

THE SPIRE

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 10

DECEMBER 2014



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

God states through the prophet Isaiah that God's ways are not humans' (55:8-9), a point well illustrated when we examine the background of Jesus' birth. Jesus was born to a family who were either peasants or those clinging to the lowest rung of what we might charitably call lower middle class. It's not a favorable lineage, socio-economically at least, in comparison to the royal stock of Buddhism's founder, Gautama, or the moneyed mercantile background of Islam's Muhammad. In human understanding, God could have raised the bar had Jesus been born to the Roman Emperor Augustus, under whose reign our Messiah slipped into human existence without fanfare or the greater world's knowledge. Or had he been sired by Roman citizens of prestige and power, a man, for instance who governed a Roman province, or served in the Roman Senate.

The problem of Jesus' birth extends beyond his familial background. The thought that Jesus was born in the Roman Province of Judea must have sent shivers down the spine of any upwardly mobile individual, in the Graeco Roman World, who believed that geography made the man or the woman. Judea was simply the "wrong side of the tracks", and any Roman governor worth his salt tried to avoid being sent there, to oversee a hostile land where Roman benefits—embraced readily by other provinces—were despised. To make matters worse, geographical hierarchy existed within the country itself. It was thought that the

region of Galilee, where Jesus grew up, and began his ministry, was a religiously barbarous area where few Jews observed Torah law or attended synagogue on a regular basis. Galileans had a funny accent, too, which evoked invidious comparisons between the cultured Jews of Jerusalem and their cracker barren brethren 'up north'.

There is one other hierarchical distinction of note. It was thought that Jesus' hometown, Nazareth, was particularly suspect, even in lowly Galilee itself. Perhaps the problem was religious laxness, or the fact that Nazareans most likely conducted business in the pagan city of Sepphoris, less than 10 miles north. In the Gospel of John, Jesus' disciple Philip encounters one Nathanael in the town of Bethsaida by the Sea of Galilee. I think we can assume that Nathanael himself was Galilean. When Philip notes that he has found the messiah, Nathanael replies, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (1:46)

Suffice it to say, that Jesus, by dint of his family and geographical background, would hardly have been considered Messiah material in the greater Graeco Roman world. The Apostle Paul can talk about the scandal of Jesus' ignominious death on a cross as "a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to Gentiles" (1Corinthians 1:23). I think his words are appropriate also with regard to Jesus' birth.

(Continued on page 2)

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What was behind God's plan to locate Jesus among the least of the very least? Perhaps it was to show us that the Christ child comes to us when we are feeling terribly small and marginalized. Perhaps Jesus stands as guarantor that God's plans for our wonderful destinies as individuals and as a believing church are not impeded by the judgments of the world. Perhaps the Christmas story reminds that the greatest of miracles in our lives are removed from the world's scrutiny and negative judgment.

May we delight in the secret ways in which the Christ Child enters our lives. May we, light the angels, sing out, "Glory to God in the Highest."

In Christ's service,

Doc Bob



Mission News! Rebecca Masters, Chair

While we continue to emphasize supporting our local agencies and community members, many people have expressed concerns about the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Therefore the mission of the month for December is **Doctors Without Borders**. This organization is highly rated and was also recommended by a woman who works for the State Department . She says most of the money goes to direct service. These individuals take their own time to do real hands on service and know exactly what is needed (for example some organizations are sending rubber gloves, but they aren't the right thickness, so they can't be used).

Speaking of highly rated charitable organizations, did you ever wonder how much of your donation goes to programs

and how much goes to administration and advertising? Web sites like The Charity Navigator can be a helpful way to start. The Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse (which is the organization that organizes the Operation Christmas Child shoe box gifts among many other things) and Doctors Without Borders (aka Médecins Sans Frontière) are ones that are very highly rated. More than 90% of their income goes directly to services.

Our clothing shed does triple duty! Not only does the shed bring us over \$100 a month , on average, the clothing then gets distributed to people in need throughout the US and overseas. Occasionally people put things in the shed that do not belong. If it is usable, we give it to the Women's Guild for their sales. A bunch of almost new small suitcases were left and those were donated to the emergency shelter for women and children. They often have to pack up at very short notice.

THANK YOU to Linda Caddy, Kathy Jansen (aka RUTH) , Cindy Sumerano and Debbie Tucker for their time and effort! Thanks to those of you who gave suggestions, too. We will continue to follow up.

Women's Guild

The pecans have arrived. If you haven't already picked yours up you can do so after church or if you didn't place an order fear not as we ordered a few extra. Please see Shirley Burns or Natalie Woodard to purchase your 1 lb bag of plain, a 12 oz bag of chocolate or dark chocolate covered, a 10 oz bag of cinnamon or chocolate clusters and an 8 oz bag of glazed at the low price of \$9 a bag. They make great stocking stuffers! Thank you for your support!

Thank you to everyone that baked or purchased a baked good item during the Election Day Dinner. We appreciate your help & support! Thanks to Kathy Hauck for chairing this event.

Winter is upon us. The air is crisp, the leaves
have fallen and the snow is threatening.
Yet still the gardens are inviting. The love of
our Lord is with us as we prepare to celebrate
his birth. The trees and wreath are proud symbols
of the holiday and the gift of Jesus within our hearts.

He is born unto us and is held close
in our hearts until we meet Him in paradise.

Our eternal family is quietly growing.
We say goodbye yet know we will be together again.
Please come, visit those whom have passed before
us and honor them by feeling their peace.

May the blessings of Christmas fill your heart.

STICKLEY GARDENS

FOR MORE INFORMATION – CONTACT ANY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

LISA LONGTO (331-1438) CHAIRPERSON
JIM PIRRO (383-0079) TREASURER
ESTHER STICKLEY (331-2919)
SANDIE GREGORY (338-7626)
DIANA CLINE (338-7276)
REV STICKLEY, SECRETARY

A SACRED PLACE OF BEAUTY AND CONTEMPLATION.
(LOCATED ON THE SOUTH LAWN OF THE CHURCH)

Thanks to everyone that brought in a box for Operation Christmas Child. Some folks took a box & when the box was returned there was enough to fill another box. If you didn't return your box please do so at any time to Sandie Gregory. These boxes are purchased by donation and we will use them next year. This year we filled 92 boxes. WOW!! Thank you for such a great response!! The expense to mail these boxes to the different parts of the world was donated this year. Thank you to everyone that made this special project a great annual activity! We couldn't have done it without all of our elves!!

The Cookie Walk time is just around the corner. This will be held on 12/14 right after church. When you come into hall during coffee hour just pick up an empty cookie box & go down the tables & let the ladies put in for you whatever type of cookies that you like. We have dozens of cookies but we always sell out so hurry out of church before your favorites are all gone. This fund raiser wouldn't be possible without all of our bakers. Thank you to everyone that bakes year after year for us!! We appreciate everyone's support!! Thanks to Ellen Richards for chairing this event.

Our calendar of events:

12/13 Setup for the Cookie Walk at 9:30am
12/14 Cookie Walk

Merry Christmas & a Happy & Healthy New Year,

Sandy Emrich-President

It's that time again!

Once again, it's time to place your orders for poinsettia plants to adorn the sanctuary for the Holiday Season.



Plants are one size, one color, and one price:
Red at \$10.00 each

POINSETTIAS

Number of plants: _____ @ \$10.00 each

_____ Total due

Name: _____

Phone: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

We are requesting that you take your plant home or deliver it to someone special.

Make Checks Payable to: **HRC Women's Guild**
Give to Shirley Ruth after worship or mail to:
215 Grandview Terrace, Hurley, NY 12443

Payment must be received by December 5, 2014

Thank you:

Dear Dr. Gram and the Hurley Reformed Church congregation:

Thank you so much for your prayers, words of encouragement, and the wonderful cards. The support and friendship was so needed and will never be forgotten,

Sincerely,

Mimi Croswell

Turkey Soup Sale

December 7, 2014

After Church

\$7.00 a quart

See Dennis

Adopted Family & Warming Shelter

Donations Tree

Please **TAKE A TAG & SHOP**

Please don't wrap the item, simply attach the tag to your item and place it under the tree.

All donations are requested
under the tree by **12/14/14**.
Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Merry Christmas

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Holiday Open House
at the Parsonage
Sunday, December
14,
2:00—6:00 pm
Please come and
share a bit of eggnog
and fellowship

The True Meaning of Christmas

Jesus Christ was born this day
So many years before
We celebrate this joyous time
Reflecting on His birth
Not born in a mansion, but a stable
He came so He could identify
With the human heart of man
And gave His life as a sacrifice
Offering a better plan
A plan that reconciles us back
To our loving Father God
Bringing hope and redemption from
Sins ruling iron rod
For this is the only reason that we
Should celebrate this day
To become focused on anything else
Would take the meaning away
So let's arise with joy in our hearts
And share it with everyone

The meaning of Christmas will always be
The birth of Jesus - God's son

DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

Coty Burgess	2	Rich Little	11
Toni Hedges	2	Jennifer Mayfield	14
Pat Baker	4	Linda Moon	16
Susan Hutton	4	Lauren Rubino	16
Thomas Horvers	5	Delaney Cox	17
Mary O'Dell	5	Jamie Hopper	20
Micaela Ryan	5	Mary Lou Vogt	20
Hall Hauck	6	Brian Rafferty	22
Caitlin Decker	7	Kathleen Pfeiffer	23
Joyce Ann Leverenz	7	Avery Herzog	24
Brent Jordan	11	Don Kent	25
William Rockwell	11	Jim Prentice	27
Renee Nekos	11	Bill Baldinger	28
		Lia Sumerano	28
		Megan Christiana	28
		Frieda Constant	29

Dawn O'Brien	29
Florence Prehn	29
Judy Horvers	30
Jada Nekos	30
David Szekeres	30
Alyson Rafferty	31
Daniel Waligurski	31

ANNIVERSARIES

Nancy & Rick Saltzmann	15
Barbara & Jim Mayfield	19
Steve & Kristen Helm	21
Clarence & Faye Jansen	27

Christmas Joys

Evergreen boughs that fill our homes
With fragrant Christmas scents,
Hearts filled with the loving glow
That Christmas represents;

Christmas cookies, turkeys stuffed,
Festive holly berry,
Little faces bright with joy,
Loved ones being merry;

Parties, songs, beribboned gifts,
Silver bells that tinkle,
Christmas trees and ornaments,
Colorful lights that twinkle;

Relatives waiting with open arms
To smile and hug and kiss us;
These are some of the special joys
That come along with Christmas.



By Joanna Fuchs

News Bytes

Information you should know ; Opportunities for Fellowship.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Events for December

December 7 Meeting

December 12 Caroling/Cookie Box/Sleepover

December 20 Pageant Rehearsal

December 21 Christmas Pageant

Christine Henning



Women's Ministries

The women of this committee are super excited in the planning of our "Outreach Program". We are also happy to have Rev. Gram on board giving us direction and spiritual guidance. We plan to not only do what we can for our own church family; but to also be of service to our community. While I am recovering from surgery, Nancy Sweeney is sitting in for me. The Members are: Helen Sgroi, Shirley Ruth, Pat Baker, Lori Baker, Marilyn More, Carla Paton, Joyce Pinckney, Linda Dux, Roberta Falatyn, Ellen Richards. Please join us, whether you are a member or not! For a while we will be having meetings when we can. The next one: Nov. 30, after service.



Men's Life Group is a monthly meeting on the third Wednesday held from 7 to 8 PM. All men are welcome and if you would like to invite a friend, who is not a member of our congregation, please feel free to do so. The group examines a large range of topics through a faith perspective.



Hurley Reformed Church

Dec 2014 (Eastern Time)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>30</div> <div>11am - Basket</div> <div>5pm - Dog Training</div> <div>7pm - Little League</div> <div>7:30pm - Al-Anon @</div>	<div>1</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>4pm - Hurley Purlers</div> <div>4:30pm - PC 101 @</div> <div>7pm - Bible Study @</div> <div>7pm - Boy Scouts</div>	<div>2</div> <div>7:30am - Bible</div> <div>5:30pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Cub Scout</div> <div>6pm - Den 1 Bears @</div> <div>6:30pm - Girl Scout</div> <div>7pm - Boy Scouts</div> <div>7:45pm - Bagpiper</div>	<div>3</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>1:30pm - Hurley</div> <div>3pm - Quilting @</div> <div>4:45pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Overeaters</div> <div>7:30pm - 1st Capitol</div> <div>7:30pm - Choir</div>	<div>4</div> <div>6pm - Youth group sleep over @ Hall</div> <div>7pm - Motorcycle</div>	<div>5</div> <div>12pm - Emma's</div>	<div>6</div>
<div>7</div> <div>10am - Worship @</div> <div>11am - Prayer Chain</div>	<div>8</div> <div>11am - VFW @</div> <div>5pm - Dog Training</div> <div>7pm - Consistory @</div> <div>7pm - Hudson Valley</div> <div>7:30pm - Al-Anon @</div>	<div>9</div> <div>8:30am - Hillside</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>4pm - Hurley Purlers</div> <div>4:30pm - dog</div> <div>7pm - Bible Study @</div> <div>7pm - Boy Scouts</div>	<div>10</div> <div>7:30am - Bible</div> <div>5:30pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Cub Scout</div> <div>6pm - Den 1 Bears @</div> <div>7pm - Local 1582 @</div> <div>7:45pm - Bagpiper</div>	<div>11</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>3pm - Quilting @</div> <div>4:45pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Overeaters</div> <div>7:30pm - Choir</div>	<div>12</div>	<div>13</div> <div>9:30am - Cookie</div> <div>10am - Genealogy @</div>
<div>14</div> <div>10am - Worship @</div> <div>11am - Cookie Walk</div> <div>2pm - Pastor's</div> <div>3pm - daisy girl</div>	<div>15</div> <div>10am - Genealogy @</div> <div>5pm - Dog Training</div> <div>7:30pm - Al-Anon @</div>	<div>16</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>4pm - Hurley Purlers</div> <div>4:30pm - dog</div> <div>7pm - Bible Study @</div> <div>7pm - Boy Scouts</div>	<div>17</div> <div>7:30am - Bible</div> <div>5:30pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Cub Scout</div> <div>6pm - Den 1 Bears @</div> <div>7pm - Hurley Lions</div> <div>7pm - Men's group</div> <div>7:45pm - Bagpiper</div>	<div>18</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>3pm - Quilting @</div> <div>4:45pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Overeaters</div> <div>7pm - NE</div> <div>7:30pm - Choir</div>	<div>19</div> <div>10am - Pageant</div>	<div>20</div>
<div>21</div> <div>10am - Worship @</div> <div>11:15am - Christmas</div> <div>1pm - Birthday</div>	<div>22</div> <div>10:30am - Genealog</div> <div>5pm - Dog Training</div> <div>7:30pm - Al-Anon @</div>	<div>23</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>4pm - Hurley Purlers</div> <div>4:30pm - dog</div> <div>7pm - Bible Study @</div> <div>7pm - Boy Scouts</div>	<div>24</div> <div>7:30am - Bible</div> <div>5:30pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Cub Scout</div> <div>6pm - Den 1 Bears @</div> <div>7:45pm - Bagpiper</div>	<div>25</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>3pm - Quilting @</div> <div>4:45pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Overeaters</div> <div>7:30pm - Choir</div>	<div>26</div>	<div>27</div>
<div>28</div> <div>10am - Worship @</div> <div>3pm - daisy girl</div>	<div>29</div> <div>5pm - Dog Training</div> <div>7:30pm - Al-Anon @</div>	<div>30</div> <div>9:30am - Badminton</div> <div>4pm - Hurley Purlers</div> <div>7pm - Bible Study @</div> <div>7pm - Boy Scouts</div>	<div>31</div> <div>7:30am - Bible</div> <div>5:30pm - Dog</div> <div>6pm - Cub Scout</div> <div>6pm - Den 1 Bears @</div> <div>7:45pm - Bagpiper</div>	<div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>December 2014</div>		

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The Rev. Dr. Robert L. Gram, LCSW
Pastor

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