

# The Journey to Bethlehem

It's fitting that this is a busy time of year. It was for Mary and Joseph. I doubt their thoughts were high minded and otherworldly. They were forced by the government to start a long, uncomfortable and dangerous journey so they could be counted in the census. They were just an anonymous couple with problems, indistinguishable from the hordes of citizens crowding into the towns of Palestine.

Certainly they were afraid and worried, yet they had faith in their God. That faith was not misplaced. God saw them. God was with them. He had prepared this special moment since the foundation of the world. They needn't have worried. They were already registered in the only census that really counts: the Lamb's Book of Life. Though their accommodations were not what they had hoped, they were adequate and oddly fitting for a struggling couple.

The human race had ever pushed forward its most popular achievers and produced not peace on earth, but thousands of years of bloody history. Despite the gritty setting, the hope of the world had just arrived. Defying all expectation, it was a baby. God as a human baby! Indeed, God's ways are not our ways.

It happened quietly. The noblest human to ever breathe air was relegated to a backyard shed. He was wrapped in a used cloth picked up at the Goodwill Store. He arrived to stressed out parents.

Our journey through December can be busy and stressful. Though we may feel ashamed to compare our blessed lives with the privations of Jesus' family, we don't have to doubt that they would understand. They went through it. You can get through it too. Keep that flickering flame of faith alive in your heart. The blaring, gaudy, obscene version of Christmas has an antidote. It's in the name itself: Christ. He is the gift. Peace on earth, goodwill toward men must start in your heart.

*Mark*

**Elders Visiting!** The Elders would like to visit each member of the congregation over the next six months, so don't be surprised if you get a call... or maybe a Text... or Facebook Invitation... or Snap Chat... or Tweet... or Instagram. (*Just kidding. We'll call.*)

## **Today is "Children's Day"**

**10:30 AM – Children's Church**

**11:45 AM – Gingerbread House**

**Want to learn more about being a part of  
Collingswood Church of Christ ?**

**Well... Come to our *NEW Member's Class*  
*December 10<sup>th</sup>* right after Worship in the "Teen Room."  
This brief, no-obligation class includes refreshments.  
Talk to us!**

## **Youth Group:**

**Today:** Help children build Gingerbread Houses  
(maybe make one yourself)

**Friday, Dec. 9,** in the evening see a Living Nativity

## **Our "Christmas Party" is Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>, 6 PM**

The theme is: "*In the Meadow We Can Build a Snowman.*"  
**A sign-up sheet for food is posted, and . . .**

**Sign-up to be in the TALENT SHOW**

## **Next Year's Monthly Volunteer List is Up!**

**December '17 still has openings:**

**1.** bringing Donuts each week, **2.** Cleaning up the donut, bagel & Juice tables, **3.** doing the laundry. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board.

## **"Giving Tree" and Christmas Cards:**

- 1. Giving Tree:** Take a paper ornament off the tree in the lobby, put the back portion with "Elf's name" in the dish and return front portion with the gift. These are *Specific Kids* we know & love whose needs & wishes have been brought to our attention. Questions? See Karen or Donna.
- 2. Christmas Cards:** to people in our church can be placed in the box in the lobby. Our kids will deliver them for you!

**Our "January Month of Prayer & Fasting" Calendar is Posted!** Just put your anonymous check-mark on the day you will fast and pray for the church. This is how we start the new year!

### **Today's Worship Leaders**

**Worship Leader:** Dave Williams

**Welcome & Scripture:** Tony Ceraso (Luke 1:30-38)

**Opening Prayer:** Nelson Nuñez

**Lord's Supper:** Tim Jones, Scott Schoener, Tim Davis, Jiony Colon

**Scripture Before Message:** Dave Cook (Matt. 1:21-23)

**Announcements & Closing Prayer:** Rick Boyle

**Nursery Nawana & Debbie** Next Week: Chris Ann & Elizabeth  
**Blue: Cleaning Team** Dec. 6-9

### **OUTREACH/MINISTRY**

Mark Finn – Minister

Church Office- (856) 854-0197

#### **ELDERS:**

Rick Boyle (856) 986-4876

Tony Ceraso, Jr. (856) 278-6276

Bret Goen (856) 996-5267

Howard Mansdoerfer (609) 790-9969

**Worship** ..... 111

Bible Class..... 63

Wednesday PM..... 37

Wed. Nov. 22..... 27

**Contribution** ..... **\$7,149**

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

# Collingswood Church of Christ

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

300 White Horse Pike

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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Do we have a place  
for the poor and powerless?