

The GAZETTE

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The Christmas Story: Reconsidered



by **Josh Zellers**

Light switches aren't used much during the Christmas season here at the Zellers home. In fact, leaning back on a couch in the great room with Handel's Messiah on the stereo with that able-to-read-a-book-because-there-are-so-many-Christmas-lights glow is to me the Christmas spirit. These evenings are enchanting and drive me to contemplate the very first Christmas. I wonder if those who witnessed it had this same sense of special warmth and restful purpose. After all, the first Christmas had a Hallelujah chorus of sorts and there was one particular Christmas light show...

Place yourself in the mind of a shepherd. Seems interesting, right? There you are taking the night shift as your flock sleeps silently. Not many people in the world

care about you or your life; and why should they? You are just a shepherd: a shepherd who doesn't even own his own sheep. Life isn't comfortable. It gets cold at night, food preparation is wearisome, sometimes weeks go by without seeing the family, and it doesn't pay well.

The new Roman world is changing everything and the rustic occupation of a shepherd feels behind the times. The whole world is united in commerce and this new system of Roman government and law shows no semblance of King David's Israel. The very last thing in your mind is that you are blessed with being set apart for something special.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the scene that unfolds: a countryside field in the darkness of night, a whole bunch of sheep and a few shepherds. The least among us are made the greatest. Blinding light! At first there is fear and confusion, so it was with most who were blessed with a glimpse at the glory of heavenly things in scripture, but the Angel says, "Do not be afraid!" And then there was the choir of angels singing of the glory of Christ "Glory to God in the Highest! Peace on Earth good will to men!"

To Bethlehem! What is going on? I'm sure the shepherds never tried to piece the logic together. There wasn't any logic. All they knew was a supernatural glory had been revealed. Frightened still? You betcha, but now they were truly excited to the point of hysteria. They say, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem!" Maybe even leaving behind their flocks as the "hurried" to see this new king.

So what does this have to do with me sitting on my couch in the midst of the Zellers Christmas tree forest? Well, It turns out that God could not have picked a better group of people to celebrate his Son. Look at how they reacted!

When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Just as I have 'the Christmas spirit' from the joyful music and decorations so the shepherds had something unforgettably beautiful. Do you think they realized they were the very first humans to hear a heavenly anthem? Just thinking about that gets me excited. They had to have tried singing the tune back amongst themselves for years to come. Wow. I sure can't wait 'til I get to hear it!

Now think of the Christmas lights I find so perfect. Of course I mean the star. Luke says the Magi who saw the star were from the East but anymore then that falls to speculation. Many believe 'the East' to mean Persia, where the Jews fell into captivity twice. The word Magi can be associated with the Chaldeans of the Fertile Crescent area. These Chaldeans were known to be master astrologers such as Daniel writes:

"Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams." (Daniel 2:2)

Perhaps the influence of the Jews left the Magi with the prophecy from Numbers that "A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel." (Numbers 27:14)"

Also, much speculation has been made over the star. Some may explain it as something of a natural occurrence such as the king planet, Jupiter, coming into conjunction with Mars in what has been calculated to be right around

the birth of Christ. This might make sense considering the Magi were astrologers and seem to be the only people in the world to have noticed the star. However, Mathew seems to give a different view of the event.

Once the Magi arrive at Jerusalem they ask: "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." (Matthew 2:2)

Note that "saw the star" probably means it came and went, which is consistent with a natural phenomenon. But when Herod frantically finds an answer and sends them off to Bethlehem something amazing happens. After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they "rejoiced exceedingly with great joy." (Matthew 2:9-10)

Obviously, this same star they saw back home wasn't a normal astronomical event. It was special.

Notice their reaction when they see the star. Rejoicing with great joy! While Israel's king loathes God's star and conspires against Him, the place of greeting God with the majesty He deserves is shifted over to the Magi who, with pure, worshiping hearts lay the gold frankincense and myrrh at Jesus' feet. Like the shepherds, God doesn't do what we think is best yet the end result is joy and the magnifying of his name.

May we each be like the magi and shepherds, staying humble through the understanding of our roles. Serving the King in our gifts and talents with excitement. May we not dwell on our own expectations of what we want God to do but instead proclaim loudly and joyfully what he already has done through his Son Jesus.



Christmas Morning Service
9:15 a.m., Sunday, December 25th

Getting to Know... The Baylys

by Michelle Holder

Where were you on October 14, 1989? Cheryl Bayly was giving birth to her first son...the one who, in his early years, would be a delightful challenge, the one who regurgitated freshly ingested milk into his father's mouth during a rousing game of airplane, the one that we have leading us each week in our corporate worship.

Nathan is the oldest of five children born to Pastor David and Cheryl. He recalls that in his lifetime his father has pastored two churches and in living that out, he is the inspiration for Nathan's desire to go into the ministry. Cheryl as a stay-at-home mom and full-time servant of the church has, no doubt, fueled that as well.

"When I was 5, I went to pre-school at some church around Toledo. All I remember from my time there was the long, boring nap time where we had to lay on these blue rubber mats, and getting many spankings from a mean woman with a long paddle. The next year, I started kindergarten at Bowling Green Covenant Academy. That was also a rough year. I remember many trips to the principal's office...it got better, though. Halfway through the year, my Dad started coming in half-days to help out my frazzled teacher, Mrs. Harold. At the end of the year, I was asked not to return. Soooo... My mom started home-schooling me, and she did this until junior high, when I decided that I wanted to go to TCS to play football."

In 8th grade, he started wrestling, and it may be that during that first season he met his future wife. "Funny thing, at the end of my 8th grade wrestling season, the TCS team went to Harbor Hills Middle School for a dual. Unbeknownst to me, a teammate of mine is cousins with Aleaha, and Aleaha attended Harbor Hills. Knowing that her cousin was going to wrestle at her school, she

had signed up to help prepare the mats for the dual! We'll never know, but it may be that I first saw Aleaha in 8th grade while wearing spandex!" (Great!)

Aleaha was born July 13, 1990. Her father almost missed her birth as he was a truck driver at the time and his boss had sent him on a trip to Chicago, even though they were pretty sure that her mom would go into labor that day. As it turns out, Aleaha was breech and was delivered via c-section, so her dad arrived on time to see her born. Aleaha is also one of five children: an older step-brother named Jon, a younger sister, Jenn, and a younger half-brother and



sister named Jake and Colleen. She was with all of her siblings growing up. As a result, she has never thought of her siblings as steps, halves or fulls but just as her siblings. Growing up, she would spend three nights at her mom's then three nights at her dad's—so that she spent equal time with them both. A note of interest is that her parents are all Toledo police officers—her dad flies the helicopter and is on the gang unit, her step-mom is a detective and her mom is a patrol officer. Don't cross Aleaha's family!

In her early years, Aleaha attending Calvary Christian school for kindergarten, OLPH until sixth grade, Arbor Hills for junior high and she graduated from Northview. This past August she graduated from BGSU with a degree in special education. (She did not get her teaching license, though, as she was awaiting the birth of a precious little one and wanted to graduate before he was born!)

Aleaha and Nate met in the commuters' lounge their first semester at BG. Nathan recalls thinking,

"hmmm, I wonder who she is?" as she walked into the room in her lacrosse T-shirt and sweatpants. She sat down across from him, and after finding out the basics, Nate immediately broke out some Reformed Theology.

Aleaha recalls that a lot of their conversation that semester was debating theology—and that, in the end, she lost every single argument. At that time, she describes herself as "KJV only, definitely didn't believe in predestination—I actually thought that "Calvinism" was a cult, I thought that the 'Left Behind' series was pretty right-on, and was waiting for the rapture to happen at any given moment, I thought that infant baptisms was wrong, etc, etc, etc."

Despite the disagreements, they were both interested pretty quickly. Aleaha remembers wondering why in the world did Nathan always wear sweaters? She thought he was different because he was good-looking and everyone liked him but he definitely wasn't the stereotypical "cool guy." In fact, she recalls a conversation with a friend about him being one of the most "un-cool" people you'd ever meet once he starts talking! They spent a lot of time together before they actually started dating, but they were soon certain they would marry. It was at this point that David suggested that Nate go to Switzerland... you can ask them about that.

Almost a year to date as of this writing, Aleaha and Nathan were married. Today they are the proud parents of Micaiah David, born on September 13th. If you haven't been privy to the pictures of Micaiah, talk to David about showing them to you. Clear up a few hours of your time for this event, as in the first twenty four hours of the child's life, Gramps took 950, yes, 950 pictures. Really.

Nate and Aleaha have been a blessing to CTW, serving as the primary leaders of LWY. Nate also leads worship on Sunday mornings, helps plan the services, and arranges music and leads the musicians. What a great joy and blessing to all of us to have the young Bayly family in our midst!

Getting to Know... The Keplers by LeeAnn Thomas

Anyone who has been around Christ the Word for any length of time has run into a Kepler. What you may or may not know is the interesting chain of life events that molded them into the faith-focused family they are today.

Robin and Lisa are both from the Toledo area. Robin was raised in the Bowsher area. Lisa was born in Swanton. She grew up by UT, and graduated from Emmanuel Baptist High School.

By the way, Robin loves to talk. You might think that Robin is an only child. Wrong! Robin has two brothers ten and fifteen years older.

Robin became a Christian when he was 18, following a girl to a Young Life meeting (though she never showed). It was there that Robin came to know the Lord. In high school Robin loved one sport: football, though he was always too small to play! In his sophomore year he weighed 80 pounds (“and he was pretty,” Lisa adds). By his freshman year at UT, he bulked up to 190 pounds and walked on the football team! Trials he had with his Bowsher H.S. upbringing led him to be a people-person, unselfish, and able to heed authority.

Lisa’s childhood is no less interesting. When a girl is 15, meeting Robin is interesting enough! Robin worked with the youth group of Bethel Baptist. Lisa grew up in Grace Baptist. The youth groups camped together in summers. Lisa dated a young man in the youth group of Bethel Baptist. She began hanging out with the other group and met Robin, who was the assistant to the youth pastor. All the girls had crushes on him, but Lisa thought they were crazy because he was so old! (She was 17.) They remained friends over the years.

In Robin, Lisa found a great listener and cheerleader. Lisa loved any sport with a ball, but her favorite was

basketball. One day, while watching one of Robin’s racketball matches, Lisa felt God say Robin is “the one she should marry.” That took some rethinking. Robin would say he felt more for her than any other kid in youth group. He asked his friends what they thought, and they said “if you don’t ask her out, we will!” Robin has always cherished Lisa. This kind of love has helped Lisa understand Christ’s love.

Lisa was raised in a Christian home. “I never thought I was not a Christian.” Believing what she knows



now, she understands she was always His. Though she doesn’t remember a beginning to her faith, she does remember wondering if she was God’s especially after miscarrying a child after Katie. Her world was shaken, though she still did not curse His name. She began asking herself, “What does it mean to examine your heart at communion... Was my faith real? Was my faith tested?” After the miscarriage her faith was not shaken. Another test. The death of their 20 month old, Camden.

Lisa had an “ah ha” moment with God. God told her through the times she trusted Him without understanding her circumstances, it built her faith. Those circumstances gave her the ability to trust in God even through the death of a child. He prepared her. He equipped her.

He gave her that faith. God showed her that her faith was real, and that she was His eternally. He upheld the family for a year after the death. All they had to do was put one foot in front of the other – God did the rest. “The greatest gift I have received from Him is making known the faith He gave me.”

Any mom’s greatest fear is losing a child. The fear was realized, and Lisa’s faith proved stronger than death, even the death of her child.

“It is a freeing thing to know your faith keeps fears at bay. You are okay

because you faced the worst thing possible, and faith is keeping you. Losing Camden was like ripping everything away that bound me to earth. Nothing is the same now that my treasures are truly in heaven. The sweet thing about sorrow is that you have nothing left and God carries you. Sorrow is to be treasured because you really see who God is and you know Him. To have your sin nature torn away...even if it is what you hold most dear...is worth it. This sounds crazy, but I wouldn’t change a thing. How could I? I have tasted fear and death and I have a Savior.”

Lisa describes it as a work of God that they ended up at CTW. Like the Bellas and Miklovic families, they attended Berean Fellowship for 20 years. They then visited the Bellas’s

at their new church United Brethren. They visited twice, then heard about David Bayly’s new church. The Keplers went to support the “shepherd” they met twice. David grabbed Robin by the shirt and said “Why are you here?” Robin said, “To support the shepherd.” They have been friends ever since! They were at the very first CTW service and never looked away.

The Kepler family certainly has grown over the years. Oldest son Zach (20) leaves for the Ukraine in early January to work in Jamie Thornton’s church and at a local orphanage. Katie (18) lives life fully, but draws near to the Holy. Kendall (12) is in 7th grade in Blissfield Schools. Jillian Rose (8) is in 2nd grade. Camden died at age 20 months and has now been gone for five years. Molly

Jo (3) is the baby of the family.

What do the Keplers do for fun? Games, camping in the u.p., people! They love playing board games, but especially cribbage. Robin likes to feed people at any time, at any place! He makes a mean camper’s breakfast. Robin loves people, and the UP, but he loves Lisa the most. He really likes the UP because he can sit next to his wife for 8 hours!

Christmas, Hunter-Style!



by Wayne Turner

If you know Hunter, you know Frugal and Generous in one package. I have a lot to learn from the man I call son. Christmas morning circa 1995, Hunter came down the stairs that led to the living room. The room was full. I think that was the year we purchased the 12’ tall tree that fit through the door on the way in, because it had been wrapped in that net thing, only to find out that we had to cut it into pieces to be able to get it out of the house. All the grandparents were there, and the four kids (this is before God gave us the gift of Hans). Tyson and Adam were maturing nicely, and their gifts were reflecting it. Heidi, being female, purchased with recipient in mind...and then there was Hunter.

If memory serves correctly, this was the year he entered the room at gift-giving time in a red plastic rain suit fresh from under the seat of my dad’s pickup. You guessed it: Santa had come for a visit. But that was only the beginning. Rachel has often

said something to the effect, “if I put a piece of lettuce (insert anything absurd here) on my head and walked in the room it would just look like I put a piece of lettuce on my head. However, if Hunter did it numerous different hilarious characters could emerge.” Hence you have: Santa from a red plastic rain suit.

I think it goes without saying that if a rain suit can be your red velvet coat, and a white tee shirt hanging on your ears a beard, then you are not going to have the typical giant red bag filled with toys. No, you’re going to have a large box you have “decorated” with a hole cut in the side to keep the surprise factor alive. Even though I can still laugh when I think about seeing the Thin Man Santa, once we began reaching in the box the real fun began. The box had been filled with every broken, defaced, maimed, out-of-service toy Hunter owned. Person after person would reach in the box when it was presented by the rain-suit-wearing Santa, and pull out a toy anyone else would have discarded long before. Who wants a one-armed super hero, a dinosaur with no head, cars with no wheels and on the list goes. If you didn’t like what you “chose” you were allowed to put it back in the box and “draw” again and you were not limited to one gift. We overheard Adam saying; “Hey, that’s what I gave you last year.” He kept on giving until the box was empty. The most amazing thing was that these broken, useless toys that had no value to the rest of us were truly treasures for Hunter.

Many would suggest that Hunter was just being frugal. However, if you really know Hunter, you’ll find

that he enjoys taking other people’s “junk” and making something useful out of it. You’ll also know that he never throws anything away. He was always waiting for just the correct time to employ part of a broken toy, using the hinges off a broken dresser, etc, you get the picture. At this point in the article, many of you have already made the leap to the “moral” of the story. “God takes the junk in our lives and makes something wonderful.” Sorry to disappoint. Even though that would have been a great application, that’s not the point. The point is generosity. Giving what we truly value to others. Hunter gave things to us that he truly valued. In addition to the toys, future projects, his time decorating the box, planning and a big dose of his creativity, he gave us a great deal of laughter.

I’ve heard it suggested that we should teach children to give by not giving them things. Some have taught that having a Christmas without gifts would teach children the “true” meaning of Christmas. I disagree. We should be teaching by example and a good one at that. If you want your children to be generous, then you should be generous with them and with others. Give the things you cherish, and they will have a great example of our heavenly Father and how He loves us. The things we give our children are not limited to tangible gifts but our time, energy and creativity as well. Frugality in all venues is a virtue only when it results in generosity. Otherwise, it’s just stingy. So go ahead and be generous. Dig around in the trunk, pull out that red plastic rain suit and surprise everyone this Christmas.

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Women of the Word

Heavenly Minded By Shelley Schriener

When is love without hypocrisy? When is it truly a genuine love? How can we abhor what is evil and cling to what is good? I was asked to share a personal testimony of this verse (Romans 12:9) in my life and here is what immediately came to mind.

Quickly after we began attending CTW, we started fellowshiping with Steve & Rebekah Wing. At the time I didn't realize that our lives would become so closely knit together. Since the onset of our relationship, Steve and Rebekah have so willingly and frequently given to our family. Above and beyond meeting a need, they have simply just blessed us. Although financially capable to do otherwise, they choose to drive used vehicles, shop the sales rack, live modestly, and instead of focusing on themselves they instead give to others. It is a giving with no strings attached. It's a laying down of their own wants and thinking of others instead. They are clinging to what is good. They are resisting the temptation to be enticed by the materialism of this world.

Haven't we all heard the phrase "He with the most toys, wins?" We hear of those who thwart the opportunity to have more children, often with the justification that they cannot afford the ones that they have. Is this really truth or an inability to abhor evil? Could they sell a car or downsize their home in an effort to free up funds? Would they even think of being without to help someone else in need?

Now most of us could perhaps proudly say, "Well that's not the case with me, but what is the case with you, and me for that matter? What evil do we cling too that prevents us from loving genuinely without hypocrisy? Steve and Rebekah have taught me personally not to hold on tight to the things of this world. I know that "toys" will

rot, be destroyed, and carry no eternal value. We must be wise and good stewards, but these material things should not become gods in our lives in which we seek to protect and hoard. We need to share freely, open up our homes and give of our time. I praise God that Steve & Rebekah open their home without hesitation to all and are happy to do so. It has served as an amazing encouragement to me to do the same.

If you are hesitant to invite people over, just do it and then do it again. Soon you will wonder why it has taken you so long to love people in this manner. If you have 26 totes in your basement full of clothes for every size and season (like I did), go through them and share them. It will soon give you delight to see others benefit from your willingness to share. If God has blessed you with financial gain, then give to someone in need and then do it again. God will bring joy to your heart as you willingly obey Him and see others provided for as a result of your love. If you somehow don't see a means to love through these avenues, then give of your time. Baby sit for free once a month so a young couple can enjoy an evening out. Clean for someone on a regular basis.

If you struggle with having a genuine love for others, pray that God would refine you in this area. May we cling to what is good and freely give of our finances, time and talents to love one another with a genuine love. We must not allow fear, greed or any other evil to keep us from doing what is right in the sight of God.

Let us not forget that we are setting an example for others to follow, whether that is our own children or others in the church. May we be found faithful in the way that we love and may it be a genuine love that infiltrates our church for years to come..... to the next generation.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Romans 12:9: To God be all the Glory!

Monthly Morsel

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

ISAIAH 9:6

Remember that our God always fulfills His promises, including the ultimate promise of eternal salvation in our LORD Jesus Christ.

Learn 'n Live

I know I'm forgetting something... what is it...oh yes, I wanted to begin remembering more scripture! Many of you heard and read explanations about Learn 'n Live earlier this fall.

This challenge from WOW was given for all women to encourage them to grow more deeply in their walks with Christ; to live out what they're learning in this process. However, if your memory is anything like mine (or is it just plain motivation?), you may have started out with good intentions, but are floundering a bit as we head into the holiday season.

So, why don't you grab a friend or two, and commit to memorizing this year's WOW verse? Or join in with a few friends and hold one another accountable with praying daily for specific concerns. See how God works mightily among you!

Another idea might be to ask some gals who you would like to get to know better and see if they'll join you in reading the Bible on a daily basis. You could send emails to them to help hold one another accountable. Imagine the truths that you'll learn and share. Most of our schedules become increasingly chaotic as Christmas draws nearer, so it is all the more important that we stay grounded in the Word of God and live out all that we're learning from our Lord and Savior. If you want more information on developing bible reading, scripture memory or prayer groups, please don't hesitate to ask one of the ladies on the WOW committee.

2012 WOW Retreat

It's coming!! The WOW retreat is on its way! Keep watching and listening for more details as they become available. In the meantime, feast on these morsels to whet your appetite for a fabulous weekend: comments on past retreats include "convicting yet encouraging, life-changing, full of warm fellowship, focused on glorifying God, and a wonderful way to recharge." March 9th and 10th, 2012 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Perrysburg, OH. Cost: Single, \$151 Double, \$95 Triple, \$76 Quad, \$67. Don't miss it!

Celebrate Together! By Tai French

In the busy Christmas season there is one gift that will always be appreciated: your time and attention. Nothing is quite so cozy as getting together with a friend, sharing a warm drink and chat on a winter day. But how can a gal find time? Looking over your holiday to-do list, see what task you can turn into a treat by doing it together. For example, do you plan for a whole day of Christmas baking? Ask another woman from church, a neighbor or co-worker to join you for the day as you bake together. If each of you plan to bring a special seasonal recipe, you can share your skills! Do you bake a special bread, pie, or dish for your celebrations? Invite one of the younger girls from

church to have lunch and bake with you. Pray before your date that your words would be full of rejoicing for God's goodness to you in the past year. Suddenly, you will find that your duty is a delight when you have someone to share it with.

For the Messiah concert the last few years I made Coconut Candies. The first year, it felt like forever before I got all those little candies made! The second year, my mom and I did it together, assembly line style, and had a BLAST! This recipe makes a BIG batch and is a fun "together" recipe! It is great for littler helpers and freezes well.

Messiah Coconut Candies:

- 2 Boxes Powdered Sugar
- 1 Can Sweetened Condensed Milk
- 1 Cup Softened Butter
- 2 Large Bags of Sweetened Coconut Flakes
- 1 Cup Finely Chopped Nuts
- 2 lbs "Almond Bark" or chocolate candy coating (I prefer white chocolate variety).

Mix all ingredients except the candy coating in a giant bowl. Drop by teaspoonful onto wax paper (or roll spoonfuls into little balls- easier to pop into one's mouth). Chill well. Melt candy coating in double boiler (or the "saucepan floating in big pan of boiling water" method). Dip coconut balls into melted coating. Chill on parchment paper. Enjoy!

December quote:

“All the paths of the Lord are loving and faithful” (Psalm 25:10) I have pondered this verse lately, and have found that it feeds my spirit. All does not mean “all—except the paths I am walking in now,” or “nearly all—except this especially difficult and painful path.” All must mean all. So, your path with its unexplained sorrow or turmoil, and mine with its sharp flints and briers—and both our paths, with their unexplained perplexity, their sheer mystery—they are His paths, on which he will show himself loving and faithful. Nothing else; nothing less.

Building Update by Scott Killy

As we near the end of the 2011 calendar year, we thought we'd take a few moments to give everyone an overview of what's been happening at the CTW building construction site.

Surveying the exterior of the building, detail work continues on the roof, as minor repairs and finishing touches are made, and the exterior trim work is nearing completion.

Also, if you've been to the building recently, you know the front parking lot has already been poured, paved, and painted with parking lines. We are hoping to have the main, rear parking area in within the next week or so, so please pray for good weather and logistics for this, as we have a limited window in which we can pour asphalt.

Recently, God allowed us to navigate around a potentially expensive plan change in the sewer and septic system, so we praise God for that, and we give thanks for all of you that have been praying for us as various obstacles have come up.

Currently, we ask that you be praying for the final approval of our pump house plans from the county, which is a vital step toward occupancy of the building, because of our use of the pump house for fire suppression.

The pump house will be located at the back, Northeast corner of the property near the lake. It will also serve as an equipment storage area



for housing a tractor, lawn equipment, etc. Currently, it is being engineered to the appropriate size for the volume of our lake and our building.

Once the pump house is underway, we will once again issue a call for an old-fashioned roof-raising project—although, this time, the square footage will be a mere fraction of what we have already accomplished on the building itself!

Currently, work also continues apace in the interior of the building!

All drywall, framing, etc., is now complete. The painting of the sanctuary and classrooms is nearing completion, and the main mall area is nearing completion and should be painted soon. Gridwork for drop ceilings has been installed in about half of the building.

Interior doors should be coming in the week of December 5th, after which we will be able to begin hanging them.

Tile work is well underway in the bathrooms, thanks to a large turnout from our expert volunteer tile installation team, led by Cheryl Bayly!

Plumbing throughout the building is complete as well, except for the installation of final plumbing fixtures.

We look forward to our first electrical hook-up in the next several days as well, so please pray that this part of the process goes smoothly and without error, as it will be critical for our move-in. There will also be an HVAC system test in the works soon, for which we would also appreciate your prayers. We are currently waiting for final approval on return air plans for the first and second stories.

Please continue to pray for all these needs, as time is becoming more and more critical as we near the end of the building process. We are nearing the end of a long journey, and there is even more exciting road ahead of us. Praise the Lord!

"Come, thou Long Expected Jesus"



CTW Christmas Concert: Sunday, Dec. 18th, 6:30p.m. @ the S.D.A.

Come, Thou Excited Christmas Worshippers!



by Jeff Thomas

Christmas Music 101 by Sarah French

Christmas music is a big deal. Some people love it, others hate it (one woman in our church, who abhors Christmas music, endured a month of "Christmas Carol Prank Calls" from two of her friends). The ones that love it argue over when to tune up the stereo—before or after Thanksgiving. And the type of Christmas music one embraces can be a source of firm conviction and opinion. That said, I don't lightly tread into the Christmas album review waters.

Some Christmas music recommendations are obvious. If you don't have Good Shepherd Band's album, "Repeat the Sounding Joy", get it pronto. And every home should have a collection of joyfully and thoughtfully sung Christmas hymns. The recommendations contained below are for those desiring something a little new or different.

The first album I recommend is titled "The Essential NOW That's What I Call Christmas." I admit it is reminiscent of the Time-Warner

Christ the Word will be presenting its new Advent Celebration program on Sunday evening, December 18 at 6:30p.m. With the Messiah program being on hiatus until we enter our new building, we have found another great way to celebrate the advent of our King and prepare for the Christmas season. Yes, we said Christmas! There will be no shortage of calling on the name of Christ and celebrating the real reason for the season.

Come worship with us in a program filled with special music by many talented Christ the Word musicians. The program will feature both adult and children's choral ensembles, as well as instrumental soloists, duets, chamber ensembles and the Everlasting Word Band. There

music compilations advertised on late-night television. The cover itself might be enough to send a weak woman running—picture big red letters, trimmed with gold, set atop a lawn of bright Christmas lights. However, that Time-Warner aura is what drew me to it. I spent a good



portion of my freshman year at college with the Totally 80's 2-disc set. I know the value of a good compilation.

I figure, if I'm going to spend money on an album, then I want all the songs to be winners. This album delivers in that regard (minus the Colbie Caillat and Wham! contribu-

will also be plenty of congregational participation as we sing songs of joy in celebration. Scripture readings and a short message will help get us focused on celebrating the birth of the Savior.

Our traditional reception will take place in the SDA fellowship hall. Take a break from rushing around and prepare for what's important this Christmas season.

You'll be glad you did!

tions). Elvis sings "Blue Christmas," Gene Autry croons "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," and Brenda Lee belts out "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree." These are the tracks you put on when you're looking for something fun and familiar to accompany a party featuring tree-

trimming, cookie-decorating, or gingerbread house construction. You don't have to think too hard about these songs. A close second in this category is titled "100 Classic Christmas Songs." However, the sheer size of the album overwhelmed me and certain songs were featured 3-4 times.

On the other end of the spectrum, I recommend "Christmas is Coming: A Tribute to 'A Charlie Brown Christmas'" by the Lori Mechem Quartet. This is the kind of music I grew up with. There are no vocals,

just beautiful instrumentation. This music draws you in and allows for relaxation and reflection without being maudlin or schmaltzy. We'll listen to this while we enjoy the glow of the tree and spend time together in the evenings.

Merry Christmas, and Happy Listening.

What's Up With SemperRef?

by Nick Cole

Three months ago David Bayly and I were discussing a few exciting things happening at Christ The Word Church as we sat in a Caribou Coffee house. David interrupted our conversation at some point with a long pause. I had no idea what to do. I sat there waiting for him to speak, uncertain about what to expect.

After a moment of silence he spoke and asked me what I thought about working with college students. My guess was that he saw Heidi and I as a good fit since I led a college ministry in Bowling Green for three years. We gladly accepted.

One of the big changes that we made with Semper Ref this year is that we wanted it to be located on UT's campus. After all, that is where college students are. UT has become our focus. We meet on Wednesday nights at 6:30 in the



Student Union to hear teaching on the Gospel of Mark.

Apart from hearing the Word, we have evangelism nights where we hit the campus in pairs to discuss the Kingdom of God with UT students. We want to be faithful to this call to preach the Gospel, and we will continue to do this on different occasions. We invite all of you to join us when we do this because there are thousands of students—and about twenty of us! We would love to have you all join us.

In all of this, we have many goals we want to reach. We want SemperRef to be holy, set apart for the Lord. We want the burdened to find rest in the easy yoke of our Savior. We want the lost to be called home. We want God to provide more harvesters because the harvest is plentiful. We want to seek the UT students who left their families to attend school yet cannot find a church that loves Jesus Christ. Pray for us. Pray that we would attain this on UT's campus. Thank you. We love you all.



the Last Laugh!

**CTW Variety Show
Sunday,
New Year's Day
6:30p.m. @ the S.D.A.**

fyi

Advent Fliers Available in the Narthex

Advent means "coming." Advent inaugurates the Christian year and is a time of looking forward to Christmas Day, when we celebrate the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. The faithful of Israel looked forward to the first advent of Jesus, the Messiah. Similarly, we look ahead to Jesus' Second Advent.

For families interested in learning more about or celebrating Advent, we have fliers with more information on the welcome table in the narthex.

Save Your Gently Used Toys

As Christmas gift-giving approaches, perhaps many of you moms will be cleaning out your children's old toys to make way for new ones. The CTW nursery and toddler rooms in our new church will be needing toys! Please consider saving your like-new and "in good working order" toys to donate to the nurseries. To save time for those who will be setting up the nursery, please don't donate toys that as we would say in the olden days, "have seen their better day." Thanks a bunch.

Pastor Hotline Reminder

In an effort to improve our flow of information, CTW obtained a phone number for members of our congregation to call with urgent or important news for the pastoral staff. Let us know when someone goes into the hospital, when a death occurs, when a surgery is planned, or when any other important event takes place which you would like a pastor to know about. The Pastor Hotline number is (419) 318-9298. This number is also listed on the back of the weekly bulletin. Pastors can also be reached via email at pastor@christtheword.com.

CTW Variety Show: "The Last Laugh!"

You are encouraged to come enjoy a hilarious, fun-filled evening of laughter, song, and, well—variety!—with your brothers and sisters in Christ. The 2012 CTW Variety Show: "The Last Laugh" is the place to be on Sunday, January 1, 2012! Everyone is encouraged to enjoy their "normal" New Year's Eve festivities on Saturday night, New Year's Eve 2011, with the hope you can join us on New Year's Day. This final talent show of our sojourn at the SDA building is expected to be a real doozy. Several top-secret acts are already lining up. Be sure not to miss out on the penultimate, quintessential, cosmic enigma of a celebration that our final variety show in the SDA building is destined to become! So, plan on being at the SDA Fellowship Hall at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 1.

Got Something Funny?

We need your funny skits, songs, poetry or whatever for the Last Laugh Variety Show. If you are interested in performing a hilarious act for the show please contact Nick Cole or Ben Byers at tcnick12@gmail.com or bjbyers@gmail.com.

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

You are invited to help prepare your hearts and minds for Christmas with Christ the Word's Christmas program "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 6:30 p.m. This program will feature both congregational and ensemble singing of praises to the advent of our King as well as scripture reading. A reception will follow in the fellowship hall.

Abortion Protest Updates Via Email

It is no secret that God has wonderfully and powerfully blessed our stand against the murder of innocents in our abortion protest ministry at 1160 W. Sylvania Ave. Lives are being saved through our work. Hallelujah! God is forever praised! Though God is working miraculously, this ministry still needs faithful prayer. If you are interested in praying for this ministry and would like a brief weekly email describing the events of our latest protest and containing the most current information, please email: ctwabortionoutreach@gmail.com and type, "Add me to the list" in the subject line. If you have any questions regarding this weekly email, please contact Abbi Bellas.

Prayer requests are now available online! Just go to:
www.christtheword.com
->community links
->prayer list
Then sign in with your password. It's just that easy!

calendar of events

December Calendar

- Dec. 18** **Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
Christmas Concert @ the SDA**
- Dec. 25** **Christmas Morning Service
9:15 a.m. @ the S.D.A.**

Mark Your Calendar

- Jan. 1** **CTW New Year's Variety Show**
- Jan. 7** **Grace Olson Bridal Shower
@ the Walls' home**
- Feb. 17-19** **2012 LWY Winter Retreat**
- Mar. 9-10** **2012 WOW Retreat**