS *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7*

- **John is experiencing a lot of pain on his side. The doctor thinks he could have broken a rib or two coughing. (Yes, that is possible.) Keep on praying for him and Jennifer.**

Continue to pray that the Lord watch over our members during this time... Roxanne's friend Mary Ann... Terry (Rosique) Benson ... Roger Townsend... Tim's heart condition... Berry... Don... Jeff's mother... Blake... Jene's hand... Christine's mother... Bill Spivey ... Allen Sawyers... The Britton Family ... Barbara... Sadie Smith... Gwen and her son Caleb... Emmy Creswick... Jene's friend, Jim Thorpe... Lu... City of Children... Healing Hands International... Japhet's work in Zimbabwe... and New Hope Uganda.

We Need Some Christmas This Christmas By Max Lucado

Don't we? Don't we need some *Peace On Earth and Goodwill to Mankind*? Don't we need some *Silent Night, Holy Night*? Don't we need the appearance of angels, the sudden joy of shepherds and the hope, the blessed hope of a baby whose very name means salvation?

We need someone to save us from this rancor, this bitterness, this hostility.

Here is what I'm for: the baby in the manger. God in a barn. God with an umbilical cord. So human he suckles milk, so divine he is worshipped by angels. A wide-eyed girl who has had a baby and never had sex. A stunned Joseph who has soldiered his way into the most improbable story in history.

"Call Him Jesus" the angel told them both because that is the name that means "The Lord is salvation" and this Lord, Jesus, is all about salvation. Salvation from sin, guilt, shame, death, and, yes, political mudslinging. And, Gabriel added with what might have been a smile, "he will be great." Great enough to silence storms, banish demons, command viruses, vacate a few graves, including his own. He's going to be great.

Do we not need a great king? This world is so chaotic, life is so fragile.

I'm for the Hope of Christmas. And I am praying that He will do what our national leaders seem unable to do, calm us. Unite us. It's going to take a miracle. Yet, if Christ is willing to show up in a barn, then a Senate Chamber and Oval Office are within his reach. There is so much shouting going on. All sides, shouting. On the airwaves, shouting. On the news broadcasts, shouting. On social media, shouting. We need an intermezzo of calm in this cacophony of shouting.

Gratefully, we have one. It's called Christmas.

Father Josef Mohr needed this reminder. He pastored the small church of Arnsdorf near Salzburg, Austria. The congregation, like the village, was comprised of simple people. They were farmers and woodworkers. There was more poverty than affluence. They worked long hours and endured harsh winters. Christmas was one of their few respites. The pastor did his best to make the holiday service special for his flock.

But this year, 1818, he had a problem. The organ had become unfit for use. It was old. Mice had eaten at the bellows. The church needed a new one. But they didn't have the money. Father Mohr went to his organist and expressed his chagrin, "We must have something special for midnight mass."

What is Christmas, they wondered, without music? On the day before Christmas Eve, the Father was called to administer last rites to a dying woman. By the time he returned to Arnsdorf, the hour was late. The valley and the village lay in darkness. The priest paused on a height overlooking the town. The events had left him sad: the useless organ, the death of a parishioner, the cold night and long journey. His heart, like the valley, was lost in shadows. But then he saw a faint light of a distant home. Against the black curtain of night, it shone even brighter. The priest pondered the light, then thought to himself: It must have been something like this—that silent, holy night in Bethlehem. Suddenly inspired, he hurried home, sat over his desk and wrote:

*Silent night, peaceful night,
Darkness flies, all is light;
Shepherds hear the angels sing.
Alleluia! Hail the King,
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.*

Upon arising the next morning, he took his lyrics to Franz Gruber, his organist. Within moments, Gruber imagined the perfect melody. When he sang the song to his wife, she told him, "We will die, you and I, but this song will live."

It has. Christmas is not Christmas without the song, "Silent Night". We cherish its promise. The world still sits in shadows. Death casts its shroud. Misfortune silences the organ. Yet, whatever the generations bring, the light of Jesus still shines.

Thank God *for* Christmas. Thank God *it's* Christmas. Because this Christmas, we really need Christmas.