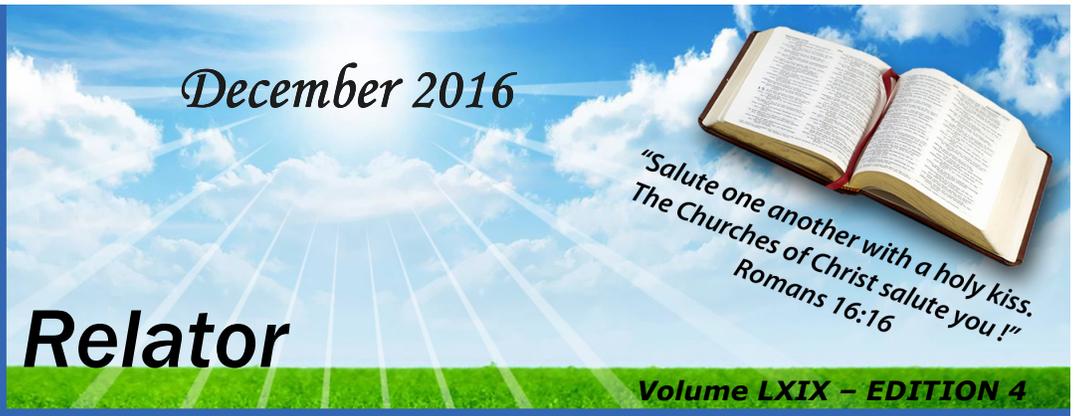




The Relator



December 2016

*"Salute one another with a holy kiss.
The Churches of Christ salute you!"
Romans 16:16*

Volume LXIX – EDITION 4



Greetings, favored woman!

The Lord is with you!

Confused and disturbed,

Don't be afraid!

*You have found favor with
God!*

*You will conceive and give
birth to a son, and you will
name him Jesus. (Luke 1:31
NLT)*

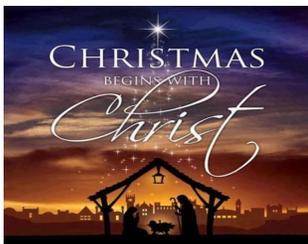
But how can this happen?

*For the word of God will
never fail.*

I am the Lord's servant.

*May everything you have said
about me come true.*

Here are 10 statements from a familiar story. You probably would have figured it out even if I did not give you any names or the Luke 1:31 notation. This story demonstrates what fear looks like, a great response to fear, and how our God can invoke and at the same time allay your fears.



The story is of a young girl named Mary who was most likely a teenager at the time of this event in her life. Many speculate that she may have been as young as 13 at the time according to the customary culture of the day, but probably not older than 17 or 18. And here she was being made responsible for taking care of the son of God. Most of us at this age would have had a difficult time being responsible for taking care of an ant farm (I know no one this age is probably reading this right now because it is not blog worthy). Now fast forward and we know Mary and her husband Joseph actually misplace the Son of God in Jerusalem for a couple of days. Now back to the story ... They are not even married yet. You've got a lot of 'splainin to do Mary. She was afraid ... Thanks a lot God! And who wouldn't be confused and disturbed.

When God finds favor with you it becomes an event of enormous emotional enigmas. You are excited by the fact that you are in right standing with God Almighty but squeamish at the idea of his expectations. It is mixed emotions ... Like your mother-in-law driving your new cadillac over a cliff (safe ... I know my mother-in-law is not reading this either). Hard to get out of this one too ... Since he sends a scary angel to deliver the message in person.

The expectations though come with the God-big promises, and that name, Jesus, the long-awaited Savior. A lot to process but easier to deal with fear when the love of God always beats down the fear in our lives. So the man, the mission, and the message is introduced here to the unknown girl ... Unknown to the world at this moment, but known by God. Just a great display of God's personal involvement in our salvation. Religion had for too long tried unsuccessfully to reach up to God. Now God was reaching down to man, or in this case wo-man.

This young woman's response does not seem eloquent but it is more than appropriate. God is not concerned with our ability as much as our availability (I just stole this from a plaque in the men's restroom ... Not sure why that phrase is posted there). I am the Lord's servant was more than an eloquent or elegant response, it was an elevated response ... Mary rose to the occasion by kneeling before the Lord. This was indeed the appropriate response.

It is time for us to respond the Christmas story ... We don't need to be afraid if we respond in faith: For 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:16-18 NIV)

If we are honest our real fear is what God will ask us to do next. But honestly, he has made the approach and the execution possible because with God nothing is impossible. Just say along with Mary ... I am your servant. May everything you have said come true!

**From One Star Struck Servant to Another
Merry Christmas!**

Check out our Sermon series beginning Sunday, December 11: **FEAR NOT!**

Monthly Newsletter Published by Phillips Christian Church, Salem, Ohio



reflections..

*Twass the night before Christmas, and all through the earth,
Every creature was stirring, awaiting a birth.
The time for Messiah was certainly near,
The prophets foretold it; the Bible was clear.
From the book of beginnings, the very first sin,
God's word made it clear how His grace entered in.
Born of a virgin, He'd come as a man.
The Creator among us, the time was at hand.
The stars were arranged to show marvelous things,
Setting Wise Men to journey and find the true King.
Shepherds in Bethlehem gazed on the sky,
Longing to see him, their Lord the Most High.
How could they know that the very next night
An angel of God would speak words of delight?
How the Savior was born, it was news of great joy.
In a cloth and a manger they'd find the dear boy.
And a heavenly host would soon join to sing
Of the glory of God and of wonderful things.
He entered creation, set position aside
To show us how deeply his love did abide.
Sin sent us away from our almighty Lord.
He became one of us that we might be restored.
He's the Prince of our Peace; He's the one who makes whole.
He is Wisdom Incarnate, a Shepherd of Souls.
He's the Author of Life; He's the Ruler of All.
He can offer salvation, on His name we call.
The shepherds and Wise Men would bow to adore
Holy God among men, our greatest reward.
All glory and honor is due to this King.
Let all join in worship; let every tongue sing.
Jesus is Lord, all creation proclaims.
He's the first and last, He is always the same.
History turned on the first Christmas day,
When God became man in a humble display.
As we think of the manger in which He was laid,
Let our hearts welcome Him to the world He made!*

Dec. 3 ... Beth Huston

Dec. 3 ... Luke Eichler

Dec. 7 ... Abigayle Phillis

Dec. 7 ... Bryan Eichler



December Calendar

- 4th** ... 8:00 am Trustees Meeting
7th ... 6:00 pm Caroling to the Shut-ins. We will be taking the church van. This is always a great adventure.
11th ... 8:00 am Elders Meeting
18th ... 8:00 am Board Meeting
 A **Christmas Treat** will be handed out to everyone compliments of the Sunday School Department.
24th ... 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
25th ... 10:00 am we will be **Celebrating Christ's Birth**. There will be **NO Sunday School**.
28th ... **NO Bible Study** or Youth Group



Dec 16th.. John & Dorothy Faloba

Dec 18th .. Richard & Verna Kelly



Dec. 11 ... Bill Opsitnik

Dec. 13 ... Elizabeth Thatcher

Dec. 23 ... Warren Gentile

I don't know where to start... So many people to thank, those who decorated, those who took the time to pick up the extras like drink- ice- all the things that make a dinner nicer.

To Brenda for picking up the chicken & buns. All those who brought food (and there was a lot of it!).

Everything I had was very good – Like I say, to be a member of Phillips you have to be a good cook & once again, you have proved it to be true !

Speaking of food, which is one of my favorite things to talk about, What did you think of having chicken this year instead of turkey ? Last year we had Swiss Steak. Did anyone miss the turkey? Let me know so that we can plan for next year. We can try any type of cuisine. Let us know your preference.

Once again, Thank You everyone who helped in any way. I hope you enjoyed the dinner. I know I did, especially the dessert tables !

--Marty Snyder



**THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

Thank you all for supporting our recent "Christmas/Mission Project" for the Red Sands Christian Church and School in Winslow , AZ. Thank you to Jason Shinn for helping with the shipping and everyone who gave monetary donations. We shipped 33 knotted fleece throws, 33 patchwork pillows, 45 hats, 49 pairs of gloves, 6 scarves, 6 pairs of mittens, 15 pairs of socks and 10 books. Thank you, God, for helping us meet our goals.

-Marty Shinn

I would like to thank everyone that donated funds to purchase gift cards for the Thanksgiving donation to needy families. The gift cards were given to the Salem High School to be donated to needy families in the school. The guidance counselor said there are alot of families in need and she appreciated the donations. The total collected was \$250.00 and it may have helped five families. We have been doing this community service for a few years and have donated to United, Leetonia and Lisbon school districts. Again, thank you for your donations.

Dorothy Faloba

*Please Pray
For.....*

- Our Congregation, Our Nation, Lost Souls,
Unspoken Needs Of Our People
- Nathaniel Davis (immune system problems)
- Bill Wiley (health issues)
- Maxine Vincent (cancer)
- Mary Lou Eberhart (health problems)
- Steve Singer (blood condition)
- Suzanne Holloway (lung cancer)
- Mary Lou Hartzell (throat cancer)
- George Faull (pray for strength)
- Northeast Ohio Bible College
- Elizabeth Thatcher (health problems)
- Donald Barnhart (hip problems and kidney disease)
- Beverly Evans (had tests to determine amount of nerve damage)
- Paulette Cook and Family (Hospice Care)
- Baby Elijah (born with heart defect, continues to struggle at home)
- Zac Carter (11 years old; leg amputated; on chemo at St. Jude's)
- Jim Webber (CHF, heart virus, pacemaker & defibrillator)
- Albert Bricker & Family (full hip replacement November 29th)
- Margaret Greier
- Willis Uphold (on dialysis)
- Tom Miller (continuing to improve)
- Nancy Moore (to have shoulder replacement surgery)

SERVING IN THE MILITARY

Joe Phillis; Joel Newburn, back in the US; Kyle Stephenson; Paige Wyss; Matt Bartel, 5th Deployment to Iraq

OUR SHUT-INS

Jim Dorsey, Essex II; Bess Staubs; Pat Kalbfell; Dorothy McFadden;
Martha Crookston, Crandall ; Wanda Huston, Allay Senior Care Center, 131 Pendleton Street, Lisbon Ohio 44432;
Ada Bailey (444 ½ Ohio Ave, Salem, OH 44460 -New Address)



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Sheldon Cosma, Minister

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SERVICES:

SUNDAY

9:00 am ... Sunday School

10:00 am ... Worship

WEDNESDAY

7:00 pm ...Adult Bible Study & Youth Group

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



www.phillipschristian.org



Merry Christmas

Where's your security?

When *A Charlie Brown Christmas* debuted in 1965, religious references were unheard of on television. Yet the show's climax features the Christmas story verbatim. As Linus begins

reciting Luke 2, he's clutching his ever-present blue blanket. Yet, as pastor Jason Soroski points out, Linus drops it right as he utters the words "fear not" (Luke 2:10).

Soroski believes the timing is intentional and that "Peanuts" creator Charles M. Schulz sends a simple, brilliant message.

"The birth of Jesus separates us from our fears," Soroski writes. It "frees us from the habits we are unable (or unwilling) to break ourselves. The birth of Jesus allows us to simply drop the false security we have been grasping so tightly, and learn to trust and cling to him instead."



Trying to find gifts for certain people — or letting others know what you want — can be quite challenging. After all, most of us don't need anything.

Realizing that the best gifts aren't material items offers a new perspective on giving and receiving. Consider these insights from author Charles Swindoll:

"Some gifts you can give this Christmas are beyond monetary value: Mend a quarrel, dismiss suspicion, tell someone 'I love you.' Give something away — anonymously. Forgive someone who has treated you wrong. Turn away wrath with a soft answer. Visit someone in a nursing home. Apologize if you were wrong. Be especially kind to someone with whom you work. Give as God gave to you in Christ, without obligation, or announcement, or reservation, or hypocrisy."



GIFT Giving Solutions