



## *The Origin of Christmas*

We are quickly approaching the Christmas holidays! Have you noticed that people seem to be a lot happier around this time of year? I saw a t-shirt this week that said, *“Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.”* That phrase is actually from the Bible. When an angel appeared to the shepherds in the field announcing the birth of Jesus, ***“Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:***

***“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Goodwill toward men!”***

***(Luke 2.13, 14, NKJV)***

It was not until the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. that we find record of people celebrating the birth of Christ in December. Thus, it was almost 300 years after Christ’s birth before this religious holiday came into existence. In the late 330s A.D., Pope Julius 1 declared: *“December 25th, Christ born in Bethlehem, Judea.”* One common belief is that Christmas was established to counter pagan celebrations. The Romans celebrated their mid-winter Saturnalia festival in late December. The Roman emperor Aurelian established a feast of the birth of Sol Invictus (the Unconquered Sun), on December 25. Christmas is thought to be a spin-off to counter the pagan solar festival. Thus, early Christians deliberately chose December 25 to celebrate Christ’s birth to encourage the spread of Christmas and Christianity throughout the Roman world. If Christmas looked like a pagan holiday, more pagans would be open to both the holiday and the God whose birth it celebrated.

But there are problems with Christmas being created to offset the pagan holiday. It was not until the 12<sup>th</sup> century that we find the first suggestion that Jesus’ birth celebration was deliberately set at the time of pagan festivals. A marginal note on a manuscript of the Syriac biblical commentator Dionysius bar-Salibi states that in ancient times the Christmas holiday was actually shifted from January 6 to December 25, so that it fell on the same date as the pagan Sol Invictus holiday. Bible scholars in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries latched on to the idea and claimed that since early Christians didn’t know when Jesus was born, they simply assimilated the pagan solstice festival for their own purposes, claiming it as the time of the Messiah’s birth and celebrating it accordingly (Biblical Archeological Society Library, December 2002).



Indeed, Jesus’ birth was, and still is, debated. Many say that Jesus was born in another season, maybe in the month of September. Another theory is that Pope Julius saw the date coincided with the winter solstice and the Jewish Hannukah, which were already times of celebration, so let the festivities be enhanced during this period. Besides, cattle had been slaughtered and wine and beer had fermented during the winter, so everyone was ready to consume fresh produce in abundance. The first *“recorded”* celebration of Christmas took place in 336 A.D. under the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine, who had slowly converted to Christianity, with Pope Julius making it official around 350 A.D. (*The New Daily*, December 14, 2017).

Regardless of the exact date of Jesus’ birth, the world has chosen to celebrate it on December 25<sup>th</sup>. But today, Christmas is highly commercialized. Christmas has become all about finding the perfect gifts to give to others. Thus, businesses have capitalized on the opportunity to sell, sell, sell. Adults feel pressure financially and work to create an outstanding celebration with perfect food, drink, decorations, and gifts for their families. Have we totally lost focus? Christmas is a time to celebrate love and good will because of Jesus our Savior, not buy the perfect gift. Think about it!

Gary

# Seeing Jesus

## Revelation 1:9-11

1. The book of Revelation assures us that no matter how bad our situation may be right now, a brighter future awaits.
2. During the days of the writing of Revelation, people desperately needed hope for the future.
3. Do you?

### I. What Was John's \_\_\_\_\_ In Seeing \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 1.12-18)?

A. *“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead” (Revelation 1.17).*

1. Why? Hadn't John been one of Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ ?
2. Others in scripture reacted the same way.
  - (a) The apostle Paul (Acts 9.4).
  - (b) Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17.6).
  - (c) Daniel (Daniel 8.17).
  - (d) Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1.28).

B. How do you think you will \_\_\_\_\_ when you come into the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ on Judgment Day?

### II. How Did Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ To John's Reaction?

A. Jesus said, *“Fear not”* (Revelation 1.17).

1. John did not prostrate himself before Jesus in order to \_\_\_\_\_ Him; rather, he collapsed, overcome by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Heaven has often shouted this message to the earth; but the need to hear it is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) Zacharias (Luke 1.13).
  - (b) Mary (Luke 1.30).
  - (c) Jairus (Mark 5.36).
  - (d) Jesus' disciples (Matthew 14.27).

B. Jesus said, *“I am the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 17).*

C. Jesus said, *“I am the \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 18).*

D. The words spoken by Jesus to Christians in distress are the kind of comforting words we need to hear today.

### III. How Should All Of This Affect Me?

A. My Jesus knows when I am \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Fear is a common condition of mankind.
2. But God does not want me to be \_\_\_\_\_ by fear.

B. My Jesus knows how to \_\_\_\_\_ me. He comforts me through...

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of His Word (Psalm 119.50; I Thessalonians 4.18).
2. His \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Corinthians 7.6; 2 Corinthians 1.3, 4).
3. His \_\_\_\_\_ care (Genesis 50.19, 20).
4. His \_\_\_\_\_ (Psalm 23.4; Hebrews 13.5).

**Conclusion:** *Do you need to come to Jesus today?*

# C O N N E C T I O N

**C** Welcome and good morning WH Family. Today in our Connection Corner we are featuring Russ and Ellen Bartee.

**R**  
**N**  
**E**  
**R** Russ was born in Austin, Texas, but as an "Air Force brat," he says that his family lived in Texas, Florida, Virginia, California, Alabama, and Colorado during his childhood. He did graduate from John Jay High School in San Antonio where he played football, sang in the choir, and loved being in theater. He played the lead in several of their productions, (I wonder if he still knows any of his lines!) He then went on to OCC where he received his degree in Pre-Med. He was also "Mr. Aerie" for OCC his senior year. He became a youth minister in San Antonio, followed by similar positions in Arlington, Dallas, and Fairfax, Virginia. While in Fairfax, he was encouraged to pursue a counseling degree and practice. Russ received a Master's Degree and ultimately a PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy and has had his own practice for many years. In addition, Russ is a tenured professor at TWU in counseling, was selected by Governor Abbott for the Texas State Board of Examiners for counseling, and is a volunteer counselor for Red Cross. He has also served as an elder and staff counselor at the Alta Mesa church and is currently an elder and teacher for us at WH. And in his spare time . . .!



Ellen was born in Commerce, Texas, but also graduated from John Jay High School. She was a cheerleader and homecoming queen. (Ask her about her homecoming reunion experience!) She also attended OCC, obtaining her degree in Secondary Education. She worked briefly in the apartment rental business before being a stay-at-home mom until their kids reached school age. She taught in a pre-school in Virginia, before moving back to Texas, where she began teaching English at SW Christian school for 30 years until she retired. She is also an excellent support for Russ as he helps shepherd the church family.

First "him", then "her", and now to the "they." Ellen met Russ at church when she was 15 and thought "he was the cutest church of Christ" boy she had ever seen! She had a boyfriend but soon "remedied" that. They began dating, she advanced her education by a year to follow him to OCC, but he broke up with her after 1 week. At the beginning of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year at OCC, He asked her to church the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday and she accepted. She noticed that Russ had invited a different girl the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. "I was livid," she says. "I told him he had to make a choice, me or all the other girls. We were engaged 2 months later!" They have been blessed with 3 children and 8 grandchildren. Argh, I don't have enough space!! Ask them about the policeman who stopped Russ for speeding and asked him "Do you have a wife named Ellen?" Or about those Christmas socks and so much more. Get to know them and you'll be blessed and laughing, I guarantee it!  
Les Keele



## *This week's shut-in spotlight shines on:*

*Please send them a note of encouragement or give them a call to let them know we still care.*

**Sue Little Smith**  
**2151 Green Oaks Road**  
**Apartment 5412**  
**Fort Worth, Texas 76116**  
**817-614-1838**  
**Visits and Calls**  
**Please Call Ahead**

**Wanda Houston**  
**5417 Altamesa Boulevard**  
**Room 165**  
**Fort Worth, Texas 76123**  
**817-915-2918**  
**Visits and Calls**  
**Please Call Ahead**

## SHEPHERDS

Greg Ball	214-801-7375
Russ Bartee	817-938-5825
Dan Kille	817-793-7493
Chuck Meyer	682-553-5444
*Tom Pauley	817- 370-5515
Ross Tomlinson	682-429-1983
John Walton	817-441-0000

\*Shepherd of the month

## MINISTERS

Gary Williams: <i>Pulpit Minister</i>	662-321-3208
Les Keele: <i>Associate Minister</i>	817-808-0566
James Bowie: <i>Youth Minister</i>	817-944-4492

## LAOTIAN MINISTRY

John Boudtaroth 817-891-2132

## DEACONS

Jon Bartee	817-889-2686
David Birdow	972-310-1143
James Bowie	817-944-4492
Zach Brookshire	817-296-9918
Brandon Duncan	903-603-1059
Jay Garner	817-205-2070
Ben Meyer	817-673-8557
Robert Scott	817-246-0911
Matt Sloan	405-471-3404
Steve Taylor	817-291-2065
Buck Thomas	817-733-2620
Arthur Torrez	817-721-2726

## MORNING WORSHIP (10 AM)

**Welcome** - Robert Scott

**Song Leader** - Jonathan Bartee

**Song** - Praise The Lord

**Song** - Salvation Has Been Brought Down

**Song** - Highest Place

**Prayer** - David Birdow

**Scripture** - Revelation 1:9-11

**Song** - Great Is Thy Faithfulness

**Lord's Supper** - Geoffrey Rodman

**Prayer for Contribution** - Geoffrey Rodman

**Song** - This World Is Not My Home

**Seeing Jesus** - Gary Williams

**Song** - There's A Fountain Free

**Announcements** - Les Keele

**Shepherd's Prayer & Dismissal** - Tom Pauley



**Attended Nursery:** After communion, we have an attended nursery available for ages birth to 3 years and a mother's nursing room.

Single-side in-ear mono earbuds with personal receivers are available for those with hearing difficulties. Please see the sound booth at the back of the auditorium for assistance.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

### Monday, December 16

Hebrews 5 - 8

### Tuesday, December 17

Hebrews 9 - 13

### Wednesday, December 18

James 1 - 3

### Thursday, December 19

James 4 - 5

### Friday, December 20

I Peter 1 - 3

### Saturday, December 21

I Peter 4 - 5

### Sunday, December 22

II Peter 1 - 4

### Last Week

Bible Class	148	Wednesday	82
Worship	216	Contribution	\$ 18,583.07
PM Worship	41	Budget	\$ 13,802.88

### Times of Assemblies

Bible Class:	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship:	10:00 AM
Sunday Evening Worship:	5:00 PM
Wednesday Evening:	7:00 PM

## PRAYER REQUESTS FAMILY

NAME	SITUATION	PRAY FOR
Bob Howard <small>12/13/2024</small>	Is in Medical City, Weatherford for Adult Acute Bronchitis. Barbara has broken her wrist once again and is waiting to see if she needs surgery. Their son is not doing well with his cancer. 6075 FM 1189, Weatherford, Texas 76087	Prayers for each of them to be healed and recover quickly
Aubrey Hallum <small>12/08/2024</small>	Yvonne passed away on Friday, December 7. 25 Leonard Trail, Apartment 317, Fort Worth, Texas 76114	Comfort for the family
Betty Kille <small>12/06/2024</small>	Is at home with pneumonia. 4112 Arroyo Trail, Fort Worth, Texas 76135	Complete healing and renewed strength
Dahlia Cade <small>12/05/2024</small>	Will have hip replacement surgery. 3832 Kelvin Avenue, Fort Worth, Texas 76133	Strength and swift recovery
Nancy Wright <small>11/11/2024</small>	Is back in Stonegate Rehab, Room 115. 8601 Cook Ranch Road, Apartment 350, Benbrook, Texas 76126	Healing and comfort
Brandon Duncan <small>11/7/2024</small>	Is having issues with controlling his blood pressure. 9928 Farmington, Benbrook, Texas 76126	A quick solution for correcting his blood pressure
James and Bridget Yawn <small>10/31/2024</small>	James had his surgery and has returned home. 9213 Idaho Street, Joshua, Texas 76058	Swift healing and recovery for James and strength for Bridget while she is the caregiver
Bill Baumann <small>10/20/2024</small>	Has been diagnosed with both lung and prostate cancer. In the weeks to come, the doctors will be developing a plan of treatment.	Healing, peace; skill and knowledge for the doctors

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

*Philippians 4:6 (ESV)*

**All prayer requests are published for 30 days and then removed unless the office is notified to continue the announcement.**

## FRIENDS CONTINUED

Paula Hamrick, sister of	Patti Musselman	Has had her cancer to return and underwent a biopsy on December 13 to determine if it is the same type of cancer or a new type.	Doctors will be able to discern the type of cancer and set her on the track for another remission. <span style="float: right;">12/08/2024</span>
Waylon Gramer, student of	Mindy Markum	Underwent an 8 - hour heart surgery on Wednesday, December 11.	Doctors and nurses to have skill, successful surgery, comfort and strength for family <span style="float: right;">12/08/2024</span>
Ronnie Hoover, a frequent visitor to	Our Assembly and Food Bank Volunteer	Was unable to have the knee surgery as he failed his stress test. He will now have a heart cath first followed by the replacement surgery at a later date.	Successful heart cath in order to have the knee replacement <span style="float: right;">12/08/2024</span>
Robert Birdow, father of	David Birdow	Began chemo Monday, December 9, for 20 consecutive weekdays.	Good results, strength to take the treatments, and family who will be caring for him <span style="float: right;">12/04/2024</span>
Dad and Wife of	Russ Jones	Both will be having biopsies this month.	Good results <span style="float: right;">12/01/2024</span>
Dorene Helton, sister-in-law of	Vickie Bowers	Cancerous mass was discovered. Her chemo has begun and surgery will follow treatments.	Strength and successful treatments and surgery <span style="float: right;">12/05/2024</span>
Cook Family, friends of	Paula Williams	Robin Cook passed away.	Comfort for the family <span style="float: right;">12/01/2024</span>
Jean (John) Saba Husband of,	Dana Saba	He is having serious heart issues. At this moment, the doctors are treating with medication.	The medication will control the issue and surgery will not be necessary <span style="float: right;">11/7/2024</span>
Joanne Powers, mother of	Adam Powers	She needs an aortic valve surgery.	God to guide the surgeons, good results, and recovery <span style="float: right;">10/21/2024</span>
Lisa Harriman		Has been diagnosed with cancer of her breast, colon, and liver. <b>UPDATE:</b> A CT on this past Monday showed that both the tumor in the colon and the lesion in the liver have shrunk significantly! The cancer markers in the blood work have all dropped to normal levels. There will be 3 more rounds of chemo followed by another scan and then surgery (probably in March). She sends her thanks for all our prayers. 400 North Tacoma Street, Farmington, Arkansas 72730	Thanking God for the good results of the present treatments; prayers for upcoming surgery and continued treatments; strength, peace of mind <span style="float: right;">09/11/2024</span>
Sangkhip Bouapraseth, father of	Kasie Muongnamvong	Has stage 4 pancreatic cancer.	Healing and pain control <span style="float: right;">09 /17/2024</span>

## SYMPATHY

Our sympathy is extended to Aubrey Hallum and his family in the passing of Yvonne. The arrangements are as follows:

### **Monday, December 16**

**9:00 AM** A bus for the family will leave the building promptly at 9:00 AM. You may follow in your own car to the National Cemetery. There will be a police escort so that all will remain together.

**10:15 AM** 15 minute graveside service

**12:00 PM** Family Dinner at the building

**1:00 PM** Memorial Service in the auditorium

## MEMBER INFORMATION

### New Members

Latrice Tucker

8000 Clamont #116, Fort Worth, Texas 76116

682-816-2175

Russ Jones and his children Alyssa, Adilyn, Caleb, and Charity

1705 Burleson Retta Road, Burleson, Texas 76028

817-988-8182

### Address Changes

EVA TORREZ

2721 Wingatest  
Apartment # 102  
Fort Worth, Texas  
76107

JEAN WIGGINS

Memory Care  
Brookdale At Tanglewood Oaks  
Room 72  
2698 South Hulen Street  
Fort Worth, Texas 76109-5593

## CONGREGATION FELLOWSHIP



### **NEW YEAR'S EVE**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31**

**6:00 PM**

**COME JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF GAMES AND CELEBRATION. BRING YOUR FAVORITE GAMES, SOFT DRINKS, TEA, AND FINGER FOODS.**

**COME RING IN 2025 WITH THE FAMILY**

## SCHEDULE CHANGES

There will be **NO MIDWEEK SERVICES** the week of Christmas nor the week of New Years. Please use this time to spend with your family and friends during the holiday season. The **Office** will be **closed** December 24, 25, 31, and January 1, 2025.

## OFFICE EMERGENCY PANTRY

### **OFFICE PANTRY**

We have a pantry in the office, separate and apart from the Food Bank, for emergencies.

We are in need of the following items:

CANNED CHILI

CANNED MEATS

SOUPS

CANNED MILK

DRIED BEANS

HOT/COLD CEREALS

DRIED PASTA

POWDERED MILK

If you are able to help provide any of these items, please drop them off in the office.

Thank you!

## LADIES' AND MEN'S BIBLE CLASS

We wish to inform you that there will be no ladies' or men's Bible class on Tuesday mornings December 17 - January 6. Classes will resume on January 7, 2025. We look forward to seeing you then! Wishing you all a joyful holiday season!



# Happy Birthday December

1 Kao Chanthanounsy

2 René Johnston

2 Melissa Montanez

2 Jeff Thiravong

2 Ross Tomlinson

3 Robert Bow

4 Jean Cox

4 Adams Powers

4 Bev Pratt

7 Kristie McLeroy

8 Lee Bradley

8 Thomas Chakrathouk

9 Dorothy Anderson

10 Christina Intharansy

12 Lorenza Fernandez

12 Martin Franz

12 Thonglouath Manyloun

12 Auna Walton

14 Wayne Gary

17 Gloria Speak

17 Jake DeKoker

18 LaRue Bow

19 Steven Johnston

20 Jeremy Swan

20 Mary Jo Winters

21 Chuck King

22 Bob Willyerd

23 Ronny Tucker

24 Betty Adams

24 Lucille Patterson

26 Zach Brookshire

30 Jay Garner

30 Cassidy Tunnell

30 Karen Haas

31 Thienxay Manyloun

## CHILDREN

10 Tanner Chakrathouk

13 Ian Thomas

27 Jonathan Everett

30 Jack Meyers

## ANNIVERSARIES:

Dec 5

Sandra & Tommy Wade 60th

Dec 14

Amy & Jonathan Bartee 22nd