

Did you know the manger in Jesus' birth was a powerful sign, not a random detail?

Most people picture a soft, wooden crib in a quiet stable. Of course, mangers are animal feeding troughs, but in ancient Israel they were made of stone. Hard. Cold. Durable. That's why the priests would put their newborn lambs in them for protection. But not just any lamb, the unblemished perfect lambs that were used in the sacrifice for sins. These lambs had to be perfect so they would wrap them tightly in cloth and lay them in the manger to keep them safe. Designed to hold something precious and to keep it from harm. That detail alone changes the scene. This was not about comfort. It was about purpose.

Bethlehem was not an accidental location. It was known for raising lambs used in Temple sacrifice. Shepherds in that region were familiar with what made a lamb acceptable before God. An unblemished lamb had to be protected, kept clean, and preserved without injury. Anything damaged was disqualified. Perfection mattered.

The only time mangers are mentioned in Jesus' birth story it is being given specifically to shepherds. In Luke 2 it says, "You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." That detail was not for poetry. It was for recognition. The shepherds would have understood this powerful parallel. They knew what the cloth and the manger meant. This baby would be the perfect lamb of God. The Messiah who would sacrifice His life for the sins of the whole world. He wasn't just a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, He was God: perfect, sinless, and holy humbling Himself to become the perfect sacrifice to reconcile us back to Himself!

Jesus did not enter the world surrounded by gold, guards, or royalty. He entered the world the same way sacrificial lambs entered the story of Israel. Set apart. Watched over. Prepared for a purpose far greater than the moment itself.

This baby was not merely born in humility. He was born on mission.

John the Baptist would later declare it plainly. "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." That truth did not begin at the Jordan River. It was written into the very circumstances of His birth.

The manger was not random. The shepherds were not random. Bethlehem was not random.

God was preaching the gospel before Jesus ever spoke a word. Christmas is not about sentiment. It is about incarnation. God stepping into flesh. The Holy One entering history. The perfect Lamb arriving exactly where He belonged so that one day He could lay down His life and reconcile sinners back to God.

Prayers and Concerns

- ◆ Stetson Pleasant had successful surgery on his feet last Friday.
- ◆ Tracy Evans had gall bladder surgery Thursday.
- ◆ Dusty Evans had a nerve in his neck fixed Thursday.
- ◆ Dale Strong is improving and is able to remove his neck brace at night and some times during the day.
- ◆ Remember those with health issues—Dale Strong, Aleta Collins, Ruth Strain, Bob Robbins, Coe Hamm.
- ◆ All those battling cancer—Ricky Langston, Lisa Langston, Tiffany Pleasant, Amy Myers, Don Luna, Jim Kirkland, Wayman King, Donna Shipley, Elaine Hunter (Larry's sister), Dawn (Chris Lemburg's sister), Lionel Daugherty, Jana Crisp, Richard Blackburn, Jenny James, Debbie Eslinger, Sharon Fox, Bill Agee, Joy Cutbirth.
- ◆ GHCC: Virginia Hamblen, Delphia Holmes. Clifford Lansdown at Hiram Shaddox; Wilbern Uchtman at Brook Haven.
- ◆ Homebound: Vernon James, Steve Siebels, Mary Piepergerdes.

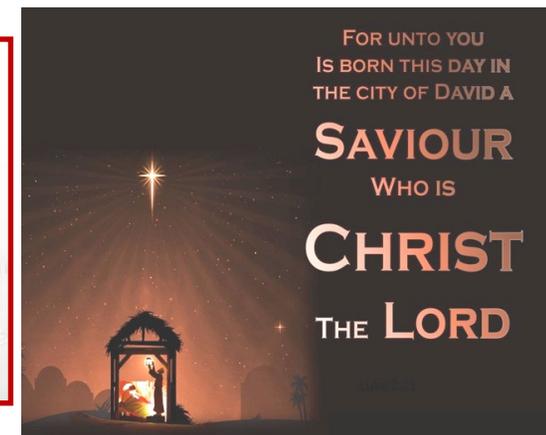
Christmas Play

Monday, Dec. 22 at 7 p.m.

We will sing Christmas carols during the play.

We need homemade cookies brought to eat after the play.

No supper or classes on Wednesday Dec. 24.



Birthdays		Anniversaries	
12-6	Don Luna (80)	12-9	Bill and Lana Cockrum
12-9	Pat Kirkland	12-31	Don and Karin Reynolds
12-9	Jim Lane	Birthdays	
12-10	David Stevens	12-14	Joe Walrath
12-10	Kenneth Workman	12-15	Dana Crisp
12-13	Dale Strong	12-21	Kim Anderson
12-13	Hope Hillhouse	12-25	Jessica Smith
12-14	Corey Hillhouse	12-27	Granger Stevens

New Year's Eve

Wednesday, December 31

Plans are for fellowship supper, singing praises, and then a party with games and visiting.

Barbara and Lana will have loaded potato soup and cornbread for supper. Please bring finger foods/snacks to share.

God's Plan for Saving Man

- ✠ Divine Love: John 3:16
- ✠ God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8
- ✠ Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9
- ✠ Holy Spirit's Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
- ✠ Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31
- ✠ Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3
- ✠ Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10
- ✠ Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16
- ✠ Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37
- ✠ Christian's Work: James 2:24
- ✠ Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

December Worship Assignments

Welcome & Shepherd's Prayer

12-21 David Stevens
12-28 Don Luna

Communion & Closing Prayer

Matt Kyle
R. J. Moyers

Song Leader: Titus Smith
Greeters: Dana and Marsha Crisp

The Family News

December 21, 2025

Gainesville Church of Christ

PO Box 7, 23550 US Hwy. 160, Gainesville, MO 65655

www.gainesvillechurchofchrist.org

A Place to Call Home

We welcome you and are so glad you could worship with us today.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

9:30 a.m. Bible Classes for All Ages

10:30 a.m. Worship Service: ***The Savior Has Arrived***

Wednesday

6 p.m. Fellowship Supper

7 p.m. Bible Classes for all ages

Sunday Worship Outline

Welcome and Shepherd's Prayer

Kids Singing up Front

Worship God by Singing Praises

Communion Service

Song before Sermon

Sermon and Invitation

Invitation Song

Closing Song and Prayer

Offering baskets are located at the back.

We are a community of redeemed sinners who are following Jesus Christ, proclaiming the gospel of grace, loving our Lord and one another.

Elders

Mark Lane 417-679-4835
Don Luna 417-712-1945
David Stevens 417-679-4700
John Abraham 870-421-5632

Deacons

Larry Butler 817-504-1604
Dana Crisp 417-331-5090
James Langston 870-315-4355

Preacher

Halbert Smith 417-257-3880

Ministers: Every Member—Each One of Us