



Bryan's Blurb

Sometimes it's interesting to take a look at the way we view Jesus' birth story. We tend to view it as one continuous story, starting at the very beginning of his life and following all the way through to the end. We see it as a history lesson of sorts, because that's how we view history today as a modern-ish people. We want to know the dates and times. We want to know the "when"s and there "where"s. We want to know the timeline exactly how it happened and it better be 100% accurate or there will repercussions to pay.

We have to keep in mind, though, that ancient peoples didn't really see "history" in that way. They didn't see history as a way to relate a 100% accurate retelling of events complete with a flowchart of all the connections. Their version of history was to tell a story that had meaning; a story that gave people the meaning of what was happening, if not the actuality.

That's why we sometimes see some differences in the way Biblical stories unfold. They all have the same experience from which to write, but they are all interpreting it and presenting it in different ways that made sense and had meaning to the communities they were in. The community that Luke's Gospel was written for was wildly different than the community John's was written for. And then, when you take into account that the earliest of the four Gospels we have in our current Bibles (Mark) was written about 70 years after Jesus' death, so they were probably written by people other than the Apostles themselves, and it becomes clear why there can be some differences.

So, if the purpose of the birth narratives are not to portray the history of facts, what are they meant to tell us? Well, I contend that while they are not meant to tell us "facts", they are meant to tell us "Facts." What facts with a little "f" are supposed to tell us are things like dates and times; the modern view of history. What Facts with the capital "F" are supposed to tell us are things like why this happened and what is the bigger meaning behind it all.

These stories of Christ's birth were written after his crucifixion and death. They are written knowing what was going to happen to that baby born in a manger. So, should the crucifixion to come overshadow the joy that we feel during Christmastime as we celebrate his birth, as we revel in the sweet innocence of that moment? Is our joy in this holiday season just missing the whole point?

No, what the birth of Christ tells is that joy is truly the message of Christmas. God gives us special permission to be joyful in all times and in all situations. Happiness is fleeting and celebrations end, but joy, true joy, is something that sticks with us throughout all of our lives. In pain and suffering, we are given a joy that cannot be taken from us. When we get sick or a loved one dies, when we struggle through life and relationships and work and, well, everything, joy comes alongside us, stays alongside us. Joy grows deeper and more meaningful within us because it is able to exist not despite these things but with these things.

Joy is not fleeting. Joy is not temporary. Joy came into this world and not even death could kill it. Joy came into this world and no earthly power could take it away. Joy came into this world and darkness could not overcome it. Joy came into this world at Christmastime. That is the story of the birth of Christ. It didn't happen on December 25th, but it did happen. It happened not despite the cross, but with the cross. Joy came to us in the babe born in the manger, God's amazing gift that would save us from ourselves and bring us salvation. God gave us joy that can outlast and overcome any storm and is born in our hearts anew every day. We can be joyful when we are happy. We can be joyful when we are sad. We can be joyful at the manger. We can be joyful at the cross. We can be joyful, because that is what Christ's birth brings: the joy of salvation, the joy of new life, the joy of God that is with us, Emmanuel.

Joy comes at Christmas. Joy stays forever. Thanks be to the God of joy. Amen.

Blessings & Peace,

Rev. Bryan Schaefer

ONE CHURCH COUNCIL 11/17/2016

ATTENDANCE: Darryl Pannier, Sue Batchelor, Ruth Ellen Holdman, Pastor Bryan, Sue Crites, Lavonna Biddle, Clara Engleman, Mike Engleman, Ann Smith, Frank Batchelor

The meeting was called to order by Darryl Pannier at 6:03 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Pastor Bryan voiced the opening prayer.

LEARNING: Bishop Schnase's book review was completed. A new book will be started and available at the next One Council regular meeting. How congregations respond in an emergency was discussed. We need to always offer encouragement to each other in the church body. One Church Council's purpose is to be an encouraging body for the church. We are called to encourage our people by 'Just Saying Yes'. The new book will be by our new Bishop Farr, "Get Their Name". The assignment about the mission statement was discussed briefly. The only one submitted was: Beginning, building and encouraging (boosting) disciples.

REPORTING: Minutes were reviewed and corrected. Ruth Ellen made the motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Frank seconded, and motion was carried. No calendar was prepared so the only date added at that time was Hanging of the Greens for the same time on the November 26th as decorating for the float. Pastor will talk to Becky for the time. Ruth Ellen provided the financial report for the month of October including the building. Terry Biddle was not present, so a report for the "memorial fund" will need to be obtained. Sue Crites made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report, and Lavonna seconded it. Sue Crites reported on the treasurer's report for the Trustees. PPR committee has sent in the Pastoral report. Pastor asked for time off from January 2 through January 10th. Motion made by Sue Crites to accept, and Ruth Ellen seconded. Motion carried. Trustees report indicated that the shed door was painted and the garage trimmed. Solar Lights are on the corning. The kitchen wall light outside is not working. David will talk to Richard about it. Trustees will be collecting the leaves. Also reported was a window in the Children's church room was not able to be latched. The lights in the upper church need to be looked at. They are on 24/7. It is hard to adjust the time.

VISIONING: Charge Conference papers were reviewed and changes were made. We need to find a replacement for Becky Hann on the Committee list. Lavonna made a motion to accept the Charge Conference packet as amended, and Frank seconded. Lay Leadership reviewed the Lay Leadership list for jobs/committees not listed on the Charge Conference sheet. A few more were added to be subs and to do the jobs. NOW committee was reviewed. See NOW news in the newsletter. We need to continue to pray for the state of our church and the work to be done.

Pastor reported that we will have a special called church meeting in January where the DS, Rev Leist will present information about our church. Our next regular meeting will be January 19th at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

Ruth Ellen made a motion that the meeting adjourn, and Sue Crites seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Batchelor

Recording Secretary



NOVEMBER 2016 Financial Report



GENERAL BUDGET

Accounts Payable	\$10,986.27
Deposits	\$7,198.80
Checking Balance	\$1,187.95

BUILDING FUND

Deposits	\$2,982.00
Loan Payment	\$2,624.66
Loan Balance	\$253,715.96
Checking Balance	\$2,075.97

NOW NEWS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! 2016 has flown by and 2017 is here. 2016 was a very hard year for the nation. Prayers have flown from our church for friends, family, and the nation. For some of us, we can only offer prayers to fix what is wrong out there and to praise God for the blessings he has bestowed on us. Please don't quit praying now—2017 needs you.

MAPLE KIDS: "Twas the Light Before Christmas" was performed by our Maple Kids and by the choir. Thank you Alex Niswonger for directing our production along with Jane Schnurbusch who was the choir coordinator. Thank you Choir for assisting the Maple Kids in this production. It was a good time for all.

PRAYER GROUP: We have wrapped up the book "Drawing the Circle". In January we will be starting a new book, "How to Pray: The Best of John Wesley on Prayer". We still meet in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 10:30.

With the new year upon us and the pending meeting with the District Superintendent open to the entire church, please pray in earnest for our church.

I am grateful to You, Lord Jesus Christ, that you have established Your church on earth, where You bless me with love and mercy in the Word and the Sacraments. I am grateful that Your Word is proclaimed in our congregation in truth and purity. May the Holy Spirit fill the members of the Maple Church congregation that it may be said of us "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Help me to do my part to keep it so for my own spiritual good. Use Maple Church for the building of Your kingdom on earth. Make Maple Church a power for good in your community, and bless our efforts to bring Your saving Gospel to the unchurched, to the glory of your name. Hear my prayer, O God. Amen.

During this month in Prayer group, we were reminded in the book by Mark Batterson about prayer: The word Prayer often induces feelings of guilt simply because we don't do enough of it or because we feel inept when we don't know what to say. Mark indicated that he went to an Ethiopian worship service where he was unable to understand a word. It was life changing for him. He could not rely on someone else's words. He started worshiping God in spirit and truth. He found his own words to sing. Sometimes lyrics get in the way of worshiping God because someone else is mediating our praise. God wants to hear your voice, your words and your praise. No matter what your "occupation" in life, turn your classroom, boardroom, locker room, operating room, courtroom, and conference room into a prayer room. Prayer is the difference between appointments and divine appointments; between good ideas and God-ideas; the favor of God and the luck of the draw; between closed doors and open doors; possible and impossible; **the best we can do and the best God can do.** Please continue to pray for our prayer list. Continue to pray for our nation, our city, our church, our pastor and the church laity.

SMALL GROUPS: Talk to Frank Batchelor about the Men's study which was to start in January. The Women's Monday night study will begin on 3/13/17 at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Due to popular demand, we will be doing a book by one of our favorite author, Liz Higgs. The book is entitled "31 Verses to Take to Heart". We are all looking forward to it and hope you will join us.

WITNESS: We ask that you look around you in worship each Sunday and if you see someone missing that you normally sit around that you call them and let them know they are missed. Send them a card or give them a call. We have also had some really good "messages" at Wired Wednesday. It is very much supported by those attending Wired Wednesday.

OUTREACH: In December, our outreach project was The Angel Tree Prison Ministry. The Angel Tree is a program of the Prison Fellowship that serves incarcerated parents by providing a pathway for strengthening and restoring their relationships with their children and families. It is an opportunity to share Christ's love with the families of the prisoners. Angel Tree Christmas connects parents in prison with their children through the delivery of Christmas gifts given on the parent's behalf. We (Frank and Sue Batchelor & Dave and Sue Crites) delivered presents with a loving message from the incarcerated parent and also got a chance to share the greatest gift of all—the Good News of Jesus Christ. We hopefully will continue with these children and families throughout the year. We can extend our ministry by inviting them to activities at our church, sending them birthday cards and back to school cards. We can let them know that we love them as Christ loves them. We will be discussing this at our next NOW meeting which is January 17 at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you to all who participated in our Angel Tree project. You are awesome.

We will be packing Hope Seeds on 1/17/17 (3rd Tuesday of the month). Please come and join us at 10:30 AM until 1:30 PM. A light lunch is always served as well. Please come and join us, it is a really good time.

We will be collecting again in March for the Feed my Starving children project in the Blessings basket. We will also need 20 people to sign up to work the day we pack. Look for more information closer to the "packing date" in April.

We were able to send \$350 dollars to the Amen Center this month thanks to the church's generosity. The count for Fish Pantry was 75 for December. Thank you all for your witness to God's blessings. We also had an awesome Christmas Trivia night. We had a lot of fun and the food was really good. We will be having another in February but no date has been chosen yet.

ADDITIONAL DATES IN CHURCH LIFE

FISH FRY—**January 27th, 2017; March 31st, 2017; May 19th, 2017; July 28th, 2017; Sept 29th, 2017; Nov 17th, 2017.**

Fifth Sunday Dinners: **January 29th**—Luau is the theme. Everyone brings pot luck. Upcoming dates: **April 30th, July 30, October 29th, and December 31st** (fun, fun, fun)

Church Mardi Gras celebration—**February 25th**—Saturday. Clara Engelmann is in charge. Look for more details upcoming.

HOPE SEEDS: 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM—3rd Tuesday of each month. Upcoming dates **1/17/17, 2/21/17, 3/21/17, 4/18/17, 5/16/17, 6/20/17, 7/18/17, 8/15/17**

Be there! Look for upcoming activities including another Trivia night in February's newsletter.

A further editorial remark: We need everyone to participate when an activity is sponsored by the church. We need you to be there to support the mission and ministry of our church and church family. We have folks putting in a lot of energy and effort to organize these events, and when you come and help, you not only make Maple Church look good, but you are uplifting to the organizers as well. We know that no one can make every event, but if everyone could come to at least half of them, it will be an enormous help to the future of our church family. We need you at the Youth events, and we need you at the Fish Frys. Please be in prayer about helping us at as **many** events as you can. Thank you!

FAITH CONVERSATIONS

Submitted by Linda Dedert

On December 1, 8, and 15, 2016 we learned about The Baha'i Faith, Celtic Paganism, and The Mormon Faith. For those who missed or was unable to attend, you missed some very interesting presentations and discussions.

Barbara Clements spoke on the tenets of The Baha'i Faith. Annick Burke gave her presentation through Skype on the beliefs of Celtic Paganism. Elders Hermann and Washburn, visiting Mormon missionaries from Colorado and Arizona, respectively, gave a synopsis of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (also known as The Mormon Church).

All four of the Faith Conversations made us all aware of the differences and similarities all these beliefs have. Through the massive amount of notes I was able to take, the telling of all this information would surely fill our newsletter. However, if anyone is interested in a little more information, I would gladly copy my notes for you.

Personally, I very much appreciate all the work Pastor Bryan put into arranging these presentations. I would like to thank all the presenters for taking their time to visit with us. And I would like to thank all those who attended, taking time out of their day, to learn a little more about religions from a different viewpoint than our own.

SUNDAY SERVICE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SUNDAY SCHOOL</u>	<u>SERVICE</u>
12-4	44	85
12-11	31	58
12-18	18	48
12-24 & 25 Christmas	NONE	61 (Eve) +36 (Day) 97
AVERAGE	≈31	72



Your presence is requested for Dinner and Wired Wednesday Worship! Dinner begins at 6:00 PM. Worship begins at 7:00 PM. This worship is laity led. It will be a wonderful time for fellowship and mini midweek worship!!!

WIRED WEDNESDAY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>
12-7	25
12-14	30
12-21	27
AVERAGE	≈27



SUNDAY SCHOOL PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Sunday School Classes: December 4-18

LOYAL AIDERS: Bob Lemons, Ethel Mize, Sue Pewitt, Ann Smith, & Dave Schaffner

BIBLE MONKEYS: Sue Batchelor

YOUTH CLASS: Frank Batchelor

YOUNG ADULT CLASS: Jesse Dunavan



January

BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 6	Mandy Niswonger
Jan. 9	Sharon Williams
Jan. 10	Yvonne Miller
Jan. 11	Robyn Morton
Jan. 11	Carmen Scholl
Jan. 13	Christine Gunnin
Jan. 15	Ruth Ellen Holdman
Jan. 16	Judy Criddle
Jan. 16	Emilie Ticer
Jan. 17	Sadie Jae Middleton
Jan. 17	Jamie Morton
Jan. 18	Reba Enderle
Jan. 22	Buddy Shockley
Jan. 23	Hannah Campbell
Jan. 23	Nicholas Ervin
Jan. 24	Frances Brotherton
Jan. 27	Heather Holdman
Jan. 29	Paul Marberry
Jan. 30	Judy Reilly
Jan. 31	Sarah (Libby) Batchelor
Jan. 31	Charles Ellinghouse

ANNIVERSARIES

Jan. 29 Mark & Susan Ervin

USHERS

Larry & Harriett George

WORSHIP LEADER

Frank Batchelor

COMMUNION

Judy Reilly & Jane Schnurbusch



FISH PANTRY

1 pound dry beans, 1 box corn muffin mix, 1 can beets, 1 can spinach, 2 cans fruit, 1 package cookies or cookie mix

February

BIRTHDAYS

Feb. 1	Addisyn Andrews
Feb. 1	Amanda Radford
Feb. 2	Bradley Main
Feb. 3	Rhonda Campbell
Feb. 3	Wilma Seabaugh
Feb. 4	Taylor Mayberry
Feb. 6	Bryan Schaefer
Feb. 6	Errin Armitage
Feb. 8	Mark Ervin
Feb. 9	Zeta Seabaugh
Feb. 12	Athena Albright
Feb. 12	Rhonda Ray
Feb. 12	Jesse Dunavan
Feb. 13	Richard Biddle
Feb. 15	Johnie Keene
Feb. 17	Terry Biddle
Feb. 18	Clara Engelmann
Feb. 21	Lydia Bunch
Feb. 25	Lucy Scholl
Feb. 28	Mary Pannier

ANNIVERSARIES

Feb. 14 Ronald & Jo Ann Ward

Feb. 14 David & Sue Crites

USHERS

Rodger & Diane Mouser

WORSHIP LEADER

Alex Niswonger

COMMUNION

Gary & Jan Roth



FISH PANTRY

1 large or 2 small cans chicken and dumplings, 1 can green beans, 2 cans fruit, 1 package cookies or cookie mix

Homebound

Verna Bingenheimer

Eleanor Brown

Frieda Clark

Frank Crites

Lee Fee

Atlee Fulbright

Joy Grace

Adon Mann

Mildred Miget

Glema Milligan

Andy & Carol Mouser

Mary Pannier

Wilma Seabaugh

Zeta Seabaugh

Howard Thomas

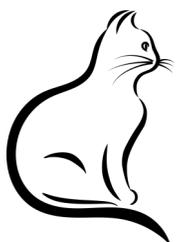
Adele Townsend

Pat Uptain

Pat Williams

Wanda Williamson

Pat (Miller) Williams



AMEN CENTER SUPPLIES NEEDED

laundry detergent, fabric softener (dryer) sheets, body wash (no bar soap), shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, toilet tissue, deodorant, combs and brushes, ketchup, cleaning supplies, paper towels



CHRISTMAS CANDLES 2016

**GIVEN BY****IN HONOR OF****IN MEMORY OF**

GIVEN BY	IN HONOR OF	IN MEMORY OF
Justin & Athena Albright	Bob Lemons	Doris Lemons
Terry Biddle	Rejuvenation Class	
Frances Brotherton		Rev. J.L. & Ollie McElroy (Parents)
Caleb Carter	AFSP Eastern Missouri Chapter, SOLOS, & Maple Church	Craig Mayfield, Jessica Randolph, Anthony Swope, & Nolan Weber
Sam & Mildred Conrad		J.W. & Lena Schattee (Mildred's Parents); L.V. & Naomi Conrad (Sam's Parents)
Juanita Cook		Norma Carrel (Mother)
Day Circle	Iona Williams & Rev. Bryan Schaefer	
David & Sue Crites	Betty Tiley & Sharon Baehr	Roy, Bill, Kenny, Pansy, Imajane, Rebecca, Bill & Alline Boyd, Helen Crites
Linda Dedert	Christopher Dedert (Son)	Stanley Probst (Brother) Paula Cobb Dover (Best Friend)
The Dunavan Family		Daniel Dunavan, PhD
Mike & Clara Engelmann		Willard & Jean Warren Rudy & Verna Engelmann
Margie Ervin	Children, Grand Children, & Great Grand Children	Wilbert "Bud" Ervin
Larry & Harriett George	Their Marriage	Joe Dan Schoolfield, Sharon George, & Edna Weeks
Beverly Hagerty	Edna Kazee (Sister)	
Ruth Ellen Holdman	Brian, Heather, Gavin, & Ashlyn	Larry Holdman & Sylvia Johnson
Bob Lemons	Loyal Aiders & Rev. Bryan Schaefer	
Loyal Aiders Sunday School Class	Bob Lemons	
Ethel Mize	Family, Grandchildren, & Great Grandchildren	Billy Mize (Husband) Mr. & Mrs. James Criddle; Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Mize; Regina Mize; Austin Mize; Paul Criddle; John Kester
Darryl & Ellen Pannier	Mary Pannier Garrett, Natalie, & Jase Pannier Chelsea Pannier Cassidy Pannier Larry & Claudia Pannier	Al Pannier
Mary Pannier	Darryl Pannier, Darron Pannier, & Family	Al Pannier
Judy Reilly	Glenda Mayfield (Mother) & Rev. Bryan Schaefer	Zelma Mayfield (Father)
Gary & Jan Roth		Vernon Roth & Ruth Eichler; Carolyn Monroe (Gary's Sister)
Gary & Karen Schaefer	Rev. Bryan Schaefer	Charles & Bernice Hinkle; Sam & Olivia Schaefer
Jane Schnurbusch		Frank & Mary Harold
Ann Smith	Frank & Sue Batchelor; Steve & Suzi Smith (Children) Jon, Angie L., Matt, & Angie K. Batchelor (Grandchildren) Luke, Clay, Libby, & Jackson Batchelor; SJ Sanders; Ryan & Taylor Mayberry (Great Grandchildren)	Fred Wayne Smith (Husband) Jeff & Mike Smith (Sons) Loyal & Gladys Hood; Fred & Marie Smith (Parents)
Robert & Terry Tripp	Maple Friends	
Iona Williams	Day Circle	Mr. & Mrs. L.L. Dalton, Della Lukow Juanita Popp, Mr. & Mrs. Albert Sebastian, Bill Sebastian, Henry Williams
Pat Williams	Family & Church Family	
Sharon Williams	Spencer, Sam, & Morgan Williams (Children) Nora Williams (Grand Daughter)	Donald E. Jacobs, Sr. (Father) John Williams (Husband)
Ron & Julie Wilson		Dwight Williams

January 2017

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 COMMUNION Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM	2	3 Prayer Group-9:30 AM Choir Practice-6:00 PM	4 Wired Wednesday Worship-6:00 PM	5	6	7
8 Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM	9	10 Prayer Group-9:30 AM Day Circle-2:00 PM Choir Practice-6:00 PM	11 Wired Wednesday Worship-6:00 PM	12	13	14 Men's Club Breakfast-7:30 AM
15 Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM	16	17 Prayer Group-9:30 AM Hope Seeds-10:30 AM NOW Meeting-6:00 PM Choir Practice-6:30 PM	18 Wired Wednesday Worship-6:00 PM	19 One Church Council Meeting-6:00 PM	20	21
22 Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM	23	24 Prayer Group-9:30 AM Choir Practice-6:00 PM	25 Wired Wednesday Worship-6:00 PM	26	27 Fish Fry-4:00 PM	28 RESERVED Dulcimer Workshop 8 AM-8 PM
29 Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM Potluck Dinner-After Service Theme: Luau	30	31 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Prayer Group-9:30 AM Choir Practice-6:00 PM				

2017

February

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 Wired Wednesday Worship-6:00 PM	2	3	4
5 COMMUNION Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM	6	7 Prayer Group-9:30 AM Day Circle-2:00 PM Choir Practice-6:00 PM	8 Wired Wednesday Worship-6:00 PM	9	10	11 Men's Club Breakfast-7:30 AM
12 Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM	13	14 Prayer Group-9:30 AM Hope Seeds-10:30 AM Choir Practice-6:00 PM	15 Wired Wednesday Worship-6:00 PM	16	17	18
19 Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM	20	21 Prayer Group-9:30 AM Choir Practice-6:00 PM	22 Wired Wednesday Worship-6:00 PM	23	24	25 Mardi Gras Celebration
26 Small Group-9:00 AM Worship Service-10:15 AM	27	28 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Prayer Group-9:30 AM Choir Practice-6:00 PM				