



## **“If You Have Any Word of Encouragement”**

Recently I have identified with the rulers of the Synagogue in Antioch (Acts 13:13-16). Have you had your share of discouragements lately? Physical issues, criticism, and critical spirits often can undo a good day. The rulers in the Synagogue were reading The Law and The Prophets as was customary. They were carrying out worship the best they could when Paul and Barnabas arrived. The missionary team had their share of discouragements. John Mark had left them, returning to Jerusalem (vs. 13). The departure of those who have walked with us is always a discouragement. John Mark was family to Barnabas and the missionary team had invested effort in his life.

At the time of their personal discouragement, the elders thought they needed to be encouraged. “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement, say it” (ESV). The word encouragement is translated “exhortation” in our KJV. It is the word “Paraklesis”-the word we get our word “comforter” from. The rulers in the Synagogue didn’t need an exposition, but they did recognize their need for comfort and encouragement..

We all need encouragement, comfort and exhortation. The missionaries needed it, the worship leaders needed it, and we need it. Paul used the Scriptures to enlighten the leaders, and he used specifically the truth of the Resurrection. He said in verse 38, “Know brothers”, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Believers are freed from everything which the law could not free you. The people were so encouraged with these words they wanted to hear them again the next week (vs. 42).

The truth that our Savior lives, and that our sins are forgiven, and that we are free from judgment are just the words of encouragement we need. If you find yourself discouraged as this year comes to an end, take a moment to read and reflect on God’s Word. Our Savior lives, our sins are forgiven, or shackles are gone. If you have any words of encouragement, don’t keep it to yourself- “say it”. We all need to be encouraged.



# December 2010 Nuggets

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## Gratitude Offering

We are praising the Lord for the congregation's expression of gratitude to God for His blessings. This year \$7,576.05 came in and will be applied to the indebtedness we owe for our recently completed roof.

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## Christmas Tea-December 4th

Our ladies have planned a Christmas Tea for Saturday, December 4th at 10:00 a.m. All the ladies of the church are invited. Secret Sisters will be revealed and if you do not have a Secret Sister, you can bring a gift to exchange. Please sign up in the foyer if you plan on attending. Mrs. Mabel Flatt will be the speaker on the theme "My Christmas Quilt".

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## Baptism and Communion-December 5th

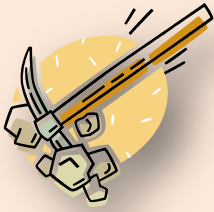
We will observe both ordinances during the morning service on the first Sunday of December. Dan Smith and Kelsey Owens will be baptized followed by a Communion Service. These two join four other new members voted in at our Business Meeting in November. Welcome to the family!

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## Valley Classics-December 7th

Craig and Shirley Golden will again be our guests for the Valley Classics Luncheon on December 7th at noon. This year we have invited the Newark Valley Senior Citizens to join us. We need your reservations by November 29th. Please don't forget to share the expenses of the meal when you sign up in the church office. Invite someone to join you!





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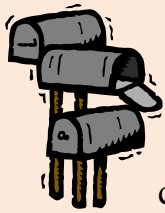
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## Deacons and Wives Dinner-December 9th

The Spiegels will host their Annual Deacons and Wives Dinner at the church on Thursday, December 9th at 6:30 p.m. We all appreciate the work put in by our deacons throughout the year and the dinner is designed as an expression of appreciation by the Pastor and his wife.

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## Christmas Card Depot

Again this year we will designate our bulletin board as the Christmas Card Depot. We encourage you to post a card to the whole congregation. Every year the variety of cards is fascinating. Our Christmas Card Depot is not intended to discourage the interchange of cards between members, but a way of sending holiday greetings to all with no one being left out.

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## Christmas Eve Service-December 24th

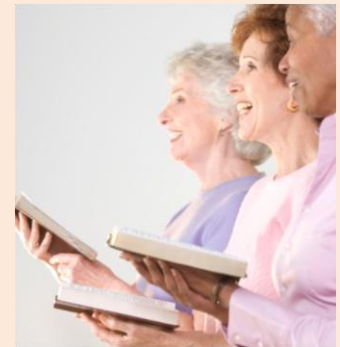
Join us for our annual Christmas Eve Service at 6 p.m. on Friday night. We will enjoy singing the songs of the season and rejoice in our Savior's birth. Pastor will read a story to the children at his annual fireside story time.

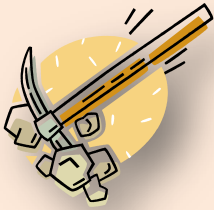
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## Women Who Worship— A Life of Worship

*“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19).”*

What kind of woman is a “woman who worships”? The Scriptures provide several portraits of such women. Deborah sang the praises of God, Who had done great things (Judges 8). Hannah worshipped in prayer, extolling the attributes of the God who had cared for her in





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her distress (1 Samuel 2). While Martha bustled about, frantically serving (and grumbling about it!), sister Mary sat at the Savior's feet, listening intently and soaking in His Word.

There's another portrait we ought to consider; it is the portrait of Mary, the mother of Christ. Here we see a truly devout woman whose life was a life of worship. When God's Word came to her, she had a will ready to obey regardless of the challenges such obedience would require (Luke 1:26-38). She had lips ready to offer up the sacrifice of praise as she marveled about what God was doing in her life and in the world (Luke 1:46-55). But above all, she had a heart in which she stored up precious thoughts about the Almighty One (Luke 2:19). Her heart was a sanctuary, a set apart place, where worship of God was going on while the world turned around her. This was a woman who knew how to quiet her soul and meditate on the Lord she loved. This was the key to her godliness, for the one who spends much time with God becomes more like Him.

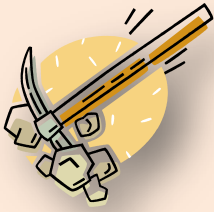
We live in a culture of frenzied activity. We are in the midst of a season with its endless "to do" list. While family and traditions are important, God is looking for women who will worship Him, not just for a brief time on Sundays, but at all times and in all ways. We can have His song on our lips every day. We can have a will that is ready to obey Him when His Spirit speaks. We may worship as we privately and publicly take in His Word and pray. But I think our greatest challenge is to cultivate hearts that have learned how to be quiet and to think, to keep the things of God always close to us and to ponder them. Is your life a life of worship?

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## **Missionary Conference**

Our church hosted the Harvest Dinner that kicked off this year's Missionary Conference. We were able to hear from two new missionaries and also from the Totmans who are supported by all three churches hosting the conference. Our church collected a total of \$816.21 for the conference missionaries.



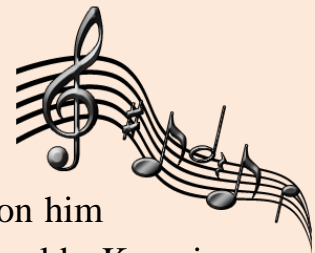
## Church Votes to Add an Assistant

The congregation held a Special Business Meeting on November 10th and voted to add an Assistant Pastor to our staff. The deacons will continue the process now of seeking God's man for the position

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## In Tune With

Christmas is **about love**, a story of God's love for you and me. God's love was manifest to us through the birth of His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the eternal God, took upon him the form of a servant so that he might die for the sin of the world. Knowing of our desperate need as sinners under condemnation, God did not wait for us to seek Him, but sent His son to seek and to save, that which was lost. That's true love in action.



Christmas is **about God keeping His word**. The Old Testament records God's promise to send a Savior. When Jesus was born, the promise was kept.

Christmas is **full of tradition**. Some traditions are good while others obscure the truth by embellishing or distorting the truth of Christmas. Don't let traditions and their use keep you from the truth.

Christmas is **a sentimental time**. It is a time when children come home for the holidays and we dream of a white Christmas. As part of the holiday spirit, we place manger scenes under the tree, play carols, and even participate in manger scene enactments. Does this mean we have accepted the Christmas message that Christ came into the world to save sinners? We need to ask ourselves, "Have I ever acknowledged that I am a sinner in need of a Savior?"

Christmas is **a time of activity**. We spend time going to parties, shopping, decorating trees, houses and yards, caroling, and visiting family. We are more absorbed in commercials than carols; more concerned with what one sells than what God has given. Christmas could be very profitable for us if we were to



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emulate the shepherd's response to the heavenly messengers as found in Luke 2:15-20.

I would like to suggest five different activities we should participate in this Christmas:

1. **Investigation** - The shepherds said: "...let us go to Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass..." Take time to investigate the Biblical account of Jesus' birth. Separate facts from fiction.
2. **Worship** - After the shepherds found the Christ child, they worshipped by glorifying God.
3. **Proclamation** - As the shepherds left the manger, they "made known abroad" the things they had seen and heard. How long has it been since you told someone about the meaning of Christmas?
4. **Meditation** - Because the shepherds wanted to understand the things they had just seen and heard, they spent time meditating upon them. As we meditate on the Christmas message, do we fully understand its implication in our lives?
5. **Praise** - When the shepherds returned to the fields, they praised God. We need to praise God for His unspeakable gift, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christmas is lots of things, but all of them find their meaning in Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Don't let activity, tradition, or sentiment take up so much room in your life that there is no room for Christ this Christmas.

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## Financial Facts



As we progress into 2011 opportunities present themselves to help curtail the effects of a slow economy. In an effort to help save church expenses we have taken on one of these opportunities to save costs in the area of charitable giving of tithes and offerings.

Our new offering envelopes have arrived and when they are distributed, you



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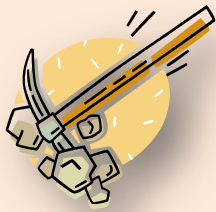
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will notice a few changes. These changes have been made to help curb the cost of these envelopes for this year and years to come. You will notice the following changes:

- The offering envelopes will no longer have a preprinted date on them. The purpose for this is to allow the use of all of the envelopes within the book over multiple years, for those who are on a fixed income and give once a month. For those who give once or twice a month due to a fixed income, their book of offering envelopes could potentially last them for 2-4 years, reducing the waste of unused envelopes as well as the yearly cost of ordering. The finance office will stamp the date on the envelopes given each week for documentation purposes.
- The envelopes will also no longer have a number on them, which means that those who use envelopes will no longer be assigned a number, specific to them. So, “How do we identify who the giver is if there is no number on the envelope?” you may ask. This is where we need your help and cooperation to help save expenses in this area. At the bottom of each envelope is a designated area for your name. It is important to put your name on the envelope (legibly) in order for the finance office to accurately record your gift for tax purposes. This is particularly important for those who give cash. If your name is not on the envelope or is not legible, and your gift was in the form of cash, the gift will not be able to be included in your yearend charitable gift statement. If you forget to put your name on the envelope and your gift was in the form of a check, we will use the name on the check for recording purposes.
- Everyone who wishes to use envelopes is welcome to use them. They are primarily intended for cash gifts. Contribution receipts will be provided at yearend for ALL gifts received by check, regardless if an envelope was used or not. But remember – contribution receipts for 2011 will be provided according to the name and address that appears on the check.

If you have any questions, please contact Mer Barrett or Kathy Brennan for any clarification needed.



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## Pastor's Desk



The Spiegels made it home from Florida. They said they got some work done and had a good time. They enjoyed the sunshine and I think got a little tanned. They have started walking with the gym walkers. Quite a few folk are coming in the morning to walk. I don't think they are getting anywhere they just seem to be going in circles. While they were gone, the roof got done. Pastor said it was a good thing since he wasn't going up on the roof, even if it was a little closer to heaven.

Ready or not, Christmas is coming. Pastor wanted me to remind you to come to the Christmas programs on December 19th. He and the Missus are thinking about going to the ESF Holiday Getaway in Corning between Christmas and New Years. Several from his Sunday School class are thinking about going. It will be great. Maybe there is still time for you to sign up.

I hope all of you have a great holiday, and don't forget that there really is a reason to celebrate the season!

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## Winter Schedule-January

This year we will again put into place our winter schedule which includes afternoon services and fellowship dinners. Our 1:15 afternoon services will replace our Evening Service until February 20th. The dinners are not only designed for fellowship but are an encouragement for those attending to stay for the afternoon service. Watch for the special flyer detailing what to bring to the dinners besides your table service.

As an addition this year we will move our Wednesday prayer services from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 a.m. during the same seven weeks. We hope this will allow for greater attendance at our midweek Prayer Service.