

## The Narrow Road to the Manger

"I'm in the will of God... *but I don't feel so good.*" Joseph and Mary could have said these precise words. They were fully in the will of God. They had his blessing. The angel messengers had reassured them. But they were alone, and poor, desperate and in the middle of emergency childbirth in a filthy stable.

King Herod on the other hand, probably felt pretty good that night. He had physical comfort, wealth, and power. A couple of years after Christ's birth he ordered the killing of many infants in a ruthless attempt to eliminate young Jesus. Even that day, perhaps he'd had a good night's sleep, a dip in his spa, a good meal, a productive meeting with his killers mixed with occasional dark laughter. Herod may have thought, "It's good to be king."

**How we feel is no indication of our standing before God.** The uneasy truth is killers can rest peacefully, while devout servants of God endure sleepless hours. Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus suffered that holy night.

Think about what this young family went through. What a huge step down Jesus took from the throne of heaven to helplessness in a rough bed of straw. From his first moments of life, Jesus walked a narrow, difficult road.

The manger is empty because that child grew to a man. He called all people to walk with him on the narrow road that leads to life (Matt. 7:13-14). Anyone who joins him will experience some of the same hardships he did. The crowd offers you an easy road off a cliff. Jesus offers a narrow road that leads to home, to him, to heaven, to all the eternal wonders he has prepared for those who love him, and who show it by the road they walk.

As you walk this narrow path, sometimes *you* may not feel so good... even at Christmas. It doesn't mean you aren't in the will of God. Take heart... and take the hand of the one who walked this same road before you.

*Mark*

Candlelight Christmas-Eve Service,  
5:00 PM: Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:00—5:40 PM. This brief, meaningful time of worship focuses on Christ who set aside his crown and laid down his life for you.

### **TODAY: A Bridal Shower for Melissa Hogan !**

The ladies are celebrating with Melissa and the Hogan family in the Fellowship Hall after worship.

**Our "Prayer & Fasting" Calendar for January is up!** Sign up with a check-mark on the day you will pray and fast. This is the BEST way to start the new year. God's blessing on our lives and on this church is a huge advantage!

**YOUTH GROUP:** Christmas Party & Pollyanna @ church **Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>.** Stay after church for a festive lunch & to hang out with friends! The McEntires will provide the main dish. Teens can bring their favorite holiday treat. Remember to bring your "Pollyanna" gift.

**It Might SNOW:** "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas," which means a possibility of SNOW. We have someone to use the snow-blower but... we ***need volunteers for each snow to help with a shovel, broom, and ice melt.*** **Sign-up** on the bulletin board under 1<sup>st</sup> Snow, 2<sup>nd</sup> Snow etc. to help out.

**Tuesday, December 29<sup>th</sup>:** We will be serving at the Cathedral Kitchen 3:30-5:30. See Vivian Carter.

**Update on "Catch-up Special Collection"—** Our total for our special collection this year *now* totals **\$37,086.** That is within \$414 of our goal! Praise God for his provision through his people!

## **Today's Worship Leaders**

**Worship Leader:** Dave Williams

**Welcome & Scripture:** Carl Smith (Luke 2:1-7)

**Opening Prayer:** Dave Cook

**Lord's Supper:** Jack, Josh Henderson, Rick Boyle, John Corbett

**Scripture Before Message:** Scott Schoener (Luke 2:8-20)

**Announcements & Prayer:** Tony Ceraso Jr.

**Luke 2** — In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." 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. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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**Nursery: Sandie & Elizabeth** Next Week- Wini & Elaine

**Pink Cleaning Team:** Dec.23-26 **Howard & Donna** Coordinate

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### **OUTREACH/MINISTRY**

Mark Finn – Preacher

Church Office- (856) 854-0197

### **ELDERS:**

Rick Boyle (856) 986-4876

Tony Ceraso, Jr. (856) 278-6276

Bret Goen (856) 996-5267

Chet Churchill (609) 560-7179

Howard Mansdoerfer (609) 790-9969

**Worship ..... 132**

**Bible Class ..... 74**

**Wed.PM..... 37**

**Contribution ..... \$4,354**

**Budget Goal ..... \$4,260**

**Daily Bible Readers: 28**

# Collingswood Church of Christ

Church Website: [www.ccc123.org](http://www.ccc123.org)

300 White Horse Pike

December 20, 2015


Collingswood, NJ 08107

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"Now faith is being **sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)



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## Luke 2:1-20