

# Messiah's Saddle Bags



PASTOR'S MESSAGE NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER -2008

Dear friends,

We are beginning preparation for a season of Stewardship, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas. I wish all of you a joyous and blessed Christmas. I send my love to all of you and your family members. It has been my honor to serve you this year as your pastor. This year I would like to share my favorite Christmas story. It is called "The Shoemaker's Dream".

"Once there was a cobbler named Conrad, a godly man. One night Conrad had dreamed that the next day Christ was coming to his humble shop. He got up early the next morning and went to the woods to gather green boughs to decorate his shops so that it would be an appropriate place in which to receive so great a Guest.

He waited all morning, but the only thing happened was that an old man shuffled up, asking to rest. The cobbler saw that his shoes were worn through. "I'll give you a new pair" he said and put on the old man the sturdiest shoes in the shop before sending him on his way.

He waited through the afternoon and the only happening was that an old woman under a heavy load of branches came by. She was weary, and out of compassion Conrad brought her in and gave her some of the food he had prepared for the Christ Child. Refreshed, she finally went on her way.

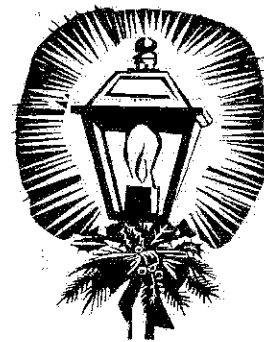
Then, as night began to fall, there came into his shop a lost child, crying bitterly. Conrad was annoyed because it was necessary to leave his shop in order to take the child home for she lived on the opposite side of the city.

Returned, he was convinced that he had missed the Lord. Sadly he lived through the moments as he had imagined them: the knock, the call, the latch pulled up, the lighted face, the offered cup. He would have kissed the hands where the nails had been, washed the feet where the spikes had entered. There the Lord would have sat with him, would have broken bread.

Conrad cried, 'Why is it, Lord, that your feet delay? Have You forgotten that this was the day?' Then soft in the silence a voice he heard.

'Lift up your heart for I kept my word.  
Three times I came to your friendly door;  
Three times my shadow was on your floor.  
I was the beggar with bruised feet;  
I was the woman you gave to eat;  
I was the child on the homeless street'."

Gifts  
for the  
needy



WATCH  
NIGHT

## THOUGHTS ON STEWARDSHIP

This year Messiah Church has had to cut its budget back due to declining revenues. All of this happened at the time of the stock market collapse and the worsening economy. Some important programs and expenditures had to be cut. We are, for example, not going to mail out the newsletter anymore to any but shut-ins. *The Saddlebags* will come out only four times per year. Copies will be available in the narthex for pick up or the newsletter can be emailed to you if you provide an updated email address. These cut-backs can be restored if the funding comes in again as it has done so plentifully these past eight years of my pastorate. We must pray for God to provide and pray for God to guide us in our giving. Let us also pray for new members.

A friend of mine named Keith Hill wrote something recently on giving:

"It is one thing to write my annual stewardship letter when every one is prospering. When real estate is rising, stocks are soaring, and we're all riding the up escalator, asking folks to think about how they give is one thing.

It is another thing altogether to write about stewardship when the escalator is going down. The market quaking events of the last three weeks put us all on a huge down escalator. As I write, we're all still wondering where the bottom will be.

Actually, though, this is not a bad time to be writing about stewardship. For the season of the down escalator clears our vision. When we talk about giving while on the up escalator, it's easy to imagine that giving is merely passing along some of our windfall to God. But in fact the Bible is plain that Christian giving is the radical act of giving God the first fruits, not the windfall. So when the escalator is going down, and we're not really certain what is next, first fruits giving is a huge act of trust. Giving should be an act of trust during prosperous times too, but on the up escalator we really don't see it.

We have a new theme here: Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength. We are pondering what it means to give our all to God and the people He loves. I believe that we can do so during this down escalator season and surprisingly, maybe even better than when the escalator is going up?

God provides! God will provide for us. We've asked our various ministry teams to dream big what would you like to accomplish for the Lord in 2009 if the budget grows by 10%!

God provides. He will provide for each of us and our families. Thus I'm not shy about asking folks to give generously even during a down escalator season. God will show himself faithful as he provides, maybe not with luxuries, but certainly with faithful provision for our needs! #

Please ponder these thoughts. Please sign up to be part of our prayer vigil for God's provision of money and new members on Saturday, November 15 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The church will be open for prayer. You may also pray at home.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

UNITED METHODIST MEN'S SALE OF CHRISTMAS SLED DOOR DECORATIONS: Sleds were sold at the United Methodist Bazaar. Orders for sleds will also be taken through November 30. The cost is \$25.00 per sled. The names of the family and each member of the family will be painted on the sleds. Order forms are in the narthex of the church. Or one can call Joe Wood or Dale Hoehn to place an order. Or phone 410 756 6092 and leave the order with Pastor Art.

## ELECTION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE UNITED METHODIST MEN

President Dale Hoehn  
Vice President Dick Lowry  
Treasurer Bill Stonesifer  
Secretary Ed Miller

## STEWARDSHIP PRAYER VIGIL, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 8:00 AM-6 PM.

I hope many of you will agree to sign up to pray for a half-hour or an hour that God will provide for the funds necessary for the running of our church. At this time of economic uncertainty let us look to God as our provider and continue to give in faith.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 WITH MARY BUZBY, OUR CHAIR OF THE EVANGELISM COMMITTEE AND FUTURE CHAIR OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL, PREACHING. Please bring your estimate of giving cards with you this Sunday or next and place them in a sealed envelope in the offering plate. You can also mail them to Steve Koeppen, finance chair.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN'S MEETING, TUESDAY, November 18 at 7:30 PM in the Youth Room downstairs. All women are invited to join.

MESSIAH'S THANKSGIVING DAY/CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY CELEBRATION, November 23, 2008 at 10:15 AM

CARING AND SHARING COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING WORSHIP SERVICE, NOVEMBER 23, 2008 AT 7:30 PM AT GRACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Area pastors and choirs will lead this inter-denominational service in Taneytown. An offering will be collected for the Taneytown Food Bank of Carroll Food Sunday.

CHRISMON PROGRAM, FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT, NOVEMBER 30 AT 4:00 PM: Come and make Chrismon ornaments, place them on the Christmas tree, sing carols, enjoy refreshments, and see Santa Claus.

THE UNITED METHODIST MEN WILL MEET ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 1 AT 7:00 PM. All are invited.

MESSIAH'S CHRISTMAS CANTATA "AN EVENING IN DECEMBER", will be held on Sunday, December 7 at 3:00 PM. This will be presented by the Messiah Chancel Choir directed by Leslie Gabler with a special presentation by the Joyful Noise Choir.

A dessert reception will follow. An offering will be collected to benefit the purchase of choir music.

LORIEN NURSING HOME MINISTRY, Sunday, December 14 at 2:00 PM. This special Christmas program directed by Messiah's United Methodist Women will include singing, refreshments, and the giving of presents to the residents.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES AT 7:00 and 11:00 PM. At the 11:00 PM service the chancel choir will sing.



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Kevin Koeppen (nephew of Steve and Tess Koeppen) has sent us much good news from Campus Crusade for Christ through a "Point & Prayer" Flyer. He thanks us for our prayers and I am sure he welcomes our support for him.

Also, we had a letter from the Missionary we support, Suzanne Porter. It has also been posted on the Bulletin Board to share with you. Please note they are having generator problems and are looking for help.

# Point & Prayer

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16



## "One of the Best Falls of My Life"

### Fall Getaway

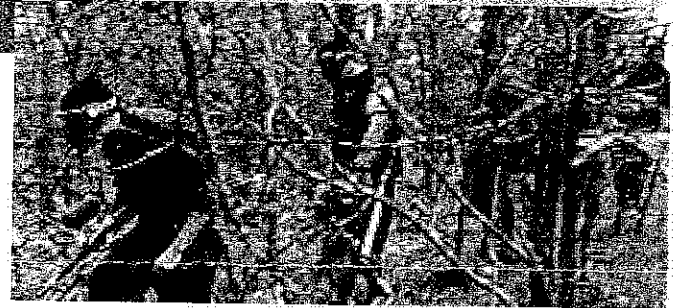
Thank you for praying for the Fall Getaway retreat, and for the students on the Stevens Point campus. We had a total of 151 students and staff come on the retreat, which is more than we have ever had come before. There were many stories of how God used the retreat to touch students' lives and bring them into a closer relationship with Himself.

One such story was about a guy named Adam. Adam was one of the freshman that was a little more hesitant in going to Fall Getaway when my friend Justin first invited the guys at his Bible study, but eventually after some thought and encouragement from others he decided to go. At the retreat Adam was able to make friends with many of the guys there, including myself, and was really impacted through the messages and worship. By the end of the retreat Adam explained through tears that he "felt like a new person" and showed that he really wanted to start following the Lord. Since the retreat, he has been coming to events regularly and just started getting disciplined by another student. He is already talking about going to future conferences and possibly on a mission trip this summer. We serve an awesome God who changes lives!

### Athletes In Action

Athletes in Action started off with a bang this year. The first event that we organized was a paintball tournament that took place right outside of Stevens Point. It was the first time I ever got to shoot anybody with a paintball gun, pretty exhilarating stuff! It was also a good opportunity to share with some athletes about the weekly small group we have going on every Monday night. So far we have had about five meetings, with about 5 to 10 people coming every week. We have been alternating between Bible studies and sports labs, so that we can get a feel for what it looks like to incorporate our walk with the Lord into our sports. A few of the topics covered have been: playing for an "Audience of One", where we learned that the ultimate purpose of sports is to worship and glorify God, the "Inside Game", in which we discussed how our identity in Christ frees us to compete with a 'grace motivation', and "Holy Sweat", where we learned that maturity is a process of growing in grace and truth and that it takes time.

There are so many other stories I would love to share with you about what the Lord has been doing in my life and in the lives of men and women in Stevens Point. This has been one of the best falls of my life, because I have never felt so connected to the Lord and to others and I have never seen Him work in as many amazing ways as I have in the last few months. Thank you so much for your support and for your prayers!



### During November Please Pray That:

- We will have opportunities to share about AIA with the different teams on campus and that the Lord would put it on athletes' hearts and minds to come check it out.
- There will continue to be a passion within student leaders to disciple men and women and to share their faith with others on campus.
- We would continue to pray and seek God's face, being attentive to the guidance of His Spirit.

### Contact Info

(262)352-2953 • 2532 Fifth Ave. #3, Stevens Point, WI 53151 • Kevin.Koeppen@uscm.org • Staff Acct #: 0607000

November 1, 2008

Dear members of Messiah United Methodist Church,

On Sunday, November 16 we shall observe Stewardship Sunday. In gratitude to God, we are called to be stewards or caretakers of what God has given us. We offer our time, talents, and financial resources up to the Lord! This year you will find an estimate of giving form at the bottom of this letter. Copies will also be distributed in the Sunday Bulletins. We would like you to complete this form because we feel that it is important to make a decision prayerfully as to how much you will give to God each week or month and set that money aside exclusively for God's use. We challenge each of you to reflect on the question, "What is God calling me to give as a percentage of my income?" The accompanying chart might help you in these calculations. Some may answer it by saying, "I feel God is calling me to give ten percent of my income to the Lord's work. I have been thinking about tithing for several years, and I want to begin that spiritual journey this year." Another kind of person responds to the question like this "Eventually, I want to begin tithing, but I am not ready to do that this year. I feel God is calling me to start somewhere--to drive my tent pegs in the ground at five percent or six percent--knowing that God will bless that decision by helping me to increase my giving in coming years." A third kind of person has been tithing for many years. For example, one couple said years ago when they were just getting started, "We'll tithe now; later we'll do more. After God has blessed us so abundantly we feel God is calling us to give fifteen percent to the Lord's work now."

The Stewardship Committee asks you to pray about your level of giving this year and consider filling in the estimate of giving form even if you have never done so in the past. This will be helpful to you as a record of the commitment God has called you to make, and it will help the church as it sees what funds are available for our budget for 2009 in the amount of \$115,437. Rising fuel bills and inflation have increased our annual budget by \$2,829 which is necessary for carrying out the mission of our local church and its local, national and international outreach.

We ask you to come and hear Mary Buzby, one of our lay speakers, preach on Stewardship, Sunday, November 16. After hearing the sermon, we would like you to fill out your estimate of giving form, place it in a sealed envelope, and come and place it in the offering plate on Sunday, November 23 or Sunday, November 30. If you cannot be in church on either Sunday, please mail it the week of December 1 to Messiah Church, Steve Koeppen, Financial Secretary, 25 Middle Street, Taneytown, MD 21787. These forms will be reviewed only by Steve.

We also are asking every one to be part of a prayer vigil for our church on Saturday, November 15 from 8:00 AM until 6:00 PM praying, in our homes or at church, that God would bring in the necessary funds for our church's budget and that God would bring us the people with the spiritual gifts and talents that can help build up the body of Christ here. If you can sign up to pray for a half-hour period, please contact Ed Miller at 410-756-9638. God bless you as you pray.

*Edward C. Miller, III*  
Edward C. Miller, III  
Chair of the Finance Committee

*Rev. Art Thomas*  
Art Thomas  
Pastor

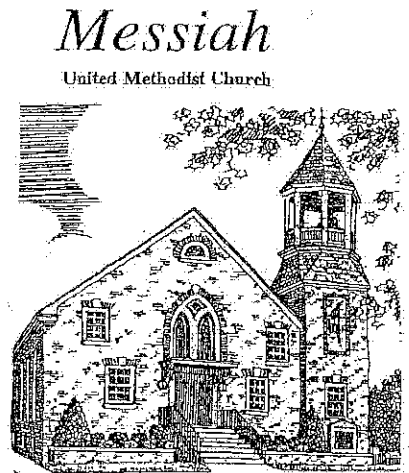
With a grateful heart for God's boundless generosity and as an expression of my Christian stewardship, I make this commitment to Christ's church and the ministry of this congregation.

My/our commitment is: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per week, or  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month, or  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year

I understand that I may adjust this estimate of giving at any time by contacting the finance secretary.

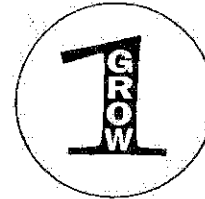
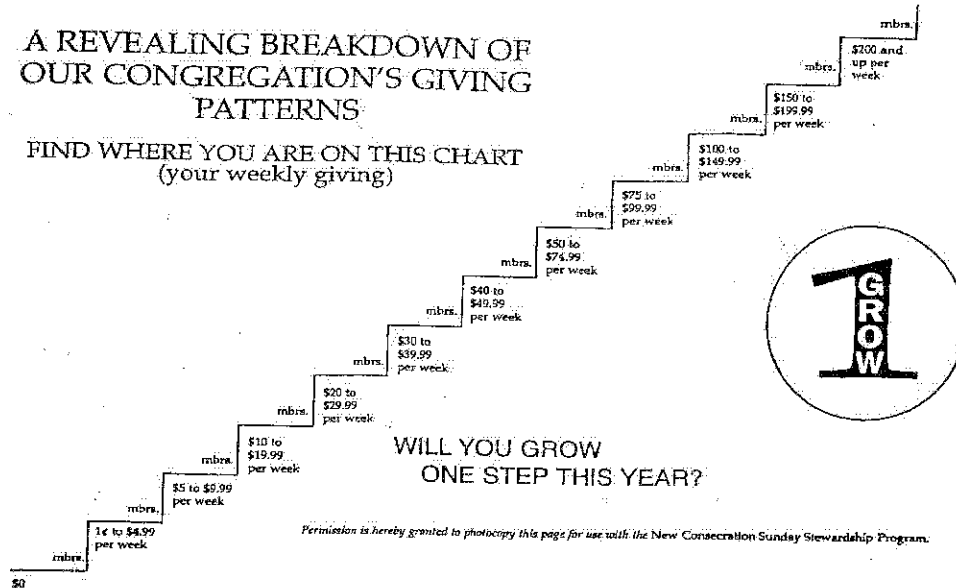
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Please contact me/us regarding how to include this congregation in my/our will or estate planning.



# A REVEALING BREAKDOWN OF OUR CONGREGATION'S GIVING PATTERNS

FIND WHERE YOU ARE ON THIS CHART  
(your weekly giving)



WILL YOU GROW  
ONE STEP THIS YEAR?

Permission is hereby granted to photocopy this page for use with the New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program.

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WEEKLY INCOME	BEYOND A TITHE		TITHE	UPPER RANGE GIVING			MIDDLE RANGE GIVING			LOWER RANGE GIVING		
	15%	12%		10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%
\$ 200	30.00	24.00	20.00	18.00	16.00	14.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	6.00	4.00	2.00
\$ 300	45.00	36.00	30.00	27.00	24.00	21.00	18.00	15.00	12.00	9.00	6.00	3.00
\$ 400	60.00	48.00	40.00	36.00	32.00	28.00	24.00	20.00	16.00	12.00	8.00	4.00
\$ 500	75.00	60.00	50.00	45.00	40.00	35.00	30.00	25.00	20.00	15.00	10.00	5.00
\$ 600	90.00	72.00	60.00	54.00	48.00	42.00	36.00	30.00	24.00	18.00	12.00	6.00
\$ 700	105.00	84.00	70.00	63.00	56.00	49.00	42.00	35.00	28.00	21.00	14.00	7.00
\$ 800	120.00	96.00	80.00	72.00	64.00	56.00	48.00	40.00	32.00	24.00	16.00	8.00
\$ 900	135.00	108.00	90.00	81.00	72.00	63.00	54.00	45.00	36.00	27.00	18.00	9.00
\$1,000	150.00	120.00	100.00	90.00	80.00	70.00	60.00	50.00	40.00	30.00	20.00	10.00
\$1,100	165.00	132.00	110.00	99.00	88.00	77.00	66.00	55.00	44.00	33.00	22.00	11.00
\$2,000	300.00	240.00	200.00	180.00	160.00	140.00	120.00	100.00	80.00	60.00	40.00	20.00
\$3,000	450.00	360.00	300.00	270.00	240.00	210.00	180.00	150.00	120.00	90.00	60.00	30.00

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE % would be for you.

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

### SPECIAL THANKS FOR SPECIAL WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

"God made us in order to use us, and use us in the most profitable way: for God's purpose, not ours. To live a spiritual life means subordinating all other interests to that single fact."--Evelyn Underhill

Nov. 2: All Saints Sunday: Thank you Pastor Art, Leslie, Marilyn, Ellen, Joyce, Betty, and Brenda Miller for your gifts to this day.

Thank you Church Council for giving us church direction on Holy Communion. Ellen will be preparing the white bread cubes for service on Nov. 2. We have an already established policy that we serve "the blood of Jesus Christ" as individual cups beginning Nov. through April because of the flu season.

Nov. 9 Veteran's Day: Thank you Leslie and Carlton for your gift to this service, and to Gerry for Coffee Hour. Thank you Veterans for your service. We enjoy our freedoms, especially the privilege of worship, because of your sacrifice.

Nov. 16: Stewardship Sunday: Thank you to all who prayed in our Saturday Prayer Vigil and to Mary for her message.

Nov. 23: Christ the King Sunday and Thanksgiving Sunday: Thank you Tess for your lovely autumn glory arrangement honoring God and His gift of creation. Sunday evening will be a community Thanksgiving service in which volunteers from all Taneytown churches will join together in song. Thanks to those from Messiah who will give their voice to this special service.

Nov. 30: First Sunday of Advent and Chrismon Celebration: Thank you Mary and Evangelism Committee for this program

Dec. 7: An Evening in December is the title, but the Chancel Choir Cantata is at 3:00 in the afternoon and will be followed by a dessert reception. Thank you Chancel Choir, Leslie, and Gerry.

Christmas Eve Services will be at 7:00 and 11:00 PM.

WE know that each of us is the Body of Christ, and that there will be lots of help from every member to make these worship services pleasing to God. The brothers and sisters mentioned above are given thanks for taking an extra hand in serving, leading, and/or preparing. The Worship Committee is counting on them and gives them thanks!

During the Advent season, one family/ group lights the Advent candle wreath each week. I would describe it as a rare gift. Any one who would like to honor our Lord by reading a prayer and lighting the candle, please don't be shy and tell Pastor Art. We will also need worship servants for the Christmas Eve services. Please sign up on the bulletin board.

Submitted by: Christie Plavis, Chairperson



UNITED METHODIST MEN

Officers for 2009, elected at our October meeting, are as follows:

- President: Dale Hoehn
- Vice President: Dick Lowry
- Treasurer: Bill Stonesifer
- Secretary: Ed Miller

On Sunday, November 2, UMM conducted the worship service at Lorien, consisting of hymn singing, scripture reading, prayer, an inspirational message from Ray Copenhaver, and Communion. Refreshments followed the service.

Our regular meetings are the first Monday of the month at 7:00 PM. All men are welcome.

Submitted by Ed Miller

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 UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women have done a lot for various missions and will be helping a family at Christmas this year.

We also elected officers, deciding to keep the ones we already had:

- President: Brenda Clapsaddle
- Vice President: Jimmy Lou Gardiner
- Treasurer: Diane Kicas
- Secretary: Cheryl Hoehn

We had a very successful Merry Methodist Bazaar and want to thank all those who worked very hard to make it happen. We also thank those who came and supported us.

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm. All women are invited to come be a part of UMW!

OUR BLOOD DONORS

We forgot to put the following donors in our Sept/Oct Newsletter. They are:

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Gary Dupel     | Wilson Speak       |
| Ed Herring     | Bill Stonesifer    |
| Bill Hoy       | Marilyn Stonesifer |
| Steve Koeppen  | Wesley Stonesifer  |
| John Moran     | Nancy Weller       |
| Robert J. Rock | Sherry Wood        |
|                | Cindy Zepp         |

Our October Donors:

- |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Bill Hoy      | Marilyn Stonesifer |
| Steve Koeppen | Karl Warehime      |
| John Moran    | Nancy Weller       |
| Wilson Speak  | Sherry Wood        |

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 From the Editor:

We want to thank the Worship Committee for planning such a great Veteran's Day worship service. We also appreciated the beautiful Anthem sung by the Choir and especially, our Music Director, Leslie Gabler for putting together the great slide show of so many Veterans past and present from Messiah and their families.

We also want to thank those who contributed goodies to the Coffee Hour, those who helped with clean up and especially to Kelly who did a lot of the set up work before I came down from church.

We need to let you know that, because of fiscal constraints, the Newsletter will only be published on a quarterly basis for 2009. We will be e-mailing the Newsletter to those who have an e-mail address. Send your e-mail address to Steve Koeppen at (Church@STKoeppen.net). We also will not be mailing the newsletter, except to shut ins. It will be placed in the Narthex for those members who don't receive by e-mail.

I, personally, want to thank Brenda Miller who has the tough part of this job, photocopying and putting it all together. And, to Steve for doing the e-mail.

May God Bless All of you through the Holidays and in the Coming Year. And, remember, GOD IS GOOD! ALL OF THE TIME!

Gerry Robinson



# Yuletide

## GAMES

Enjoy the Christmas season with these games, centered around the theme of Jesus, our greatest gift.

### JESUS' BIRTH FROM A-Z

What you need:

- Paper
- Pencils or pens
- Bibles (optional)



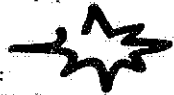
What you do:

Instruct players to think of as many Christmas-related words as they can that start with each letter of the alphabet. Start with A and give everyone a minute to brainstorm words for each letter. For example, M words include manger, Mary and miracle. If you get stuck, look at the Nativity accounts in Matthew 1 and 2, and also Luke 2. Players get a point for each word not repeated by others.

### PIN THE STAR ON THE MANGER

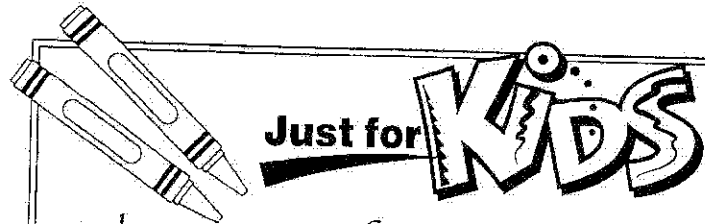
What you need:

- Butcher paper, poster board or plain wrapping paper
- Markers, paint or crayons
- Construction paper stars
- Tape
- Blindfold



What you do:

On large paper, draw a picture of a stable. Give each player a star cutout. Put a small + above the manger where the star led the shepherds and wise men to baby Jesus. Like in Pin the Tail on the Donkey, the blindfolded person who puts his or her star closest to the + wins.



## The Story of Jesus' Birth

Jesus' birth is recorded in three New Testament chapters: Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 2. Follow some important words about our Savior's birth by starting at a word beginning with the letter A and finishing with a word starting with the letter Z.



	angels	Bethlehem	car	dance	easel
cat	bear	child	donkey	egg	fast
holy	glory	flocks	Earth	feathers	gap
inn	jacket	grapes	peace	quiet	hat
Joseph	King	Lord	only	righteous	shepherds
kelp	loop	Mary	night	unique	tidings
last	maze	paper	wise men	virgin	water
open	nest	word	excitement	young	zillions saved by this baby called Jesus

Answer: angels; Bethlehem; child; donkey; Earth; flocks; glory; holy; inn; Joseph; King; Lord; Mary; night; only; peace; quiet; righteous; shepherds; tidings; unique; virgin; wise men; excitement; young; zillions saved by this baby called Jesus.

"The holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

Luke 1:35, NIV



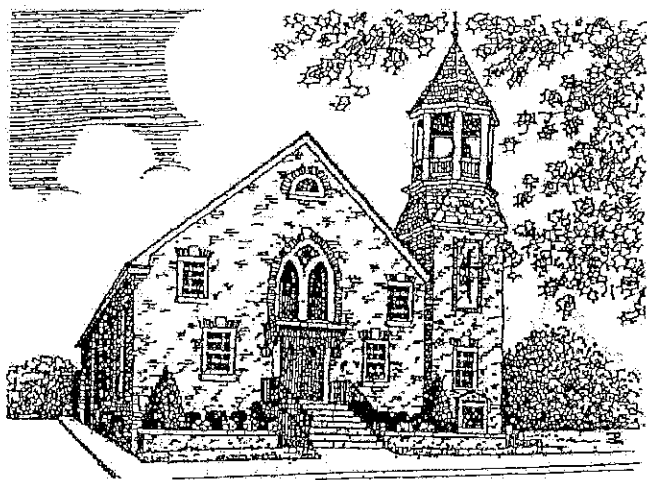
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COVER ART

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Messiah United Methodist Church  
Office Phone: 410-756-6085  
Pastor's Study: 410-756-6092

Sunday School for All Ages  
9:00 AM  
Worship at 10:15 AM

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Submit items for the Saddlebags via email to  
Gerry Robinson - [tomngeri@verizon.net](mailto:tomngeri@verizon.net)  
Please do not send attachments with your email  
You may also leave your articles in the Newsletter  
box in the Church's narthex.

Items for the Newsletter must be received by the  
20th of the month for the following month's  
newsletter.