

Jarrett's Jottings



Dear Friends,

By now, you've probably heard "it's going to be a different kind of Christmas" more times than you'd like. I know I have. It is definitely different this year, and not exactly in a good way. For many, there is a sense of grief and mourning. We remember the pre-Covid holiday seasons, and we long for Christmas of yesteryear. We remember with fondness the gatherings and festivals and church activities and all that makes the holiday season wonderful and magical. It can be tempting to be a bit down or even feel sorry for ourselves. I caught myself going down that path a few days ago. In one of those moments of grieving or stressing about something, it hit me: feeling sorry for myself and adopting a "woe is me" attitude really doesn't serve any good. Focusing on what I *can't* do doesn't magically make things better. Grieving what won't happen this year will not bring any sense of joy to life. Maybe you are in the same boat. What if, whether we've been feeling down about things or not, we spent our time and energy focusing on what we *can* do, rather than what we can't do or what is lost this year? I started jotting down a list (because I'm a list-maker) and I'd like to share some of it with you:

- ✧ **You CAN still worship** — I know there are those who do not use Facebook, and we are looking for additional digital platforms. Even though online worship may not be our preference, it's still an opportunity to worship! Because the Christian year begins with the first Sunday of Advent, our focus during this season will be A New Year. I invite you to tune in and not just watch, but worship!
- ✧ **You CAN engage Scripture** — On November 15<sup>th</sup>, I preached on the importance of immersing ourselves in the Word of God and invited the congregation to commit to reading through the Bible in the next year. A copy of the reading plan we will be following, plus a few words of encouragement/guidance are included within this newsletter. Perhaps this is just the time we need to invite the Word of God into our hearts.
- ✧ **You CAN reach out** — Need a listening ear? Someone just to talk to or vent to? Someone to pray with you? Give me a call!! I'd love to chat/listen/pray or whatever you need. I do understand these are times

that can bring out the worst in us and we are all trying to get through; you are not alone!

- ✧ **You CAN pray for others** — Pray for our church family. Pray for our community. Pray for those affected by Covid. Pray for our healthcare workers. Pray for our students and teachers. Pray for our nation. Pray for church leaders (including myself) who are making difficult decisions. Pray for whomever God lays on your heart.
- ✧ **You CAN send expressions of love and care** — Just because we are physically distanced from one another does not mean we must be emotionally distanced. A note, a card, a phone call, a text message, a gift can all be wonderful ways of expressing to others that we care about them and are thinking of them.
- ✧ **You CAN help others** — Whether it's donating to any one of our community ministries or reaching out personally to someone in need, there is no better time than now to show and share the love of Jesus!
- ✧ **You CAN be the church** — Just because we cannot meet together doesn't stop us from being the church in our daily lives. Remember, the church is not the building; the church is the fellowship of those who meet in the building.

Dear ones, we've made it this far-with the grace and help of God. We're all tired of this pandemic and wish we could go back to before it started. Perhaps, right now, our invitation from God is to maintain our faithfulness, as God has been faithful to us, and to lean into the promise of Jesus that He will build His Church, and nothing will prevail against it. Let us rest in that promise this Advent and Christmas season.

From me and my family, may this season for you be filled with the hope, peace, joy, and love of God that comes only in Christ Jesus!



Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Jarrett

The Mustard Seed

# December

**Ministry Team:**

Pastor ~ Jarrett Wells

Office Manager ~

Maria Hymes

Pianist/Organist ~

Jill Roegge

Choral Director ~

Tim Bartholomew

Financial Secretary ~

Lynne O'Hara

Treasurer ~

Susan Treadway

Youth Director ~

Andrea Wells

Custodian ~

Tonya White

**Sunday Services:**

Worship Service ~

9:00 a.m.

Sunday School ~

10:30 a.m.

Phone ~ 217-323-1257

E-mail ~

beardsumc@sbcglobal.net

Website ~

beardstowmfumc.com

"Like" us on Facebook ~

Beardstown First UMC

## *Birthdays*

- 3 Kirk Cowen
- 5 Donald Lew Barker, Jr.  
Lane Sommers
- 6 Bibi Cline  
Andrea Elliott  
Isabela Ruiz
- 7 Marilyn Ritter  
Ann Morrow
- 8 Carol Robeson
- 9 Tasha Johnson
- 10 Isaac French  
Jennifer Korsmeyer  
Katie Starkey
- 11 Nancy Cowen  
Kyle Taylor
- 12 Cindy Farmer
- 15 Mitzi McClenning
- 16 Jacqueline Rodriguez
- 18 Jamie Kight  
Randy Simpson
- 19 Emma White  
Brian Humphrey
- 21 Dan Robertson  
Riley Jo Clements
- 22 John Quigley  
Marc Blakeman  
Nathan White  
Dawnelle Hammon
- 23 Erwin Krumwiede
- 24 Paula Kloker  
Keaton Taylor
- 25 **JESUS, OUR SAVIOR**
- 26 Rick Kight  
Ryder Hamlin
- 27 Breanna Stocker  
Jacob White  
Cole Huey  
Jack Fearneyhough
- 31 Sydney Force

## *Anniversaries*

- 16 Frank & Gena Sommer
- 26 Dennis & Cynthia Hack
- 27 Terry & Jeanette Barker
- 29 Trevor & Sadie Courson



*With all that is going on around us, we  
hope you have a wonderful Christmas and  
Happy New Year. Never forget  
Jesus is still the reason for  
the Season!*





## Christian Love In Action

Currently C.L.I.A. is in need of: *Cereal*. You can bring your donated items to the church again. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. CLIA hours are: Tuesdays from 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Thank you for donations. If you would like to contribute but don't have time / remember to shop, you can give money to Lynne O'Hara and she will pick up the items.

## Cass County Food Pantry

The Cass County Food Pantry is another place that helps Cass County residents in need of food. To help with their mission, they are asking churches for donations for the month of **DECEMBER**: *Egg Noodles, Soup, Crackers, Beef Stew, Chicken & Dumplings, Tomato Juice and Chili Beans & Mixed Vegetables*.

They are always in need of: *Peanut Butter, Jelly, Macaroni & Cheese, Canned Vegetables, Canned Fruit, Cereal, or Non-Perishable Food Items*. They have a walk in cooler or freezer to hold perishable items, and are able to take fresh produce items.

## Worship / Activities Update

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Frank Beard instructed all congregations within our Conference to suspend in-person gatherings/activities, including worship, for at least 4 weeks. Further guidance/directives would be issued by December 13<sup>th</sup>. What does that mean for us? A few things. Namely, it means December 20<sup>th</sup> is the earliest we could possibly return to in-person worship. It also means some adjustments will be made to our Christmas services:

✳ **Longest Night Service (December 21<sup>st</sup> @ 7:00 p.m.)** — this quiet, reflective service will be streamed via our Facebook page. This service recognizes there are those who meet Christmas in the midst of pain and difficulty and offers an opportunity to step away from “the world” and into the embrace of God.

✳ **Christmas Eve** — We will NOT be having in-person Christmas Eve services. The service will be streamed on our Facebook page. We are in the process of looking at some other possibilities, as well. More information will be shared as it becomes available!

## Operation Shoebox

Thank you to everyone who made a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child. Even with the short notice we had 8 boxes, which means there are 8 children out there who will receive a Christmas gift.

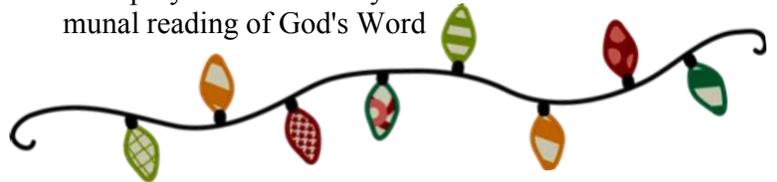
## Encouragement for Engaging Scripture

To go along with the encouragement to immerse ourselves in the Word of God, here are a few words of information, guidance and encouragement as we begin:

1. The reading plan we are using is enclosed within the newsletter, just in case you didn't get a copy at worship or download it
2. Begin whenever you'd like — I'd suggest as close to November 29<sup>th</sup> as possible; that is the first day of the Christian New Year. Make a Christian New Year's Resolution!
3. The plan is a 12-month reading plan but **READ AT YOUR OWN PACE!** Set a reading goal but adjust it if needed.
4. Be gracious to yourself. If you get sidetracked, don't stress and worry and give up! The goal in all of this is not to master the text, but to be mastered BY the text. Maybe it takes us a few days of reading and rereading a certain passage — that's okay!! Perhaps God has a word just for you in the midst of that passage.
5. This is a chronological plan — that means that we will not be reading straight through Genesis-Revelation; instead, we will be reading the Bible in the way scholars best believe events happened. This means we will read the history and the prophets together; it means we will read the gospels as a story instead of four separate stories.
6. Find a friend to read with you — this is a great way to hold one another graciously accountable, as well ask questions and ponder together. It also serves as a great way to introduce someone to Scripture.

In all things...please feel free to reach out if you have questions or if something really sticks out to you.

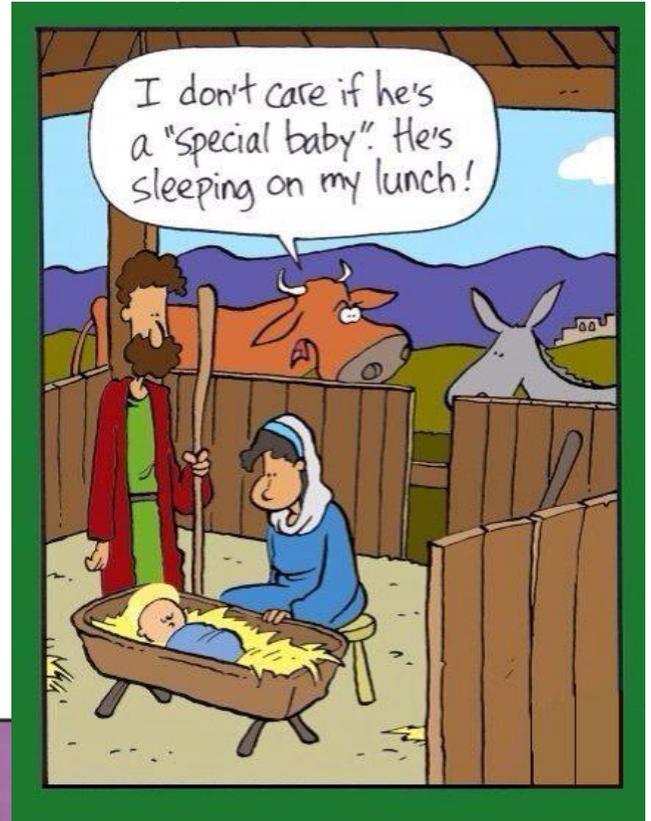
I pray God will richly bless the individual and communal reading of God's Word



# Christmas Bible Trivia

1. Where in the Bible do we read about the Birth of Jesus?
2. Who gave birth to Jesus?
3. Which city did Mary and Joseph travel to for the census?
4. What city was Jesus born in?
5. Who appeared to tell Mary that she was with child?
6. How many miles did Mary and Joseph have to travel to get to Bethlehem?
7. How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
8. How many angels spoke to the shepherds?
9. What sign were the shepherds supposed to look for when searching for Jesus?
10. Who followed a star to find baby Jesus?
11. Where was Jesus laid after he was born?
12. What is a manger?
13. How many wise men were there?
14. What gifts did the wise men bring to baby Jesus?
15. Where was Joseph originally from?
16. Who was the one trying to kill Baby Jesus?
17. Who was the prophet that foretold a virgin shall give birth to a son called Immanuel?

18. What are the five names of Jesus found in the Bible?
19. Which direction did the wise men travel to, going to Jerusalem?
20. Where did Jesus' family flee to from Bethlehem?
21. What else did the wise men do aside from give Jesus gifts?
22. What does the name Immanuel mean?

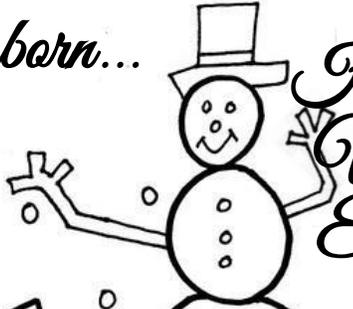


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1. Luke. 2. Mary. 3. Bethlehem. 4. Bethlehem. 5. The angel Gabriel. 6. 80 miles. 7. The bible doesn't specify. 8. One. 9. A baby lying in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. 10. The wise men. 11. In a manger. 12. A feeding trough. 13. It is not specified. 14. Gold, incense, and myrrh. 15. Bethlehem. 16. King Herod. 17. Prophet Isaiah. 18. Jesus, Immanuel, Christ, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace. 19. Westward. 20. Egypt. 21. They knelt down and worshipped him. 22. "God with us."

*For unto us a  
Child is born...*

*And the government will be upon  
His shoulder; And He will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*



**DECEMBER**

*~ Isaiah 9:6*

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*The Mustard Seed*

