

Messiah Messenger

January 2022

This is not the usual “Messenger” format. Our faithful editor is rightfully busy with family this Christmas Season. The normal *Messenger*, which we appreciate so much, will return in February. -- *Pastor Michael Meranda*

What are your favorite memories of the 12-Days of Christmas? I think back to January 31st in 1967. My dad, brother, and I gathered around the 19-inch Zenith black and white TV and watched what would become known as the Ice Bowl.

In my college and seminary years, the 12 days of Christmas were always preoccupied with travel. I had to travel home to Oregon, then leave Oregon to return to the Midwest. I recall one United Airlines flight. It was a red eye. I had fallen asleep and slept thru breakfast. The flight attendant, bless her heart, had set aside a breakfast tray for me. After I awakened, she served me a nice, hot breakfast. Another year brought horrendous weather. Ice delayed our departure out of Chicago. In the meantime, fog blanketed the west coast. Portland was socked in; so was Seattle, so we could not divert there. We landed and stranded in San Francisco. The weather system hung on like gorilla glue. The best option was to catch a Greyhound bus and motorcoach home to Portland.

Christmas Eve 2007 was special. It was my first one here at Messiah. We had finished the 11:00 PM midnight mass. Dick Reinker was among the last to leave the building. He had taken me under his wing my first moths at Messiah. He knew I would be catching a flight to go to Minneapolis and onto central Wisconsin (Mary had not yet moved here). I drove to CLE, dropped off the rental, then shuttled to the terminal. I was looking forward to treating myself to a 2:00 a.m. meal in the terminal. But CLE was basically closed Christmas Eve. Baggage check was closed as were all the gates in all the concourses. I just found a seat in the outer terminal and sort of napped. I awakened to check in. The attendant was really grumpy for having to work Christmas Day. I could not blame her. When I got back into Concourse C I finally made it into a Starbucks. I must have looked bedraggled. The worker handed me my Latte’ with Hazelnut and said, “It’s OK, this one’s on the house.” My other memory of CLE terminal was a man dressed in a Santa Suit, but for his cap he wore an Ohio State Buckeye cap. “How appropriate,” I thought, that even Santa would be a Buckeye Fan.

What are your memories of the 12-Days of Christmas? Did some really good things happen to you or around you? Did Christmas season bring an unexpected loss or unwelcome pain? Did the season bring good memories of foraying out into an exciting new venture?

Christmas Season is enfolded in color. It is situated between Advent Blue and Epiphany White (some manuals suggest gold color on Epiphany Day). We go into Christmas Joy after having been through Advent Hope. Christmas Season is enshrouded in light. We emerge from Christmas joy into the confident light and calling of Epiphany. Christmas lights follow Advent lights and lead us to Epiphany light. We go from light, thru light, into light.

The Twelve-Days of Christmas then inspire us to be light-full all other days of all other life seasons. Sure, the world brings darkness. There is disease and death. There is fear and prejudice. There is failure in our systems and gross incompetence in government. But world's darkness cannot defeat God's light. The smallest sliver of light will be seen in the darkest room. We are lightful going into 2022. We do not have to rely on our own reason or strength. We do not have to fuel our inner personal generators. We just get to reflect the Light that has already come to us. Isaiah tells us, "Arise, shine, your light has come." At creation God said, "Let there be light." Light was born at Bethlehem. Baptism and Holy Communion pour this enlightening light into our souls. Having been made light-full we shall be lightful. – *Pastor Meranda*

NOTICE FOR MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION:

The congregational council has called us to gather for semi-annual meeting on Sunday, January 23, 2022. The primary agenda item for this meeting is to pass a budget for 2022. This meeting is held in the church, immediately at the end of the Holy Communion service.

REPORTS ARE DUE

It is our policy to make committee reports available to the congregation one week before the semi-annual meeting in January. That way members may pick up and read summaries of the prior year before ratifying a budget for the new year. Committee reports are due January 10, 2022. That way the office can copy and assemble them for distribution on January 16, 2022. The Semi-Annual meeting is right after church on January 23, 2022.

FROM THE MAIL

Aristi (Ennis), Josh, Margot Ozbolt: "Wishing Messiah a safe and happy year ahead. Merry Christmas!"

Raquel (Bradley), Steven, Tre, and Nola Baker: "Messiah, wishing you a Christmas decorated with joy."

Elizabeth Eaton & Conrad Selnick: "Merry Christmas / Joyous Holidays / Happy New Year with love (featured Conrad's photo of a power line worker high in a cherry picker but dressed in a Santa suit).

ADDITIONAL MEMORIAL GIFTS:

For Rick Reinker: Darlene Cocherell

For Connie Cooper: Richard Stewart, Linda Morrow, James & Lynn Foran, Harold & Kathleen Bogner, Jeffery and Cathy Carle, Richard & Dixie Selip, Karen & Ed Herron, Harold and Janet Switzer, Sharlene Hurst, Sue Riley, Samantha & Kenneth Ospelt, Francis and Diane Maenpa