



## December 20, 2020

### Weekly Newsletter

#### The Preacher's Post – *Darin Kennedy*

How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of the heav'ns.  
No ear may hear his coming,  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him still  
the dear Christ enters in.

—*Phillips Brooks, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (1868)*

The fact that Jesus is born in Bethlehem is incredibly significant concerning the identity and mission of Jesus. Some may point to its being the birthplace of King David and, therefore, a testimony to Jesus' royalty. But the point of Bethlehem is not only that a king was born there, but also, and more importantly, that is not the place that kings are supposed to be born: David is the last of eight brothers from an out-of-the-way place called Bethlehem. The prophecy of Micah 5:2 that the king will be born in Bethlehem, which is well-known to the people of Jerusalem in Matthew 2, is significant because, again, no one would expect a king to come from there. The empires rage around Israel, the most powerful nation on earth Babylon, draws near, it appears all hope is lost, but little, insignificant Bethlehem carries within her womb the promise of victory. Do not think of Bethlehem with Christian eyes that see it with glory, that make it the place for cathedrals, tourism, and pilgrimages; rather, see it for how it should always be remembered—little.

There is no comparison between Bethlehem and Rome, between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, between a shepherding village and the centers of commerce, religion, and government. Bethlehem's only grandeur is that God

treads there. His steps are so small, so humble and quiet—"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n! No ear may hear his coming..." If God walks in Bethlehem and no one is around to notice, does He make a sound?

The song "O Little Town of Bethlehem," I believe, captures the significance of such a move by God, defining who Jesus is and what Jesus does, with the line, "...where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in." Bethlehem is the packaging for this gift that tells for whom it is given. When we have presents under the Christmas tree, we put tags on them with the standard "To" and "From" with names listed beside. Sometimes tags are accidentally forgotten, and the family gift-wrapper (you know you have one who does most of the wrapping, sometimes even having to wrap her own gifts) uses either x-ray vision or memory to say, "Oh yeah! That gift is for \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_. Sorry that I forgot to put on a tag." But Bethlehem is both the wrapping and the tag, and the recipient is clear—"To: Those meek and humble enough to think to look in small places for something glorious," or, "To: Those who can't get out of low places," or, "To: Those hidden from the world until the world decides to use and mistreat you." "From: God." The gift inside is Christ, who seems willing to claim his kingdom just about anywhere: in a manger, on the streets, on a cross, in the heavens, or in the human heart.



## Prayer Requests

**Stormy Cook** – has had some knee troubles. MRI shows no major issues that need surgery at this point. But she is in a lot of pain, **Buddy Self's** sister (Ruth) – lost her husband after a COVID diagnosis. He had a heart attack and 4 strokes while on the ventilator, **John Owen's** mother (Betty Owen) - has been hospitalized after a stroke, **Carol Hendrix** – passed away peacefully this morning, **One of Our Members** (wishes to remain anonymous) - has been hospitalized with a very serious case of COVID. Their spouse is not able to be with them, **Vint and Roxanne Hall's** neighbor and friend (Bill Marsh) – is in the hospital with COVID and is not doing well. Family is also unable to be with him, **Vint Hall's** brother-in-law (Tom Skaggs) – passed away due to COVID complications last week, **Frank Stewart's** son (Bill Stewart) – had a heart attack and is in the hospital. He is the one that lost his wife in October, **Frank Stewart's** son (John Stewart) – had a double knee replacement. He was doing well but ended up with an infection in one of his knees. He was in the hospital but is home now. This infection is a serious concern, **Roman Martin** – is having as bronchial scope on Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. His middle lobe lung has collapsed. They are trying to find the cause. It could be infection or more cancer, **Edmond Barr's** friend (Ana Ortiz) – is suffering from some severe health issues, **Bill Haley's** mom – is at the Mayo Clinic in Arizona trying to find answers to severe chronic pain, **Liddy Miller's** friend's father (Gary Schouten) - is in ICU with COVID. He was intubated, put on full oxygen and is alone in the hospital, **Samantha Pollard's** cousin (Fabian) - has been admitted to the hospital with pneumonia and blood clots in his lungs **Update:** he tested positive for COVID and his mother-in-law passed away this week, **Jurhee Bench** - passed from this life last Thursday. She had been in the hospital since December 2<sup>nd</sup> with congestive heart failure issues. She was sent home with hospice on Wednesday and passed on Thursday, **Mark and Flora Swartz's** son in law (Jeremy Braden) – had surgery for a herniated disc, **Marcella Hedges'** son-in-law (Bud Mosely) – was in the hospital with blood clots. **UPDATE:** He is home now and is back to work, **Sydney Kerley's** friend (Aaron Derringer) – passed away after a battle with COVID. Aaron leaves behind a wife and 5 young children, **Mark and Flora Swartz's** son (Mark D) – is doing very well. He is having stitches removed today, **Mary Ellen Myers's** friend (Patricia Lands) – was recently diagnosed with COPD, **Cathy Eldridge** – is slowing recovering from some ongoing health issues, **Susan Foster** – is recovering well after her knee replacement and recent hospitalization, **Pat Kreisel** – is experiencing some back pain and is limited in her mobility, **Joe Harber's** wife (Charlotte) – is suffering from some ongoing health issues,

**Hannah Guntert's** grandmother (Wanda Thomason) – has been diagnosed with breast cancer, **Mitch and Peggy Rush's** granddaughter (a family from East Independence church) – is suffering from a severe head injury. She is 6 years old. She was in a car accident., **Stormy Cook's** brother (Ralph) – has been put on a liver transplant list, **Buddy and Sharon Self's** daughter (Lisa Self) – has a blood clot and fluid in her lungs. She is slowing regaining her strength, **Shirley Simmons** – is recovering from open heart surgery. She is having trouble breathing. Her lungs are partially collapsed. She is awaiting a doctor's appointment on December 29<sup>th</sup>, **Kelly Seuferling** – is recovering from breast cancer related surgery. She will start chemo on December 29<sup>th</sup>, **Flora Swartz's** friend (Joanie Green) –**UPDATE:** Joanie saw the Dr on Monday and received a very surprising and discouraging report. The tumor in the liver is two and a half centimeters. They plan to do more oral chemo along with IV chemo starting in February. After that, surgery probably the middle of the year after chemo. Joanie and Leonard had been told by a previous Dr that surgery wasn't an option so Joanie was quite upset, **Andy Hester, Joel Morehead, Bruce Keeton, Will Kreisel, Lena Bramlett, Dave Nash**

## Birthdays: December 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>

Samantha Pollard – 21<sup>st</sup>

Jillyan Seuferling – 21<sup>st</sup>



Jillyan Seuferling is turning 10!!!

children read a bible on the bed – Volodimir Kalina © 123rf.com  
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