

BETWEEN SEEDTIME AND HARVEST

**Senior Adults Newsletter
Christ Covenant Church
December 2020**



GRACE TO YOU

by
Pastor Bruce Creswell

KEEPING WATCH

I have always been drawn to the shepherd account of the birth of Christ. They were simple, hard-working, lower class people of their day. It says in Luke's Gospel that at night they were watching over their flocks. For me, I like to be at home, sleeping in my own bed, and protected from the elements. Not so with them; the shepherds were making sure their flock was safe from wolves and wild beasts, on the lookout for thieves. They were the first line and only defense of their flock, as well as for themselves. In case of attack, there was no outside help and no cell phones with 911 available. They must have been a tough lot, vigilant, physically fit, able to endure the elements of weather, wielding a rod and staff at a moment's notice. Their clothes, appearances, and stench identified them as shepherds. They barely eked out a living for themselves and their families.

But their watch and care for their flock reveals what often goes unnoticed and what really makes them shepherds. Through hands-on experience and working with seasoned shepherds, they understood the character and make-up of their flock. They saw their vulnerability, their stubbornness, their lack of smartness, and were keen to pick up on their sicknesses. Their experience and understanding of their flock are only one side of the coin. What made the difference was their care for their flock. He knew each one, he named them, he carried them when they were sick, he defended them from their enemies, he led them to green pastures to feed them and to give them drink. Though outwardly he was tough, his heart was tender towards them. And in response to his care for them, they followed him and felt secure under his watch.

It was to such a group of men, outcasts in their own culture, dirty and smelly and uneducated, that the angel of the Lord first appeared to announce the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ. It was to such a group of men, who knew only of the Shepherd's harp, to first hear the multitude of the heavenly host say, "Glory to God in the highest!" It was to such a group of men who first welcomed and worshipped the Messiah of the world. It was to such a group of men who first made known to those they encountered that Emmanuel has come to earth.

These shepherds model the sheep who come to the Great Shepherd. As God initiated the call through His angel to them to come to the manger, so He sovereignly calls those of His choosing. And like those shepherds, we, too, are outcasts, dirty, and smelly. They whom He calls hear the joyous words, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" And to the claims of His Gospel, in faith and in repentance, they worship Him. And though they still are sinners, they are saved sinners who live, and their words reflect the saving grace of Jesus Christ. These sheep who make up the Great Shepherd's flock are known by Him and they follow Him.

(Continued on Page 2)

I remember the words of an old pastor speaking to us young men preparing for ministry. He said, "If you don't like the smell of sheep, don't be a shepherd!" The Great Shepherd demonstrated His love in coming to Bethlehem's manger and dying on Calvary's cross, even when we were yet sinners. And when we wander off, He is there for us forgive and restore us! Merry Christmas!



HYMN HISTORY

Submitted by Peggy Dear

COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS

Although prolific hymnwriter Charles Wesley penned eighteen Christmas songs, he was never content with simply painting the picture of the manger scene. He needed to go deeper. In this hymn, he begins by alluding to Scriptural prophecies of Christ. Moving on to personal application, he continues: Christ is not only the "desire of every nation;" he is the "joy of every longing heart." He is not only the child born with the "government.....on his shoulders" (Isaiah 9:6); he is also "born to reign in us forever."

Such personal application was a hallmark of the Wesley's ministry. Charles and his brother John challenged the staid Anglican traditions of their time. The church of their day had great scholarship; its theology was orthodox. Christians sang hymns straight from the Scripture. But the Wesleys asked, "Does this mean anything to you? Is the biblical story about long-ago events or about what is going on in your life?" They urged people to meet Christ personally and to include Him in every part of their lives---even their hymn singing.

Come Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine own sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley(1707-1788)

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE

Articles for the January newsletter are due to Jane Yancey no later than December 20th. Please send them to her at jane@yancey.com



Book Review

By Chris Williams

THE WINTER ARMY – The World War II Odyssey of The 10th Mountain Division, America's Elite Alpine Warriors

*By Maurice Isserman
Houghton Mifflin 2019*

When I was a boy, I seem to remember illustrations in magazines of a white clad soldier skiing down the snow with a pack on his back and firing his M1 rifle at some distant enemy. This was the publicity surrounding the 10th Mountain Division during the war. It sold well but was not reality for the troops in this unit. They did eventually use their mountaineering skills late in the war in northern Italy, but it did not include skiing.

The 10th Mountain Division caught the imagination of the public and had no trouble getting recruits since it held out the promise of winter sports in support of the national war effort.

They trained at a place called Camp Hale near Leadville, Colorado. The camp is abandoned now, and if you look for it on Google Earth, you will find the ruins of the old training facility. It has never been re-purposed or developed commercially. That is because the choice for the camp was a poor one as the author explains. Sorry, you will have to read the book to find out why.

The author has researched his book well, and it is full of interesting detail about individuals. He writes more from the enlisted perspective than the overall strategic purpose. There are a few gory scenes depicted, but he does not dwell on them. The Army realized it needed a mountain division because of possible warfare in the European Alps, but they had no clear idea how to train and structure such a unit because no one had ever done it. Lots of mistakes were made.

The training came to fruition in the Apennine Mountains of northern Italy in the spring of 1945 as the Battle of the Bulge was winding down. The 10th used their mountain climbing skills to good effect in defeating German forces and pushing them back to the Po River as peace was declared in May.

It is a very interesting look at an obscure part of the war and includes many individual soldier's lives before, during, and after the war. The skiing resorts of Aspen and Vail came about through the enterprise of several men who were part of the 10th Mountain Division training.

Definitely recommended if you are a World War II buff.

By Hugh Wise

WHY SOCIAL JUSTICE IS NOT BIBLICAL JUSTICE

By Scott David Allan

Social justice is a Trojan horse in our culture and is gaining traction in some of our mainline churches. By twisting Biblical words and using ungodly methods, social justice is attempting to transform our Christian gospel into a new postmodern religion. Their world view is completely incompatible with Christianity. All cultural changes begin with language change. (Think pro-choice).

Biblical justice for the Christian means 'Shalom and God's perfect moral standard, living out the Ten Commandments, the Royal Law, Isaiah 53:4-6, due process of the law, the Magna Carta, U S Constitution, etc.'

Social justice means deconstructing traditional systems deemed to be oppressive with pre-eminent emphasis on class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and victimhood. Man is sovereign, not God. There is no Holy God, no graces, no humility, no forgiveness. The state (not God) will supply all your needs. (Philippians 4:8).

In essence, social justice is cultural Marxism with diversity without unity, division, hatred, submissive compliance, and deeply anti-Christian ideology. Christians are the oppressors. White supremacy is one of their ill-defined buzz words. Black Lives Matter with their mission statement of destruction of the nuclear family and elimination of Christianity are two of their 100% radical goals. Social issues like abortion, the poor, and LGBTQ are addressed in ways that are 180 degrees different from the church's approach.

Social justice claims they're on the 'right side of history,' but the reality is that they are the epitome of the perversion of justice. American history is defined by slavery, colonization, greed, genocide, and imperialism. American heritage and Christian inheritance are completely discounted. Allen weaves cultural history into the narrative by mentioning the Enlightenment, Reformation, splitting of the church in Nazi Germany, Darwin, Fundamentalism, social gospel, and progressive Christianity.

Social justice has made the long march through the media, entertainment, big business, high tech, much of our government, and now poses a tremendous threat to the church.

So, now I beg the question: How should Christians react?

I challenge you to read the book. It will exceed expectation.



*Senior Adult Annual Christmas Dinner
Friday, December 4th
Community Life Center, 5:00 pm
\$15 per person*

GOOD INFORMATION!

Submitted by Alone Waddine

GOOD INFORMATION! If you have not yet heard about being able to shop at Amazon and be making a contribution to a charity of your choice at the same time, please take note. Instead of logging into Amazon directly, [DO THIS....](https://www.smile.amazon.com) enter [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com)., choose the charity of your choice, and each time you shop, a percentage will go into a fund that Amazon will send to your charity periodically. What I really enjoy is getting reports from time to time from Amazon letting me know what their check amounted to for the charity, and what amount I have contributed. Enjoy!! Great time to join in with increased shopping at Christmas.

The Caregiver's Prayer

Submitted by Alona Waddine

Father, today I come asking for
a fresh wind of grace from You.
Lead me and guide me in this role of
caregiver for the one I love.
Let me gather strength from You hour by hour.
Let me graciously take assistance
from others when they offer.
Give me wisdom from You for any
new issues I may face today.
Remind me when I need a break
so I can take care of myself as well.
May I remember that I will sometimes get tired
and the only perfect caregiver is You.
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sheila Gosney



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 – Fran DiAndrea
2 – Carolyn Cousar
2 – Tina Stratis
3 – Ken Cochrum
6 – Vicki Evans
6 – Judy Pinkard
7 – Harriet Marshall
8 – Stu Carroll
8 – Dave Cullen
12 – Tim Roberts
12 – Chris Williams
16 – Terri Theyson
18 – Joe Morris
19 – Martha Ann Harris
19 – Douglas Linton
22 – Ken Bodwell
22 – Deborah Carter
22 – Henry McClain
24 – Darrell Hargett
25 – Elaine Deaner
27 – Chris Oliver
27 – Susan Parrish
28 – LaTrell Ross
30 – Daniel Daloia
30 – Lynn Sistare
31 – Steve Gooch



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

1 – Paul and Deborah Carter
2 – Ted and Jane Williams
16 – Butch and Sandi Barkman
19 – Ken and Tara Dabbs
29 – Fred and Jean Depp
30 – Chris and Betty Williams

Coram Deo Sunday School Class:

Sundays: 9:00 AM, WC 201 (Choir Room)

Pastor on Call: (704) 708-6101

Pastor of Senior Adults and Visitation:

N. Bruce Creswell

bcreswell@christcovenant.org

Study: (704) 708-6106

Newsletter Editor:

Jane Yancey

jane@yancey.com

Jenny Blackmon, Assistant to Pastor Bruce:

jblackmon@christcovenant.org

(704) 708-6104

Christ Covenant Church

800 Fullwood Lane

Matthews, NC 28105

O COME, O COME . . .

Submitted by Miriam Jones

God with us.
Do we listen for Him?
Reverently we sing
"Silent Night, Holy Night . . ."
He is here . . . do you hear Him?
Are our ears, alert for sounds,
Only met with hollow laughter, empty cheer . . .
Echoing the songs of the season,
Deaf to the gentle voice of the Son of the season?

Emmanuel.

God with us.
Do we reach for Him?
Happily we sing,
"O Come Let Us Adore Him . . ."
He is here . . . do you want to touch Him?
Are our hands, busy with preparations,
Only met with packages to wrap, deeds to be done . . .
Tying the bows of the season,
Empty without the Gift of the season?

Cease your labor for a moment;
Lower the volume of the sounds,
Open eyes of understanding . . .
And be aware that He has come.
His hands reach out, He sweetly speaks,
"I am here, both Gift and Giver."

Can you see Him?
Do you hear Him?
Will you trust Him?

He is here.
God with us.
Emmanuel.

Lois Williams