

Church & Community



PASTOR'S CORNER

By Mary Ann Kotch
River of Life Fellowship

The actual date of Jesus' birth is unknown. And there is no evidence of celebrating the Nativity or birth of Christ before the third century. At that time, January 6th was widely observed as the manifestation of Christ on earth including His birth, baptism and visits of the Magi.

There are various theories on the reason December 25th was chosen as the date to observe Jesus' birth. The most widely accepted theory is that the date was already a major pagan festival called Sol Invictus. The festival celebrated the birth of the "unconquerable Sun" and marked the winter solstice. When Christianity triumphed over paganism, Christmas replaced the celebration.

As Christians we have applied "Sun of Righteousness" to this. In the bible we read in Malachi 4:2: "But for you who revere my name, the Sun of righteousness will rise up with healing in its wings and you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall."

If we look around and observe the attitude and atmosphere permeating modern society, we will find it very difficult to observe and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. The holiday seems to have made a full circle returning once again to the worship and celebration of the season of winter.

Those who strongly adhere to the separation of church and state theory would disagree. But no matter which position you champion, whether it be Christian or pagan, the birth of Jesus or a snow man, it remains the practice of religion.

This message is a wake-up call to Christian believers. The celebration of Christmas has nothing to do with snowmen,

weather, Santa Claus, our gift giving, trees, wreaths, candles, or any of the commercial trappings that overwhelm the market-place. Christmas has to do with the birth of the Christ Child, who He is, what He is, and why it all happened. That is the focal point of December 25th. He is God's gift to us. His coming conquered death. His coming offers us eternal life by giving us victory over sin. He came to give us freedom and life on earth. He came to give us the authority and power to live victorious lives. He is "Emanuel, God with us." He is "The gift of God that is eternal life through Jesus, the babe in the manger, "Our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

Wouldn't it be resoundingly magnificent, as we celebrate the birth of the Savior of the world, that we would proclaim the true Christmas story as the center-piece of our celebration rather than reciting "Twas the night before Christmas" or sing about "Rudolph the red-nose Reindeer?"

In the gospel of Luke, chapter 21:1-24 we read in part: "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today is born to you a Savior, He is Christ the Lord."

Christians and non-Christians are faced with a decision this time of year to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas or to celebrate the season of winter. We as Christians must continue to proclaim "We have waited for our Messiah and He has come."



Celebrate Christmas

at the church of your choice

COME TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS
CHRISTMAS EVE
TRUCKSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
DECEMBER 24, 2003



4:00 PM FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
CHILDREN'S CHOIR, Carols
Holy Communion and Lighting of Candles

7:30 PM TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
CHANCEL CHOIR with Special Music
composed by Harry Trebilcox
Holy Communion and Lighting of Candles

Rev. Michael Bealla, Pastor
Harry Trebilcox, Choir Director
Vivian Jayne, Organist & Children's Choir Director
Cindy Thomas, Guest Organist

Church Road, off Route 309
Phone: 696-3897



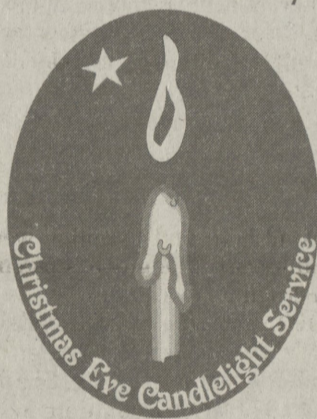
Trinity Presbyterian Church
105 Irem Road, Dallas, PA • 675-3131 • Pastor Rev. Mark C. Harper
Christmas Eve Services



5:00 P.M. - Candlelight service, pageant, music and carols
10:30 P.M. - Candlelight service, scriptures, music, carols and communion

All are welcome!

The public is welcome to celebrate Jesus' birth at
New Life Community Church



Wednesday, Dec. 24th 7:00 pm
at the Glory Barn, Brace Road, Orange
Pastor Dennis Madeira 639-5433

HIGH POINT CHURCH

1919 Mountain Road, Larksville, PA
570.779.7668

Come & Celebrate with us...
Candlelight Service & Christmas Eve Drama
6:30 PM & 8:00 PM

Directions - visit our website:

www.highpointnepa.org

Handicap Accessible... plenty of parking

'A Christmas Carol' at Cross Creek

Cross Creek Community Church will present a Christian version of Charles Dickens' Classic "A Christmas Carol" on Sunday December 21 at 6 p.m. Admission is free. For more information call 696-0399 or look at the church website, www.crosscreekcc.org.

CHURCH NOTES

Dallas United Methodist

4 Parsonage Street, Dallas
Dec. 21, Christmas Cantata with participating churches, Trinity Presbyterian and Albright United Methodist, Wilkes-Barre, 4 p.m.

Grace Community

Memorial Highway, Dallas
Dec. 24, Christmas Eve Service, 7 p.m.

Idetown Methodist

Idetown Rd., Lehman
The Idetown Congregation will be joining with their sister congregation, Lehman UMC at Lehman from December 2003 through March 2004 for Worship services and Christian Education on Sunday's.

Lehman United Methodist

1011 Mt. View Drive,
Sunday Worship, 11 a.m.
Sunday School, 10 a.m.
2nd and 4th Sundays, Youth group at 7:30
Dec. 21, Christmas Vesper Service, 4:30 p.m.
Dec. 24, Family candlelight service, 7 p.m.

Shavertown United Methodist

163 North Pioneer Ave.
Dec. 21, Youth Group caroling and lunch, 12 noon.
Dec. 24, Christmas Eve services at 7 and 10 p.m.
Prayer time Wednesdays, 7-7:15 p.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran

RR 4 Box 627A (off of 118),
Dec. 24, 7 p.m. Family Candlelight Service, reception following.
Dec. 26-28 Jr. /Sr. High Winter Camp. Registration forms at the church office.
Dec. 28, One worship service, 10 a.m.

Trinity Presbyterian

105 Irem Rd., Dallas
Dec. 24, 5 p.m. Candlelight service, pageant, music.
Dec. 24, 10:30 p.m. Candlelight service.

Trucksville United Methodist

40 Knob Hill Rd., Trucksville
Dec. 24, Family Christmas Eve service, 4 p.m.
Dec. 24, Traditional Christmas Eve Service, Chancel Choir.

THE CHURCH OF THE GATE OF HEAVEN

Dallas, PA

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE
Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24th
3:30 PM - Children's Choir & Youth Folk Ensemble Carols
4:00 PM - Family Mass, with live broadcast in the gym;
5:30 PM and 10:30 PM - with Candlelight Carols at 10:00 PM

Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25th
9:00 AM and 11:30 AM

Mary, Mother of God
New Year's Eve, Wednesday, December 31st:
5:00 PM
New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1st,
9:00 AM & 11:30 AM



Shavertown United Methodist Church

Phone-A-Prayer 675-4666
Every Saturday 5:30 PM Chapel Worship
Every Sunday 9:00 AM Family Oriented Worship
9:45 AM Sunday School
11:00 AM Traditional Worship

Children's Musical "Miracle at Midnight"

Sunday, December 14, 5:00 PM

December 24

6:30 PM Music of the Season 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship Candlelight and Communion Children's Message Cherub Choir and Children of Light Choir Chancel Choir Dramatic Message "Mary Speaks"	9:30 PM Music of the Season 10:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship Candlelight and Communion God's Handful Youth Choir Chancel Choir Handbell Choir Dramatic Message "Mary Speaks"
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Come to Worship Christ, The New Born King!

Pioneer Ave. at Center St., Shavertown
675-3616 • www.unitedmethodist.org

Christmas Services at St. Paul's Lutheran Church

RR 4 (Rt. 118), Dallas, PA

Christmas Eve - 7:00 p.m. - Family Candlelight Service with "Birthday Party for Jesus" reception following the service

Christmas Eve - 10:30 p.m. - Traditional Candlelight Service.

Welcome to our Church
Sunday, December 28 - 10:00 a.m.
Traditional Lessons & Carols Service



Rev. Charles H. Grube, Pastor
Phone: 675-3859
Directions: 309N to 415. Turn left on R 118 then first right.

The Congregation of St. Paul's Wishes You Peace and Joy This Christmas Season



St. Therese's Church

Pioneer Avenue, Shavertown
696-1144

"Season of Christmas"

Worship Schedule

Feast of the Birth of Our Lord Wednesday, December 24th 4:30pm- Church & Hall 6:30pm- Children's Choir Church	Feast of the Holy Family Sunday, December 28th 7:30am, 9:00am & 11:00am
Thursday, December 25th Midnight Mass- Church 9:00am and 11:00am	Solemnity of Mary-Jan. 1st Wednesday: 4:30pm Vigil Mass Thursday: 9:00am & 11:00am