

Mt Zion Christian Church Newsletter-DECEMBER 2018

(Published in memory of Miss Lillian Sharpe)

CHRISTMAS AND THE GIFT OF PEACE

by Charles Stanley

Christmas sometimes passes like a red, green, and gold blur of lights, wrapping paper, and familiar carols. Bombarded by relatives, gifts, events, and special programs, there are times when this blessed season hits as hard and fast as a Texas tornado. It commences, whether we are prepared or not. And instead of joy, peace, and glory to God, it produces physical, emotional, and financial overload.

We often submit to the overwhelming societal and commercial pressures because we truly want to make the most of the season. But in the midst of the hustle and bustle, **what we actually need most—spiritually, emotionally, physically, and relationally is to be quiet and observant.** We gain the greatest benefit from being silent and tranquil—cherishing the opportunity to reflect on Christ's birth and what our Savior really means to us. It is amazing the blessings and sense of peace we miss when we don't take the time to be still and see how God is moving.

Think about the people who first missed Jesus' birth. The religious leaders of Israel didn't realize the Father had sent the Savior, even though He announced through the prophet Isaiah, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). They envisioned the Messiah to be a mighty warrior who would free the nation, not that He would be born in a barn or that God's salvation would be accomplished on a cross.

Yet recall the people who *did* witness Jesus' birth. Luke tells us, "There were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord'" (Luke 2:8-11). It was in the stillness of that quiet night in Bethlehem that the announcement came. And because their ears and hearts were open, the shepherds were blessed in an awesome way.

The same is true for us.

I've often said peace with God is the fruit of oneness with Him. Stopping in the midst of our hectic schedules and looking for ways the Savior is working is not only immensely important—it is downright indispensable. Through our time in His awesome presence, He settles our souls, fills our hearts with peace, strengthens us for the struggles ahead, and teaches us His ways. Could anything be more satisfying, important, or powerful than that?

This Christmas, make sure to enjoy moments of silence and meditate upon God's gifts of salvation, character, and His holy Word. Learn to look for Him in the stillness of the day, and anticipate His glory in the most unexpected places. In doing so, you will strengthen the foundation of your growing relationship with Him. And that's the very best Christmas present you and I could ever receive.

"A Soldier's Silent Night":

'Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,
In a one-bedroom house made of plaster and stone.
I had come down the chimney, with presents to give
and to see just who in this dwelling did live.
As I looked all around, a strange sight to see,
no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.
No stocking on the mantle, just boots filled with sand.
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.
Medals and badges, awards of every kind,
a sobering thought came alive in my mind.
This house was different, it was dark, it was dreary.
I had found the home of a soldier, I could see that most clearly.
The soldier lay sleeping silent, alone.
Curled up on the floor in his one-bedroom home.
His face was so gentle, room in such disorder,
Not at all how I pictured a U.S. soldier.
Was this the hero, of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho, a floor for a bed?
Then I realized the other families that I saw this night
Out there lies the soldiers who are willing to fight.
In the morning around the world, children would play
Grown-ups would celebrate a bright Christmas day
But they all enjoyed freedom, each month through the year,
because of soldiers like the one lying here.
I couldn't help but wonder how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas Eve, in lands far from home.
The very thought brought a tear to my eye.
and I dropped to my knees and I started to cry.
The soldier awakened, I heard his rough voice,
"Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice
I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more.
My life is my God, my country, my Corps."
The soldier rolled over, and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, and I continued to weep.
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still.
as both of us shivered from the cold night's chill.
I didn't want to leave him on that cold, dark night.
This guardian of honor, so willing to fight.
Then the soldier rolled over with a voice soft and pure.
He whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas Day, all secure."
One look at my watch and I knew he was right,
Merry Christmas my friend,
May God bless you this night.

Drafted by Father Ted Berndt from the original "Merry Christmas My Friend"
by former Marine Corporal James Schmidt

Happy Birthday

- 12/2 Shane Jones
- 12/5 Peggy James, Jim Parker, Mollie Young
- 12/6 Erin Oates, Story Rudder, Gracie Culler, JJ Ray
- 12/9 Lee Allen
- 12/11 Sue Ann Gentry
- 12/12 Nathan Robertson
- 12/14 Cole Oakes
- 12/15 Frankie Vaughan, Carol Poole Williams
- 12/16 Donnie Thompson, Justin Minter
- 12/17 Corrina Carter
- 12/18 Rebecca Jones
- 12/19 Jimmy Evans, Allie Tate, Richard Shepherd
- 12/20 Tyesha DeLoach, Eloise Wilder
- 12/21 Shelly Byrd, William Rice, Phoebe Cole, Faye Thompson
- 12/23 Sherrie Dixon, Savannah Fitch, Pat Woods
- 12/25 Jenny Day
- 12/26 Wesley Freshwater, Angie Welch
- 12/27 Doug Atkins
- 12/29 Jo Ellen Bradley
- 12/30 Trisha Lynch
- 12/31 Tyrese DeLoach, Jake Blincoe, Kayla Oakley

Happy Anniversary

- 12/8 Doug & Dianne Atkins, Hurley & Louise Tate
- 12/12 Shane & Heather Lynch Burns
- 12/13 Will & Erin Oates
- 12/14 Joseph & Sarah Vaughan
- 12/15 William & Gayle Rice
- 12/21 Jessie & Vivian Wynn
- 12/24 Mike & Mollie Young, Odis & Julia Johnson
- 12/26 Carroll & Bette Corbin

Activities for December 2018

- Each Wednesday Night-----Adult Bible Study @ 6:30PM
Choir Practice @ 7:30PM
- 12/1 Men's Prayer Breakfast @ 7AM
 - Hanging of the Greens/Eating of the Beans-2PM
 - 12/2 Flower Fund-SS
 - 12/3 Ladies Christmas Party @6PM Western Steakhouse
 - 12/5 Mt Zion Support @11:30AM Blue Ribbon
 - 12/8 BOCE @ 7PM Deacons/Deaconesses Follow
 - 12/15 Ladies fill Christmas Bags @9AM
 - 12/16 Christmas Play & Party @5PM
 - 12/25 CHRISTmas Day

BABY JESUS

K I N G D O M N A Z A R E T H
 C E N O I T A T N E S E R P D
 H A L N N O I T A L E V E R E
 U N E C D E T A R C E S N O C
 M G R S A L V A T I O N S P R
 B E R W A R A T S J M H B H E
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 C D U G S N E J U D E A E N L
 P E A C E O L E Y O J N M S E
 E T I R I P S L E U N A M M E

Augustus, Bethlehem, Blessed, Caesar, Christ, Consecrated, Cyrenius, Decree, Dream, Emmanuel, Espoused, Gabriel, Galilee, Grace, Humble, Inn, Jerusalem, Joseph, Joy, Judea, Kingdom, Magi, Mary, Miracle, Nazarene, Nazareth, Peace, Pondered, Presentation, Prophetess, Revelation, Sacrifice, Salvation, Shepherds, Sign, Spirit, Star, Swaddling

After you have found all the words, put the leftover letters in the correct order to form the *mystery answer*.

Last month's answer: GRATITUDE

Each month we will show an individual's favorite hymn and Bible verse.

Lewis Baker: Have Thine Own Way, Lord

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The Mt Zion Support group met on November 7th at Cracker Barrel with 5 people enjoying good food and great fellowship.

We will meet on December 5th @11:30am at Blue Ribbon.

Please come and join us.

Libby Atkins

The Men's Prayer breakfast was held on December 1st with 17 in attendance. A delicious breakfast and great fellowship was shared by all.

Many prayers were lifted up for the sick and hurting in our church, our families and our community. Those attending were: Jeff Kirby,

Rodney Walker, Cecil Shue, Robert Bridges, Haywood Shue, Lewis Baker, Doug Atkins, Mark Harris, Rick Webster, Anthony Cole, Asie & Sandra Glasgow.

Also we recognize the wonderful cooks for all the prayer breakfasts: Pete Enroughty, Jerry Lane, Johnnie Parker,

Gary Moran and Max Thompson. If you don't come to the prayer breakfasts you miss a wonderful time of fellowship and also a delicious breakfast including:

country ham, grits, homemade jellies, eggs, blueberry cake, biscuits, red-eye gravy, milk,

orange juice, coffee.....and more. Please join us for our next get together on January 26th to kick off 2019.

Jerry Lane