



CONNECTION

December, 2016

“Something to Treasure and Ponder”

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:15–20 ESV)

One of the most remarkable details of the Christmas story is Mary's reaction. In the midst of all the joyful praise, she is quietly thinking about what it all means. The host of angels is thundering the birth announcement. The shepherds are rushing to the scene and expressing their joyful praise. And Mary is treasuring up these things and pondering them in her heart.

We know that “Jesus is the reason for the season,” but it is very easy for these days to be filled with shopping, decorating, cards and meal planning. We are busier than every and there is precious little time to think about the amazing gift of Christ.

This year, our congregation is not presenting “The Promise,” as we often do for Christmas. Michael Card's music is wonderful, and it is a joy to share it with others. But there is something nice about having a quieter Christmas this year. Perhaps we will have more opportunities to pray, worship, give thanks, and treasure Christ our Savior.

The words of the Christmas hymn capture this in a moving way:

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly-minded,
for with blessing in his hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
our full homage to demand.

May God give us moments during this season when we are able to take a much needed break. In those moments, may we worship, ponder, and treasure Christ in our hearts.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave".

Pastor Dave

Men's Bible Study

The Men's First Saturday Bible Study will not meet in December or January due to schedule conflicts with other meetings. We will resume on February 4 at 9:00 am in the church Lounge. We will be finishing up the book of Hosea, chapters 13 and 14.

Budget Update from the Session

Recently we provided each of you members with our proposed budget for 2017. Although we've been running with a mild deficit all year (positive for a few months and negative for others) we have been hit with several significant bills since the budget was drafted which now leave us with a shortage approaching \$13,000.

This includes a large insurance bill and the great work the trustees have done to repair the situation which caused water to back up into our basement with each substantial rainfall.

Our trustees have done a sensational job slashing our expenses wherever possible. We now know that our office computers are dealing with a nasty virus which will be an expensive fix, along with paying our Per Member Asking to the EPC.

We pray that we can count on your support to help us remedy this situation and get back on to a firm financial footing. If God has prospered you and you are in a situation to help retire this debt, we'll humbly praise you. If you are behind in your regular giving, we'll be grateful for your getting caught up.

Your elders and trustees will be reassessing this situation in January. We are prayerfully optimistic that we will not have to make painful budget decisions at that time.

James 1:12 reminds us "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him." (ESV)

In His service,
The Session

Upcoming Sermons

December 4

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Luke 1:68-79

"Zechariah's Song"

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. (Eph 6:10-11 ESV)

December 11

Luke 2:8-14

"The Angels' Song"

And 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 among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:13-14)

December 18

Luke 2:27-32

"Simeon's Song"

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:29-32 ESV)

December 25

Luke 2:15-20

"Worship the King"

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:20 ESV)

Special Worship Times!

Christmas Morning

December 25, 2016

10:00 am

New Year's Day

January 1, 2017

10:00 am