



# MOUNTAINSTREAMNEWS

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## PONDERING CHRISTMAS

### MESSAGE FROM PASTOR



*Luke 2:19  
But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.*

That first Christmas, though vastly different from ours – was also a blur of activity for Jesus’ family. It was a night like no other. Mary needed a moment to catch her breath and process everything she had just experi-

enced.

After the arduous journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in an advanced state of pregnancy Mary found out that they had to stay in a stable because the inn was overcrowded. Later that night she delivered her precious baby and was forced to place Him in a manger – a feeding trough for animals. The Scriptures are silent about the details of that crucial delivery. Was

there some kind woman available to assist her? Did she and Joseph have to navigate their first childbirth all by themselves? We will never know, but we thank God that it was a safe delivery. After delivering her baby, Mary perhaps only had a little time to rest before a commotion announced the arrival of unexpected guests.

Roughly dressed shepherds entered the stable and asked to see her newborn baby. When they saw the baby Jesus they were filled with awe. They reported that angels had accosted them in the fields that night and told them magnificent things about this Child. He was the Savior of the world! This was the greatest news this tired world could hear. What was more the Baby was right there in Bethlehem – near to them. They felt compelled to come and see Him for themselves.

After the shepherds left and things quieted down, Mary pondered what had transpired. Maybe she recalled her own angelic visit nine months earlier. Maybe she recalled the amazing things the angel Gabriel had prophesied about the sweet child. Perhaps she tried to imag-

ine what all this would look like as He grew. But she could never have imagined all that Jesus would do and say – and that one day He would die on a cruel cross to rescue her and all of humanity from our sin.

Amidst all the hustle and bustle of our preparation and celebration of Christmas this year, let us like Mary make some time and space to ponder the meaning and implications of Christmas. Far more important than any gift we receive, than any delicious meal we enjoy, or any wonderful fellowship we experience, is the reality that Jesus came into the world to deliver us from sin. He came so we could be restored to a right relationship with God.

If you have received Jesus and His salvation, rejoice in your eternal freedom. If you haven’t received Him yet, I pray you’d ponder the truth at the heart of Christmas and receive your Savior.

God bless you,

Pastor James



### WHAT'S HAPPENING

**CORPORATE PRAYER**  
TUE @ 7 PM

**DEC 26**

Join us via Zoom video  
Please contact Pastor James for log on information at [rcantio@gmail.com](mailto:rcantio@gmail.com)

**YOUTH GROUP**  
FRI @ 6:45 PM

**DEC 29**

In-person at church.  
For teens ages 13 and over

**EVENING SERVICE**  
1st & 3rd  
SUN @ 6 PM

**JAN 7 & JAN 21**

Join us in-person at church

**KIDZONE & NURSERY**  
SUN @ 11 AM

**DEC 31**

These ministries are available every Sunday during the morning service  
Kidzone for ages 6-12 yrs. old.

**WORSHIP SERVICE**  
SUN @ 11 AM  
**DEC 31**

In-person service & livestream

Livestreaming is only on Facebook and our church’s website.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Merry Christmas!**
- New Year’s Eve Service: December 31<sup>st</sup> @ 10:30pm
- The church’s Annual Business Meeting will be held January 13th, 2024 at 4 pm at the church. All members please plan to attend this important meeting.
- The 2024 Nominees for church officers are posted at the Information Center. Members, begin praying about whom God would have us select.
- Help Needed: If you’d be willing to bring refreshments on a Sunday, speak to Becky or Lori.
- Join us on 1st and 3rd Wednesday at 3:15 at the Meadows at Stroud as we sing and share the gospel with the residents. Contact Tom for more information.

### QUICK TIPS ON WAYS TO GIVE YOUR OFFERING

Traditional during the Sunday morning service, with a check by mail or through our secured website. Please remember to hit "SAVE" after you give if you did not set up an account so the church can have a record of who gave for tax purposes. Thank you!