

# Valley Views



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Pastor Mike Hill



## Christ in Christmas

By: Hank Hanegraaff

**Christmas** — bright lights, glittery trees, children's squeals of excitement, church chimes in frosty air, the press of shoppers — memories of Christmas. Oh, yes, almost forgotten — in a scratched, wobbly, wooden manger on a church's front lawn, there's a baby doll, plastic fingers upraised in frozen appeal, alone in the night.

Christmas has forgotten Christ. For many, celebrating Jesus' birth has little to do with Christmas, and even many Christians don't know how to "put Christ back into Christmas." I believe we can overcome the commercialism and paganism with the Good News — "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Below I have used a **C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S** acronym to explain how to honor Jesus Christ this Christmas.

**C**, the first letter in *Christmas*, stands for the person who alone gives any day eternal significance: Christ our Lord. It is easy to shove Christ aside on this holiday, but we should celebrate the birth of Jesus, whose very name means "the Lord is salvation" and whose title, "Christ," points to His role as the Redeemer of humankind. If Jesus is not Christ in your life, celebrating the birth of an obscure Jewish carpenter's son is meaningless to you.

**H** stands for *history*. The birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not myths or fantasy, but are historical realities. That God became man in Jesus Christ is an actual, testable historical event. Christmas reminds us that Christ is not just a warm feeling in our hearts, or an imaginary therapist enabling us to face life's traumas.

We don't know the exact day of the year Jesus was born. We do know, however, that the December 25 date was advocated as early as about A.D. 220. The church may have chosen to celebrate on December 25 as a triumph of Christianity over paganism because it came right after the Roman holiday of Saturnalia, one of the popular pagan winter solstice holidays (December 17-24).

**R** stands for *rejoice*, an appropriate response in recognition of what Christ has done. Favorite Christmas hymns show that rejoicing has always been an integral part of Christmas. We should rejoice because Christ came, not because of a nice present or a week off! We should rejoice like the psalmist, who said: "Come, let us rejoice in him" (Ps. 66:6).

**I** stands for the *Incarnation*, describing that glorious event in which God became man. Christ is not only eternal God (John 1:1), but at a time in history He became man as well (John 1:14). Matthew's gospel says, "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel — which means, God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

**S** stands for *St. Nicholas*, the fourth century bishop of Myra, a Christian whose story — embellished by years of telling — nevertheless exemplifies Christian faithfulness and charity. Christmas should remind us of the faithfulness of God, without which we have no hope of redemption through His greatest gift, His Son (John 3:16). Little historical knowledge is available concerning St. Nicholas, commonly called by his German/English equivalent, Santa Claus. But he is known for kindness to children in need, and for his commitment to Christ through persecution and martyrdom. Many traditions associated with Santa Claus are objectionable — especially that he is all-knowing or able to be present everywhere. However, the themes of faithfulness and charity are biblical and honor Jesus Christ.

**T** stands for *tradition*, the stories and customs associated with Christmas. Christmas traditions are of three types: (1) those strictly non-Christian, inappropriate for Christians; (2) those that were initially pagan but were changed to affirm the gospel; and (3) those developed within the church. One inappropriate tradition from early pagan mid-winter festivals is drunkenness and immorality. The drunken Christmas party may reflect Rome's ancient Saturnalia, but has nothing to do with celebration of Christ's birth.

Some Christians think the Christmas tree is a pagan tradition forbidden by Jeremiah 10:2-4. However, the Jeremiah passage is not about trees dedicated to one day of the year (Christmas); rather, it refers to permanent, all-year-round idols carved out of wood and covered with gold and silver. The Christmas tree actually symbolizes that Jesus brings us eternal life (the evergreen) and is the light of the world (lights or candles).

Likewise, boughs of holly with red berries and green leaves represent Christ's shed blood on the cross and eternal life. Even the candy cane/shepherd's crook represents Jesus as our Shepherd. While tradition is no substitute for dynamic personal faith, it enhances our appreciation of Christ's birth.

**M** stands for the *magi*, or wise men, directed by God to find and worship Christ. We shouldn't forget that no one is wealthy enough, powerful enough, or far enough away that he or she should not bow before Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15).

**A** stands for *advent*, a word referring to Christ's coming. Christ came once in Bethlehem — as an infant who grew to manhood, died for our sins, and rose again the third day. Christians eagerly look forward to His Second Coming — “the blessed hope” (Titus 2:13). Many churches conduct advent services for the four weeks prior to Christmas, encouraging Christians to look forward to the birthday of Christ and also to His Second Coming.

**S** stands for *salvation*, made possible by the coming of Christ. The gospel story is so simple we often forget it, but so profound it affects every individual. We are all sinners, separated from God, with absolutely no way to reach God except He reached down to us through His Son. With the coming of Christmas comes recognition that because He came, He died, and because He died and lives again, we also may live (Rom. 6:8; 8:11).

Christmas is not primarily a celebration of human life, although each human life is valuable; not primarily a celebration of peace and love, although peace and love are noble. The center and circumference of Christmas should be the celebration of the birth of our Lord: “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).



# † SON LIGHT HOUSE REFLECTIONS

Son Light House – 130 Carpenter Street, Muncy, PA 17756 – Phone: 570-546-3585    November 2019

**Son Light House**, established in 1982, is a non-profit, ecumenical, and community-supported resource that distributes food, clothing, and limited furniture to individuals and families in need and that qualify on family income guidelines set up by state and federal policies. Son Light House serves individuals and families in eastern Lycoming County. Son Light House is an equal opportunity provider.

**The Lord's Prayer – Our Standard** - *Pray then in this way: . . . Give us this day our daily bread. (Matt 6:9 and 11)* Prayer and action are necessary to serve the individuals and families living in our communities who are in need.

## Households and Individuals Served

	Households	Individuals	New Hlds.
June	387	859	7
July	360	840	8
Aug	364	879	4
Sept	395	953	4
Oct	422	1,055	16

## Son Light House – for All Ages

	Children	Adults	Seniors
June	213	391	255
July	236	364	240
Aug	253	399	227
Sept	268	438	247
Oct	316	481	258

**School Lunch Data for 2018-19** – The three school districts that serve eastern Lycoming County have many of their students meeting the free-and-reduced lunch requirements. Son Light House serves many of these children and their families.

School District	% Free Eligible	% Reduced Eligible	Total %
East Lycoming	32.5	3.8	36.3
Montgomery	40.7	4.5	45.2
Muncy	35.5	4.5	40.0

**Thanksgiving and Christmas Donations** – Son Light House will be accepting turkeys for Thanksgiving and roasting chickens for Christmas distributions. Donations of these items can be made every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday between 7:00 am – 10:00 am. Thanks for your generosity.

**Touch-A-Heart at Christmas** – The locally supported Touch-A-Heart program will continue to supply Christmas gifts for children up to age 17. Registration is already underway at Son Light House.

## “Thank You” to These Recent Supporters

**Individuals and Families** who have recently supported Son Light House include: Dick and Alice Arthur, LizAnn Barlett, Oliver Barlett, Kermit and Maryann Breon, Ron and Nancy Forsht, Rev. Mike and Sally Gardy, Dan and Amy Gardner, Richard and Rose Hafer, Cleason and Joanne Hall, Phil and Donna Hartranft, Ed and Sylvia Herman, Jeff and Helen Hiserman, Judith Hock, Tom Marino, Gene and Carol McCarty, John and Pat Merrifield, Jim and Betsy Mothersbaugh, David Moyer, Anita Nagpal, Arlene Opp, Bob and Carol Perry, Mona Pettenger, Lonny and Tammy Reinard, Dennis and Patricia Ringling, Rosemary Rohrbach, Paul Rovinski, Paul and Donna Shaner, Jackie Sheets, Phil and Betty Soohy, Rev. Max and Diann Walters, Loretta Winter, Delores Wolf.

**Churches and Church Organizations** for their recent support: Beacon United Methodist Church (UMC), Hughesville; Church of the Resurrection, Muncy; Crossroads Church, Muncy; Ecroyd Missionary Circle, Muncy; Faith Church, Lairdsville; First UMC, Muncy; Franklin Fairview UMC, Unityville; Hughesville Baptist Church; Kedron UMC, Muncy Valley; Lungerville Christian Church, Unityville; Messiah Lutheran Church, Clarkstown; Mill Creek UMC, Montoursville; Moreland Baptist Church, Muncy; Muncy Baptist Church; New

Life Church, Pennsdale; Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Montoursville; Pennsdale Trinity UMC; Picture Rocks Baptist Church; Picture Rocks UMC; Pleasant View Wesleyan Church, Muncy; Route 405 Church of God, Montgomery; St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Muncy; St. James Episcopal Church, Exchange; St. James Lutheran Church, Muncy; St. John Lutheran Church, Montgomery; St. Marks Church, Lairdsville; Trinity Lutheran Church, Hughesville.

**Community Businesses and Organizations** that recently made generous donations of money, food, or services include: Blessing Insurance Agency, Muncy; Epsilon Eta Chapter - Delta Sigma Phi, Muncy; Pennsdale Huntersville Senior Citizens; Kellogg's, Muncy; John Savoy and Sons, Inc., Montoursville; Muncy Area Lions Club; Muncy Bank and Trust, Muncy; Muncy Public Library; Muncy Valley Moose Family Center, Hughesville; Roger Myers Insurance Agency, Muncy; Pyramid Transport, Muncy; Edward J Smith VFW Post 3428, Muncy.

**Schools and Youth Groups** for their recent support: FLBA - Muncy Jr./Sr. High School; Myers Elementary School, Muncy.

#### **Son Light House Hours of Operation:**

##### **Donations:**

Every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday 7:00 am - 10:00 am

Food, clean, usable, seasonable clothing, toys, and furniture may be donated only at this time.

##### **Distributions:**

Two weeks a month on Wednesday from 8:00 am - noon and Thursday 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm as follows:

##### Distribution Dates:

November 6+-7+, 20\*-21\* - \*Thanksgiving

December 4+-5+, 18\*-19\* - \*Christmas

January 8+-9+, 22-23

February 5+-6+, 19-20

+ Senior Boxes for eligible seniors

##### **How Can I/We Help?**

Prayers, volunteers, money, and food donations are always needed. For more information or to get involved, contact **Son Light House** by calling Ken and Delores Frey at 546-3585.

10/31

St. John's Methodist Church  
715 Pikes Peak Rd  
Allenwood PA 17810

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Son Light House  
130 Carpenter Street  
Muncy, PA 17756

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit #162  
Williamstown, PA



We are in need of someone to do snow removal and salting of our parking lot at Elimsport UMC this winter. This job is paid by an hourly rate. Let Pastor Mike or Tom Taylor know if anyone is interested.

There will be a blood drive on Tuesday, December 3rd from 2 - 7 at the Fellowship Hall.



Community Breakfast is held Wednesday mornings from 7:00 - 9:00 am at the Elimsport Church.

Dear Church family,

Thank you all so much for the care package! It was a wonderful surprise & I was very excited to receive it. It totally makes a college kid's day to see these snacks & know that we have a family who cares about us. Thank you all again!



Emma Klopp



Parish Bible Study continues each Tuesday evening at 6:30 at the Elimsport church. We are studying the book of Psalms. All are invited. In case of inclement weather or questionable road conditions, Bible study is canceled.

#### Acolyte Schedule:

12/1	Mitchell & Samuel
12/8	Garett & Elizabeth
12/15	Jackson & Elizabeth
12/22	Samuel & Mallorie
12/29	Garett & Jackson



Dear Church family,

Thank you very much for the care package. I really appreciate it. It is really wonderful to see how full it was & how I'm thought of. Thanks again.



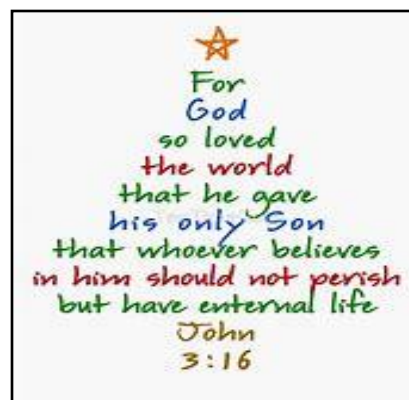
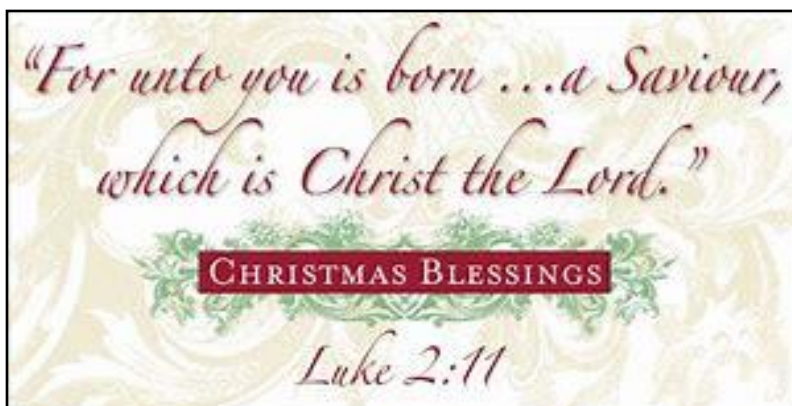
Ben Klopp

Hanging of the Greens will be Sunday, December 1st at both churches. Please bring a snack to share after at Elimsport.



Just a reminder: Everyone is to check the mailbox in the back of the Elimsport church.





Elmsport United Methodist Church  
and St. John's United Methodist  
Church,

Thank you so very  
much for your donation to the Mont-  
gomery food bank. Your gift was  
very much appreciated. Thank you  
for caring for the needy people of  
the Montgomery area. Thank you  
so much for all the items you gave  
to the Montgomery Food Bank and  
also thanks for the 10 bushels of  
apples.

Thanks again,



Footprints of Montgomery



We will be having com-  
munion in the pews on Sun-  
day, December 29th at  
both churches.



## Elmsport Volunteers

### Greeters for December

December 1	Jody Hill & Eleanor Taylor
December 8	Bruce & Marti Anderson
December 15	Retta Moore
December 22	Mary Moore
December 29	Tweet Flick

- Items for January's newsletter are due December **20th**.
- Items for the weekly bulletin's need to be to the church office by **Wednesday** morning each week.

(Items received after these dates are  
not guaranteed to be printed.)



## Council Of Ministry Events

Again this year our warming of the tree mission will be to help with gifts for some students/families of Montgomery School District. We put the tree up on 11/10 so you have some time to pick and buy an item/ornament off of the tree. The unwrapped gift needs to be brought in by 12/8. Please attach the ornament to the gift when you bring it in. Thank you in advance for your help with this important mission. Any questions please see Deana Drick or Sharon Heintzelman.



St. John's is in need of a pianist in 2020 and possibly the future. If anyone is interested or if you know of someone who might be interested, please let Pastor Mike know.



St. John's is in need of someone to fill a position

### Committee



on Pastor Parish Relations Committee and someone to fill a position on the Parsonage Committee. These are 3 year terms. PPRC meets 4 times a year and parsonage committee meets as needed.

Christmas Eve services will be held on Tuesday, December 24th. St. John's service is at 6:30 p.m. and Elmsport service at 8:00 p.m.



Elmsport Christmas pageant will be held Sunday, December 22nd during worship. Donut Day will follow





# Kid's Corner



# **ELIMSPORT VALLEY UNITED METHODIST PARISH**

## **Worship Schedule:**

### **Elimsport UMC**

Worship 9:00 am  
Sunday School 10:30 am

### **St. John's UMC**

Sunday School 9:15 am  
Worship 10:30 am

### **Parish Youth Group**

Check weekly Bulletin for current schedule and events  
(at Elimsport)

### **Parish Bible Study**

Varies according to the season.

### **Parish Office:**

16145S. RT 44 HWY  
Allenwood, PA 17810

### **Parsonage Phone:**

(570) 547-1386

### **Pastor Mike's Cell:**

(570) 974-8590

### **Parish Website:**

[www.evpumc.org](http://www.evpumc.org)

### **Parish email:**

[elimsportumc@gmail.com](mailto:elimsportumc@gmail.com)

[www.evpumc.org](http://www.evpumc.org)



She will bear a son, and  
you shall call his name  
**Jesus**  
for he will  
save his people  
from their sins.  
Matthew 1:21

### **Our Mission Statement at Elimsport UMC**



We gather together as a community of Christian believers to worship, fellowship, and to learn more about God. By the unity of the Spirit and the support of each other, we are able to reach out to the community and the world.

### **Our Mission Statement at St. John's UMC**



The purpose of St. John's is to both evangelize and nurture. We are called to show God's love in our world by giving aid and by spreading the Good News of Christ. We in turn provide an atmosphere for nurturing where Biblical truths are shared enabling people to become spiritually enriched. By providing this, people will learn and through learning, become more effective witnesses.