

December 2021

Emo Christian Reformed Church



Care & Share

A NOT SO PICTURE-PERFECT CHRISTMAS

By Dr. Marno Retief

Imagine you were given the task of orchestrating the birth of Jesus the Messiah, of getting everything ready and in place for the birth of the Son of God. It's up to you to choose the time, the place, the setting, the people, and all the events leading up to the birth. How would you have gone about this task? Well, for starters, I imagine many of us would have opted for Jesus to be born from a family line with an impeccable reputation. A family where all the ancestors were known for their remarkable virtue and righteousness – people who always obeyed the commandments of God as perfectly as possible. Doesn't that sound great? Add to that, a high social status, and lots and lots of money, and you'd have a picture-perfect family for the Son of God to be born into. The kind of family that would make it onto the cover of any trendy lifestyle magazine. As for the historical timing of the birth, I think many of us would insist on the birth taking place during the era of 24-hour news coverage, since this would allow for maximum media coverage of the event, including breaking news reports from CNN and Fox News. Moreover, the news would soon go viral on social media, creating the kind of buzz you want when some world-changing event occurs. In terms of the place and setting of the birth, we would probably recommend somewhere stylish and elegant, a place which signals royalty and prestige, somewhere like, let's say, Buckingham Palace maybe. Or alternatively, at least one of the most prestigious hospitals in the world, such as Mayo Clinic or Johns Hopkins Hospital. As for Joseph and Mary, they would both be successful business people, with Joseph earning a six-figure salary at some blue-chip company in Silicon Valley, while Mary would be the founder and owner of some upmarket lifestyle brand. Of course, we'd also make sure they have the most divine wedding engagement shoot and make sure they purchase a family home in some brand-new luxury estate. Doesn't this all sound just perfect? Doesn't this sound like the kind of circumstances you would want the Son of God to be born into? But this is not the story we find in the Gospel of Matthew, not even remotely.

Instead, Matthew's story about the birth of Jesus seems much more like the start of some disturbing Stephen King novel. During the opening verses of his gospel, Matthew explains how Joseph, Jesus' adoptive father, has passed on the Davidic lineage to Jesus. Now, of course, King David, despite his faults, was ultimately a good king who enjoyed the approval and favour of God. But in this family tree of Jesus, we also find some questionable characters, people who were known to have a really bad reputation, people whose lives were marked by some seriously sinful and unwise patterns of behaviour. There were bad kings, such as Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Jehoram, Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, and Jeconiah – the character and leadership of these kings was terrible. Neither Jesus, nor his adoptive father, Joseph, enjoyed any benefit whatsoever from being associated with these awful kings.

But it doesn't stop there – even more scandalous is the presence of certain women of ill-repute in Jesus' family tree. There's Tamar who posed as a prostitute in order to seduce her father-in-law, Judah, and consequently became the mother of his twin sons, Perez and Zerah. There's Rahab, a Gentile who worked as a prostitute in Jericho, but ultimately helped Israel conquer Jericho. There's Bathsheba who engaged in an adulterous affair with King David, which contributed to the premature killing of her husband. Talk about having some black sheep in the family! You would think God would have given Jesus a better family tree than this. Surely, our almighty God could have removed all the questionable characters from Jesus' family history. After all, wouldn't giving Jesus a more wholesome family tree have strengthened his claim to being the Messiah? Wouldn't a family tree with only righteous ancestors have served to deepen people's faith in Jesus as Messiah? Yet, for some reason, God didn't. God, in his perfect wisdom, in his perfect knowledge, in his perfect love, justice, and mercy, sovereignly chose to give Jesus this family we read about in Matthew 1. Still, we cannot help but wonder why. Why, God? Why do it like this?

But, as if this problematic family tree weren't bad enough, we discover something even more shocking in the circumstances leading up to Jesus' birth. Mary, who was engaged to Joseph, is found to be pregnant before their marriage and Joseph is not the child's father. As I said, it reads like a Stephen King novel. It makes you want to ask, "What other unsettling surprise is waiting round the corner?" We live in a world where the phenomenon of childbirth outside of marriage is quite common. So, the shock value of this pregnancy may be lost on us. But make no mistake – in the context of first century Israel, many would have viewed Mary's pregnancy as nothing less than scandalous. Now just try and put yourself in Joseph's shoes – imagine how embarrassing this situation must have been for him. Imagine all the plans and dreams he must have had for Mary and himself – plans which now seemed lost forever. What would become of his reputation if he married a woman pregnant with someone else's child? Think of Mary's feelings of shame and embarrassment – all the questions that must have been racing through her mind as well. What would people say if

they found out the child doesn't belong to Joseph? What would her parents say? What would her friends say? What would Joseph say? What would become of her reputation?

Yet, it's in the context of this seemingly scandalous situation that we read about the power and presence of God the Holy Spirit. How do we know this? Verse 18 clearly states that before Mary and Joseph's marriage had taken place, while Mary was still a virgin, "she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit." In other words, think about this: God chooses to perform what many consider to be his greatest miracle – the incarnation of the Son of God – he chooses to perform this miracle in the context of scandal. And, in doing so, God communicates one of the most important truths about God's saving work: God's main priority is a person's salvation, not their reputation. Yes, you read correctly: God's main priority is a person's salvation, not their reputation. This statement made sound strange to us, especially in our social media age, where many people regard their social status and reputation as the most important thing in their lives. Some people go to great lengths to project an image of success and happiness to the world, even making use of so-called reputation management consultants. Did you know there's such a thing as a reputation management consultant? Regardless of any advantages it may have, such reputation management is not God's priority.

When you consider the events surrounding Jesus' birth, the two major characters – Joseph and Mary – are people who, from an outsider's perspective, face the prospect of ending up with bad reputations. When Joseph finds out about Mary's pregnancy, he decides to divorce Mary quietly in order to spare her public shame and humiliation. He knew what many people would say about Mary if they learned the child wasn't his, so he decided to rather say nothing and get a divorce. The use of the word "divorce" might seem strange to us, since they weren't married yet. But in first century Israel, engagement or betrothal was considered legally binding – in fact, it was so binding that you had to get a divorce if you wanted to break off the engagement. I'll say something about why Joseph felt compelled to divorce Mary a bit later. In any event, Joseph was willing to risk having a bad reputation since he must have known divorcing his pregnant fiancée would be viewed as scandalous behaviour on his part. Of course, Mary also had to deal with the prospect of a bad reputation. She had to deal with the fact that Joseph thought she was pregnant due to infidelity. Moreover, she had to prepare herself for the possibility of being a divorced woman and a single mother in a society where women were marginalised even in the best of circumstances. Yet, when planning the events of Jesus' birth, God knew Joseph and Mary would face the reality and risk of bad reputations. But he also knew his plan of salvation through his Son, Jesus, was infinitely more important than the reputation of anyone involved in the story of Jesus' birth. God's priority is a person's salvation, not their reputation.

Upon learning of Mary's pregnancy, Joseph is angry. He feels betrayed. As a righteous man, he knew Jewish law allowed a man to get divorced if the man was convinced there was some form of indecency in her. From the narrative, it's clear that Joseph initially believed Mary's pregnancy was due to sexual infidelity on her part. Accordingly, in Joseph's mind, divorcing Mary would be the right thing to do – divorcing Mary would be doing righteousness. But the Lord intervenes – an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream and commands him to take Mary as his wife, emphasising that the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. After waking up from his dream, Joseph obeys the command – he takes Mary as his wife. Where Joseph originally thought doing righteousness would be to divorce Mary, the Lord reveals that, in this instance, doing righteousness demands taking Mary as his wife. This teaches us another important aspect of God's saving work: God's righteousness doesn't always look like we think it should.

As God the Holy Spirit guides you in the various aspects of your life, sometimes doing the right thing might appear like the wrong thing to outsiders. I'm quite sure many Jews in Joseph's day would have felt divorcing Mary was the only righteous course of action for Joseph to follow. Yet, Joseph learned the important lesson that God's righteousness sometimes looks quite different to what we imagined it would. Are you facing some important decision in your life, a decision where you are struggling to discern the will of God? You must know that people won't always understand your decision. But once you've studied the Word of God about the issue, prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and come to a decision which you believe is in line with God's will, then you must feel free to follow that course of action, regardless of the criticism you receive. You must discern God's will in your particular situation, like Joseph did. Doing righteousness won't necessarily look the same the same in each person's life. Your decision might appear irrational or even sinful to some people but doing righteousness according to God's guidance in your life is much more important than anybody's opinion of you.

Getting back to the angel's command to Joseph, you'll notice how the angel didn't only command Joseph to take Mary as his wife, he also commanded Joseph to call the baby Jesus. The angel revealed Mary was going to have a son and the reason for calling him Jesus is the fact that "he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21c, NLT). The name Jesus is derived from the Hebrew name Yehoshua, which basically means "God saves" or "God is salvation." If there's anything that Jesus' birth teaches us, it's the fact that God is the one who saves. And maybe that's precisely why the events leading up to Jesus' birth are far from ideal. Maybe that's why God allowed Jesus' birth to take place in circumstances many people would regard as scandalous. By sending his Son into such a chaotic situation, God sends us a clear message: It's God who saves.

We are not saved by our clever plans, we are not saved by our best efforts, we are not saved by our social status, nor our family ties, nor our material wealth – we are saved by the grace of God alone. This central teaching of Scripture is a central part of our Reformed faith. We should never imagine God's work of salvation in our lives is due to something special we've done or because of some wonderful spiritual or moral work we've performed. Whether before or after our conversion to Christ, everything we receive from God is given as a gift, even our ability to believe. As Paul puts it in his letter to the church in Ephesus, "God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God" (Eph. 2:8, NLT). As followers of Jesus, our lives have been forever changed because of the gracious action of God in our lives. God and God alone deserves the glory for that.

After describing the angel's appearance to Joseph, Matthew goes on to quote Isaiah 7:14, which mentions that a virgin will conceive and bear a son, but also – importantly – it declares that the child will be called Immanuel. Matthew remarks that Immanuel means "God with us." Isn't it paradoxical or even strange how Matthew notes that "all of this," meaning everything leading up to Jesus' birth – including the things we'd consider as scandalous – all of this fulfils Isaiah's prophecy about Immanuel, about "God with us"? I say paradoxical, since how could anyone looking from the outside have detected the presence of God in any of this? I mean: Where is God in a family tree with so people of bad reputation? Where is God in the situation of teenage Mary becoming pregnant before marriage? Where is God in the situation of Joseph whose fiancée is pregnant with a child that doesn't belong to him? Where is God in a relationship that almost ends in divorce? Where is God in any of this? Where is God? The surprising answer is he is right there. He is present in the midst of all this chaos.

And maybe that's a message you also need to hear. You might find yourself in a situation that seems so messy – not just to you, even the people around you think your life is in disarray. Maybe it's your marriage, maybe a friendship that's gone wrong, maybe your business is struggling – maybe it's a combination of these things or something entirely different. But you're finding it extremely hard to see God in any of it. Well, part of the message of Christmas is that can be and often is present in such messy situations. God is with you, despite the fact that it doesn't look that way or feel that way.

But, you know, there's something else that really grabs me about the story of Jesus' birth. After everything Joseph and Mary went through, after all the scandal and embarrassment, after all the fear and uncertainty, out of this messy situation, the power of the Holy Spirit brings forth the gift of Jesus. Yes, Jesus – the one who came to save his people from their sins, the one who came to

save Israel – this Jesus is born out of a situation that many would have considered hopeless. The birth of Jesus brings hope to a hopeless situation. As the Gospel of John testifies about Jesus, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it” (John 1:5, NLT). Through his life and ministry – and especially through his death and resurrection – he brings hope to all who believe in him! Growing up, there was a song I sometimes heard in church, a song written by Bill and Gloria Gaither, called “Something Beautiful” and the words of the song continue to resonate with me up to the present day:

Something beautiful, something good
All my confusion He understood
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife
But he made something beautiful of my life

I believe the grace of God can do the same in your life, but you need to trust in Jesus Christ. You need to trust in Jesus’ work of salvation. Jesus was willing to take the ultimate scandal on himself, without any regard for his reputation, by letting himself be killed on a cross for the sake of our salvation. For many people, the cross of Christ remains nothing but a scandal and a source of embarrassment. They’re unwilling to accept that God chose to perform his work of salvation in such a way. As Paul remarks in his First Letter to the Corinthians, “So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense” (1 Cor. 1:23, NLT). Yet, as I said earlier in the message, God’s way of righteousness doesn’t necessarily look like we think it should. In fact, it might not make sense to us at all. Once again, Paul summarises this so well when he writes to the church in Corinth, “But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God’s weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength” (1 Cor. 1:24-25, NLT). Is the scandal of the cross too embarrassing for you? Have you chosen to ignore it or reject it? Or will you embrace the scandal of the cross and put your trust in the one who was willing to have a bad reputation for the sake of your salvation?

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

From the book, "The Heart of Christmas", written by Rich Warren:

We spend most of our Christmas season searching for the perfect gift, the bargains, and the ideal decorations. Many people missed the very first Christmas because they were too busy looking for other things. The innkeeper missed the very first Christmas.... Religious leaders missed the first Christmas, because they were looking at other things. The only people who enjoyed the very first Christmas, nearly two thousand years ago, were the people who were looking for it.

Angels: "You'll find the baby....lying in the manger."

Shepherds: "Let's go and see!" (Luke 2:12,15).

The shepherds found Jesus because they were searching. And later, another group, the wise men, found Jesus because they were looking for Him too.

Wise men came from the East, asking, "Where is the baby.....?" We have come to worship Him." (Matt.2:1-2)

What are you going to find this Christmas? You'll find what you are looking for.

Our church calendar year has come to an end and we are now in the time of Advent. Advent is a time of waiting and reflection. Yes, we are waiting for so many things. We learned that this summer when we were waiting for rain. And then it all turned around. Cows were grazing till almost mid-November. God is working and teaching us to lean on him. This is also a busy time with Christmas preparations (baking, family get together, etc.) We have a lot on our minds but first should be the message of Jesus being born in Bethlehem's stall. Christmas is the most romanticized Christian remembrance day. The television commercials show us enough of what the "holidays" mean for the majority of our society. May our Christmas differ from the getting and buying spirit. Let us be filled with the gift of Jesus' birth.

A huge thank you to the church family for all the love, support, phone calls and words of condolences during this time of loss. Many knew Ted and the memories that are being shared with us has helped with this grieving process. Once again thank you to you all. Everything you have done has eased our hearts and sorrow.. God bless all of you.

Love, John, Kay, Turner, Morgan and Maddy.

Please pray for Cathie Sinninghe. She received the news this week that the surgery she had on her foot a while ago was not successful. She will need another surgery in the future.

There are many in our church family who are not feeling well, whether that be physical, emotional, relational, etc. Let us keep each other in prayer.

Congratulations to Geneva Veldhuisen who became a Canadian citizen this past week. You were always a part of us, now it is official 😊.

We praise God with Dr. Marno Retief and Prof. Rantoa Letsosa who were this week that their article, "Models of disability: A brief overview," published in the academic journal HTS Theological Studies, has won the AOSIS Laureatus Award for most cited article in theological and religious studies in the AOSIS scholarly domain (this time for the 2020 publishing period). This makes it the second year in a row they have won this award. Thanks be to God for making this possible. Glory to God alone - Soli Deo Gloria

The Dorcas Society would like to thank everyone for their support with the Stampot Supper and the dessert fundraiser at our recent congregational meeting. It is all so very much appreciated.

At the congregational meeting held this past week, I was overjoyed to hear about the new (used) organ which we will receive for free from the Presbyterian Church in Fort Frances. Thank you to those who have arranged this and will be moving it to our building.

Please note that the new email address for Archie and Eleanor Wiersema was not printed correctly in the November Care & Share. Their correct email address is archiewiersema@gmail.com.

Our seniors celebrating their birthday in December are Janice Wiersema on the 4th, Hilda Schryvershof and Eltjo Wiersema on the 7th, Peter Van Heyst on the 12th and Darlene Byma on the 30th.

Celebrating anniversaries in December are Larry & Dove Stahn (32nd on the 10th), Henry & Thea Kaemingh (63rd on the 19th) and Louis & Darlene Byma (47th on the 27th).

Thought for the month:

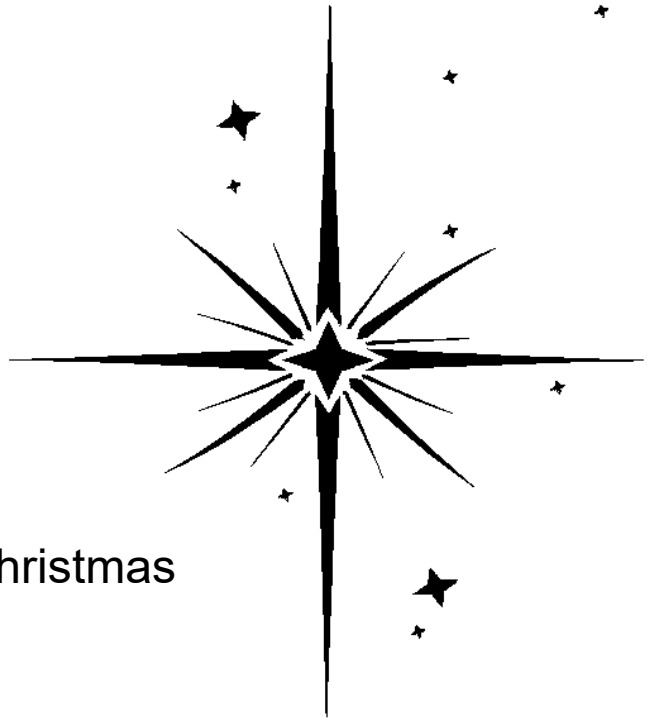
If our greatest need had been knowledge, God have would have sent us an educator.

If our greatest need had been money, He would have sent us an economist.

If our greatest need had been technology, He would have sent us a scientist.

But since our greatest need was forgiveness, God sent a Saviour, Jesus Christ.

This Christmas, let us offer Him the only gifts he desires: our worship, our love, our life. God bless you!



Love Came Down At Christmas

Love came down at Christmas
Love incarnate love divine
Love was born at Christmas
Star and angels gave the sign

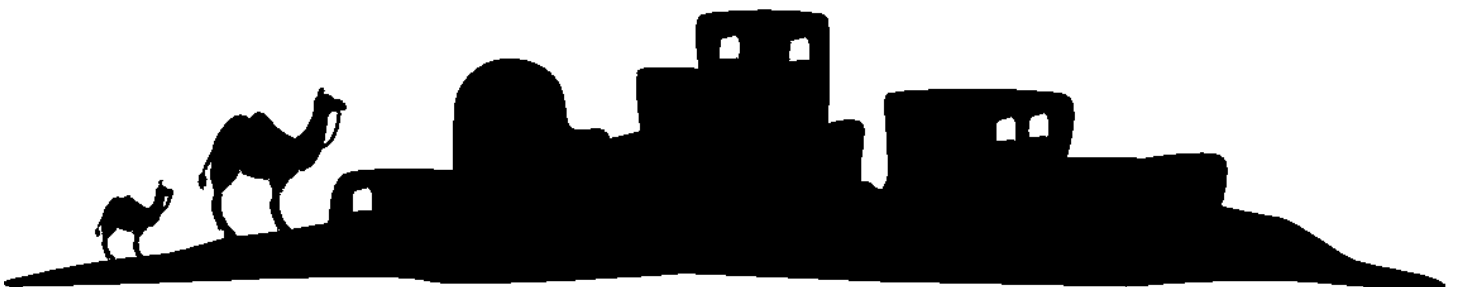
Emmanuel our God with us
Emmanuel our hope our trust

Love shall be our token
Love be yours and love be mine
Love to God and neighbour
Love for plea and gift and sign

Emmanuel our God with us
Emmanuel our hope our trust

Worship we the God head
Worship we the God head
Worship we the God head
Love divine

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Name: _____ Date: _____

The First Christmas

Word Search

DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the
vocabulary words in
the grid. Look for
them in all directions
including backwards
and diagonally.

ADVENT
ANGEL
BABY
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSING
EAST
FAITH
FRANKINCENSE
GIFTS
GOLD
HOLY SPIRIT



HOPE	MYRRH
JESUS	NATIVITY
JOSEPH	NAZARETH
JOY	REJOICE
LORD	SAVIOR
LOVE	SHEPHERD
MAGI	STABLE
MANGER	STAR
MARY	THREE KINGS
MIRACLE	WISE MEN



December

	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalms	Proverbs
<input type="checkbox"/> 01	Daniel 8:1-27	1 John 2:1-17	Psalms 120:1-7	Proverbs 28:25-26
<input type="checkbox"/> 02	Daniel 9:1-11:1	1 John 2:18-3:6	Psalms 121:1-8	Proverbs 28:27-28
<input type="checkbox"/> 03	Daniel 11:2-35	1 John 3:7-24	Psalms 122:1-9	Proverbs 29:1
<input type="checkbox"/> 04	Daniel 11:36-12:13	1 John 4:1-21	Psalms 123:1-4	Proverbs 29:2-4
<input type="checkbox"/> 05	Hosea 1:1-3:5	1 John 5:1-21	Psalms 124:1-8	Proverbs 29:5-8
<input type="checkbox"/> 06	Hosea 4:1-5:15	2 John 1:1-13	Psalms 125:1-5	Proverbs 29:9-11
<input type="checkbox"/> 07	Hosea 6:1-9:17	3 John 1:1-15	Psalms 126:1-6	Proverbs 29:12-14
<input type="checkbox"/> 08	Hosea 10:1-14:9	Jude 1:1-25	Psalms 127:1-5	Proverbs 29:15-17
<input type="checkbox"/> 09	Joel 1:1-3:21	Revelation 1:1-20	Psalms 128:1-6	Proverbs 29:18
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	Amos 1:1-3:15	Revelation 2:1-17	Psalms 129:1-8	Proverbs 29:19-20
<input type="checkbox"/> 11	Amos 4:1-6:14	Revelation 2:18-3:6	Psalms 130:1-8	Proverbs 29:21-22
<input type="checkbox"/> 12	Amos 7:1-9:15	Revelation 3:7-22	Psalms 131:1-3	Proverbs 29:23
<input type="checkbox"/> 13	Obadiah 1:1-21	Revelation 4:1-11	Psalms 132:1-18	Proverbs 29:24-25
<input type="checkbox"/> 14	Jonah 1:1-4:11	Revelation 5:1-14	Psalms 133:1-3	Proverbs 29:26-27
<input type="checkbox"/> 15	Micah 1:1-4:13	Revelation 6:1-17	Psalms 134:1-3	Proverbs 30:1-4
<input type="checkbox"/> 16	Micah 5:1-7:20	Revelation 7:1-17	Psalms 135:1-21	Proverbs 30:5-6
<input type="checkbox"/> 17	Nahum 1:1-3:19	Revelation 8:1-13	Psalms 136:1-26	Proverbs 30:7-9
<input type="checkbox"/> 18	Habakkuk 1:1-3:19	Revelation 9:1-21	Psalms 137:1-9	Proverbs 30:10
<input type="checkbox"/> 19	Zephaniah 1:1-3:20	Revelation 10:1-11	Psalms 138:1-8	Proverbs 30:11-14
<input type="checkbox"/> 20	Haggai 1:1-2:23	Revelation 11:1-19	Psalms 139:1-24	Proverbs 30:15-16
<input type="checkbox"/> 21	Zechariah 1:1-21	Revelation 12:1-17	Psalms 140:1-13	Proverbs 30:17
<input type="checkbox"/> 22	Zechariah 2:1-3:10	Revelation 13:1-13:18	Psalms 141:1-10	Proverbs 30:18-20
<input type="checkbox"/> 23	Zechariah 4:1-5:11	Revelation 14:1-20	Psalms 142:1-7	Proverbs 30:21-23
<input type="checkbox"/> 24	Zechariah 6:1-7:14	Revelation 15:1-8	Psalms 143:1-12	Proverbs 30:24-28
<input type="checkbox"/> 25	Zechariah 8:1-23	Revelation 16:1-21	Psalms 144:1-15	Proverbs 30:29-31
<input type="checkbox"/> 26	Zechariah 9:1-17	Revelation 17:1-18	Psalms 145:1-21	Proverbs 30:32
<input type="checkbox"/> 27	Zechariah 10:1-11:17	Revelation 18:1-24	Psalms 146:1-10	Proverbs 30:33
<input type="checkbox"/> 28	Zechariah 12:1-13:9	Revelation 19:1-21	Psalms 147:1-20	Proverbs 31:1-7
<input type="checkbox"/> 29	Zechariah 14:1-21	Revelation 20:1-15	Psalms 148:1-14	Proverbs 31:8-9
<input type="checkbox"/> 30	Malachi 1:1-2:17	Revelation 21:1-27	Psalms 149:1-9	Proverbs 31:10-24
<input type="checkbox"/> 31	Malachi 3:1-4:6	Revelation 22:1-21	Psalms 150:1-6	Proverbs 31:25-31

"For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light!" (Psalm 36:9).

November 2021

Greetings from Mark & Tina Mast

God is so GOOD! Wow! What a wonderful ride 2021 has been! We have so much to thank the Lord for! He has been faithful to open countless doors of ministry even in the midst of perceived "limitations." On a daily basis we encounter hearts that are receptive to the Gospel. **"Divine Appointments"** abound! **Thank You Jesus!**

Guatemala Bound!! After 19 months of being unable to take **"Guatemala Outreach"** teams to Guatemala, Mark received a "green light" last week. He quickly put together a group of 7 people to **"GO!"** from **November 16-24**. The team will be helping construct the new **"Grace, Love and Mercy Church"** which is located on the campus of IDS school that has now completed 3 years of instructing impoverished children. **"GO!"** will also build homes and conduct many Bible Schools, preach at churches and minister at dumps. Please pray that the Lord is exalted and magnified!

Apples of Gold! Please pray for the weekly **discipleship gatherings** that Tina and Rachel are hosting for girls from the Rainy River District. Ask the Lord to create a hunger and eagerness to hear and receive the Truth of the Bible.

Zoom! Even though worship services and prayer meetings have resumed at churches, we continue to broadcast them by way of Zoom so those who are unable to attend in person can still participate online. This platform continues to be a very effective way to serve area churches and the broader Christian community. Drop in for a visit! Please pray!

House of Bethel is almost completed. The **"Holy Ground"** in Miryalaguda City, India that was purchased in 2020 now is home to a beautiful orphanage that will soon accommodate 50 precious little girls who were rescued from the streets of India. It is a miracle what the Lord has done! Please pray for Pastor Elijah & Sunitha and their team.

Pikangikum First Nation remains under very restrictive COVID measures and we are presently unable to return. Mark uses social media to connect with many. Pray that believers will be strengthened and nurtured in their faith. Pray that the evil one is restrained. Pray that many come to saving faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Border EFC recently decided to move forward with plans to construct a **"multi-purpose worship center"** to replace the nearly 100-year-old church that has served as a house of worship for so many decades. Mark has pastored this small country church in Minnesota for over 20 years. Pray for the Lord's favor/blessing as we move forward in faith.

What a **Mighty God** we serve! **Thank the Lord** for countless ways He is blessing the ministry He has given us.

Thank you for the wonderful support that you are to us! The encouragement that you have been to us in ministry this past year has truly been our lifeline. We are grateful for the partnership we share and the countless ways you join us in what God is doing! We are so thankful for your prayers and financial support. **May the Lord bless YOU!**

Though this is a little early, we also wish you a **Blessed Thanksgiving**, a **Merry Christmas** and a **Joyous New Year!**

Looking to Jesus, Mark & Tina Mast

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Email address: masts@bell.net
Web site: www.onehoperrainyriver.ca

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Click the **"Donate Now"** tab on the upper right hand corner. Choose to donate from the **"USA"** or **"Canada"**.

Please be sure to indicate that your gift is for **"Mark & Tina Mast"** in the designation box.



December

2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 Janice Wiersema
5 Timon Kaemingk Donna Sinninghe Alexa Veldhuisen 10:00 WORSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL	6 Jackson Arpin DORCAS	7 Leni Kaemingh Jessica Marissen Hilda Schryvershof Eljo Wiersema 7:00 COUNCIL	8	9 Luke Esselink	10 Dan Veldhuisen *Larry & Dove Stahn (32nd)	11 Emma Kaemingh
12 Peter Van Heyst 10:00 WORSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL	13	14	15	16	17	18 Tina Geerdink Dwight Stang
19 Kerrilyn Esselink *Henry & Thea Kaemingh (63rd) 10:00 WORSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL	20	21	22	23	24 Kari Lemelin Paiton Veldhuisen	25  CHRISTMAS DAY 10:00 WORSHIP
26 10:00 WORSHIP	27 Theo deGroot (Snr.) *Louis & Darlene Byma (47th)	28	29 Grace Kooistra	30 Darlene Byma	31 Mindy Van Zwol	