

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The church gets decorated on December 1
- Luke's unique look at the birth of Jesus Christ
- Phil's Corner—It is Time for Advent Again

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The Annual Decorating of the Church

On Saturday, December 1 several decorators gathered at the church to decorate the sanctuary and the fellowship hall. This is always a festive enjoyable time as we anticipate the arrival of the blessed Christmas season. Jim and Curtis strung extension cords and mounted the candles in the windows. Roger was in charge of decorating the chandeliers and putting the large wreath in back of the sanctuary along with Phil's help. Karin, Shari, and Curtis also hung the garland around the stage.

Meanwhile, in the fellowship hall Myriam Herron, Melinda Evaul, and Winnie Davey put up the Christmas tree and decorated it. Conrad fixed the overhead light in front of the fire place.

Each year this is a big job, but it is one that is enjoyed by all. In addition to the decorations, there was fellowship, coffee, and dough nuts for all.

At right: Conrad works on a light fixture in the fellowship hall.



The Genealogical Record of Jesus Christ

In our men's class recently we have been studying the book of Luke, and, of course, one of the first things that is encountered is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

Luke has a very unique Gospel in several ways. First of all, Luke was a medical doctor, and he approaches the telling of the life of Christ from a very educated and medical point of view. He also uses the best Greek of any of the Gospel writers.

Only in Luke do we find the story of the man with the withered hand who Jesus healed and that it was the right hand. Only a physician would note details like that.

Luke traces Jesus's genealogy from Adam as opposed to Matthew's tracing of the genealogy from Abraham, the father of the Israelite name. Adam was the father of the human race, Jew and Gentile alike. This is in line with the fact that Luke was a Gentile; therefore, he presents Jesus Christ as the savior of all peoples.

Luke's genealogy is also traced through Mary's line which gave to Jesus the right to the royal throne. Matthew's Gospel traces the line through Joseph's line which was cursed from occupying the throne by the curse on Jeconiah (Coniah according to Jeremiah). Christ would not have been qualified to occupy the throne of David if Joseph had been his biological father.

Genealogy was very important to the Jews, and keeping accurate records was of paramount importance. Josephus said that public records recorded genealogies from the oldest to the youngest while private records went from youngest to oldest. This keeping of genealogy records was done in order to prevent unqualified persons from gaining positions (especially priestly positions) through their ancestry. Ezra 2:61-63 and Nehemiah 7:63-65 record accounts where priests were rejected because they could not prove their Levitical ancestry.

The book of Mark was written in common Greek and presented Christ as the servant. Servants' ancestry was of no importance to anyone in those days, so therefore, no genealogy is recorded in Mark.

John presents Jesus Christ as the Son of God; and therefore, there is no genealogy as well since God has always been and has no ancestry. The ways in which Luke and Matthew presented Christ required that they show the genealogy.



Since Mary was a virgin when she conceived, then even though Joseph was married to Mary, and even though he was descended from David, Jesus was not entitled to the throne through him. Likewise, genealogies were to be through the line of the males and not the females. It appears that God left a convenient loophole in this law that would allow women to be included in the ancestral line if they met two stringent conditions.

1. Numbers 27:8—Therefore, tell the Israelites; if a man dies without leaving a son, you shall let his heritage pass on to his daughter.
2. Numbers 36:6-7—This is what the Lord commands with regard to the daughters of Salphahad; they may marry anyone they please, provided they marry into a clan of their ancestral tribe, so that no heritage of the Israelites will pass from one tribe to another, but all the Israelites will retain their own ancestral heritage.

So two things had to be proven: (1) the father of Mary had no sons, and (2) Mary married within her own tribe of Judah, Genesis 49:8-12.

Did Mary have any brothers? There is no record of it in the Bible. The Bible does say in John 19:25 that Mary's sister was standing beside her at the cross. This is thought to be Salome who was the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John.

In the Jewish culture in those days, the mother who was widowed (assuming that Joseph was dead at this time) would have gone to her father, or brother, or to her other children, so Jesus gave her to John in John 19:27. The words of Jesus in John 19:27 and lack of evidence of male siblings, strongly suggest that this condition was met.

Matthew clearly shows that the bloodline of Joseph does go back to the tribe of Judah and through King David. If Jesus is the Son of David, then His mother Mary has to be also of the house of David and, therefore, by implication, of the tribe of Judah. It is shown in Romans 1:3 that it could not be said that the Son was born according to the flesh of the offspring of David unless Mary were of Davidic descent.

Both of the conditions for the bloodline to continue through the female line are satisfactorily met by Mary since she was of the tribe of Judah through David as was Joseph, her husband.

Phil's Corner— It is the time of Advent again.

This Advent season our readings in church are profiling several of our favorite Christmas carols, focusing on a key phrase in the song that we tend to overlook, even though we've sung the songs so many times.

One of our oldest Christmas carols is "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," written during the 12th century. The song highlights the titles ascribed to Jesus and what they mean to us. Our hymnbooks only have a few of the many verses originally written. Let's zero in on three.

Verse one we're all familiar with: "O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear." Those of you who grew up with the Catechism learned that Jesus fills the offices of Prophet, Priest and King. This verse speaks of His work as Priest.

"How does Christ execute the office of a priest?" the Catechism asks. The answer is, "Christ executes the office of a priest in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us." In offering Himself as a sacrifice for our sin, He ransoms us from our exile – our bondage to sin and death. By His gift of Himself, He ends our alienation from our Creator and brings us back into relationship with God.

Hebrews 2:17 describes His work succinctly: "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

Verse two of the carol speaks about His work as Prophet: "O come, O come, Thou Lord of might who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height, in ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe." We don't often sing this verse – or, rather, we NEVER sing this verse. That's too bad, because we miss out on an important truth. A prophet speaks for God, instructing us of who God is, what He's like, and what we're supposed to do. Or, as the Catechism puts it, "Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation."

The wonder of Christmas is that God speaks to us not just in words, but by actually coming personally to us. His title, "Emmanuel" – meaning "God with us," proclaims this miracle in one word.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Wow! You recognize this moving passage from John 1:1 & 14.

And how does Christ execute the office of a King? "Christ executes the office of a king in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies." This Cate-

chism answer is quite a mouthful! Jesus is a king. He is THE King. He is our ruler and He expects us to obey His laws (which are meant for our good anyway) and to be loyal subjects. He stops the rebellion in our hearts and makes us His people. He protects us from sin and from Satan.

See how the poetry of verse 3 of the carol expresses it: "O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell Thy people save and give them victory o'er the grave."

When we receive Christ as our Savior we also submit to Him as our King. We repent of our rebellion against Him and pledge our loyalty to Him. And we find that He is the ultimate Benevolent Dictator, who only has our best interests in mind.

See how Christ's three offices are profiled in 1 Cor. 1:30-31: "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God [Prophet], and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption [Priest], so that, just as it is written, 'Let Him who boasts, boast in the Lord [King].'"

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.



**Elderly Ladies of the Church—Circa 1950
(or thereabouts)**

Shown above is a group of the ladies of the church around 1950 give or take a couple of years. The picture was taken off the end of Lists' porch on List Hill.

This group of ladies met for a variety of reasons. They formed the nucleus of the Sale Creek Sewing Circle whose raison d'être was to make quilts and other sewn goods for newly married couples, needy folks, and victims of burn outs. This group was usually led by Gertie List, Licia Downey, or Stella Patterson.

Pictured left to right—Florence Coulter, Unknown, Unknown, Mary Phillips (widow of former pastor L.D. Phillips), Unknown, Stella Patterson, Burleigh Downey, Gertie List, Licia Downey, Unknown, Alyn List, Unknown, Ruth Evelyn (Downey) Jenkins. The child is unknown.



Our Financially Supported Missionaries

Dave & Ninette Cox
Joyce DeRosset
Fred & Grace Ely
Bob & Carol Evaul
Alec & Tammy Harrison
Dick & Sara Hart
Hazel Neddo

Our Prayer Supported Missionaries

Bud & Lolly Fritz
Mark & Candy Garrett
Ken Hood
David & Marcia Jones
Reginald Lisemby

December Anniversaries

December 1—Bill and Gwen Molloy
December 30—Jack and Karin Traylor

December Nursery Schedule

December 2—Winnie Davey & Jo Alice Stultz
December 9—Mary Gray & Cindy Poole
December 16—Roger Coulter & Cathy Bishop
December 23—Melinda Evaul & Betty Ray
December 30 - Curtis Coulter & Charlotte Blake

December Birthdays

December 1—Mark Davis
December 9—Grayson Davis
December 16—Melinda Evaul
December 20—Laura Hubbard
December 21—Paul Patterson
December 28—Mike Metzger

Prayer Requests and News

Patty wins again with her quilt. Patti Iles and Karin Traylor are in a quilting club in Dayton. Recently the club held one of its annual competitions, and Patti's quilt won the prize and a ribbon.



Ian Shelley and Andrew Patterson are finishing their first semester in college. Andrew is at University of Tennessee—Chattanooga, and Ian is at Tennessee Technological University. Their finals are this week, and then they will have a few weeks off before second semester starts in January.

Conrad Herron is recovering from a case of shingles that he had several weeks ago. Continue to pray that they will disappear completely and that his pain will go completely away.

David Lane had knee replacement surgery last week and is recuperating nicely. Pray for his quick and complete recovery from this operation.

Kathy Shelley has been the photographer for the bulletin pictures lately. The one a couple of weeks ago was especially pretty. She does quite well with a camera.

Karen Kirby also had surgery for a torn rotator cuff on her right side. She is recovering; however, she is not able to lead the choir nor do many of the other chores she has. Pray that she will heal quickly. Mark and Karen plan to go to Wisconsin for Christmas.

George and Charlotte spent a week at their time share in Crossville recently. They take one week a year there.

Alice Coulter thanks those who prayed for her nephew, Jeff Thorington, who almost died recently with heart complications. Many prayers went up for him, and he left the hospital several days ago.

Christmas program news—Because of Karen's surgery and other choir members being gone, there will be no cantata this year. Instead, on Sunday, December 23, we will have an old fashioned sing-around-the-fire Christmas program. Different ones will be singing, playing instruments, stories, puppet shows, etc. If you would like to make a presentation, please notify Karin Traylor if you can take a part in the program.

Grayson Davis recently played the part of the captain in Normal Park Museum Magnet's production of Aladdin.

Christmas Decorating of the Church



Above (left): Myriam, Winnie, and Melinda teamed up on the Christmas tree. Melinda must have been behind the tree.

Above (right): Roger readies the little lighted church that has been around the church since the crack of doom. It is older than most of us in the church.

(Right): Jim, Shari, and Karin confer on matters in the sanctuary. The Advent candles and arrangement can be seen in front of them.



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