

Dear Friends,

Teresa and I are going on vacation and will be getting back to Weston right after Thanksgiving. We are looking forward to helping get the church building ready with all the decorations for Advent that begins on November 28<sup>th</sup>. More than this, we hope to ready our hearts to celebrate Jesus's first coming while we eagerly await His next and final coming. We will read a Scripture every week leading up to Christmas, including Christmas-eve that prepares our heart for this sacred season.

The reason we celebrate Christmas is to remember Jesus's coming into the world that He created, and how He was rejected by the very people who should have recognized Him as He was portrayed in their own sacred Scriptures. The task for us is that Jesus is given his rightful place in our lives this holy time of the year. We need to be sure that we do not become so busy we don't take time with our Savior to chat and catch up. We need to be careful that His face is not hidden by tinsel, trees and presents, and His voice drowned out by our deafness and distraction to the Word, or to have Jesus not be the major focal point of this time of the year and to be replaced by a bearded, although adorable, fat man from the North Pole.

Let's take more time, not less, to gather in worship, study and prayer. Let's make certain that people understand on Whom we have our focus. As Christians we need to fully recognize the importance of giving and being thankful for the greatest Gift of all – Jesus of Nazareth who was born in Bethlehem nearly 2026 years ago. Sometimes I run across material outside the Bible that is also true and represents the Truth of the Bible.

I know this is a little different, but here is a helpful story from a Facebook friend: This is long but so worth it! 🍌 I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit Grandma on the day my brother dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," he jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her "world-famous" cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus?" she snorted, "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad!! Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous cinnamon bun. "Where" turned out to be Kirby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kirby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping.

For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for. I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church.

I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out to recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough; he didn't have a good coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat! I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that. "Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down. "Yes, ma'am," I replied shyly. "It's for Bobby."

The nice lady smiled at me, as I told her about how Bobby really needed a good winter coat. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag, smiled again, and wished me a Merry Christmas. That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible) in Christmas paper and ribbons and wrote, "To Bobby, From Santa Claus" on it.

Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially, one of Santa's helpers. Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going."

I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his door and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally, it did, and there stood Bobby.

Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were -- ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

I still have the Bible, with the coat tag tucked inside: \$19.95.  
May you always have LOVE to share, HEALTH to spare and FRIENDS that care...  
And may you always believe in the magic of Santa Claus!

God gave us an extravagant gift when He allowed His Son to come to us and paid for what we could never afford – our salvation. Why not share what you have been given by others – the Gospel and help make their Christmas the best ever.

Your brother in Christ

Gary

## THE MAGI AND THE STAR OF CHRISTMAS

The Gospel of Mark has nothing at all about the birth of Jesus. The Gospel of John describes the birth in symbols like “word” and “light” entering the world. Luke’s Gospel has the story of the angels and the shepherds. But only Matthew writes about the Magi and the star.

**Matthew 2:9** records—a comet with a long tail. Comets are known to appear suddenly and to seem to travel slowly across the night sky at a typical rate of 1-2 degrees per day. Matthew says that the star “stood over” the place where the baby Jesus lay. A long-tail comet with its head pointing downward can seem to point to a place on earth. This would dramatically fit with the description in Matthew of the star. The Magi would have arrived several weeks after the birth of Jesus—at the house where the holy family then resided (**Matthew 2:11**).

Several cities and villages in Persia (today’s Iraq and Iran) claim that the wise men came from there. We don’t know exactly where they were from or even how many of them there were.

Could those eastern wise men have known of Balaam’s fourth oracle back in **Numbers 24**? He predicted that “... a star will rise out of Jacob; a ruler’s scepter will rise from Israel.” Perhaps when Balaam returned to the Middle East, that story was spread, and the Magi may have heard of it. Tradition has given these Magi special names and even numbered them as three, since there were three gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh. They have been called “three kings,” but there is no evidence for this. Also interesting is the fact that these gifts were unique. Gold is from the earth; frankincense is of the heavens, a symbol of prayer in the Bible. And myrrh is for the burial of the body, used in ancient times in Egypt and learned of by the Jews. Jesus was like these gifts—from heaven, from earth and would be buried, briefly.

Joseph was warned in a dream to leave Bethlehem and go to Egypt to escape the slaughter of the innocents. The three gifts are how the holy family was able to survive economically in an Egyptian city among other Jews. Then at the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC, the holy family returned to Israel, but being warned in a fourth dream, Joseph removed the family to Nazareth of Galilee. And so Jesus would be called a Nazarene.

Either way, Jesus’ birth was actually in 5 BC, making our calendar, which was invented later on, inaccurate. This New Year would actually be 2027, rather than 2022, if it were based in the birth of Jesus the Messiah.

Several questions arise from Matthew’s record: 1) Where were the wise men from? 2) How could they know that the star meant a king was born? 3) What was the star? 4) When did the star appear?

not the first who saw the star of Christmas. Chinese star-gazers saw it first. For millennia the Chinese had kept close watch on comets and other heavenly phenomena.

The word “Magos” (singular of “Magi”) comes from an Iranian word for “great one.” Magi were the upper caste in the Middle East—both Persia and Babylonia—for many centuries. They were the scholars who studied the stars and struggled to discern how events in the heavens might impact the earth. But they were not the first who saw the star of Christmas. Chinese star-gazers saw it first. For millennia the Chinese had kept close watch on comets and other heavenly phenomena.

According to ancient Chinese records a spectacular comet with a very long tail appeared in 5 BC and was visible to them for over 70 days. This comet is the only celestial phenomenon recorded between the period 20 BC and AD 10, according to ancient Chinese records. This comet fits uniquely with the birth of Christ, because **Luke 2:2** reveals that Quirinius was governor of Syria when Jesus was born. Quirinius was governor of Syria the first time from 6 BC to 4 BC.

After the Chinese had tracked the movements of the comet, the Magi would have been able to see it, too, since it began its journey "in the east," just as Matthew said. This one obvious astronomical object, and the only one, fits with the account of the star of Bethlehem that Matthew told us about.

This is from a newsletter for the Kiamichi Clinic

Author: Dr. Mark Berrier, Academic Dean



## How to keep Christmas

Inspirational author Wilferd Peterson pondered ways to “best keep Christmas” and “defeat the little bit of Scrooge in all of us.” After reading his suggestions, add your own!

- By following the Star ... to stand again in awe and wonder before the Babe in the manger.
- By rediscovering the faith and simplicity of a little child.
- By being still and listening to the angels sing within our hearts.
- By quietly evaluating our lives according to the Master’s standards as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.
- By resolving to give ourselves away to others.
- By using the light of Christmas to guide us through ... the coming year.

**The Newsletter**®

Stewardship Statistics	10/31/21	11/07/21	11/14/21	11/21/21			Total Money And Average Attendance
Attendance for in-person services	51	51	55	43			50
General Fund	\$1836.00	\$4510.00	\$5947.00	\$1381.00			\$13674.00
Weekly Budget	\$2464.71	\$2464.71	\$2464.71	\$2464.71			\$9858.84
+ or — Budget	(\$628.71)	\$2045.29	\$3482.29	(\$1083.71)			\$3815.16
<b>Designated Giving</b>							
Birthday Money		\$12.00					\$12.00
Cliff Lehman Memorial			\$50.00				\$50.00
Food Bank			\$50.00				\$50.00
Minister Appreciation			\$75.00				\$75.00
Benevolence				\$1000.00			\$1000.00
<b>Total Giving's</b>	\$1836.00	\$4522.00	\$6122.00	\$2381.00			\$14861.00

**Prayer List**

U.S. government leaders  
 Krause's-Philippines  
 Scott Fouts (home, doing better)  
 Kevin & Melissa Comstock (prayers)  
 Larry Biscarner (Nancy Snyder's brother has prostate cancer)  
 Duane Rupe (stroke/prostate)  
 Doris Rothenbuhler (cancer treatments)  
 Shelly Sharp (friend of Peggy's/cancer)  
 Norm Romaker (heart surgery)  
 Betty Fortney  
 Duane Miller (continues to heal)  
 Kevin Roe (pain therapy)  
 Skylar (feeling good)  
 Debbie Wagner (Dick Phillip's sister)  
 Kim Huffman (prostate cancer treatments)  
 Cathy Swenson (detached retina surgery/recovery)  
 Shelly Sherman (home, possible rehab)  
 Norm Murphy (home with health issues)  
 Ed's coworker Shawna has mother with carcinoma.  
 Sandy Mazey (cancer surgery)  
 Jose Artiaga's x Geri (brain infection)  
 Jim Fouts (in the hospital with lung cancer)  
 Diane Repasz (feeling good now)  
 Erin Cooper (Stage 4 cancer)  
 Family of Patrick Tolbert (missionaries in Ireland)

**Prayer list continued**

Paula Thomas (MRI, still has pain)  
 Family of Phyllis Mathews (Gary's aunt)  
 Family of Thomas Walters  
 Family of Jay Soto  
 Megan Brown (leg issues)  
 Ed Tankersley (cancer)  
 Jeremy Prowant (cancer surgery recovery)  
 Family of Barbara Loose  
 Family of Tom Newlove  
 Leighan Yarger (shoulder healing)  
 Julie Chesney (3 more radiation treatments)  
 Becky Repasz (still having pain)  
 Grace Barnes (cancer free at this moment)  
 John Snyder (back problems/possible surgery)  
 Russ Harshberger (recovering at home)  
 Rick Bruielly (chemo every Monday)  
 Jerry Snyder - Home now (healing)  
 John McKenzie (January 3<sup>rd</sup> appointment in Cleveland for facial neuralgia)  
 Christian Aid Missionaries kidnapped in Haiti (Praise God for the 2 that were released last week, but 15 still being held for ransom)  
 Family of Lee Hill (Pastor at Victory Deliverance Church on Rt. 6, Weston)

**Those in Service**

Lt. Col. Elijah Ward – Korea  
 Ron Burkhart - Stateside  
 Jon Walker - 180th TFW Active duty  
 Michelle Metzger - Army Nat'l Guard  
 Daryl Trail - U.S. Navy  
 Austin Varela - Marines/Stateside  
 Luke Millican - USAF  
 Walker Polsinelli - Pakistan  
 Gunnar Bontjes - Army National Guard



**Remember our Shut-ins**

Tom & May Ann Hillier - B.G. Manor  
 Rose Mary Gensen - Arbors of Oregon

- Second Sunday of Advent, *December 5*
- Third Sunday of Advent, *December 12*
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 19*
- First day of winter, *December 21*
- Christmas Eve, *December 24*
- Christmas Day, *December 25*
- New Year's Eve, *December 31*

## Leadership Elections - December 12

Ballots will be out for you to vote on your leadership positions.  
Approved nominees will be posted on the bulletin board for  
your consideration before election day.



### **Small Group Bible Study at the parsonage**

**Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> @7pm**

**No Small Groups on December 15, 22, 29.**

**New study will start on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**“Intentional Choices: Discovering Contentment in Stressful Times”.**

### **Board Meeting**

**December 7**

**7:30pm**

### **Elders Meeting**

**December 14**

**6:00pm**

## **Weston Community Food Pantry**

**We are open to the public every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays,  
10am - Noon.**

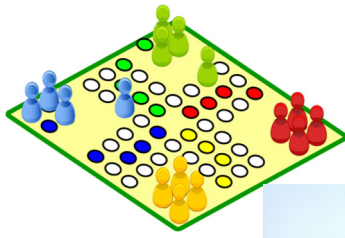


We're in our fourth month with this outreach. Thanks to Modern Woodmen of America Insurance and the Weston United Methodist Church for their recent donations. Thanks also to members of the congregation and other anonymous donors. We've served 50 different families since September. If you know someone in the Weston area in need, please inform them about the pantry. We are here to serve. See you on the 4th and 18th!



## **December Sermons**

December 5	Submission to Those in Authority	Romans 13:1-7
December 12	You Will Never Get Out of Debt	Romans 13:8-14
December 19	Passing Judgment	Romans 14:1ff
December 26	Love Defined: All Loves Excelling	Romans 15:1-3



## ONE GAME NIGHT IN DECEMBER

Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 - 9:00pm

BRING FOOD AND DRINK TO SHARE.



Weston United Methodist Church, 13185 Maple Street, Weston

Christmas Cookie & Craft Bazaar

Sunday, December 5, 11:30am - 1:30pm

All monies from the bake sales go to missions. Contact Deb Allen, 419-260-2207 if you want a spot to sell crafts. This is one of their annual fund raisers for missions.

## COME TO THE STABLE

Bowling Green Alliance Church, 1161 Napoleon Road, Bowling Green

500+ Nativities! Indoor Event • Handicap Accessible • Free Admission

December 9th - 12th

Thursday, 5pm-8pm

Friday, 10am-8pm

Saturday, 10am-8pm

Sunday, 12pm-5pm



Christmas Eve Service - December 24th at 6:00pm

Weston Church of Christ, 13355 Center Street, Weston

Music • Scripture • Communion • Candle Lighting





## **Mission Moment - December 5**

### **Christian Children's Home of Ohio with Dan Franks**

CCHO provides a safe and stable environment where abused, neglected and traumatized children find healing, discover hope and experience unconditional love. Originally founded in 1969, CCHO's residential treatment facility in Wooster, OH is designed to meet the mental, emotional, physical, recreational and spiritual needs of as many as 36 children at one time. Children in residential care are provided a variety of therapeutic approaches, such as equine-assisted therapy, art, group, partial hospitalization, individual, play and certified trauma therapy.

### **OUR HEART**

In Ezekiel 11:19, God's promise to the brokenhearted is clear and encouraging: "I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh." Time and again, we've watched God move in miraculous ways to change the bruised and battered hearts of boys and girls who have never heard that they are loved unconditionally. They come to us in crisis, in pain, in need, and they find safety, healing and peace.



The heart in our logo represents the radical transformation that only God can initiate. It reminds us that, while we strive to do our jobs well each and every day, there is only One who can renew hearts and restore lives. As verse 20 says, "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." Without Him, we are lost but with Him, we all have hope.

## **A Shoot Brings Life**

Last year, Israeli scientists harvested dates from seeds that had been dormant about 2,000 years. The seeds, recovered during archaeological digs, were nurtured in incubators and several thrived. One (named Methuselah!) became a 10-foot-tall palm tree.

Horticulturists joked about marketing "dates that Jesus ate," but there's another scriptural connection. Isaiah 11, a traditional Advent reading, prophesies: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots" (verse 1, NRSV). Jesus is the tender shoot that emerged from the humble peasant origins of Jesse, father of King David. From a dynasty that went dormant due to Israel's sins sprouted a mighty tree, who will someday usher in a reign of peace (see verses 6-7).

Some people and churches celebrate Christmas with a Jesse Tree, remembering how God sent Jesus to sprout life out of death and bring new hope and joy to the world.

—adapted from *The Wired Word*



## The Greatest Gift-Giver

When we give each other Christmas presents in [God's] name, let us remember that he has given us the sun and the moon and the stars, the earth with its forests and mountains and oceans — and all that lives and moves upon them. He has given us all green things and everything that blossoms and bears fruit and all that we quarrel about and all that we have misused. And to save us from our own foolishness, from all our sins, he came down to earth and gave us himself.

—Sigrid Undset

## The Example of Mary

"We must look to Mary's example to know how to deal with the glorious impossibilities of God," writes Calvin Miller in *The Christ of Christmas*. "Look how she turned the world upside down by making one simple statement."

Jesus surely could have come to earth without Mary's aid. But God seems to prefer partnering with people to accomplish miracles such as salvation and healing. So God chooses Mary to carry the Savior. Later, Jesus often declares people's own faith crucial to their healing. And today, God works justice through us, not apart from us.

God doesn't force us into collaboration. Yet, notes Miller, "God needs only a little of our agreement in order to work mighty wonders." Like Mary's humble assent: "I am the Lord's servant. ... May your word to me be fulfilled" (Luke 1:38, NIV). And like yours — for whatever partnership God invites you into. God will do the heavy lifting, for certain, but he hopes you'll say yes.

***The***  
***Newsletter*** Newsletter®

## Remember to Reach Out

For many people, the holidays bring sorrow, grief and stress. If you're hurting, turn to Jesus and his power. Learn from the woman who, desperate to be healed, reached out to touch the edge of Jesus' robe and was immediately cured.

Sometimes we think our healing process will be so exhaustive that we hesitate to take the first step. Or we doubt that Jesus still performs miracles. Amid your pain, have you reached out? Have you dared to touch Jesus' robe? He is there, waiting to say: "Your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (Mark 5:34, NIV).

—Julie Lee



6 Jonathan Walker  
6 Robert Walker, Jr.  
14 Courtney Steiner  
16 Julia McKenzie  
18 Richard Saylor  
18 Deb Lehman  
19 Sue Mazey  
20 Ray DeWitt  
24 Charles Roe

10 Tom & Jan Zulch  
18 Norn & Kay Tolles



**EVERGREEN**—These trees, which keep their green leaves year-round, are symbolic of Christmas, eternal life and God's everlasting love. In the Bible, evergreen trees are called the "cedars of Lebanon," suggesting growth (Psalm 92:12), height (Amos 2:9), fragrance (Hosea 14:6) and steadfast faith.



**What's in a name?**

An angel told Joseph what to name Mary's baby. Solve the puzzle to discover the name's meaning.

*Directions: Begin at the circled H below and follow the arrows. Circle every other letter, and then place them in order to complete Matthew 1:21.*

"S\_e w\_ll \_ \_ve b ir\_ \_  
to \_ s\_n, and \_ \_u a\_e to  
gi\_e \_i\_ the \_ \_me J\_ \_us,  
b\_c\_u\_ \_ he \_ill s\_e his  
\_ \_op\_e f\_o\_ t\_ \_ir s\_n\_."

MATTHEW 1:21, NIV

START HERE

**H**

Answer: "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21, NIV




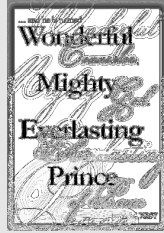
### Bible Quiz

In Matthew's genealogy, which woman is *not* mentioned as Jesus' ancestor?

- A. Tamar
- B. Rahab
- C. Mary
- D. Ruth
- E. Sarah
- F. Bathsheba



Answer: E (See Matthew 1:1-17.)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
			7:00pm Small Group	7:00pm Band Practice		10:00am - Noon FOOD PANTRY
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30am Worship Mission Moment Christian Children's Home of Ohio Fellowship Break 11:00am Adult S.S. Methodist Bazaar, 11:30am-1:30pm		7:30pm Board Meeting	7:00pm Small Group <b>(Last One)</b>	Come to the Stable 5-8pm  7:00pm Band Practice	Come to the Stable 10am-8pm  6:30 - 9:00pm Game Night	Come to the Stable 10am-8pm
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30am Worship 11:00am Adult S.S.  <b>Leadership Elections</b>  Come to the Stable, 12pm-5pm		6:00pm Elders Meeting		7:00pm Band Practice		10:00am - Noon FOOD PANTRY
19	20	21	22	23	24	Christmas 25
<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>  9:30am Worship 11:00am Adult S.S.		First Day of Winter		7:00pm Band Practice	<b>Christmas Eve Service</b> 6:00pm 	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
9:30am Worship 11:00am Adult S.S.	7:00pm Ladies Christian Fellowship		<b>Note: New Small Group Bible Study starts January 5<sup>th</sup></b>	7:00pm Band Practice	<b>New Years Eve</b>	

Weston Church of Christ  
PO Box 344  
13355 Center Street  
Weston, Ohio 43569



January newsletter articles due December 28

#### Sunday Worship Times

9:30am Worship Service  
11:00am Sunday School



## Weston Witness

Minister: Gary L. Wackler, 336-280-5311

Elders: Ed Tolles, 419-409-1622;

John McKenzie, 419-806-5775

Bob Walker, 419-262-8006

Email us at: [church@westonchurchofchrist.org](mailto:church@westonchurchofchrist.org)

Website: [westonchurchofchrist.org](http://westonchurchofchrist.org)

Check us out on Facebook

#### December 2021

Pat Higley, Editor

Church: 419-669-3895

**The purpose of the Weston Church of Christ is to glorify God by reaching the lost,  
strengthening the saved and serving as one body for Jesus Christ our Lord.**