

## Calendar for December 2016

Date	Time	Event	Location
1	13:10	SU	Grammar
	18:30	Pilot Light Meal and Meeting	Manse
2	19:30	Young Adults	Church
4	09:30	Prayer Breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	Service - Advent 2: Luke 1:39-45 Assurance	Church
	2 till 4	Care Home services	
5	19:30	Property Committee	Eden Room
7	19:30	Home Group	Idle's
11	09:30	Prayer Breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	<b>Service - NATIVITY Advent 3</b> : Luke 1:46-56 Adoration	Church
	18:30	Service - Readings and Carols	Church
13	14:30	Carols & Tea for our senior members	Back Halls
14	19:30	Prayer Meeting	Eden Room
15	13:10	SU	Grammar
	19:30	Concert	Church
16	10:30	Presbytery Prayer Meeting	Haddington
18	09:30	Prayer Breakfast	Eden Room
	11:00	<b>Service - Advent 4</b> : Luke 1:57-80 Amazing Praising	Church
20	09:15	Primary Christmas Service 1	Church
21	09:15	Primary Christmas Service 2	Church
	19:30	Home Group	Idle's
24	18:30	Family Service	Church
	23:15	Watchnight Service	Church
25	10:30	<b>Christmas Day Service</b>	Church
Jan 1st	11:00	<b>New Years Day Service</b>	Church

*Wishing you the gift of Faith  
the blessings of Hope and the  
Peace of His love at Christmas  
and always*



## Dunbar Parish Church

Minister

Rev Gordon Stevenson

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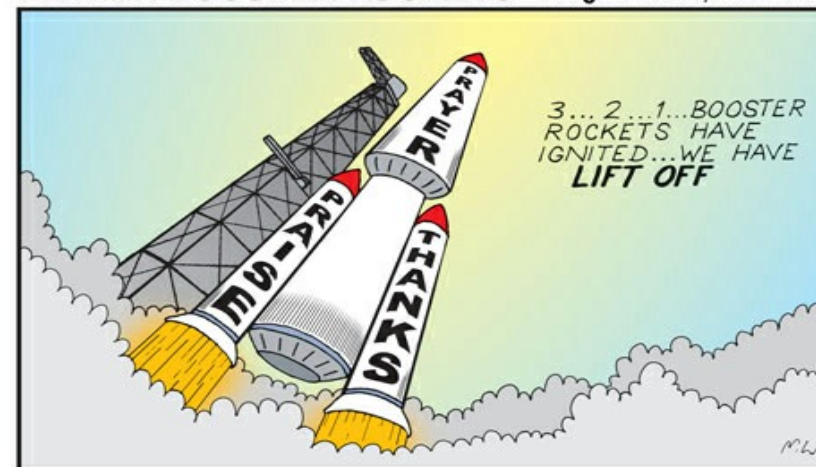
# MAGAZINE



Dunbar Parish Church is a  
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December 2016

### PRAYER BOOSTER ROCKETS A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name. — PSALM 100:4 NIV

THE LORD SAYS: "THESE PEOPLE COME NEAR TO ME WITH  
THEIR MOUTH AND HONOUR ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR  
HEARTS ARE FAR FROM ME. **THEIR WORSHIP** OF ME IS BASED  
ON MERELY HUMAN RULES THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT. Isaiah 29:13

Do YOU love God? Honestly do YOU  
love God? If God asked YOU, is there  
any evidence YOU love God?

Sunday & Special SERVICES		READERS	PRAYERS
4 <sup>th</sup> 11:00	Advent 2 : Luke 1:39-45 Assurance	Kirsty Harper	Martyn Cox
11 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 18:30	NATIVITY Advent 3 : Luke 1:46-56 Adoration Carols and Readings	Jim Thompson	Ian Coltart
18 <sup>th</sup> 11:00	Advent 4 : Luke 1:57-80 Amazing Praising	Jonathan Idle	Rachel Mylne
24 <sup>th</sup> 18:30 23:15	Luke 2:9-20 Arriving Shepherds Watchnight Meditations and Carols		
25 <sup>th</sup> 10:30	Luke 2:1-20 A Birth above all others		
Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 11:00	New Years Day Service	Mike Mylne	

Ministers Letter December 2016 : Worshipping God is wise Advent arrived on time. Some things are reliable. God's people have waited many times for answers to their prayers and for the Messiah, God broke in that first Christmas, as and when required, and in accordance with His will and purposes. Christmas is a crescendo for **worship**, joy and peace.

Christians thank God and learn, not only to be grateful, but to appreciate more and more what He has done, and is doing, for each one of us. As we come under His word, commune in His presence, and gather in fellowship with God's people on the days HE set apart for rest and **worship**, that is when we allow ourselves to be most open to Him. We are seeking to be lifted out of the world with all its pressures, sin and chaos, and to be lifted up into the arms of almighty God.

Of course it is easy to be dutiful or religious but that is not how it is meant to be. A. W. Tozer once wrote, "Without **worship**, we go about miserable." This is a stark contrast to these words by Robert Webber, "**Worship** is an it-is-well-with-my-soul experience."

In churches there are people who are confused or uncomfortable with **worship** as well as people who **worship** in Spirit and in truth, with great joy and vibrancy and others in between - where are you? It is really helpful to take stock. It is "year end stocktaking" time in spiritual terms.

Whenever we gather to **worship** God, people are there from a spectrum of understanding and experience concerning **worship**. WE all get to join together wherever we are at, but the possibilities for growing our love and devotion to our saviour and redeemer are manifold every time.

In my own life, even at my most difficult times, I have **worshipped** the God who loves me perfectly. Without fail, He has lifted me closer towards Him. It seems odd that by praising and honouring God, I get beautiful rewards.

We label that grace, but the experience of God beats labels or ideas or even our most imaginative expectations. God is truly awesome and sensational. So why do so many people not get it?

This world and the ruler of the world for the time being certainly misdirects many through temptations, busyness, hurts etc. But the reality is that many like to be self-driven, and not dependent upon God. We might think, "He might change us or make demands upon us that would interfere with what I want". The truth is HE knows what is best for us and we too often don't.

So this Advent is a chance for us all to re-commit; to ask big things of God; to soak in His word in fellowship with His people, to begin to learn to truly **worship** and appreciate and adore Him, or at least go deeper.

The Psalmist 95:6 urges us, "*Come, let us bow down in **worship**, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*" It is not to demean us, it is to invite God to bless us for discovering how much HE desires to bless us. *Yours Gordon*

## WORSHIP GOD

**Worship** is the highest function of the human soul. *Geoffrey R King*

What we **worship** determines what we become. *Harvey F. Ammerman*

Attitudes to God, especially as we come to him in **worship**, are the true monitor of spirituality. *John Benton*

The first foundation of righteousness undoubtedly is **worshipping** God appropriately. *John Calvin*

Religious people are content with occasional "acts of **worship**". Sadly they have no appetite for real communion with God. *John W. Everett*

Imagine presuming one could **worship** God up in the highest heavens when one has not learned how to **worship** Him upon the earth. *C.S. Lewis*

We must take our whole heart to the house of God, and **worship** and hear like those who listen intently at the reading of a will. *J.C. Ryle*

Our life has to be an *act of **worship*** which increases our **adoration** of God.

We learn in public **worship** how to **worship** Him secretly; alone with God.

That way we can take Him to public **worship** for others to learn to **worship** Him too. *Gordon Stevenson*

God wants **worshippers** before workers; indeed, the only acceptable workers are those who have learned the art of true **worship**. **Worship** is a moral imperative  
*A. W. Tozer*

## Starters for Sunday!

Start Sunday morning with a nice breakfast, coffee or tea, in good company. 9:30 in the Eden room. We chat over breakfast, then have a short time of reflection and prayer prior to worship at 11:00.

No need to worry, you can just sit back and listen or join in. If you are able to help in leading or catering speak to Michael Veitch or email: [michaelgveitch@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:michaelgveitch@yahoo.co.uk) for more information.

## Communion

In order to maintain accurate records of our Communicants, the Kirk Session is encouraging the congregation to hand in their Communion cards in the tray provided in the narthex. If you do not have one, can you please take one and place in the tray, or fill in the sign-in sheet at the table.

The next Communion is

**Sunday**

**11 December 2016**

Thank you for your co-operation.



BOYS' BRIGADE ABSEIL  
AT BARNES NESS LIGHTHOUSE



The recent abseil down Barnes Ness lighthouse by the Boys' Brigade raised £1,260 for the Bethany Trust's work with the homeless.

Many thanks to the Church members who helped make this possible

GUILD  
CHRISTMAS PARTY

6<sup>th</sup> December in the Halls  
at 2:30 pm



HOME GROUPS

Wednesday evenings at 7.30 p.m.

Contact Ian /Jenny Manning  
2 Temple Mains Cottages,  
Innerwick 01368 840334

Jonathan and Christine Idle  
4 Salisbury Walk, Dunbar  
01368 860922  
See Calendar for dates

CAROLS & TEA

for our senior members on  
Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December  
at 2:30 pm

In the Church Halls  
Transport can be provided  
Please phone  
Moyra Wright on 863316

The Magic of  
*Christmas*  
is not in the presents  
but in *His* presence

Miss\_ion Matters (from Helen, Miss\_ionary correspondent)

Remember our overseas partners in prayer especially throughout December. It can be a time of great opportunity, but cultural sensitivity remains paramount.

As we sing '..Light and life to all He brings', think about *your* traditions. How does Jesus fit it? Here are some Christmas *traditions* in other places .....

UAE is a very ethnically diverse country and all religions experience freedom to worship and the opportunity to celebrate their religious festivals. The country respects its Christian (mainly ex-pats) residents and permits Christmas festivities, including lighting up large beautifully decorated trees and lavish dinners, with people from different ethnicities and religions all gathered together around one table. Some Muslims get into the festive spirit and celebrate Christmas as a fun and joyous occasion; a time to be with family, exchange gifts and give to charity. Christmas for many is celebrated as a tradition, not a religious event.

In Spain, Christmas begins on December 8<sup>th</sup> with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Mary is honoured with candles and decorations. Christmas lights are turned on and shops come to life with all kind of holiday decorations and music to cheer up the shoppers. Life-size nativity scenes called nacimientos are traditionally set up in public places. Christmas Eve or La Nochebuena (the good or blessed night) is a family-oriented time with late night feasting in most Spanish homes. The most religious will commemorate the birth of Jesus by attending the Midnight Mass, known as Misa del Gallo (the Rooster Mass); the traditionally held belief is that a rooster was the first to announce the birth of Christ. Christmas Day is probably the quietest in the whole Spanish calendar. Most families spend the day relaxing at home and lingering over leisurely lunches. Spanish custom is for children to receive gifts at Epiphany on January 5<sup>th</sup>. They are taught that The 3 Kings travelled through Spain on their way to Bethlehem so children put out their shoes to be filled with gifts.

Only a small percent of the Chinese population are Christians. Christmas is known as 'Sheng Dan Jieh', meaning Holy Birth Festival; however Christmas is not a public holiday. The colour red symbolises good things to the Chinese; red paper chains and red lanterns are used in decorations. Big department stores and city centres will have a 'tree of light' and other decorations to brighten up the winter darkness. Santa Claus is a popular good-luck figure. Little is known of the story of Jesus and the light He brings to the world.

**"I am the light of the world, whoever follows me  
will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."  
John 8:12**

**Transport to the Church:** We can arrange for someone to bring you to church and take you home each week. Please phone **Jenny Manning** by the Thursday evening, on **01368 840334**. If you could offer someone a lift, even occasionally, you could be a reserve driver, please let Jenny know, it would be greatly appreciated.



## Bible Book Club

Christmas Night on

**1<sup>st</sup> December**

At Gill's 7:30 pm

We will be continuing with  
*The Shack*

Any questions please call  
**Emma Weaver 01368 459082**



Sermon's are available on the Church website. Use the link on the Home page  
([www.dunbarparishchurch.org](http://www.dunbarparishchurch.org)) to access them

*The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. Zephaniah 3:17*

*Bible Verse for 2017*

The Lord says, I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you'. Psalm 32 : 8

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.  
Isaiah 43:19

DATE	SUNDAY DUTY TEAMS	FLOWERS in CHURCH	CLEANING ROTA (U) = upstairs (D) = downstairs
December 4	 <b>DECEMBER</b> <b>Will Collin</b> Moira Anthony Lindsey Barley Rob Barley Val Collin Christine Idle Jonathan Idle Moyra Wright	<b>December Convenor:</b> <b>Laura Girvan</b> Mrs E Laing	5 Gill Phillip & Alistair Matthews (U) Fiona Fleming & Barbara Leslie (D)
11		Mrs I Ward	12 Ian & Jenny Manning (U) Laura Pulner & Laura Girvan (D)
18		Mrs G Low	19 Sandy & Ian Darling (U) Moyra Wright & Anne Creedican (D)
25		Mrs G Low for the late Mrs J Bain	26 Jenny & Jason Kay (U) Gordon & Gail Stevenson (D)
January 1	 <b>JANUARY</b> <b>Derek MacDonald</b> Denise Brunton Margaret Croft Ian Hastie Lena Glass May Low Lorna McLeod Margaret MacDonald Ian Manning	<b>January Convenor:</b> Mrs M Crow	2 Jonathan & Christine Idle (U) Val & Will Collin (D)
8		Mrs M Wright	9 Margaret & Derek MacDonald (U) Lorna McLeod & Margaret Croft (D)
15		Mrs M Low	16 Margaret & Ian Coltart (U) (D) vacant
22		Mrs P Rimmer	23 Fiona Fleming & Barbara Leslie (U) Gill Phillip & Alistair Matthews (D)
29		Miss D Davie	30 Laura Pulner & Laura Girvan (U) Ian & Jenny Manning (D)



**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS**



If you have any **USED STAMPS**, over the Christmas period especially, could you please save them and leave them in the box provided. These are picked up and given to 121 with another congregation for charity.  
**THANK YOU!**

**PLEASE PRAY...**

**For your office bearers and all who lead and teach in Your Church here. Pray for more resources to share the load and for all those we can aid in Christ's work.**

**Ploughmans' Lunch**

Please note that there is no Ploughmans' Lunch on the 29<sup>th</sup> December. The next Lunch will be on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 12-2 in the Halls.



## Article Series 8 (pt 8) "God deserves our best Worship"

Please read *Daniel 4:28-37*: WORSHIPPING God positively affects us. Many of us today like instant solutions to our problems. Even in Church circles we want God to answer all our prayers just the way we want and quickly. I suspect that we are in the main, less keen for God's judgment to fall so speedily.

Nebuchadnezzar had a full twelve months to repent from his pride before God's patience turned into action v29-30. Look at all my achievements, "which I have build by **my mighty power**" This is a clear example of a god complex. So, despite having stated there is "no God like your God", now he is saying "I am my own powerful god". There is no credit given to the many labourers, and other skilled workers who made it all happen. There is no credit to the sovereign LORD who creates us all and who gives us the many necessary talents. God had sent him a stark warning v31-33, which he clearly recalls. God's message, His word, has the habit of coming back to bite us if we are living out of tune with Him. A period of God's judgment begins and will continue until "you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over" all kingdoms and people. For those who like to wax their bodies and manicure their nails, Nebuchadnezzar's hair and nails must seem awful. Yet the outdoor life, eating grass, out in all weathers etc. cannot be fully understood by any of us - however we might label it, but we cannot know what it must have been like.

This sentence ends when Nebuchadnezzar "raises his eyes towards heaven" v34. What relief and joy fill him. **Worship and praise flow as he seeks to glorify and honour the Most High God** who is eternal and truly sovereign over all kingdoms v35. God's judgment has worked for good! Nebuchadnezzar has learned his lesson. The tone and language in v36 may or may not suggest that self is back to the fore. However, may I suggest that Nebuchadnezzar "became greater than before" is true. He has learned to **worship God** appropriately and acknowledge Him. He has become greater all round.

Therefore, the only appropriate ending to this narrative is the clear acknowledgement and **worship of God**. In v37 Nebuchadnezzar praises, glorifies, honours and exalts the "King of heaven". HE declares God a just God and one who is able to humble even those who are at the extreme ends of self delusion or self grandeur.

What conclusions could we take from this point? Firstly, those who do not give God appropriate **worship** or acknowledgement in their lives are treading on seriously thin ice. Though some folk work on the Sabbath, many regularly choose to put **worship** on the day of rest as a lower priority - beware, God is not to be mocked - "keep the Sabbath Holy".

Secondly, those who don't need Church at all are in an even worse position. How can they hear God's words, when they absent themselves from fellowship and His word?

The bottom line is that one day **every knee will bow to Jesus our LORD**. Yet those who bow willingly having accepted Him as LORD and SAVIOUR will have the greater reward. For the others short term madness is minor compared to what eternal damnation offers.

**Worship the LORD** in the beauty of holiness every Sunday. Yours Gordon.



## My 1st Book of questions and answers!

### Section 5 - Salvation

46. Who was His mother?

Answer: The virgin Mary



This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about:  
His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph,  
but before they came together, she was  
found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

*Matthew 1:18*

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### Opt - ins : Serving

There are many rota's you  
can serve on among us.

Add your name where you  
are **gifted to serve**.

Coffee/Tea rota

Cleaning rota

Sunday Bible reading rota

Sunday prayer rota

Film night catering rota

Prayer Breakfast leader rota

Prayer Breakfast catering rota

### DPC Verse for 2016

From the rising of the sun to  
the going down of the same  
the Lord's name is to be  
praised

Psalms 113: 3

Your Elder

All members and adherents should  
contact their elder if they know of any  
pastoral needs. If you don't know  
who to contact, ask Alan Low

**Dunbar Choral's  
Carols & Readings  
for Christmas**

December 14<sup>th</sup> in  
Belhaven Parish  
Church at 7:30 pm

Tickets £8 /  
Children £1  
Includes refreshments

## Hall Bookings

Please Contact: Sonia Young  
she keeps the master diary and  
updates the hall one.  
email [bhraggie@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:bhraggie@tiscali.co.uk)  
Telephone: 07874 816326

## Prayer Breakfast Rota

4 Dec - Catherine Hodgson

11 Dec - Derek & Margaret  
Macdonald

18 Dec - Youth

**No Prayer Breakfast on  
25<sup>th</sup> Dec or 1<sup>st</sup> Jan**



## BASICS BANK

### BUDDY SCHEME...

Are experiencing an increase in demand. There will soon be a list of essential items which will be available in the Narthex each week. Do please take one and help those in need. We would like to encourage more folks to become Basics Bank Buddies.

If you are not already part of the Buddy Scheme please drop an email to [basicsbankbuddy@gmail.com](mailto:basicsbankbuddy@gmail.com) and you will be kept up to date with a weekly email and shopping list.



## CHURCH PRAYER MEETINGS

14<sup>th</sup> December

7:30 pm In the Eden Room

Testimony Evening

This will be an opportunity for anyone who attends to share what God has been doing in their lives in 2016, should they wish to.

To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.

Martin Luther King JR

## PASTORAL TEAM

Do you know someone who could use some pastoral help?

Perhaps someone infirm, lonely, or bereaved of a loved one? Maybe an illness or operation or other suffering has knocked you a bit? Any member or adherent who is interested contact Moyra Wright (tel. 863316) or Mike Bigden (tel. 865385) directly or via any Church member.

The pastoral team are genuinely interested in your well-being.

## Magazine Input:

Please send your items in by **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December** for January Magazine - out on 1<sup>st</sup> January, or if you would like a regular E\_Magazine

Tel: 862903 Denise or email: [dmbrunton@gmail.com](mailto:dmbrunton@gmail.com)

Weekly Notices: Contact Denise

In this opening sentence we can learn so much as we are introduced to God. He was there at the beginning and he is the creator of this incredible world and us.

In Genesis 1 – 3, God has given us an incredibly powerful and memorable story that tells us deep truths about God, ourselves and the world we live in.

If acts of literature are separated into chapters, sections, acts, sequels or trilogies, how does the Bible follow the grand and profound opening of the Old Testament with its beginning in the New Testament

In John chapter 1:1 we read:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

(take a few moments to compare and contrast this with Genesis 1)

In this opening we have Jesus, (the word) his divine and human nature brought before us. We have had pointers towards him (prophecies in the Old Testament) and now we start this second section with an amazing insight into the nature of Jesus.

Of course, the Bible was never intended to be a literary masterpiece, it is the word of God, given to us as a living, powerful manual on how to live a life which is right, fulfilling and pleasing to him, the life which God intended us to live!

Have you ever tried building something without looking at the instructions? I have regularly done battle over the years with that well-known Swedish furniture trickster. wrestling with inadequate diagrams, the wrong tools and no grasp of the Swedish language. If we can't stick some furniture together without the instructions, why, oh why, would we try to live a life, with all its complexities, without the aid of the creator's manual? Just as well we don't have to!

If you've never read the Bible before, give it a try and even if you are a self-proclaimed scriptural expert, it will continue to surprise and delight, challenge and instruct in new ways each day.

So, this Christmas, if you get books or kindle tokens, remember not to neglect your Bible, find out more about God and “the word” who were there at the beginning!!



Have a great Christmas and New Year!  
Blessings Derek



## TEEN PAGE... Literary genius

It was truly a life or death situation.....

When sitting down to write a novel, short story (or perhaps teen article), all of the professional advice is to grab the reader's interest, with the very first line, thus providing the "hook" to convince them to read on. Once you have the reader's attention, you can then take your time to draw them deeper in to the narrative in a more subtle way, allowing the reader to be introduced to the characters, trait by trait, until you either love them or hate them, depending on the writer's intentions, and want to find out what will befall them.

So, what examples do we have from some of literatures finest offerings?

- "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" *A tale of two cities*, Charles Dickens (1859).
- "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there." *The Go-betweeners*, L.P.Hartley (1953).
- "Call me Ishmael" *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville (1851).
- "It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen" *1984*, George Orwell (1949).
- "Mr and Mrs Dursley of number four, Privet drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much." *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, J.K Rowling (1997).

Great openings, I'm sure you'll agree. Words which pique your intellect, spark some interest and leave you curious to find out more.

What about the best-selling book of all time? A timeless classic that has been fully translated into 554 languages, with 450 different English versions? Is it some Shakespearean masterpiece, or perhaps a Dickens classic, some insightful sci-fi prediction of the future or a crime who-done-it of epic proportion??

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you..... The Bible!!!

So, how does this book begin? Does it follow the golden rule of novel writing? In Genesis chapter 1, the first sentence we read is:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."



## Where Is Your Bethlehem? by Marilyn Ehle

Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem... to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. Luke 2:4, 5

As the crow flies, it was a journey of approximately 100 km but travelling over hills, through villages and around rivers would likely have made the trip even longer. Christmas pictures always show Mary riding a donkey but we really have no idea of their mode of travel. In any case, whether on foot or on the back of a swaying brown animal, it wasn't an easy journey, especially for a women nearing the end of her pregnancy.

Why did she go? True, government officialdom decreed a census and that everyone must go to one's "own city," the place their families called home, for this official registration and counting. Perhaps Mary was also quite ready to leave the village of Nazareth where tongues were wagging about her pregnancy and unmarried status.

But Mary and Joseph knew they were going far from family and into a city whose streets would be clogged with travelling strangers. They were assured of no warm welcome, no cozy place to birth the expected child. Perhaps they hoped for a small house or a distant relative or a way for Joseph to earn money for their keep, but in almost every way, they were travelling into the unknown. The journey was long and hard, the destination uncertain.

Nearly 9 months before their arrival in Bethlehem, Mary spoke life-changing words to God, words that were to comfort her in the many uncertain years ahead. "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." With those simple words of faith, she could endure the long journey on the back of a donkey, the cold streets of Bethlehem, the staring faces of strangers, and even the crude stable with its straw-lined manger.

Where is your Bethlehem? Has the path been long, the people uncaring, the circumstances burdensome? When we submit ourselves as servants to a loving God, we can—in quietness and confidence—add "May it be to me as you have said" no matter the place or position in which we find ourselves.

Would you like to know Jesus?

You can have peace, find hope and know forgiveness through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer. Praying is simply talking to God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. Here's a suggested prayer:

*Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life to You and ask You to come in as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Bring peace to my world this Christmas. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.*

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, pray it right now and Christ will come into your life as He promised. If you invited Jesus Christ into your life, thank God often that He is in your life, that He will never leave you and that you have eternal life.



## One Snowy Christmas Eve

There was once a man who didn't believe in God, and he didn't hesitate to let others know how he felt about religion and religious holidays, like Christmas. His wife, however, did believe, and she raised their children to also have faith in God and Jesus, despite his disparaging comments.

One snowy Christmas Eve, his wife was taking their children to a Christmas Eve service in the farm community in which they lived. She asked him to come, but he refused. "That story is nonsense!" he said. "Why would God lower Himself to come to Earth as a man? That's ridiculous!" So she and the children left, and he stayed home. A while later, the winds grew stronger and the snow turned into a blizzard. As the man looked out the window, all he saw was a blinding snowstorm. He sat down to relax before the fire for the evening. Then he heard a loud thump. Something had hit the window. Then another thump. He looked out, but couldn't see more than a few feet.

When the snow let up a little, he ventured outside to see what could have been beating on his window. In the field near his house he saw a flock of wild geese. Apparently they had been flying south for the winter when they got caught in the snowstorm and could not go on. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter. They just flapped their wings and flew around the field in low circles, blindly and aimlessly. A couple of them had flown into his window, it seemed. The man felt sorry for the geese and wanted to help them. The barn would be a great place for them to stay, he thought. It is warm and safe; surely they could spend the night and wait out the storm. So he walked over to the barn and opened the doors wide, then watched and waited, hoping they would notice the open barn and go inside. But the geese just fluttered around aimlessly and did not seem to notice the barn or realize what it could mean for them.

The man tried to get their attention, but that just seemed to scare them and they moved further away. He went into the house and came back out with some bread, broke it up, and made a breadcrumbs trail leading to the barn. They still didn't catch on. Now he was getting frustrated. He got behind them and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they only got more scared and scattered in every direction except toward the barn. Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn where they would be warm and safe.

"Why don't they follow me?!" he exclaimed. "Can't they see this is the only place where they can survive the storm?" He thought for a moment and realized that they just wouldn't follow a human. "If only I were a goose, then I could save them," he said out loud. Then he had an idea. He went into barn, got one of his own geese, and

carried it in his arms as he circled around behind the flock of wild geese. He then released it. His goose flew through the flock and straight into the barn -- and one by one the other geese followed it to safety.

He stood silently for a moment as the words he had spoken a few minutes earlier replayed in his mind:

"If only I were a goose, then I could save them!"

Then he thought about what he had said to his wife earlier.

"Why would God want to be like us? That's ridiculous!"

Suddenly it all made sense. That is what God had done.

We were like the geese -- blind, lost, perishing. God had His Son become like us so He could show us the way and save us.

That was the meaning of Christmas, he realized. As the winds and blinding snow died down, his soul became quiet and pondered this wonderful thought. Suddenly he understood what Christmas was all about, why Christ had come. Years of doubt and disbelief vanished like the passing storm. He fell to his knees in the snow, and prayed his first prayer:

*"Thank You Jesus for coming in human form to show me the way out of the storm!"*

### True Christian Christmas

*By Joanna Fuchs*

Christmas isn't showy gifts

Or glittering decoration;

It's honouring our Saviour, Jesus Christ

In humble adoration.

It's serving those less fortunate,

Meeting their needs before our own;

It's making sure at Christmas time

That no one is alone.

It's taking what we would have spent

On things that no one needs,

And using it to help someone

With service and good deeds.

*May the miracle of  
Christmas  
fill your heart with love and joy*

Our Saviour showed us how to live  
With charity, faith and service.

It makes the holidays a joy,  
More peaceful, and less nervous.

So let's remember Christmas is  
About our Saviour's birth;

That's the way to happiness,

The way to peace on earth.

