

# His Place *focus*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HIS PLACE WORSHIP CENTER

DECEMBER 2016

## Christmas: the Birth of a Miracle



The expression “miracle of birth” is often bandied around – even by humanists and atheists who don’t believe in occurrences beyond the realm of nature. It is used to depict the remarkable but natural process by which a fertilized egg cell develops into a beating heart and a cognizant brain, encased in skin – in short, a living being.

But for believers in God, the “miracle of birth” is more than an expression, but describes an inexplicable, God-fulfilled, process. “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13).

And through the birth of a baby – by means of a virgin, at that - God brought about the miracle we celebrate at Christmas. Through an infant, “(t)he Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14).

This baby “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:41). He walked with us as a human being, taught us, healed us – and died to give us the

miracle of rebirth into God’s kingdom.

And we are destined for the greatest rebirth – the recreation of our bodies. “So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

Our gift from God at Christmas was more than a sweet little baby in a manger, whose birth resulted in a season of Christmas trees and presents wrapped in red, green, and gold. It marked the birth, in our hearts and lives, of the one who brought about the birth of our world, the birth of our lives, our birth in the Spirit, and the culmination of our history when God’s kingdom is fulfilled.

**So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable . . . .**

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8).

## Church Events

- Dec 11 – “Worship Leader Appreciation” potluck dinner after the worship service. Bring a covered dish and your appetite!
- Dec 18 – Double the fun and fellowship. We will have our Christmas potluck dinner after the worship service.
- Dec 25 – Come and celebrate Christ’s birth during our 9:30 Sunday School and the 10:30 am worship service.
- Ladies’ Bible study, led by Marian Boyd, each Tuesday at 6:30-7:30 pm, at Clinchfield Baptist Church





# Sharing the Gift of Christ With the World's Children

*"Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves."* - Eric Sevareid (CBS news journalist from 1912 – 1992).

The children of His Place spent much of the Sunday School hour November 20 demonstrating love in action. They filled plastic shoe boxes with dolls wrapped in pink blankets, Christian coloring books, toy cars, nerf basketballs, and other items – not for themselves, but for the boys and girls of the world.

The gifts were for Operation Christmas Child, a worldwide Samaritan's Purse ministry to proclaim the gift of Christ through shoeboxes full of gifts. Shoeboxes are handed out throughout the year in over 100 countries. Recipients also receive *The Greatest Gift*, a colorful presentation of the Gospel in their own language.

Many thanks to His Place for financing shoebox items, and to Pat Epley, Marian Boyd, and Marion Stephan, who shopped for the gifts. Also thanks to those individuals who placed donated gift items in the designated collection box.





# Children's Ministry

*Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. Psalm 127:3-5*

## Angels Prepare the Way for Christ's Birth

During Sunday schools in November, the children of His Place learned how God prepared four human beings for the great work God was about to do through the birth of His Son, Jesus. The four chosen to help bring about God's purpose were Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, and Mary and Joseph, the earthly parents of Jesus.

### Heralding the forerunner's birth

On November 6, the class learned how the angel Gabriel announced the upcoming birth of John to Zechariah, whose wife, Elizabeth, was childless. The children decorated a giant outline of the angel Gabriel. (The class, composed of all girls that day, gave the angel a female face, and dubbed it "Gabby.")

Zechariah and Elizabeth's upcoming son, John, was to be a forerunner of the Messiah. To reinforce this concept, the children were asked to form pairs for a "forerunner" activity. The pairs took turns standing outside the classroom while the remaining children waited inside. One child in each pair, the "forerunner," would enter and announce the entrance of the second child. The second child would then walk in, to cheers and applause from the class.

### Mary accepts God's commission

On November 13, Gabriel surfaced again in a lesson about this angel's announcement that Mary would be the mother of the Messiah. The children received gifts from a "chosen one" classmate, were led around blindfolded, and were asked to eat a mystery item (a small Snickers bar) from a box



labeled "poison." These activities were used to demonstrate that Mary was chosen by God and trusted Him enough to let Him lead her. She also submitted to His will, even though being an unwed mother in New Testament times could mean death.



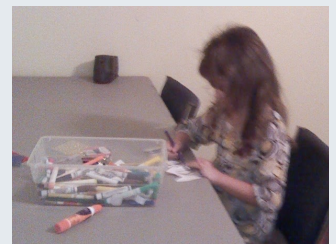
### Joseph becomes a stepfather

The children, on November 20, experienced Joseph's dilemma when he learned his fiancé was pregnant. They learned that an angel came – as angels often do when we are troubled – and told Joseph the child was the son of God. Joseph "did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife" (Matthew 1:24).

The children spent part of the lesson assembling shoe-box gifts for Operation Christmas Child. (See photo spread on page 2.)

### The nature of angels

During the lessons described above, the children had so many questions about angels that we spent the November 27 discussing these beings. The children learned in this lessons that some angels in the Bible have wings: the 6-winged seraphim (described in Isaiah 6:1-2) and the 4-winged 4-faced cherubim of Ezekiel 1:4-10.



Some angels, the kids learned, appear as human beings, as did the three angels that Abraham invited to dinner. Angels can also be protectors – as they were to Daniel in the lion's den – and warriors, like the angels who helped throw the devil and the devil's followers out of heaven.

As a craft, the children decorated strings of angel paper dolls with markers and gold garlands.

# From The Pastor's Desk

## Thoughts from Pastors Paul and Marion

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. Luke 2:15-18*

Most of us enjoyed, as children, the school-time activity show and tell. Not only did show and tell give us a chance to share treasures important to us, it provided a welcome relief from classwork.

In the Bible, a person experiencing an encounter with God usually proceeded to "go and tell"

others about the experience. As the prophet Amos puts it, "The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

After we experience something wonderful, surprising, or out of the ordinary, we feel – thank God - compelled to share it with others. We just can't help it.

This is what motivated the shepherds - after experiencing the glory of God through an angelic manifestation and then through the sight of the Son of God – to proclaim to everyone what they had heard and seen.

This is what motivated those healed by Jesus to tell everyone about it – even when He instructed them to keep silent.

Jesus commanded us to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark



16:15). When we meet Jesus, spreading the gospel becomes not just a commandment, but a passion. As the apostle Paul put it, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16)

So, in the words of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century spiritual: "Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;/go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born."

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The "forerunner" activity and the Mary activities described on the Children's Ministry page (page 3) were adapted from suggestions in teacher's guides CURNT204 and CURNT205, downloaded from [children.ccm.com](http://children.ccm.com).



- 8 Veronica Williams
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*From birth  
I have relied on  
you; you brought me  
forth from my mother's  
womb. I will ever  
praise you.  
Psalm 71:6*