

# THE PARK BENCH



Greetings in the name of The Lord.

Yes...it is December and Advent is again upon us. Which means Christmas is not far behind. It is exciting for some, but for some it is another time to reflect on grief and loss and pain. But in this busy culture, we will *all* either take part in, or observe, as people decorate; make Holiday party plans at work and home, prepare the menu, make room for company, and yes...make Christmas lists for Santa so that we are not disappointed with what we find under the tree on Christmas morning.

Without *trying* to seem overly unimaginative or trite; I thought that we might briefly consider...

***What would Jesus want for Christmas if we asked Him?*** What would be central on His list? Would His list look like ours? And does He even have to ask for ANYTHING since He owns all things?

Well, we catch a glimpse of His (Christmas) desires in the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel. The climax of His yearning is found in verse 24: *"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world"*.

Although we are ALL undeserving sinners, there are those whom The Father has *"given to Jesus."* These are those whom The Father has drawn to the Son (John 6:44, 65). These are Christians—people who have *"trusted"* Jesus as the crucified and risen Savior. Jesus says he wants them to **be with him**.... He is speaking of His Church. **He is speaking of US!!!!**

Have you ever heard the silly notion that God created man because he was lonely? They say, "God created us so that we could be with him." Does Jesus agree with this? Well.... He does say that he really wants us to be with him! But the question is WHY? Is it because He needs playmates? Someone to play *Hot Wheels* with on Christmas morning because He is getting bored playing by Himself? Why does Jesus want us to be with him? ... *"to see my glory that you [The Father] have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world."* That would be a strange way of expressing loneliness. If the sole purpose for our existence was to meet some need found in God to cure His loneliness; that would be an expression of selfishness found in God. But our purpose according to Scripture is that **He longs to share His glory with us....**

**KA-CHOW!!!! Merry Christmas to US!!!!!!**

*"I want them with me, so they can see my glory."* In fact, it doesn't express his loneliness. It expresses his concern for the satisfaction of ***our longing***, not *his* personal loneliness. The Father is not lonely, and Jesus is not lonely. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are profoundly satisfied in the fellowship of the Trinity.

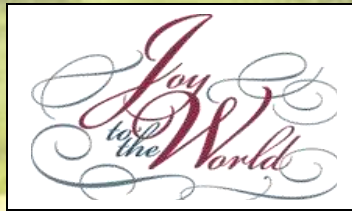
We, *not Jesus*, are starving for something. And what Jesus wants for Christmas is for us to experience what we were really made for—seeing and experiencing his glory. Oh, that God would make this sink in to our souls!

Jesus made us to see his glory. Just before he goes to the cross he pleads his deepest desires with the Father:

*"Father, I desire that they ... may be with me where I am, to see my glory."* But that is only half of what Jesus wants in these final, climactic verses of his prayer. *That we would know The Father's love just as Jesus knows The Father's love....* that we not only see his glory but savor it, relish it, delight in it, treasure it, love it?

What Jesus wants most for Christmas is that (we) his people be gathered in and experience the longing of our hearts—to see and experience **His glory!** Our hearts remain a vacuum searching for anything and everything in THIS world to fill it until we discover that we were made for HIM! Oh that we would wrap our hearts around that this Christmas. Consider the words of St. Augustine as he reminds us; *"Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee."*

What I want most for Christmas this year is for Franklin Park Baptist Church to experience Christ in all His fullness and that we begin having a burden to share it with others. We want to see Jesus, whose first “advent” or “coming” we celebrate, and whose second advent we anticipate and LONG For. This is what Jesus prays for us this Christmas: *“Father, show them my glory and give them the very delight in me that you have in me.”* Oh, may we at Franklin Park Baptist Church see Christ with the eyes of The Father and see ourselves in His High Priestly prayer. This is THE Good News of Great Joy and THE essence of heaven. This is the gift that cost Jesus His human life to bring us to eternal life.... and is what we should ALL long to sing, celebrate and shout about this Christmas!



Have a wonderfully blessed Christmas,

Pastor George

#### Advent Readers and Candle Lighters

December 3 - Gordon and Sandy Bonham

December 10 –Margaret & David Kelly and  
Benjamin Carver

December 17 -

December 24 10:30 a.m.- The Hofstetter Family  
Christmas Eve Service - The Palombo Family

December 3 – Debbie & John Moeller  
December 10 – Scott & Sally Cunningham  
December 17 – Sandy & Eddie McGinnis  
December 24 – Randy & Laurie Dauer & family  
December 31 – Paul & Cindy Merriman

#### **December Worship Service Greeters**



### THANK YOU

To Nancy McNaughton and the Guiding Lights for all their work to bring us our new pictorial church directory. It is now available on-line at the following link:

<https://mobiledirectory.lifetouch.com/433600/franklin-park-baptist-church>

It will ask for your access code : **ge017**

Thank you to everyone who had pictures taken and made the directory a huge success !

<http://www.franklinparkchurch.org/>

## Christmas Season Schedule of Events

“One Voice” Christmas Concert here at Franklin Park on Sunday, December 10 at 2 p.m. EVERYONE is welcome. This is a community event.



Guiding Lights Christmas party will be at the church at 7:00 pm on Monday, December 11. If you will be attending please bring a \$5.00 grab bag gift.



Caroling Friday December 15. Meet at the church at 6:00 p.m. then back to the church for refreshments. Jane and Tom Myers will host if everyone will bring appetizers and desserts to share.



. **Interchurch Christmas cards:** If you would like to participate in this event please have your cards in alphabetical order and secured with a rubber band or string. The Christmas card basket is on the table in back of sanctuary and cards will be sorted on Saturday, December 16 at 9:30 a.m.



Our Christmas Eve service will begin at 4:00 p.m. and will be a service of candles and scripture. At this service we will receive the RMMO Offering which benefits retired ministers and missionaries. Rev. Cunningham, Carol Jean Keefer and Rev. Paul Aiello receive a “THANK YOU” check from this outreach for their years of faithful service to the ministry.



The weekly worship service services can be accessed on-line if you miss one or would like to hear it again. Just send an email to the church and the link will be sent to your e-mail from Drop-box.

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

## Special dates

- First Sunday of Advent, *December 3, 2017*
- Second Sunday of Advent, *December 10, 2017*
- Third Sunday of Advent, *December 17, 2017*
- First day of winter, *December 21, 2017*
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 24, 2017*  
Christmas Eve, *December 24, 2017*
- Christmas Day, *December 25, 2017*
- New Year's Eve/Watch Night, *December 31, 2017*

## Sir Pizza Fund Raiser

**WEXFORD LOCATION ONLY**  
**Corner of 910 and Brandt School Rd.**

**Wednesday, December 13, 2017**  
**11 a.m. – 10 p.m.**

*Present this coupon when paying your check and  
Franklin Park Baptist Church Summer Mission Group  
will receive 20% of your guest check total.*



***A Thank you from Millie and John Flinchum :***

“My heart is so full with the love and kindness this church family has shown to my family. All I wanted was prayers for Kaitlyn and the Frances family with the cancer and the fire that took their home. May God bless each and everyone of you for your generous donations. It is with pride that I am a member of such a loving, warm Christian family. Blessings and love to each of you.”



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**WE HAVE BEEN INVITED to Fairmount Church on December 10 to join with them for their Christmas dinner. The story of St. Nicholas will be told at 4:30 p.m. and dinner will be at 5:00 p.m. The cost is \$6.00 per person and reservations must be made this week. Please tell Pastor George if you plan to attend or contact our church office by phone or email.**



## **More than a wreath and candles**

The Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Lighting its candles is a common practice on the four Sundays leading to Christmas. Some churches use four blue candles around the wreath with one white candle in the center, while some use all white candles. Many denominations light purple candles on the first two Sundays, pink on the third, purple again on the fourth Sunday and a large white candle on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

The wreath, the candles and the colors all have symbolic significance. Here are just a few of the many and various interpretations:

- The circular green wreath symbolizes the everlasting love of God, having no beginning or end. Green represents eternal life.
- The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. One tradition says that each candle also represents one thousand years. They total 4,000 years — the time from Adam and Eve until the birth of Christ.
- Purple, in ancient times, was expensive and was considered the color of royalty and kings. On Christmas, Christ is proclaimed King of Kings. Purple also symbolizes humility and penitence.
- The first purple candle signifies Hope.
- The second purple candle stands for Peace.
- The pink candle for the third Sunday symbolizes Joy and signifies the halfway point of Advent.
- The final purple candle is for Love.
- The large white candle in the center is the Christ candle. Its light symbolizes Christ the Savior - “the light of the world.”
- The beauty and brightness from the glow of all five candles is a reminder that Christ’s life was the light for all earth’s people “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:5 NRSV).

	<p><b>Dorothy McKinney</b> Creek Meadows Personal Care 1630 Ellwood City Road Zelienople, PA. 16063</p>	<p><b>Albert (Buck ) Bucklew</b> Chicora Medical Center 160 Medical Center Road Chicora, PA. 16025-2612</p>	<p><b>Peggy Bucklew</b> Chicora Medical Center 160 Medical Center Road Chicora, PA. 16025-2612</p>	
<p><b>Janet Tehois</b> Broadmore Senior Living 3275 Washington Pike Apt. 221 Bridgeville, PA. 15017 412-559-2813</p>		<p><b>George Green</b> Cranberry Place 5 St. Francis Way Room 122</p>		<p><b>Mrs. Shirley Wright</b> Passavant Retirement Community Trillium House Room 215 Zelienople, PA. 16063 Telephone 724-452-5400</p>

**Homebound -**

**Jane Nagel & Dale, Jr.**  
4015 Wick Place  
Wexford, PA. 15090

**Gloria Meinert**  
2915 Salisbury Court  
Wexford, PA. 15090

**Jean Downing**

**Bill and Eleanor Mooney**  
221 Chickasaw Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA. 15237

**Prayer Requests and Concerns**

**December, 2017**

- ^ **Gene Worst**, 86, father of Rich Worst, passed away in November. Please remember Rich, Leslie, Justin and Danielle as they deal with the loss of this special man.
- ^ **Jeremy Styron** will be having a bone marrow transplant on Friday, December 1. Please remember Jeremy and his parents, Jack and Wanda for strength as they deal with this very serious procedure.
- ^ **Karen Ott** received wonderful news! Her tests results revealed that she is cancer free. Please keep her dad in prayer.
- ^ **Ron Reibie** Nancy Hurley's brother and a Franklin Park fireman, is recently diagnosed with mesothelioma Stage 4 and a treatment plan is under consideration for him.
- ^ **Kaitlyn Frances**, 16, is waiting for a possible new course of action for her as the cancer treatments she has been receiving have not produced positive results. Continued prayer and love for Katelyn and her family is appreciated.
- ^ **Ted Parks**, nephew of Gordon and Sandy Bonham is in Kazakhstan. He applied for a U. S. visa for his wife and adopted daughter a couple of years ago but no one knows if it is lost or in the process somewhere. Please pray that it is processing and issued in the near future.
- ^ **Prayer for all** the policeman and first responders who are in danger as they are out there doing their job. Especially Shawn McNaughton who is a member of this church family and works in Cecil Township.
- ^ **Answered prayer and praise for** : A heartfelt thank you has been received by our church family from Millie and John Flinchum for the love, kindness and generosity shown to the Frances family. The note is posted on the bulletin board.
- ^ **Those Who Have Lost Loved Ones** : **Dickie Pilart**, uncle of Linda Raraigh passed away November 18, 2017. **Laurie Youngblood**, friend and co-worker of Laurie Dauer and Erik Kolodziej, lost her brother and sister in law in the mass shooting in the church in Texas.
- ^ **Continued Concern For**: Bill Craig, John Cress, Bill Mooney, Cindy Foight's father Bill, Mary Glassburn, Katie Jones, Tim McCrory, Landon Noulett, Edith Yockel, Christians around the world who are being persecuted.
- ❖ **Those With Cancer**: Bill Smith, Lance Cunningham, Matt O'Leary, Robert Stinebiser, Horatia Hammerschmitt, Mary Ann Yoder.
- ❖ **Missionaries** : **Becky and Larry Stanton** ( Hungary); **Peter and Sarah McCurdy** (Dominican Republic / Cuba); **Carol Sydnor** (Nepal); **Nora and Pieter Kalkman** (Prague, Czech Republic), **Brian and Lynette Smith & their boys** (Haiti). **Valerie and Aaron Osterbrock** (East Malaysia).
- ❖ **In Service of Our Country** : **Major Doug Bauer**, his wife Hope and children, Walker & Mackenzie in North Dakota serving our country.



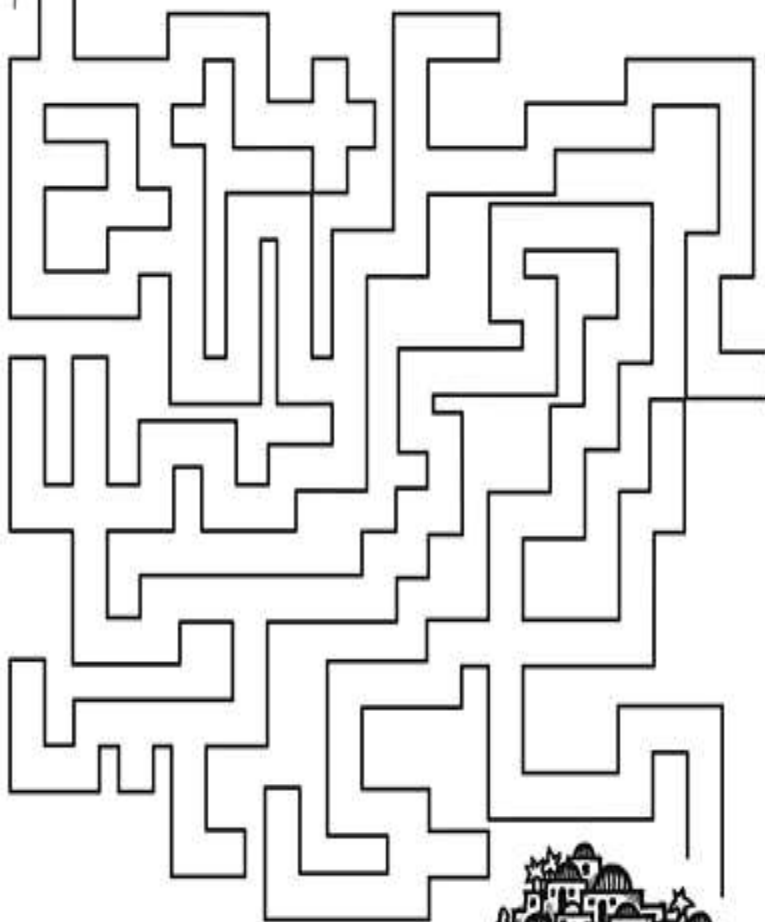
# JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.



START

Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.

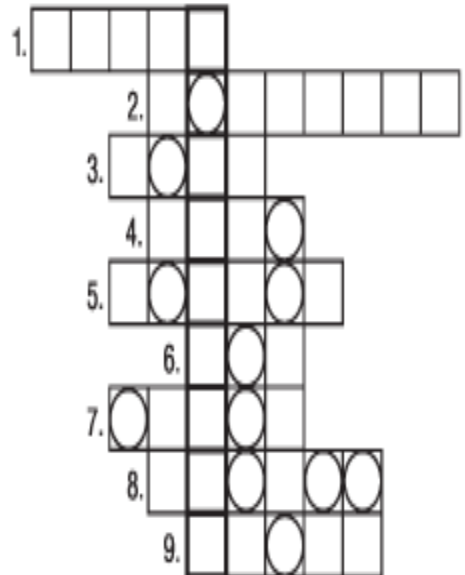


BETHLEHEM



# Puzzle!

Use the clues to fill in the blanks. Then write the word from the boldface vertical column. Also unscramble the circled letters to reveal a seasonal phrase.



1. Carolers and instrumentalists make this
2. What happens at malls
3. The angel Gabriel appeared to her
4. You'll find this under a Christmas tree
5. He was a carpenter
6. Joseph had to pay this in Bethlehem
7. The "ship of the desert"
8. Cattle eat out of this
9. Shepherds tend this

**Bold word:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Seasonal phrase:** \_\_\_\_\_

Answers: music, shopping, Mary, gift, Joseph, tax, camel, manger, sheep, Christmas, peace on earth

**FROM YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL :**

Dear Congregation:

Your Council thanks you for your generous support of the Youth Mission work and especially the fund raising rummage sale event. Council has adopted a policy regarding the receiving of rummage items and the clean out of unsold items. Simply, rummage sale items are not accepted but two (2) weeks in advance of the sale date at the church. Upon the close of the rummage sale all unsold items will be removed / disposed of from the church no later than one (1) week.

As many of you are aware we the congregation are the stewards of God's church and keeping the church clean, orderly and uncluttered makes for an inviting atmosphere and good teaching / learning experience.

So should the upcoming holiday season bring you replacement items or updating and remodeling or discards or downsizing and clean out items which you would want to donate towards the rummage sale, please hold them for the announced sale date. We thank you for your cooperation and your continued support of our youth mission project.

**Holiday Benefit Concert**

December 4, 2017 at 7 p.m.

Greater Cranberry Men's Chorus and special quartets at Dutilh Methodist Church, 1270 Dutilh Road Cranberry Township Admission is free.

(The show is only an hour so you can still catch the Steeler's game ! )  
Come out and hear holiday favorites in rich 4 part harmony.

**Any questions please talk to Rev. Paul Aiello who is a member of this group.**



- |           |                                                  |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Heather Ott</b>                               |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Mike Jones</b>                                |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Luke Merriman ( his 9th ! )</b>               |
| <b>24</b> | <b>Justin Worst</b>                              |
| <b>26</b> | <b>Ruth Cunningham ( her 91<sup>st</sup> ! )</b> |
| <b>26</b> | <b>Dan Douglass</b>                              |
| <b>27</b> | <b>Eli Liebenguth ( his first ! )</b>            |
| <b>28</b> | <b>Tom McNaughton</b>                            |
| <b>28</b> | <b>Nathan O'Leary ( his 10<sup>th</sup> ! )</b>  |
| <b>29</b> | <b>Jenny McGahee</b>                             |
| <b>29</b> | <b>Rich Worst</b>                                |

*Pastor George Palombo 724-601-3111  
Franklin Park Baptist Church*

Address: 2470 Nicholson RD. Sewickley, PA 15143 Phone: 724-935-3950

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