

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEC 25, 2016

HOSPITAL: Tabitha Rushing (Princeton, ICU)

HOME: Fred & Romaine Elliott, Henry McDonald, Lucille Finn, Rick Pope, Gene McDonald

PRAYER LIST: April Lazenby, Sue Hinds, Joshua Jackson, Elmer Williams, Debra Webb, Patsy Tucker, Debbie Odom, Robert Turner, Bobby Holloway, Ricky McDonald, David Brown, Kim Elliott, J.D. Dailey, Donna Laratta, Kathy Windham, Arthur Mason, John Pruitt, Madison Banks, Charles Crump, Martha Ann, Margie Thomasson, Micah Earnest, Vonciel Phillips, Wanda Self, Jamie Sanford, Bruce Windham, Raymond Johnson, Joyce Jacobs, Patrick Parker, Gene McDonald, Mike Miles, Jon Sanford, Marvin White, Jimmy Harrison, Otto Tolbert, Diane Chambers, Angie Jones, Victor Crosby, Brianna Cordell, Michael Griggs, Bud Howell, Margaret Henson

AM - NEIL MYERS - "QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTMAS"

PM - CONNOR RODEN

TODAY'S AFTERNOON SERVICE TIMES ARE CHANGED: THERE WILL BE A 30 MINUTE BREAK AFTER MORNING WORSHIP AND THEN WE WILL MEET FOR OUR AFTERNOON SERVICE WITH CONNOR RODEN SPEAKING FOR US

NEW YEAR'S EVE SINGING AT ADAMSVILLE STARTS AT 8 PM

BIRTHDAY:

Dec 25: Carolyn Myers

ANNIVERSARY:

Dec 27: Travis & Sandy Richardson

THE WEST WALKER WELCOMER

WEST WALKER CHURCH OF CHRIST
26036 HWY 78
CARBON HILL, AL 35549
(205) 924-9038
westwalkerchurchofchrist.org

TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNING

Bible Class 9:30

Worship 10:20

SUNDAY EVENING 5:00

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY 7:00

ELDERS:

Gene McDonald 924-4827
Carlton Myers 221-0637
Neil Myers 924-9289
Bruce Windham 221-2348

DEACONS:

Danny Busby 387-0213
David Preston 300-1927
Kevin Richardson 295-8864
Chris Robbins 388-1354
Vince Roden 924-4062

MINISTER:

Ben Wright 522-8004

THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Hugo McCord

At year's end for centuries, even before the birth of Christ, people in Europe enjoyed a holiday season. An occasion of rejoicing, was the fact that at year's end the northern hemisphere was at its farthest point away from the sun and was about to turn back closer to its light and warmth. Days would begin to lengthen. Gradually the long nights would be shorter. As a symbol of returning life, the ancient Teutonic tribes decorated their houses with evergreen and the fireplace burned brightly with the yuletide log. Good luck gifts were freely exchanged. It was a time of joy and good cheer.

Over three hundred years after Jesus was born the year's end holiday season was appropriated to make it a religious celebration. It was recognized that Jesus was not born in the winter time, for shepherds do not have their flocks out in the open around Bethlehem in December. The continual weather forecast for December in the Bethlehem area is "Hail. Snow in higher hills, and occasionally on lower levels." Nevertheless, the date of December 25 was selected by Liberius, bishop of Rome in 354 A.D. to coincide with the established year's end holiday. Since that time, the bishop's order has been followed by the Roman Catholic Church, and when the Protestant churches were established, they began following Rome's lead in making December 25 a sacred day.

God did not make any day of the week as a holy day for Christians. If anyone does so, it is his own private doing from "*his own mind*" (Romans 14:4). And if he does so, he must not push that day on others, for, said Paul, "*Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls*" (Romans 14:4). The Christians in Galatia were pushing certain days as holy, and they received a blistering condemnation from Paul: "You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you" (Galatians 4:10-11). The first day of the week to Christians is not more sacred than any other day. Every day is a gift from the Lord, and so every day is the Lord's day, but Christians do remember the first day of the week as a day of precious memory that Jesus arose on that day (Mark 16:9), and in that sense the first day of the week is a day of memorial, and they call it the "*Lord's Day*" (Revelation 1:10). But they do not regard Sunday as a sabbath or a more holy day than any other. On that day by apostolic teaching they assemble to observe the Lord's Supper and to make financial offerings (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

After the Roman Catholic Church had fitted an erroneous birthday of Christ to coincide with the established holiday season, more and more additions became part of the celebration. "St. Nicholas" was a 4th century bishop, who was called "the patron saint of children, sailors, and scholars," who is now called "Santa Claus." In the 11th century someone invented the word "Christmas," meaning "Christ's mass" (**Christes Masse**). In France the word "Noel," meaning pertaining to a birthday.

The burning of candles and the use of bright lights during the December holidays are believed to have come from the Jewish custom in their celebration of the Feast of Dedication, the Hanukkah, the "Feast of Lights," December 23-30, mentioned in John 10:22.

The use of trees as decorations began in German mystery plays as symbolic of the Garden of Eden. The use of mistletoe came from the English belief of its magical powers: If one's enemies stood under the mistletoe he would disarm himself.

Manger displays started in Italy, and mincemeat pies began to be baked in oblong shapes to represent the manger. The poinsetta was discovered in Mexico, and came to be called the "Flower of the Holy Night." The sending of greeting cards originated in England. Today such a custom spreads good cheer the world around.

To thousands, Christmas does not mean a mass for Christ, just as Saturday does not mean a day to worship Saturn, and as Thursday does not mean a day dedicated to the god of war, Thor. To thousands, Christmas means only a time for families and good friends to get together, to exchange gifts, and to relax.

All Christians rejoice that the great Father planned that Mary, sitting on a donkey's back, riding toward Bethlehem, had, in her womb, God in flesh, being protected by a water bag. But when the inns are full, they are full. Sleep where you can. So, in a stable, "God deep in the flesh became deep in the straw." Lying in a feeding trough was the creator of the universe (John 1:3). One who would become a brother (Romans 8:29), a friend (John 15:14), the sin-bearer (2 Corinthians 5:21), and the redeemer (1 Peter 1:18-19).

On any day at any season of the year it is edifying to sing songs about the birth of the Anointed one, the Christ-child. Songs about the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem continue to make millions happy and draw them closer to one another and to the One who came to live among humans and who wants to take them to Heaven. The earliest of such carols, from the 4th century, is "Jesus, Light of All Nations." Other famous ones: "O Come, All Ye Faithful," "God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "Away In The Manger," "Joy To The World," and "Silent Night."

My family and I want to thank each of you for your kindness and generosity shown in the gift you gave us Sunday night. We love you and hope for each of you to have a wonderful holiday season and a happy New Year!! (Ben and family)