

The Master's Message

The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

December, 2024

Virtual Adult Bible Study
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Saturday, 12:00

2783 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10465
718-597-6298

Sunday Worship
Sunday 11:00 am

cotm47@verizon.net

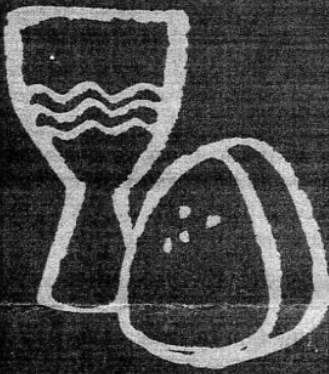
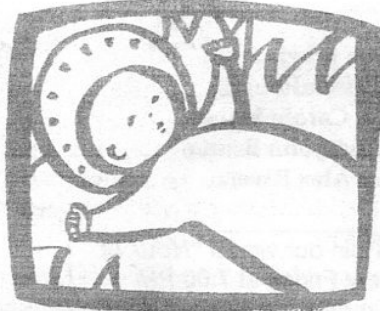
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Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor

ADVENT MEANS OUR LORD IS COMING!

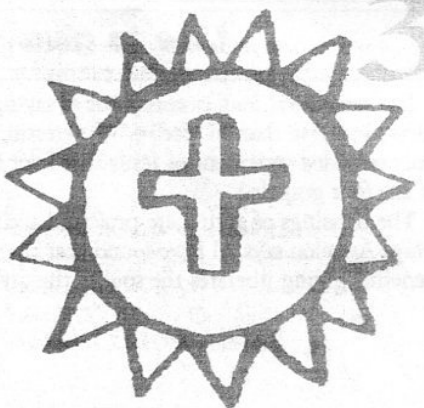
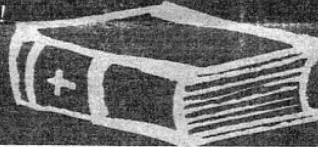
From ages past

Humankind has ached with longing
For some power to set things right,
To calm the beast, curb the tyrant,
And bring peace to the soul.
We have longed for you, Lord,
And we listened for your promises—
To give us hope—
Until promises gave birth to God-with-us...
You came, Lord Jesus!



Here and now

In the proclamation of the Good News
In the sharing of the Bread and Wine
In the Word of forgiveness
In the fellowship of the Church
In the needs of neighbors, and
From your Spirit
Burning within us,
Now, today, here, God is with us...
You come, Lord Jesus!



For tomorrow

Hope! (our hands empty and open):
God will fill the hungry;
God will raise those laid low;
God will make creation right.
Imagine! (our eyes closed, hearts open):
Our Lord returning in glory;
Our Lord judging the peoples;
Our Lord sharing his glory.
Go! (boldly and unafraid):
Step into tomorrow
Without calendar or map.
Walk toward eternity
From this place and time.
You will come, Lord Jesus, God-with-us!



SPECIAL DATES

- First Sunday of Advent, December 1st
- Second Sunday of Advent, December 8th
- Third Sunday of Advent, December 15th
- First Day of Winter, December 21st
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22nd
- Christmas Eve, December 24th
- Christmas Day, December 25th
- New Year's Eve, December 31st

News From the Pews



Prayer Requests

Continue praying for:
Ellen McCullough,
Allen Ford, Carole Mahon,
Loretta Byrd, John Bruno,
Alice & Alex Rivera

Everyone is invited to join our virtual **"Hour of Prayer Power"** every Friday at 7:00 PM. The conference call-in number is 605-475-4860, code: 371231#

Our **Online Bible Study** meets
Wednesday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 12:00.
Contact Ron Rivera (917-716-8273)
for information on joining



CHURCH CHUCKLES

One day, three men were hiking in the wilderness when they came upon a large, raging river. The first man prayed to God, saying, "Please God, give me the strength to cross this river." Poof! God gave him big arms and strong legs and he was able to swim across the river, although it took him a long time to make it, and he almost drowned a couple of times.

Seeing this, the second man prayed, "Please God, give me the strength and he tools to cross this river." Poof! God gave him a rowboat, and he was able to fight the current, after almost capsizing the boat a couple of times.

The third man had seen how this worked out for the other two, so he also prayed to God, "Please God, give me the strength, the tools and the intelligence to cross the river." Poof! God turned him into a woman. She looked at the map, hiked upstream a couple of hundred yards, then walked across the bridge.

A woman went to the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. When it was finally her turn, the clerk asked her what denomination stamps she needed.

"Oh, for heaven's sake! Has it come to this? All right," the woman conceded, "Give me 25 Protestant and 25 Catholic."

THIS WEEK'S SERMON

Tonight's sermon topic is "What Is Hell?"
Come early and listen to our choir practice

Peace  On Earth

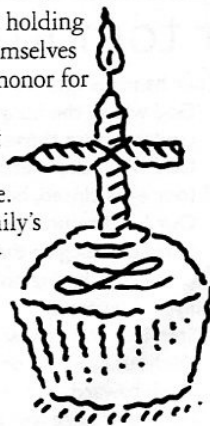
Happy birthday, Jesus!

Each Christmas, a family celebrated by holding a birthday party for Jesus. To remind themselves of Jesus' presence, they placed a chair of honor for him at their dinner table.

The highlight of the party was singing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and then blowing out the candles on a special cake.

One Christmas, a visitor asked the family's 5-year-old daughter, "Did you get everything you wanted for Christmas?"

The girl paused and then answered, "No! It's not my birthday!"



Live to give

In Acts 20:35, Paul quotes Jesus as saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Interestingly, that's the only recorded statement of Jesus that's not found in one of the four gospels.)

The blessings of giving are profound and lasting. Poet Maya Angelou says, "I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver."

As you get older, you really just want to be surrounded by good people. People who are good for you, good to you, and good for your soul.

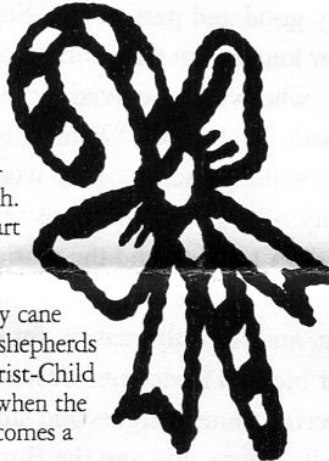


A tale of the candy cane

The account of the candy cane's origins circulates every Christmas season and is more likely a fun story than historical fact. No matter; tales often contain truth. This tasty treat can convey important elements of our Christian faith.

The stripes remind us of the heart of Christmas, our Savior, Jesus: white for his purity; red for his blood shed on the cross. The candy cane resembles the curved staffs of the shepherds — the first people to visit the Christ-Child and worship at the manger. And when the cane is turned upside down, it becomes a letter J, for "Jesus."

Indeed, Jesus turns our lives upside down and inverts our presumptions: A poor baby born in a stable becomes King of kings and Lord of lords; enemies aren't for hating but loving; blessings aren't for hoarding but sharing; the world works for war, but Jesus calls us to live in peace; receiving is better than giving; sinners are made saints; and death is conquered as God grants us eternal life.



In our newsletters, we are sharing our financial reports with our readers so everyone is aware of our situation. Our most recent report, September showed a deficit of \$2,569.54, after paying our quarterly insurance and assessment bills, over our regular monthly bills.

We're trying to cut corners as much as possible but we need the help of our members, former members and friends. **As a member, if you miss a week or two, please make up your weekly donations for those weeks.** You may not be here for those weeks, but our expenses don't skip a week.

Again, we thank our generous former members and friends who send us a donation, whether it's on a regular basis, occasionally during the year or during the holiday season. We really appreciate the donations, as well as hearing from you.

One way we're trying to save some money is with sending this newsletter. If you receive our monthly newsletter by mail, we would appreciate it if you would let us know if you want to continue to receive it. If we have not heard from you, this December issue will be your last issue. Our postage keeps going up and a donation toward it will help us to continue sending it.

Our prayer is that we can continue to keep in touch with everyone and that will only be with your help.

- He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree.

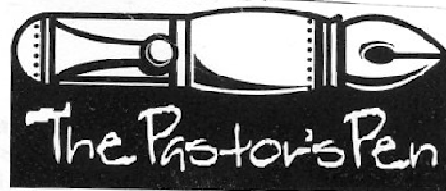
—Roy L. Smit

The same old song

Meeting a parishioner on the street, a pastor asked why he had not seen the fellow at worship very often. "Well," the man complained, "it seems like every time I go to church you sing the same old hymns."

"Oh," replied the preacher. "What hymns are those?"

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem."



December Newsletter Article – Joy to the World, the Lord is Come!

December brings the joy of the blessed Advent Season. Despite the cold chill of winter, our hearts are warmed as we reflect on and celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Our Heavenly Father is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Some 2,000 years ago, God gave us the greatest gift humankind has ever known, on that Christmas morn, God sent us Salvation in the person of his only begotten Son, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, his earthly mother. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (2 Cor. 9:15). May we not allow the grinch of the world to steal our joy this Advent Season. Let us instead focus on the beauty of the Season. Let us remember the lyrics of the gospel song "This joy that I have, the world didn't give it and the world can't take it away!" Let us not allow the commercialization of Christmas cause us to lose the hope and the joy of the Season. Let us remember that Jesus is the reason, and the only reason, for the Season! Most importantly as we praise God for the birth of our blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ, let the true meaning of the Season sustain us! Let the wonderful sounds, sights and smells of Christmas lift our spirits. May all your Christmases be filled with Peace, Joy and the Hope as we join our voices to sing the ageless Christmas song—

"Joy to the World the Lord is Come, Let earth receive her king,
Let every heart prepare him room, And heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing."

Shalom to you and Merry Christmas to all!

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden
Pastor
Church of the Master

- "I have a better Caretaker than you and all the angels. He it is who lies in a manger, but at the same time sits at the right hand of God, the almighty Father. Therefore be at rest."

—Martin Luther



- "Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas."

—Calvin Coolidge

- "Life is like a camera: Focus on what's important, capture the good times, develop from the negatives, and if things don't work out, take another shot."

—Source unknown

Gasoline Alley



Lessons from the angels

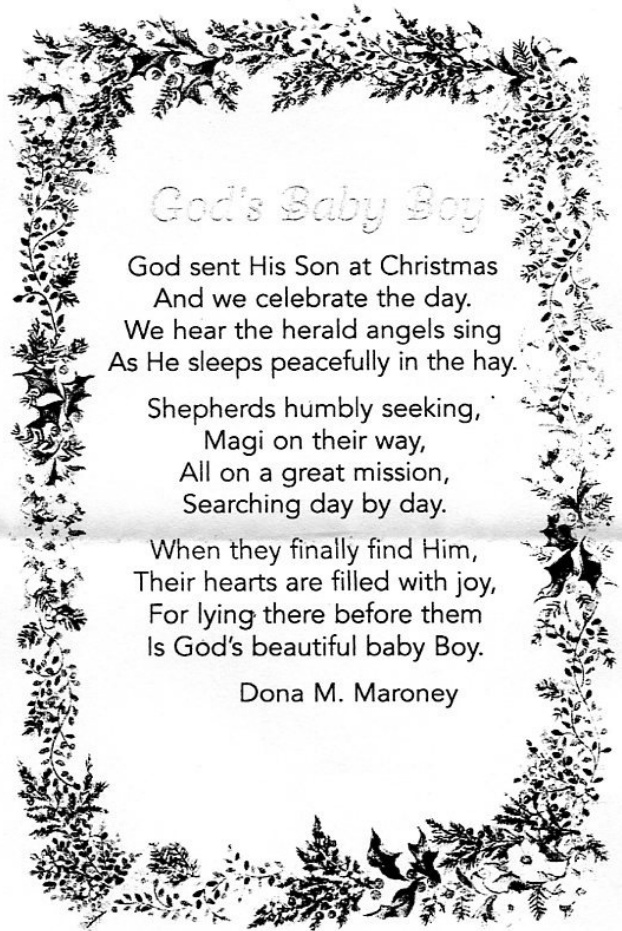
To frightened shepherds on the first Christmas Eve, a host of angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14, KJV).

Nineteenth-century minister Charles Kingsley explained how these key words tell the meaning of Jesus' birth and give meaning to our lives.

- **Glory.** "That little babe, lying in the manger among the cattle, was showing the very highest glory of the great God who had made heaven and earth. To stoop, to condescend, to have mercy, to forgive — that is the highest glory of God."
- **Peace.** "God is not selfish. He sacrificed himself for us. Sacrifice yourselves then for each other! Give up your own pride, your own selfishness, your own interest for each other, and you will be ... at peace."
- **Good will.** "God loves you, and he wills to raise you out of this selfish, quarrelsome life of sin, into a loving, brotherly, peaceful life of righteousness. That babe in the manger at Bethlehem is a sign to you and me that God will freely give us that spirit of love if we ask for it."

What is Christmas?

Christmas is belief in the past, courage for the present and hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace.



Change happens

When we tell ourselves "I can never change" or "That will never happen," we presume too much and believe too little. In Jesus Christ, God renders all of our final conclusions premature and all of our talk of determinism as simply bad faith. In Christ, God opens closed doors, brings resurrections, reveals possibilities, reclaims the lost, liberates the cursed and possessed, and changes the unchangeable.

—Don Shelby

