

Faith



LOVE



Flying Water



The Feet of the Cross



Good Shepherd - Lost & Found

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The Sower



Joyful

TO.....S  
A CLOSER WALK

WRITTEN BY CATHERINE PRICE  
ILLUSTRATED BY CONNIE RHODES



Wise & Foolish



Widow's Offering



Fishers of Men



Come Follow Me



Prayer & Care

## INTRODUCTIONS



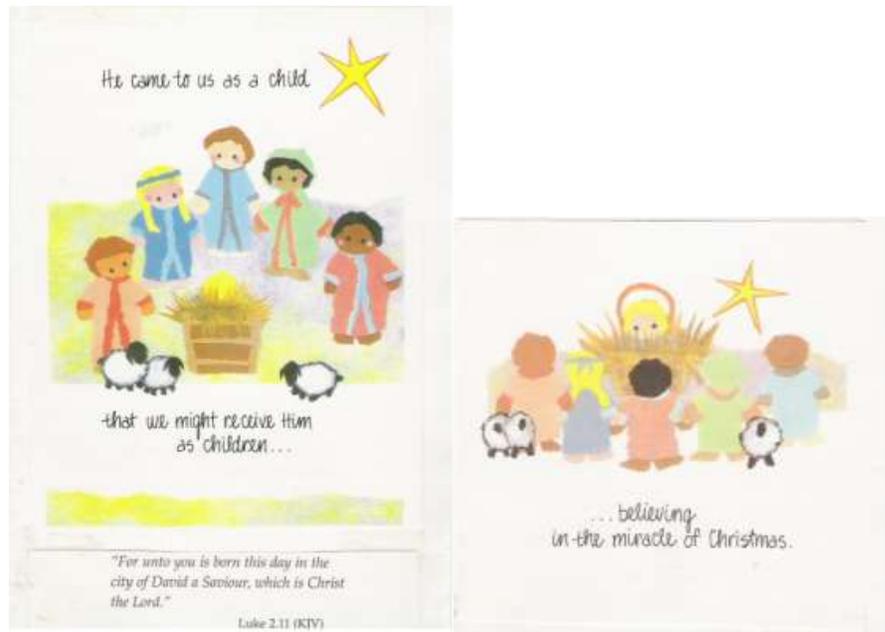
Hi! I am Catherine Price and I live in the small town of Aliceville, Kansas. I am a member of the Mont Ida Church of the Brethren. I have been married to my husband, James, for 28 years. I have just recently retired from Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation in Burlington, Kansas where I worked in the Accounting Dept. for 17 years. For the last 10 years, I have taught the Young Adult Sunday School Class and I also help to lead the singing. I began writing a newsletter for our church in September of 2007, shortly after my "inspiration" came at the Western Plains District Conference. Connie Rhodes' Footprint Art was displayed in the sanctuary of the McPherson Church of the Brethren and our theme was "Come...Follow Jesus." Connie has graciously allowed me to use her art in the Newsletter and I have done so through 2007 and 2008. In 2009, I published several newsletters that were consolidations of several months. My last newsletter was in August 2009. After this I felt God's calling to begin a Daily Devotional Book based on these Footprints. I talked to Connie about my idea and she was very excited about it and has been a constant inspiration in her willingness to share all of her art so freely. Since that time I have been working on each month's devotionals which, looking at the cover of the book, you can see on your top left, the theme of "Faith" and going across the top, you see the themes of "Love", and "The Foot of the Cross" "The Living Water -The Holy Spirit". Next, is "The Sower" and on down the right side; "The Wise and Foolish Virgins". This is the first Volume. I will be working on the Second Volume in the months to come. Please enjoy this six-month study in the meantime. If you have comments or questions, please feel free to call or text me at: 1-785-204-2938.



Connie Rhodes would like to extend her greetings to you all. In the above photo, she is doing her art presentation before an audience at Salina, Kansas in April of 2008, at the Western Plains District Ladies Retreat. Her talents became apparent to many of the "Brethren" when we came to the District Conference in July, 2007. She had been given the task of creating artwork that depicted the Conference theme: "Come, Follow Jesus" Each of her original designs were in the form of a footprint and artistically portrayed a Bible story or theme. The original paintings were displayed around the sanctuary of the McPherson Church of the Brethren where the Conference was held. As we saw at the Ladies' Retreat the next year, she is so much more talented. Her presentation includes; painting a beautiful scene while talking to the audience. This usually takes about 30 to 45 minutes. She is a very funny lady. You can see all of her artwork on her website: [www.artbyrhodes.com](http://www.artbyrhodes.com). Connie has been a member of the Newton Church of the Brethren for 22 years and is also the Church Clerk, as well as serving on the Church Board and teaching Sunday School where needed.

I FELT THAT IT WAS HELPFUL TO HAVE THE ADVENT SERVICES FOR EACH SUNDAY IN THE FRONT OF EACH WEEK'S DEVOTIONAL—TO BE A SPECIAL ADDITION TO THE SUNDAY READING—EACH WEEK'S ADVENT SUBJECT GOES ALONG WITH THAT WEEK'S DEVOTIONALS IN SOME WAY.

### ADVENT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN'S STORY



This is an Advent Service Scheduled around the time in the service when it is Children's Story. The children will have a very active part in the Advent Service this way and everyone will enjoy the fresh and simple manner in which it is delivered.

1<sup>st</sup> Week of Advent: Last Sunday in November

#### The ADVENTures of the Story of Jesus with The Candles and the Gifts:

What is Advent? Come up to the front for Children's Story, children, and we will search for the answer to this mystery together. Now, look at the poster I have made... (make a poster with the large letters that say: "ADVENTURE" with ADVENT underlined). The word ADVENT means coming or arrival. There is a very special Holiday coming that is all about the arrival and birth of a very special person. Who can tell me who that is? Yes! This is the celebration of Jesus' Birthday! We are going on an adventure that will take us through all of the years of waiting for this most important event right up to the event of

Jesus' birth. We will discover how we can begin becoming much more aware of God's Presence through His Son, Jesus Christ in this wonderful season of the year.

Who would like to light the first candle? Let us begin by lighting the First Candle of Advent – this is the WHITE candle that represents The Light of Christ. We are lighting it first because without Jesus none of the other things that the candles represent would have any meaning, and we are lighting the candle of Christ first because He is first and is what it is all about. (Be very careful when having the child help light the candle, I have found it too hard for them to use the ignition wand and have used a smaller candle that I light for them and hand it to them with which to light the Advent candle.)

The story begins over 700 years before Jesus came. God told His plan to a very special man named Isaiah, who was God's messenger and he wrote it all down, so that we could see it whenever we open our Bibles to Isaiah 9:2, 6-7. "The people who walk in darkness shall see a great Light – a Light that will shine on all those who live in the land of the shadow of death." "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder. These will be His royal titles: Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. His ever-expanding, peaceful government will never end. He will rule with perfect fairness and justice from the throne of His Father David. He will bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world. This is going to happen because the Lord of Heaven's armies has dedicated Himself to do it."

Who would like to light the second candle? The Second Advent Candle (PURPLE) that we will light represents "Preparation and Anticipation" We want to prepare for the celebration of the greatest of all events on this earth. There should be anticipation—this is being anxious and excited for the celebration to begin—Celebrating Jesus' Birthday! At this celebration, Jesus wants us to show our love that we have for Jesus by showing our love for each other in the giving of ourselves to one another through gifts we call presents, and through being together and having fun together, fellowshiping and singing and sharing everything that we have and everything that we are. It is also very important to let everyone know about the Story of Jesus and Why He came to live among us, His gift or present was His presence!. So it is very important that we know the story so we can tell others, and so that we will know for ourselves how wonderful God is, and How Much He Loves everyone, everywhere. Next week, we will see God's Plan unfolding in just a matter of months before that great event takes place. And the Messenger this time will be a very special Angel named Gabriel. See you here next week for the next chapter in this Adventure. Let us Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, help each one of us stop and be still and feel You are right here with us as we have a Moment of Silence in which to sense Your presence...(wait).....Prepare our hearts, and minds, and spirits, our whole lives, to anticipate the miracles of Christmas, yet to be revealed in us.  
Amen

Sing: "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"



2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of December

(Note: by now you should have a table set up for the Advent Candles and the Nativity Scene close by)

### **We Need A Savior**

Lighting the Candle of Hope

(Teacher: You will need to bring a small table top Christmas tree and a small string of mini-lights, gift-wrapped)

Last week we talked about presents, gifts, and the presence of God. We were very quiet and we listened for God. Today we want to continue the story of how Jesus Christ came into the world. First, the prophet Isaiah told about Him, and that was 700 years before Jesus was born; now we will learn about how His promise of coming to the earth brings hope to the people who are living in darkness, or sadness. Their sadness is because of their sin. Jesus comes to take us out of that darkness, He is the Light of the World. We light the candle of Hope – Who would like to come up and light the purple candle of Hope? Who can tell me what the word HOPE means? Wishing, dreaming, expecting something that we really, really want to happen or something we want to have....It also means Expecting to get an answer from God to our prayers, believing on God's Promises. With Jesus Christ coming into the world, there is now hope for everyone. We have two gifts to open today—two of you come up and we will see what is inside them.(OPEN THE LIGHTS FIRST) These lights are small but together they will make more light—

We are God's lights shining out to the world to bring them the Story of Jesus. Let's open the next gift: This little tree is symbolic of God's Family Tree—In the Bible in John 15 we learn that Jesus is the Vine (or tree trunk) and we are the branches. When we allow Him into our lives He grafts us or connects us to Himself, and we become part of the Family Tree of God. The story of how Jesus came into the world, continues:

An angel named Gabriel came down from heaven, because God told him to go to some very special people and tell them some very good news. First, Gabriel went to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. Elizabeth and Zacharias could not have children. But Gabriel the angel told Zacharias some Good News, that Elizabeth would have a son and that his name was to be John. But Zacharias did not believe the angel and so he was punished by God and could not speak until the baby was born. Then, several months later, Gabriel went to Mary and told her that she would have a son and his name would be Jesus—His name means Savior. Savior means someone who rescues us from all harm. Mary did not know how this could be, but she believed the angel and was glad. Then Gabriel went to see Joseph, the man who was engaged to Mary. Gabriel told Joseph not to worry, that Mary had not done anything wrong, that the baby inside her was given to her by God and was a Holy Child. So Joseph also believed and was happy to take Mary to be his wife.

The Presence of God means that He is here with us. One of the names that we call Jesus is Immanuel, this means "God with Us" We call yesterday the past, and we call tomorrow the future, who knows what we call today??? Yes, the present is a gift from God to be opened each day and it is through Jesus being with us today that we experience God's presence. God wants to be even closer than just near us. He wants us to let Jesus into our hearts, when we do this we are letting Him save us, He is our Savior when we let him into our hearts. This is called Salvation. This is what we are talking about today. The Hope of Salvation is here with us and will be in us if we will believe in Him and ask Him in. This is God's Gift to us—the gift that keeps on giving is salvation.

Let this song be our prayer today "Come Into My Heart Lord Jesus" (or "Have you any room for Jesus?" )

**FOOTPRINTS TO A CLOSER WALK**

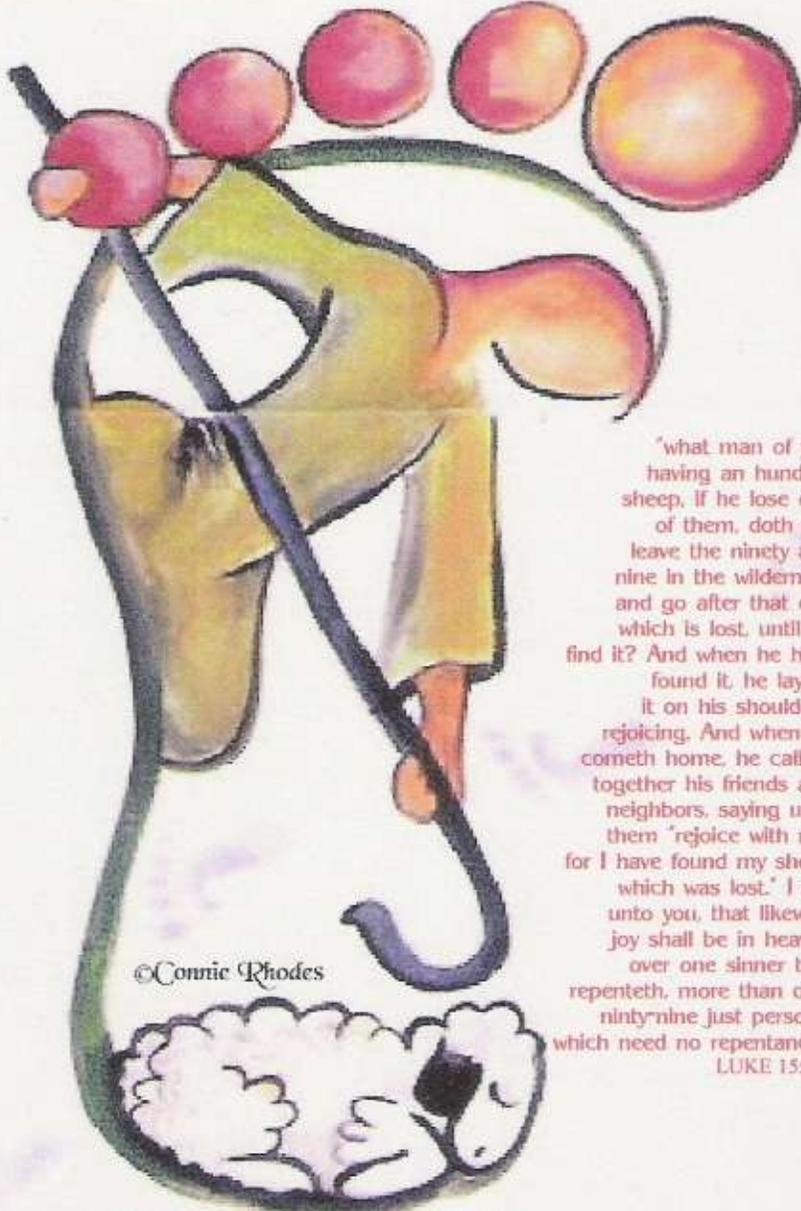
**DECEMBER DEVOTIONAL**

**CHAPTER TWELVE**

**“THE BEGINNING”**

(This copy of Connie's Footprint was used in one of my Newsletters)

**FOOTPRINTS**- Mont Ida Church of the Brethren Newsletter  
Editor - Catherine Price -MAY/JUNE/JULY/AUGUST/SEPT 2009



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“what man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that one which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them “rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.” I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over nintynine just persons, which need no repentance.”  
LUKE 15:4-7

**GOOD SHEPHERD-LOST & FOUND**

**THE SHEPHERD HAS COME! THE LOST SHEEP HAVE BEEN FOUND!  
DECEMBER'S DEVOTIONALS WILL BE ABOUT THAT SHEPHERD AND  
HOW HE CAME AS A LAMB AND GAVE HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP.**

**FOOTPRINTS TO A CLOSER WALK**

DECEMBER DEVOTIONALS

"THE GREAT SHEPHERD"

FIRST WEEK

FOR ADULTS ONLY

"THE CONCEPTION"

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB  
(sing the same tune)

Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb  
Mary had a little lamb, His fleece was white as snow.

Mary's Lamb became a man, became a man, became a man.  
Mary's Lamb became a man, His name was Jesus Christ.

Jesus was the sacrifice, the sacrifice, the sacrifice,  
The Lamb became the sacrifice, that God required of man.

Jesus died for all mankind, all mankind, all mankind,  
Jesus died for all mankind to save us from our sin.

Jesus rose to heav'n above, heav'n above, heav'n above,  
Jesus rose to heav'n above to reign with God on high.

Trust in Him will save your soul, save your soul, save your soul.  
Trust in Him will save your soul, and make you white as snow.

Now His Spirit comes to man, comes to man, comes to man,  
Now His Spirit comes to man to help us live for Him.

He's the shepherd for the sheep, for the sheep, for the sheep,  
The Lamb's become the Shepherd now  
to lead us Home to Him.

By Catherine Price

**DAY ONE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FIRST WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**AN AWESOME TEACHING**

Scripture Reading: Psalms 139:1-16: (Living Version)

"Oh Lord, You have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit or stand. When far away you know my every thought. You chart the path ahead of me, and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment, you know where I am. You know what I am going to say before I even say it. You both precede and follow me, and place Your hand of blessing on my head. This is too glorious, too wonderful to believe! I can never be lost to Your Spirit! I can never get away from my God! If I go up to heaven, You are there; if I go down to the place of the dead, You are there. If I ride the morning winds to the farthest oceans, even there Your hand will guide me, Your strength will support me. If I try to hide in the darkness, the night becomes light around me. For even darkness cannot hide from God; to You the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are both alike to You. You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body, and knit them together in my mother's womb. Thank You for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it! You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion! You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in Your Book!"

**We are starting out December's Devotionals with a wonderful study all about how all of us were formed in our mother's womb with God watching! David even says that God scheduled each day of our lives "before we began to breathe." This is the most awesome, exciting, controversial but eye-opening study I have ever been given! I will now share this Precious Present with each one who will be honest and open enough to receive it—the most wonderful Christmas Gift of all! It is not "my revelation" but is from a precious scholar of God, who is a beautiful Jewish man, a born-again believer who has written many books and continues a radio and t.v. ministry and out-reach. His name is Zola Levitt. I have learned very many marvelous things about the Seven Feasts of Israel from this man's teaching of the Word of God I was fascinated with all his insight into God's intentions when He ordained the First Feast Days back in Leviticus. In retrospect, we look back on these first oracles of God with new insight, understanding now the reasons for these rituals that the Israelites were commanded to observe. The meanings of which were obscured from their view, but we are given all the advantages of hind-sight, insight, and fore sight that they could not see.**

**Prayer:**

**Father, we praise you this day, such a wonderful time of year to celebrate the birth of our Savior and learn many astounding truths surrounding the mystery of His birth. Amen**

**DAY TWO.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FIRST WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**I HAVE FORMED YOU IN YOUR MOTHER'S WOMB**  
From "A Child Is Born" by Zola Levitt:

**"A most intriguing and almost startling application of the system of the 7 Feasts of Israel came to me recently during some research for a book. Perhaps this whimsical little section will serve as an example of how God's formulas pervade this earthly human life. I was asked by one of my publishers, to look into writing about the birth of a baby from a Biblical perspective. This pleasant assignment led me to the many fascinating birth stories in the Bible, including of course, the birth of our Lord. I wanted to find some theological principle, perhaps some hidden truth in the scriptures, about how each of us are born. I wanted to know if the scriptures held some secret as to how God made us. To that end, I contacted Dr.**

**Margaret Mathewson, a Bible-reading friend, and a very good obstetrician who has delivered over 10,000 babies. I questioned Margaret about pregnancy in general, and how it is calculated, and how the baby developed within the mother. I learned that the average pregnancy is 280 days on an ideal Jewish Year. The ideal Jewish Year will start exactly at the Spring Equinox, with the first day of Nissan (our March) the New Moon of the first month occurring on the first day of spring, March 21. Interestingly enough, I found that a pregnancy of 280 days begun on March 21 would end on December 25<sup>th</sup>. We don't know that this was the actual day of the birth of Jesus, but we do know that it is the date for the Feast of Hanukkah, or the Feast of Dedication (not one of the original 7 Feasts but was instituted later on.) That discovery led me to think that there must be something very biblical indeed about the pregnancy term and I asked Margaret for more details. It was really Margaret's first statement that turned me on to the whole system that I am about to disclose. I asked Margaret to tell me in some detail just how the baby was made and just how it grows. And she began with this statement, "On the fourteenth day of the first month, the egg appears."**

**I will stop here and hope that you are curious enough to continue tomorrow for "Our Great Advent-ure" as I am calling the Advent services an adventure with the children. I hope that these lessons that we are learning together will blend in and also expound greatly upon the truths that we are touching upon in the advent services. Isn't it wonderful that God gives us so much information when we just open ourselves to His teachings that He has given through His Holy Spirit to believers throughout the world. What a Gift! Sharing God's Word with one another IS a gift, and one that we can say just keeps on giving. Have you ever asked the question, "Will wonders never cease?" I think I know the answer, NO!**

**Prayer from 1 Timothy**

**Praise You Lord for reminding all of us to be diligent, to present ourselves approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. For we know that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that this man of God be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. Give us discernment, Father, as we continue to learn more of Your truth, in Jesus name, Amen**

**DAY THREE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FIRST WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE EGG APPEARS**

**Scripture Reading: Leviticus 23:5(KJV) “On the fourteenth day of the first month at even, is the Lord’s Passover.”**

**Continuing quotation from “A Child Is Born” by Zola Levitt:**

**“I asked Margaret to tell me in some detail just how the baby was made and just how it grows. And she began with this statement, “On the fourteenth day of the first month.” I couldn’t help hearing that familiar line of Leviticus 23:5: (God’s original instruction for the Israelites observance of Passover): “The Egg appears”, Margaret finished. The Jews use an egg on the Passover Table as symbolic of the New Life they were granted by the sacrifice of the lamb in Egypt. The egg, of course, appears in the Easter celebration as well, but is not symbolic of the same thing, and not of biblical sources. The egg is an appropriate enough man-made symbol of a New Life and I was fascinated that the 14<sup>th</sup> day of a woman’s monthly cycle does the same thing as the 14<sup>th</sup> day of God’s First Month of the Festival Year; it brings the chance for a new life, (I suppose in the literal sense when the Israelites were “passed over” or spared by the death angel all because of the blood of the Lamb and then freed from bondage to slavery--CP). I was already thinking that the baby must develop along the schedule of the 7 Feasts but I concealed my excitement from Margaret. I didn’t want to encourage her to slant the facts in any way just to prove a biblical point. I questioned her carefully, keeping in mind that the next feast, Unleavened Bread, must occur the very next night, the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, according to Leviticus 23:6. I asked Margaret how soon fertilization of the mother’s egg must occur if pregnancy was to happen. Her answer was very clear and definite; “fertilization must occur within 24 hours or the egg will pass on.”**

**Let us think about Jesus’ conception for a moment; let us think about Mary.**

**Gabriel had told Mary that she would have a son and that his name would be “Jesus”.**

**When Mary questioned the Angel, there was no condemnation for this, for she had an honest question, “How can I, being a virgin, conceive a child, not having known a man?” The angel answered her question, (Luke 1:35) “The Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you, and that Holy thing that shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.” Mary began praising God right then. She said, “Behold! The Handmaid of the Lord! Be it unto me, according to Thy Word!”**

**Prayer**

**Father, I thank You for all of this Story, so precious to know and to the best of our ability try to understand, and yet so marvelous a mystery that we really, honestly cannot fully grasp all of the significance of the wonder and glory of it all. But neither did Mary. But she received it by Faith and it was counted unto her as righteousness; and the Immaculate Conception did occur. Praise You Forever, Amen**

**DAY FOUR.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FIRST WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**FERTILIZATION OCCURS**

**Scripture Reading: Leviticus 23:6 (KJV) “And on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of that same month is the feast of Unleavened Bread unto the Lord and seven days must ye eat unleavened bread.”**

**From “A Child is Born” by Zola Levitt:**

**“I asked Margaret how soon fertilization of the mother’s egg must occur if pregnancy was to happen. Her answer was very clear and definite, fertilization must occur within 24 hours or the egg will pass on. Now I was getting excited, not only did the two momentous pre-natal events occur on the right days but they were also the appropriate events. The egg, of course, for Passover, and the idea of fertilization; the planting of the seed for Unleavened Bread.**

**The crucifixion and burial of our Lord on Passover, gave each of us a chance for life everlasting. His burial in the earth prepared for each of us the glorious resurrection to come.”**

**John 12:24: “Jesus replied that the time had come for Him to return to His glory in heaven, and that “I must fall and die like a kernel of wheat that falls into the furrows of the earth.**

**Unless I die I will be alone—a single seed. But my death will produce many new wheat kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.”**

**Jesus, being a devout Jew, never missed an observance of the festival days. After dying on Passover as our perfect sacrificial Lamb, our Lord was buried by the next observance, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, all about leaven or yeast in the bread meaning “sin” and the lesson being one of keeping ourselves pure. Could Mary have been “overshadowed” by the Holy Ghost during Unleavened Bread to signify her own purity and innocence in this event? When the Holy Spirit inseminated Mary, to bring about the human birth of Jesus Christ, a very amazing thing took place. The heavenly and the earthly merged in a way never before accomplished, or “conceived” of. Spirit merged with flesh. I am not suggesting that there was any actual sexual union that took place, for there was not, the seed had to be implanted in Mary’s womb but the Spirit can do anything, so this seed was introduced in her supernaturally and even superspiritually, if you please. Back to Zola’s story: “I almost held my breath as I inquired about First Fruits. I realized that this third feast is not on a definite time schedule. It simply occurs on the Sunday during the week of Unleavened Bread. It could be the day after or it could be almost a week away. I asked Margaret cautiously what happened next in the birth process. “Well, that is a little bit indeterminate,” she said, “the fertilized egg travels down the tube at its own speed toward the uterus and may take anywhere from 2 to 6 days before it implants.”**

**Prayer**

**Father, how marvelous are Your ways! Your creation of each one of us is all a part of Your Love for us. It is so special to meditate upon the miracle of human life, and go deeper into the facts to discover new truths about Your plan for our lives. I love You, I praise You, I worship You, Amen**

**DAY FIVE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FIRST WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**IMPLANTATION**

Scripture Reading: Leviticus 23:9-11 (Living Version) The Festival of Firstfruits: "When you arrive in the land I will give you and reap your first harvest, bring the first sheaf of the harvest to the priest on the day after the Sabbath (Sunday). He shall wave it before the Lord in a gesture of offering, and it will be accepted by the Lord as your gift. That same day you shall sacrifice to the Lord a male yearling lamb without defect as a burnt offering." Second Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 15:20-23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead,. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the Firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

*From "A Child Is Born" by Zola Levitt*

**"I asked Margaret cautiously what happened next in the birth process, "Well, that is a little bit indeterminate," she said, "the fertilized egg travels down the tube at its own speed toward the uterus and may take anywhere from 2 to 6 days before it implants." I loved her word "implants" because it so suggested the festival of First Fruits, the spring planting. And it was the correct medical term, I found out. The medical term is implantation. This marks the moment when a fertilized egg arrives safely in the uterus and begins its miraculous growth into a human being. Needless to say, Margaret and I were very soon occupied with a pile of obstetrical textbooks, embryonic charts, and the scriptures in several translations. I appealed to her to help me track this thing down, but still did not reveal to her just what it was I was after. I was only going to ask her about how our little fertilized egg would develop, without telling her that I fully expected a very exact schedule in accordance with the feasts. It is probably not necessary for me to say that I was holding my breath by this time, in hopes that something had really been uncovered. After all, it was so beautiful so far. Surely, God designed the conception of each of us in accordance with these first three majestic feasts, so appropriately fulfilled by our Lord. But would the system continue?"**

**Prayer**

**Father, help us all to understand what is being revealed here. I have laid out the scripture verses to help us. We know that there would not be enough space to fully go into it all, but help us to see with our spiritual eyes what You are revealing.**

**Amen**

**DAY SIX.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FIRST WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**A NEW CREATURE**

**Scripture Reading: Leviticus 23:15-17: “The Festival of Pentecost—Fifty days later you shall bring to the Lord an offering of a sample of the new grain of your later crops. This shall consist of two loaves of bread from your homes to be waved before the Lord in a gesture of offering. Bake this bread from a fifth of a bushel of fine flour containing yeast. It is an offering to the Lord of the first sampling of your later crops.”**

**”From “A Child Is Born” by Zola Levitt**

“The next occurrence on the pregnancy schedule was a tough one. It seemed that things were happening fast but the seven feasts schedule now called for that long wait until Pentecost. I asked Margaret cautiously what the next development would be with our implanted egg. “Well, of course, we have a slowly developing embryo here for a long time,” she said, “it goes through stages. But there’s really no dramatic change until it becomes an actual fetus. That’s the next big event. You can see it all right here on the chart.” And she turned her medical book toward me, so that I could see a page divided like a calendar, showing the first few weeks of the embryonic development. I looked across to the little pictures at what seemed liked a little tadpole, which soon had flippers, and then began to look like a little man from Mars, and so on down to the very last picture on the page. There I saw a human baby, and beside that drawing, the very scriptural message: “FIFTY DAYS!” I looked up at Margaret – trying to conceal my excitement, and asked, “Is the fiftieth day important?” “Well, up until the fiftieth day, you wouldn’t know if you’re going to have a duck or a cocker spaniel, but at the fiftieth day of the embryo, it becomes a human fetus.” (this is not a statement I agree with, since I believe as all Pro-Lifers do, that human life begins at conception-cp) This was Margaret’s matter-of-fact reply, however.

**Prayer: Father, only You know why this was revealed to us mortals. People believe all sorts of odd things about man’s origin, I choose to believe Your Word on the subject. It affirms in me that there is an order to creation just as there is to life itself. And when there is order there is control, and I am assured that You are in control of all of life. In Jesus Name, Amen**

**DAY SEVEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FIRST WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**EXPECTING**

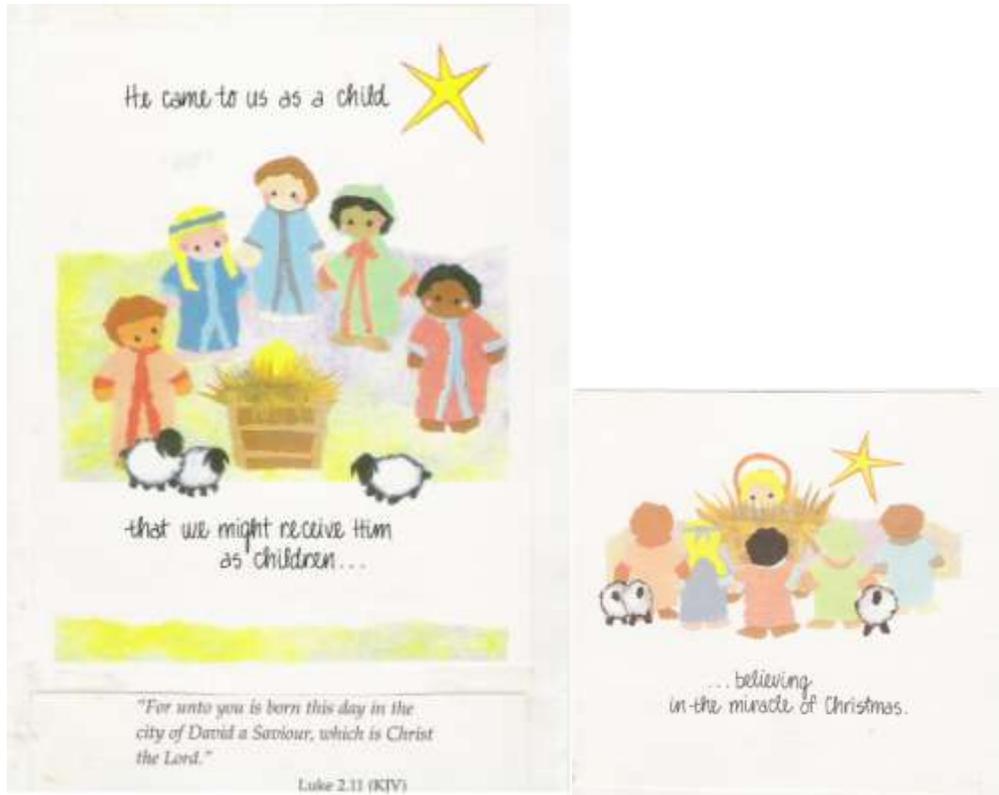
Scripture Reading: 11Cor. 5:17(Living) "When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!"

**"From "A Child Is Born" by Zola Levitt**

**Scriptural phrases went flying through my head. "A New Creature" seemed to be the appropriate one for the momentous event of the change from this indiscriminate life form, the embryo, to what essentially was a human being. Indeed, on that day of Pentecost, those unregenerate Israelites at the Temple, became truly, NEW CREATURES! They became spiritual, they received life eternal! They were not the same now as they were before. They would now go on to another life outside the confines of the fleshly bodies they were now in, in the manner that that fetus would go on to another life outside the body of its' mother."**

This time in Mary's life was very exciting. The angel had told her that Elizabeth became pregnant six months ago, then Mary went to see Elizabeth a few days later. So we know that Mary was only a few days along in her pregnancy when she visited Elizabeth. Now let us read Luke 1:41 "At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "You are favored by God above all other women, and your child is destined for God's mightiest praise. What an honor this is, that the mother of my Lord should visit me!" This confirms that Mary was already pregnant with Jesus – the Holy Spirit actually confirmed it! The interesting thing about Zola's theory is that there were fifty days between what the Feast of Firstfruits represented (resurrection of Jesus) and the Feast of Pentecost when in Acts we know that the Holy Spirit was given to dwell within believers. So from the first feast represented here (Passover-conception) we then see that the first three are within a week's span, and then fifty days later the fourth feast, in all less than two months. The Bible says that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months. If Elizabeth was 6 months along when Mary came, then it would have been time for Elizabeth to give birth to John, when it says that Mary returned home. Surely, Mary would have stayed with Elizabeth until after her son was born. I cannot imagine it happening any other way. Then Mary went home to Joseph who by this time, knew from the Angel's visit that it was all right to take Mary as his wife.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for giving us more understanding than even the Bible gives us, simply because we are becoming more discerning of Your ways and know that every detail cannot be written down. We must fill in the blanks in places where it is fairly obvious, with a little help from the Holy Spirit. Praise You, Amen



### THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT—GABRIEL, THE BUSY ANGEL

#### Lighting the Candle of Joy

Gabriel has been very busy with the assignments that God has given him to do on earth. Last week we talked about what the Bible tells us of the story of how Jesus came into the world. We are not yet talking about His birth, but we are Hoping—and this word means “Expecting” this great event to happen very soon. Even now, we see that there is Great Joy in those who have been visited by Gabriel and who have been given the GOOD NEWS! Let us light the PINK candle of JOY (WHO WOULD LIKE TO DO THAT TODAY?)---can someone tell me what this word JOY means?? Happiness or being happy depends on what happens—but Joy lifts us above our circumstances & strengthens us to get thru our difficulties.

Luke 1: 39-45: “A short time later Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went to Zechariah’s home, where she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, her baby moved within her. The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth, AND SHE WAS FULL OF JOY!. Then in a loud voice she said to Mary: “God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. Why should the mother of my Lord come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became FULL OF JOY and moved within me. The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise.”

No sooner did Jesus begin to live within her than Mary went off to help her cousin Elizabeth. Jesus living in us also encourages us to serve those who need help at home, in our church, and in our community. Christmas is the season of helping and of hospitality. Friends and family are a part of it, of course, but Christmas is also a time to be hospitable to people we don't see very often. Our fellowship and kindness to each other is a way of welcoming Jesus into our hearts and homes. **LET US OPEN THE FIRST GIFT AND SEE WHAT GOD HAS FOR US THIS TIME! (THE DOVE REPRESENTS THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE)** The Holy Spirit is a gift from God to all of His Family, everyone who asks Jesus into their hearts receives this GIFT! **WHO WOULD LIKE TO PUT THESE ON OUR TREE?** (Make or purchase small white dove ornaments) There are many gifts of the Holy Spirit—and they are called in the Bible **FRUITS!** **THIS IS THE SECOND GIFT—FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.** This is how we grow as Christians—We are Branches in God's Tree and He wants us to grow Fruit which means to have attitudes and actions that are just like Jesus. (Make or purchase fruit ornaments—Or use balls) The names of all of the gifts or fruits are **JOY, PEACE, LOVE, FAITH, HOPE, KINDNESS, PATIENCE, SELF-CONTROL.** **NOW LET'S OPEN THE THIRD GIFT: THE BIBLE—THE WORD OF GOD!** This is one of the most wonderful gifts from God— It is where we find out about this **FAMILY TREE OF GOD,** we all have a **FAMILY TREE—**A long list of people in our family that goes back for generations. In the Bible, Matthew begins with a Family Tree of the ancestors of Jesus from Joseph's side of the family and Luke gives us a the family tree or genealogy thru Mary's side of the family that goes clear back to Adam, the very first man.

— In this Advent season, “thank you” should be on our lips at all times. God wants us to realize all of His gifts so that we can give Him all the thankfulness for them. He wants us to know full and complete **JOY!** God is the Creator of the whole universe, from the smallest plant to the biggest planet. When Mary learned she was going to be the mother of God's Son, something entirely new started to happen. God began to share our human life in all things except sin. Jesus shared our life so completely that He even suffered and died. And because He did it to show how much God loves us, God raised Him from the dead and this is called, “**RESURRECTION**”. Now we can share in God's own life and resurrection through faith in Jesus. **THE FOURTH GIFT IS EVERLASTING LIFE (THE ICICLES ARE OUR PROMISE OF HEAVEN)!** Let us pause and Thank God for these gifts: Heavenly Father, Grant us Joy throughout the whole year by helping us to receive the gift of salvation and believing in Your promises, so that we will be full of hope and Joy! Amen! **LET US SING “JOY TO THE WORLD” AND WHILE EVERYONE ELSE IS SINGING LET'S FINISH UP DECORATING THIS TREE, SHALL WE??** (children help decorate the tree with teachers help while all of the congregation stands and sings “Joy to the World”

**DECEMBER DEVOTIONAL**

**THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

**SECOND WEEK**

**THE COMPLETION OF THE MASTERPIECE**

**DAY EIGHT.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....SECOND WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**I HEARD THAT!**

**”From “A Child Is Born” by Zola Levitt**

**“Margaret apprised me that every scheduled event in the birth of the baby varies somewhat with the particular case, just as the length of the entire pregnancy would vary from mother to mother. The medical book chart had measured its fifty days from fertilization rather than from implantation, (First Fruits in the scriptures), but the variations among pregnancies would account for the difference. Substantially, after the seventh week, following conception, this embryo, this inhuman life form, would become that one creature created in God’s own image. I next asked Margaret about the first day of the seventh month. I had hoped that there were no big events through what would be the long summer on the schedule of the feasts, and indeed there were none. It seemed that the fetus, once started on its growth into a human being, ready to be born, progressed in a rather general way with nothing momentous happening. The baby, I now realized, had developed very early and now was only gaining size and strength. But of course, there were a few small perfections to be added by the hand of the Creator, and I was delighted to find that one of these coincided so exactly with the next feast. The perfection that arrived just at the beginning of the seventh month was the baby’s hearing. Margaret’s textbook, stated that the baby’s hearing was now fully developed. At the first day of the seventh month the baby could discriminate a sound for what it really was, for example, a trumpet was a trumpet! Just in time for the Lord to descend from heaven with a shout, and with the sound of the trumpet of God, that baby could perceive the sound! (Are you following this? Zola is talking about the fifth festival which is Trumpets! Lev. 23:23-24: “Mid-September is a solemn time for all the people to meet together for worship; it is a time of remembrance, and is to be announced by loud blowing of trumpets. Don’t do any work on the day of the celebration, but offer a sacrifice by fire to the Lord. “) This is the festival that is prophesying the rapture of the church and the beginning of the blowing of the seven trumpets of judgment upon the wicked. (from “The Seven Feasts of Israel” by Zola Levitt)**

Prayer: Father, I do not know why You chose me to be the “carrier” of the truths being revealed, but I know that they are true and right and so exciting to see Your blueprint and the order of things, so that we can understand the end times prophesies in light of Your schedule of events coinciding with the schedule of the Feasts. I Praise and Honor You. Amen

**DAY NINE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....SECOND WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

***INTERESTING SUPPOSITION***

**Scripture Reading: Luke 1: 39-45: “A short time later Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went to Zechariah’s home, where she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, her baby moved within her. The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth, AND SHE WAS FULL OF JOY!. Then in a loud voice she said to Mary: “God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. Why should the mother of my Lord come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became FULL OF JOY and moved within me!” We have just studied about the hearing of the baby being perfected on the first of the seventh month. When John’s mother, Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, he leaped for joy! And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit! Do we see the significance? Because it coincides with Elizabeth at the end of her sixth month. The baby’s hearing was perfected, just in time for John to hear Mary’s voice and he leaped within Elizabeth in response. In Luke 1:15 we see the awesome secret revealed! “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine or strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb!” How awesome! Mary’s response is full of joy: Luke 1:46-56(NIV) “My soul glorifies the Lord! And my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior! For He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant! From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me--Holy is His name! His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as He said to our fathers.” Mary is surely prophesying here, with the help of the Holy Spirit! Later on, we want to study more about Jesus as our Great Shepherd and this all ties together eventually, but first we must finish our pregnancy and right now, there are some things about the “Family Tree of God” that was mentioned in the Advent service that goes right along with what Mary has said in the above scripture. “From now on all generations will call me blessed.” It is very interesting about the genealogy of Jesus Christ that we are given in both Luke 3:23-38 (Lineage thru Mary) and Matt. 1:1-17 (lineage thru Joseph) In the commentary given in the Chronological Bible, there is an explanation for the difference in genealogy: Heli is assumed to be Joseph’s father-in-law. This genealogy goes clear back to Adam. Looking forward, we will discover that our blood-line will be mentioned in the study on the Blood Acceptable. There are more eye-opening discoveries straight ahead.**

**Prayer: Father, my mind is easily bogged down with too much information. But I want to know all I can about the History of Creation, because it is so fascinating. Help me be able to absorb it all. I give You all the Glory, Amen**

**DAY TEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....SECOND WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE BLOOD ACCEPTABLE**

Scripture Reading: Lev. 23:26-29: "The Day of Atonement follows nine days later. (the tenth day of the seventh month- Jewish reckoning ) All the people have to come together and repent of their sins. And they shall offer sacrifices by fire to the Lord. Don't do any work that day, for it is a special day for making atonement before the Lord your God. Anyone who does not spend the day in repentance and sorrow for sin shall be excommunicated from his people."

**"From "A Child Is Born" by Zola Levitt**

**"I was now out for blood! That is, the blood that would represent the sixth feast, the Day of Atonement. This was the outstanding day of blood sacrifice and I specified to Margaret that I wanted to know if there was any development just 10 days into the seventh month. I still was careful not to imply just what I was looking for, and if Margaret had said that the elbows were finished, then I suppose my system would have been finished, too. But somehow I was very confident by now, and the Obstetrician didn't let me down. Half quoting from her textbook and concentrating hard, Margaret stated that the important changes now indeed were in the blood! It was necessary for the fetal blood which carried the mother's oxygen through the baby's system to change in such a way that the baby could carry the oxygen that it itself would obtain upon birth. Technically, the hemoglobin of the blood would have to change from that of the fetus to that of a self-respiring and circulating human being. The fetus does not breathe but rather depends on oxygen obtained through the mother's blood circulation. Naturally, this system must be changed before birth and that change occurred, according to Margaret's textbooks, in the second week of the seventh month, and to be precise, on the Tenth Day. "The Blood Acceptable" rang through my mind. "I have given you the blood to sprinkle upon the altar as an atonement for your souls for the remission of your sin." Lev. 17:11. This was God's statement. Indeed, each person of Israel had to present blood to the Lord through the High Priest of Israel on the Day of Atonement. If that blood was acceptable then there would be life. Likewise, in the fetus, when that blood was mature, there would be life. But of course the fetus is not yet ready to be born.**

**Prayer**

Father, help each one of us recognize all of the implications in this prophecy of this feast being fulfilled so completely by our High Priest, Jesus Christ, when He poured out His precious Blood upon the Cross for all of us. This is why He had to come in the flesh. Now, our atonement has been made, and "It is finished!" Amen

**DAY ELEVEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....SECOND WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**“LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD”**

Scripture Reading: Lev. 17:11

All through the scriptures we see blood being mentioned. We cannot ignore it, or allow ourselves to find it distasteful, because it is a very sacred thing to God. It was so sacred that He instituted sacrificing animals, just to make atonement for the sins of the people. Unless we understand why, we will forever misunderstand God. His word expounds upon the truth that life is in the blood. We know that this is so in our own lives. When we cut ourselves and bleed, we know that we must make sure that we get the bleeding stopped or we will soon become weak and if not stopped, we will eventually die. God has rules for us to live by. If we do not obey His rules, there are consequences, just as there was when we were growing up at home. God was teaching man that when he sins there is a consequence. The people of God, in the earlier times; before the time of Christ, were taught to go through the sacrificial system to atone for their sins. Think of how hard this was; a young man had raised the calf from birth, fed him, cared for him and helped him as he grew big and strong, but then one day he told a lie, not only that, he hit his friend in the nose. So he had to go to the temple and bring his prize steer and cut his throat and make sure the blood was collected and given to the priest, so that atonement could be made for his sin. Then God said, enough! I will give My Son for their sacrifice, once and for all, and their sins will be laid upon Him, and He will atone for all of their sins. Now we have that freedom of forgiveness of sin, plus the added joy of having the access to God that used to be exclusive only to the priests. But, God is Holy. He cannot dwell with sin or even look upon it. His vessels must be cleansed and pure. The precious, divine blood of Jesus, the spotless Lamb, was provided to cleanse us from all sin and make us pure white as snow, so that the Holy Spirit could make His residence in our hearts. The transformation begins with our trust in Jesus' saving power. Through our faith and repentance we then appropriate that blood (Webster's: make our own) We make His blood our own. How else could His blood cleanse us from all unrighteousness; there is a sprinkling of blood on our own hearts. Done in a supernatural way, to give us our new blood-line; the incorruptible seed is implanted within us by the Holy Spirit.

1 Pet. 1:23: J "For you have been born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible seed, through the living and enduring Word of God." This is the same way that Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb, an incorruptible seed was planted within her by the Holy Spirit. This is why we can conclude that Spirit merged with flesh; in the case of Jesus' conception and in our own re-birth process as well; and as Jesus was the First New Man; all that follow after Him into eternal salvation are of

one blood and one family. We are the branches of His Tree and bear the Fruit of the Spirit. Hallelujah!

**DAY TWELVE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....SECOND WEEK**  
(devotional).....(Bible Study)

**THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRIT**

Scripture Reading: Lev. 23:39-42: The Feast of Booths (Tabernacles): " Also, in the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month , when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days, on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. And ye shall take ye on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths. That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God."

**"From "A Child Is Born" by Zola Levitt**

**"There remains still another feast, but by this time I was quite confident that Margaret would come up with the appropriate fulfillment. I asked for the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month, and she immediately recognized the day as the beginning of the safe delivery period. "You see, that's when the lungs are developed", she said, "and as long as they get their little lungs going we can bring them along even if they are born at that early time. I'm afraid if they decide to come along before those lungs are finished, then they have a very little chance. But by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month, a normal baby has two healthy lungs and if born at that point can take in its' own air and live on it." The Feast of Tabernacles, I pondered, but of course, the Tabernacle is the House of the Spirit! The Spirit is the air in the Bible. Didn't God blow breath into Adam to make him live? And didn't Christ breathe the Holy Spirit upon His disciples? And even more so, in Ezekiel's dry bones vision, (Ex. 37) Ezekiel saw God make dead bones, sinews, and muscles come together into human beings, and then commended the prophet, "Prophecy to the wind, thus saith the Lord God, Come from four winds, oh breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." (Ez. 37:9) Tabernacles is the end of the feasts, the end of the road, the end of God's Plan and the beginning of God's Kingdom! The baby would live, if born at this time(which represents Tabernacles) and the believer will live once he enters the Kingdom!" (end of quote from Zola)**

**Prayer:**

**Father, Your plans for us are to prosper us and not harm us. We see how very much You have loved us as You have shown us Your mysteries and Your secret things have been revealed to us and we thank You and Praise You. Amen**

**DAY THIRTEEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....SECOND WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**  
**WHY?**

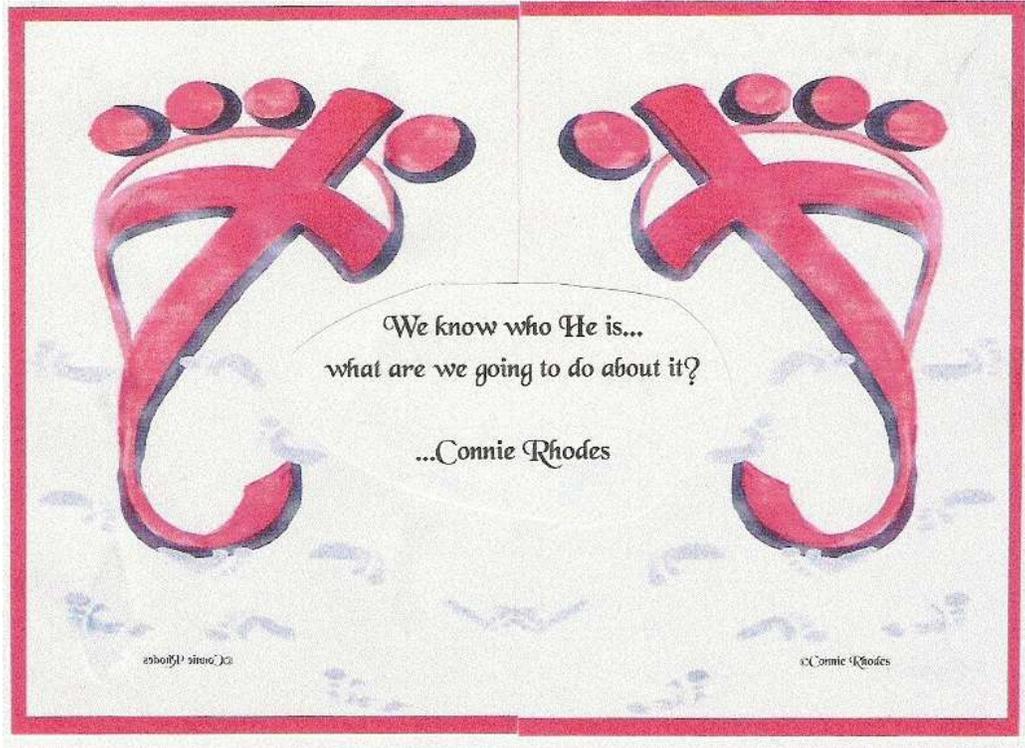
**God's Plan for each of us started in our mother's womb. His timetable for all prophecy is shown through the mystery of the Seven Feasts of Israel. Whether or not we can see the correspondence in the development of a human fetus following the same schedule as the Feast Days and also having a meaning that is similar in some way; we still must see that God's Hand is on this teaching and have to admit that at the very least there are many similarities in the times of growth following along with the feast schedule.**

**I wrote a book some years ago, and I am not trying to make myself look accomplished in any way, because I have never gotten it published, but then, I have never tried to get it published. I have made enough copies of this book for my Sunday School Class, so that everyone could follow along as I read it to them, I felt that this would help them to understand it better that way. Though they still did not understand a whole lot of it. This was very frustrating to me because I felt that what I had to share with them was very interesting and wonderful. It had to do with the Tabernacle and how all of the parts of the Tabernacle, and all of the furniture in the Tabernacle all related in some way to Jesus and there were many other things that the study revealed. Then the study went on to teach on other subjects about Jesus and went through His crucifixion and then went into a study on Revelation. I felt that it was a very thorough study on the whole Bible. Anyway, this is why I have to share what I have just shared about the teaching on the development of the fetus. It is so timely in our part of this Devotional at Christmas time. I have used my poems and pictures to portray these same truths each year in some new way whether it be for a Christmas Play, or an Advent Service, or even a special Bible Study, etc. But now we are almost ready for the Grand Birth. So far, the study has been very interesting leading up to this birth of Jesus. I will be revealing something that God has given me to see in a very spiritual and meaningful way. But first, I am thinking about "why" it is very significant and important for us to know about this interesting fact about the correspondence between the development of the fetus and the feast days. We no longer celebrate the feasts, although we still have other Holidays that in some way depict many of them. We have Christmas of course, and even Thanksgiving was much like the celebration of Tabernacles; we have Easter which is bringing us through the Passover and the meaning is even more significant than ever, now that we know that everything that it portrayed was a prophecy of the main events in Jesus life here on this earth. But what I have gotten from this study is that God's Plan has an order to it, and I believe that since these were on the same schedule, that we can depend on God to bring us through this same schedule in the**

**End Times scenario, and I have laid this out in my book. By the way, the name of my book is “Thine Is the Kingdom.” Prayer: Lord lead us all into a shared vision of what You want us to be as Your people in the times ahead. Amen**

**DAY FOURTEEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....SECOND WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT**



**THE GIFT**

**While strolling one day I turned but to spy, some sadly dejected souls drifting by;  
Darkness is their solace, and hope is gone from sight, yet here am I, so full of joy  
and light.**

**I thought within myself "Oh Lord! Why can't all men believe Your Word?"  
My hopes soar high, beyond life's bounds; throughout my life, God's care  
surrounds.**

**Alas poor children of despair, beyond the point of reaching for care,  
There is a gift that is offered to all men, yet so few have claimed its' riches within,  
A Gift so free, yet life's greatest treasure, it grows when taken-to size beyond  
measure!**

**Oh lost man! Can't you see it's your own? All you need do is take it by faith alone!**

**Take what's yours and tarry not, each day so new can bring a lot.**

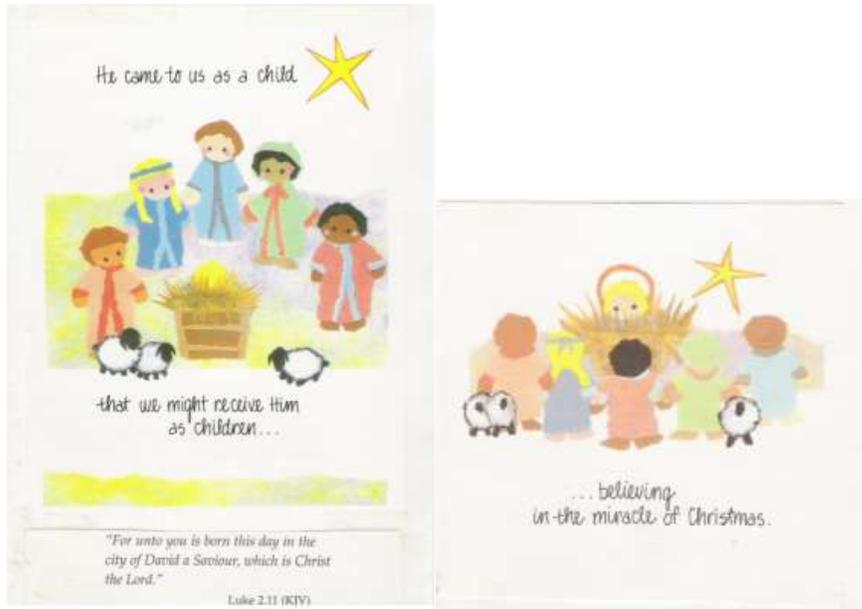
**Death may come and lock the door, so take the gift and fear no more.  
For while alive, the gift sustains your love in service, that hope maintains.**

**When life is over the gift transforms**

**Your soul, to rise from death's cold arms.  
Then in the Lord's presence the gift's exchanged;  
For within the gift was a promise arranged.**

**Salvation was the gift in hope,  
And now is realized in full scope!**

**(By Catherine Price)**



#### FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT –THE CANDLE OF PEACE

(Teacher—You will need to have a sack full of Bows)

WHAT IS PEACE? BEING CALM, NO CONFLICT, UNITY, LOVE, QUIET, FORGIVENESS. These are all different meanings of peace, and there are many more. In the Bible, there is recorded the writings of Isaiah the prophet, we talked about him a few weeks ago. When he told about Jesus coming to the earth, he said: These will be his royal titles: Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. ..He will bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world.” JESUS IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE! WHO WOULD LIKE TO COME UP AND LIGHT THE BLUE CANDLE OF PEACE. Deep within every human heart is the desire for peace. We long to see not just an end to fighting and division in our world, but an increase in love and cooperation. We want these same things in our family and so we ask for God’s help. That’s an important reason why we go to church on Sunday so we can get Gods help to build peace all week long. What are some of the ways we can live more peacefully this Advent in preparation for Christmas?. ( forgive, ask forgiveness, pray, help others) Jesus came among us so that we could share his life, both now and forever in heaven. And he showed us how powerful forgiveness can be; it can heal our deepest hurts. Since none of us is perfect; we all need to forgive and be forgiven. We even need to forgive ourselves sometimes. That doesn’t mean making excuses for doing something wrong. But it does mean that we cannot save ourselves. We need a Savior. Jesus came to make us forgiven children of God. Day by day, we continue to grow in love as we make forgiveness a part of our lives. Jesus taught us to pray for forgiveness and to forgive others so that God can forgive us. This is called Reconciliation—another big word to learn today! RECONCILIATION is to MAKE PEACE BETWEEN US AND GOD, AS WELL AS OUR ENEMIES.

FOR JUST A MOMENT THINK ABOUT SOMETHING YOU NEED FORGIVENESS FOR---NOW ASK GOD FOR FORGIVENESS. TAKE ANOTHER MOMENT AND THINK ABOUT SOMEONE YOU NEED TO FORGIVE. NOW ASK GOD TO HELP YOU FORGIVE HIM OR HER. . Now, let us continue with our story!

. We read in the Bible in Luke 1: 57-64 and 76-79: When Elizabeth's son was born, her neighbors and relatives heard how kind the Lord had been to her, and they too were glad. . They were going to name him Zechariah, after his father, But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John." The people argued, "No one in your family has ever been named John." So they motioned to Zechariah to find out what he wanted to name his son. Zechariah asked for a writing tablet. Then he wrote, "His name is John. Everyone was amazed. Right away, Zechariah started speaking and praising God. Zechariah spoke to his little son "You my child, will be called a prophet of God in heaven above. You will go ahead of the Lord to get everything ready for him. You will tell his people that they can be saved when their sins are forgiven. God's love and kindness will shine upon us like the sun that rises in the sky. On us who live in the dark shadow of death this light will shine to guide us into a life of peace." Then we read about Jesus being born in Luke 2:6-20"(Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to be taxed,) and while they were there the time came for her baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first child—a son. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

While all this was happening, an angel, (I bet it was Gabriel) went to announce some good news again, this time to the shepherds around the area of Bethlehem and told them" Don't be afraid! I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone. The Savior, yes, the Messiah, the Lord has been born tonight in Bethlehem. How will you recognize him? You will find a baby wrapped in a blanket lying in a manger. Suddenly the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God. And singing "Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth for all those pleasing Him." And the shepherds ran to find the baby so they could worship him."

I am thinking of some GIFTS that are right here in this room today, and if you will listen real closely, you will probably be able to guess what that is. God has brought each one of us safely through birth, and through all birth-like transitions to new life. We need to trust in God in times of change and new life. God will bring us through. Imagine what the birth of Christ meant to Mary and Joseph and how it changed their lives. Each one of us is a great gift to the world. Why? Because each one of us is an image of God, a unique and unrepeatable expression of the greatness of our Creator. Each one of us has a one of a kind contribution to make to the world. God, who made us in this way, will help us be all that we can be. Our family is also a great gift to the world. The love we share and the care we give to one another make us a special sign of God's presence in the world. The Spirit of Jesus has already come to us, but in our celebration of Christmas we look forward to that Spirit coming alive in us in new ways. Let us Pray for our families at this time: Father God, Help each one in our family to feel Your presence during this Christmas season, and let Jesus be seen in each of us to show those in our family that He loves them and cares about them. Help us reach out to each one and tell them how much we care for them and how much God cares for them. Amen

SO, DID YOU GUESS WHAT THE GIFTS ARE TODAY???? (PUT ON THE BOWS AS EACH CHILD COMES UP TO STAND BEFORE US ) LET US SING:THE VERY SONG PERHAPS THAT THE ANGELS SANG THAT NIGHT: "HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING"

***FOOTPRINTS TO A CLOSER WALK***

***DECEMBER DEVOTIONALS***

***THIRD WEEK***

***"INSIGHTS INTO THE FIRST ADVENT"***

**DAY FIFTEEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....THIRD WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**JESUS' BIRTH IS ANNOUNCED**

**Scripture Reading: Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:30-33: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign; Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel! (meaning "God with us") "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called: Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and Peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over His Kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice, from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. " "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus (which means Savior); for He will save His people from their sins." "Then the angel said to her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father, David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there will be no end."**

**There were many, many prophecies that had gone out into the world, telling of this great one to be born. Jesus' birth announcement that I have created from the "cross footprint" that Connie has drawn, has a special meaning to us, knowing that this was His destiny from birth, that He was to die for our sins. This is part of the Christmas Story, and was brought out in the Advent Services; that we need a Savior. There were many announcements of His birth when it finally happened as well. In Luke 2:6-8: "Now there were in the same country, shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For there is born to you this day, in the city of David a savior who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign unto you. You will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth Peace, goodwill toward men."**

**Prayer from John 3:16**

**"Father God, You loved us so much that You have given us Your Son, that who ever believes in Him, will never die, but have everlasting life in His Kingdom forever.**

**Amen**

**DAY SIXTEEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....THIRD WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE VISION CONCERNING THE VEIL**

***Scripture Reading: Mt. 1:20-25: "But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. So all this was done that it might be fulfilled with was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "The virgin shall conceive and give birth to a Son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means, "God with us." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. "***

***There is a truth that I would like to share with you. Jesus is all things to us—He is our brother, He is our Father, our Shepherd, our Lord, our Counselor, our King, and our Bridegroom. But when He was on the earth He was called "The Son of Man". Mary was a virgin maiden and Jesus was formed within her body as the SEED, an embryo, a fetus, a baby ready to be born. Now the scripture above says that "the virgin shall conceive and give birth to a Son", and concludes by saying "But Joseph had no union with her until she gave birth to a son." Now in order to show you what I am about to explain I must get rather "graphic". Being a virgin, she had that veil of flesh that marks a woman as being a virgin. My point is: the hymen was not penetrated. I read a precious little book called: "Why the Hymen?" that went into the teaching on the Blood Covenant between the husband and wife at consummation. Here is what the Lord has shown me; as Jesus came down from the Glory of the Father, from the true Holy of Holies in heaven, to be born as a fleshly human being, He broke through the veil of human flesh. He came out of heaven, into humility and weakness of flesh to sacrifice Himself for us. Tearing the veil into at the moment of His birth, He came to meet His destiny here on earth and live a perfect life, to lead us all into salvation through our faith in His atonement and sacrifice on the cross for our sins. When this was accomplished, the Veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom, the work of God, not of man, and He brought His blood into the Holy of Holies and made His way to His Father's House. Praise and Honor and Glory be to the Lamb! Amen***

**DAY SEVENTEEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....THIRD WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE FIRST VISITORS**

**Scripture Reading: Lk. 2:15-20: “When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about. So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”**

**God must surely have a special place in His heart for shepherds. They were most fortunate to be the first to see the Child and to be given the birth announcement by the Holy Angels! What an experience! There is such a neat connection between this and the prophecies that have to do with Jesus as our Shepherd that now seems to be a good time to bring this out. Ezekiel 34:23-24:NIV: “I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. “I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.”vs.30-31: “Then they will know that I the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign Lord. “You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the sovereign Lord.” Jeremiah 23:5-6: “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**” The greatest leaders found in the Old Testament writings were shepherds: Moses and David. In the blood-line of David, was Jesus. His earthly blood-line was carried forward through his mother Mary. His Divine Blood-line was, of course, from His Father’s side. Jesus had some other special visitors in the days following His birth. After His circumcision on the eighth day, He was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem for the Dedication. There was Simeon and Anna. They both prophesied about Jesus, through the Holy Spirit they knew exactly who He was. They, like the shepherds, told everyone they saw about the wonderful news.**

**Prayer**

**Oh Lord at this Holy Season, we rejoice with much excitement, and are like the shepherds and prophets; telling everyone we know that Jesus is our only Hope, our only Savior, He is the GOOD NEWS of the whole Year! He is the best news of any day. Amen**

**DAY EIGHTEEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**

**TWELTH MONTH.....THIRD WEEK**

**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

### **THE DEDICATION**

**Scripture Reading: Lk. 2:22-24: “When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”**

**The Chronological Daily Bible has a good commentary about this: “The rite of purification takes place 40 days after Jesus’ birth and ordinarily would have required the offering of a yearling lamb and a pigeon. However, the law permits poor parents, such as Joseph and Mary are, to offer a second pigeon or dove instead of the lamb, which they cannot afford. Thus, even by his parents’ offering of purification, it can be seen that Jesus comes humbly into the world.” Much later,**

**there is another commentary that we have GOT to read about dedication: IN JERUSALEM FOR THE FEAST OF DEDICATION: Whether intentionally present for the feast or there for other reasons, Jesus is in Jerusalem in December during the 8 day Feast of Dedication, known more modernly as Hanukkah. This feast was instituted as recently as 164 B.C. by Judas Maccabaeus in commemoration of the refurbishing of the temple after it had been profaned for idolatrous use in 168**

**B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes. The Jews celebrate Hanukkah as the time of rededication of the Temple.” If, per chance, it is actually the time when Jesus was born, isn’t it a wonderful picture of how our Lord is in His Holy Temple (our hearts) and this is the time to rededicate our hearts to His Presence in us; our Immanuel! Our Prince of Peace! HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR KING! The next by-line in the Bible I am looking at is: JESUS AFFIRMS OWN DEITY! Jesus came there (perhaps) on his own birthday, to affirm His deity. Just as on the day of his dedication Mary and Joseph dedicated Him to His heavenly Father. Jesus said, in John 10:23-30: “Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”**

**Prayer: Oh Father of Lights! We see the Light of Jesus today. Hallelujah! Amen!**

**DAY NINETEEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**

**TWELTH MONTH.....THIRD WEEK**

**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**Mary's Little Lamb**

**Scripture Reading: Psalms 23: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake! Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff—they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over! Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever! Amen!"**

**Little baby Jesus was in Mary's arms and she cradled Him there and wouldn't it be appropriate that she would sing to her little baby boy this lovely lullaby—Psalms 23? There was great peace and joy at this time in the young parents lives. We know that through all of the previous days Mary has heard many things about her son and even been filled with the Holy Spirit to prophecy about Him herself. Now she is pondering all that has been said and all that has happened. She knows there is a very special Child in her arms. She feels a shiver down her spine and feels the goosebumps on her arms. "Whatever lies ahead, Lord, I will try to do what You have told me to do. I am Your hand-maiden and Your will be done. Amen"**

**Joseph had never known such love, such peace and joy! There was a special feeling of calm and safety; a Presence seemed to saturate each corner of the tiny cottage that they were renting, a Presence that he didn't understand, and yet from all that had been spoken to him by the Angel, Gabriel, he knew that there was greatness and something more, even a feeling of the heavenly realm around them. A sudden urge to hold his son came over Joseph and he reached out to Mary. Mary met his gaze with adoration and love. He had been such a help to her in the baby's birth, and then it was nothing short of a miracle, that Joseph was able to do some carpenter work for a man in Bethlehem, to pay for the rent on this little cottage and to buy enough food to sustain them temporarily. His tenderness, now, was such a comfort to her also. She found herself dozing off in complete peace and contentment.**

**Scripture Prayer from Ephesians**

**Precious Jesus, Prince of Peace, thank You for being our way of peace, making us all one Family; Jews and Gentiles have been made into one New Person! We are "fused together" to be parts of Your own Body! What a foundation we stand on now—all of us who believe in Jesus to save us are carefully joined together with Christ; as parts of a beautiful, constantly growing, Temple of God! And the cornerstone of the building is Jesus Christ Himself. All praise to You Father, for we are also joined with each other, by the Holy Spirit and are all a part of this dwelling place of God. Amen**

**DAY TWENTY.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....THIRD WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH**

**Is pictured in JESUS' BIRTH**

**Scripture Reading: John 3:3; Heb. 10:5-7, 10; John 10:1-4, 7-8, 11; "Jesus replied, "With all the earnestness I possess I tell you this—unless you are born again you can never get into the Kingdom of God. Men can only reproduce human life but the Holy Spirit gives New Life from Heaven.!" :Therefore when He came into the world He said, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a Body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure! Then I said, "Behold! I have come—in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, 'To do Your will, Oh God.' He takes away the first, that He may establish the second; by that will we have been sanctified—through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ—**

**ONCE FOR ALL!" "Most assuredly I tell you that he who does not enter the sheepfold by the Door, but climbs up some other way; the same is a thief and a robber! But he who enters by the Door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and he leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." "Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly I say to you, I AM THE DOOR of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them." "I am the Good Shepherd; a good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."**

**It is only natural that there is a birth. It naturally follows all of God's creation laws that He has taught us thus far through nature. In the earthly sense, a marriage takes place and then there is a birth. In the spiritual sense, from our union with Christ, through the Holy Spirit, comes New Life. Just as Christ became the first New Man so all who come after Him, those who are born again, also become a New Creation in Christ and the Church was born when believers were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus has bridged the gap between a Holy God and sinful man! Now that we are made Holy through the sacrifice of the body of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, we have been gathered into His Kingdom, not made with hands, and this is the Church. This is called "the Sheep-fold" in the above scripture. Each sheep-fold is just one tiny part of the Church, God's Kingdom on Earth.**

**Scripture Prayer from Hebrews**

**Holy Father! You have brought us to Mount Zion! The City of the Living God! The Holy Jerusalem! You have brought us here to Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant and to the Blood of sprinkling! Father, we hear Your voice from Heaven saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth but also Heaven. Let those things which cannot be shaken, remain!" Oh Holy Lord, we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken! Lord grant us grace by which we may serve You acceptably with reverence and godly fear! For You are a consuming fire, nevertheless, Lord, Praise You forever! Thank You for Your promise that You will never leave us nor forsake us! Help us all to remember each other in prayer, asking that You, the God of Peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead—that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make each of**

**us complete in every good work to do Your will, working in us what is pleasing in Your sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen**

**DAY TWENTY ONE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**

**TWELTH MONTH.....THIRD WEEK**

**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**CONTINUING THE GLORY**

**Scripture Reading:1 Peter 5:2-4;(John 10:2,9,28-30) “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” “But he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.” “I am the Door. If anyone enters by Me; he will be saved, and will go In and Out and find Pasture.” “And I give them Eternal Life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s Hand! I and My Father are one.”**

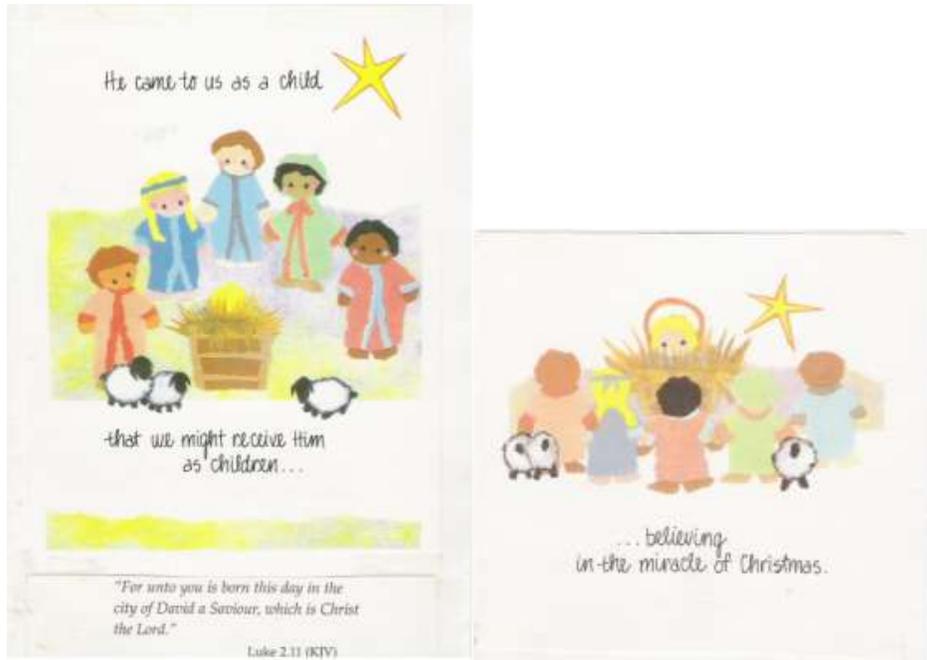
**The first scriptures are speaking of pastors and spiritual leaders. Our Chief Shepherd came through the gate of death, into resurrection and through the door of the Temple into the Holy of Holies, to make a New and Living Way (door) for all of us to enter. Now we must die to self before we can be shepherds of the flocks of God who go in and out of the sheepfolds, for the shepherd always gives his life for the sheep. And we as sheep ourselves, know the Chief Shepherd’s voice and we follow Him, and He gives us eternal life and no man shall ever pluck us out of His hand. Hallelujah!**

**The Shepherd will then lead us out as we go home to our families, our jobs, our lives on the earth, and leads us back into the sheepfold once again for fellowship. Jesus calls Himself the Door, the Good Shepherd, and the Lamb! Notice that He never refers to Himself as a sheep? Why? Maybe we find the answer as we study about Him as the Lamb. Isaiah 53:6 says: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Verse 7: “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. “**

**Remembering what the scripture said about anyone refusing to walk through the gate into a sheepfold, who sneaks over the wall must surely be a thief? Those who are not truly accepting Jesus as their Savior (the Door) are thieves among us. Remember the teaching on the Parable of the Sower? The wheat are those who are “in the Kingdom” and the “tares” are those who are growing among the wheat but are not of the Kingdom. The tares will be plucked up first and burned in the fire. But, not if we can get to them first and win them to the Lord! He has called us to be shepherds of the sheep, to find the lost sheep and bring them into the “Flock of God”; into the Kingdom of God. All of Jesus’ messages were about these things—(guiding, leading, saving, and loving) it was the message of Redemption!**

**Finding that which was Lost! The Shepherd came to give His life for the lost sheep. Our Footprint at the beginning of this Chapter is all about “The Reason for the Season” really. All that was done, was for this reason. Jesus is still finding lost sheep, but He does it through us, by the Power of the Holy Spirit. Make sure that you possess the Key of Faith, and have also entered through the Door of Christ into the Kingdom of God, and that your name is in the Lamb’s Book of Life.**

**Prayer: Hallelujah to the Lamb that gives us abundant life, that we might be given the blessed privilege to go in and out of the Kingdom and find pasture, and find it more abundantly! Amen**



## FIFTH WEEK OF ADVENT—THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

(Have all of the Advent Candles lit before service, have a child blow out all but the Christ Candle when they come up for Children's Story)

Preparation is now over. Now it is time to trust in the Lord, trust that He is accomplishing in us everything that needs to be accomplished. We have done what we can to get ready, and now we need to allow God to give us the special blessings of the Christmas season, in whatever form they come. Jesus himself is a good model of trust; he came among us as a tiny baby, trusting not only in the heavenly father but also in his human parents, Mary and Joseph. Throughout his life and ministry, he trusted that, no matter what, the Father would take care of him. He could even face suffering and death, trusting that all would be well. And so it was, on that morning of His Resurrection. God's love for us included giving His most cherished possession, His only begotten son, whose death and resurrection made our salvation possible.

**LET'S LOOK AT GOD'S TREE OF LIFE. WHAT IS STILL MISSING? THE STAR!**  
 (A Child Opens the gift wrapped Star and put on the Tree) Our story talks about the shepherds running to find Jesus, and worshiping him there in his little manger bed. They were guided some how to the place where Mary and Joseph were staying, perhaps the star or the light of a special angel was over them guiding their steps, we do not know for sure. But the Bible tells us about The Star of Bethlehem that was guiding some very wise men from far away, who had been traveling for a very long time to see this one who was prophesied to be the Messiah, the King of Israel. They started traveling because they saw this special star that lead them all the way to where the Holy Child was.. This trip took them about six months, or so. The baby Jesus and his parents now lived in a house there in Bethlehem, and when the wise men came and brought gifts of gold, and frankincense and myrrh, they worshipped him. Believers have worshiped Him ever since then and still today and throughout eternity we will be worshipping Him. That is why we have Church.

(You could have a small church on the table and not mention it until now, or have it gift wrapped for them to open) Our church building is where we come to offer our gifts and worship him together and we are called the body of Christ, because, THE PEOPLE, are actually the Church, but this building where we meet together is our House of Worship, so that we can have a place to worship Jesus and God. THE CHURCH HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AND This is Jesus's special gift to all us who believe in him and follow him just as the Wise men did. We are a part of His Great Kingdom, the Church that Jesus established while He was here on earth. We come together to learn His ways from His Word, the Bible. We can also learn by listening to the pastor when he gives us his words of wisdom, and our SS Teachers as they give us stories from the Bible to learn from and enjoy. We learn about God also by opening our hearts to the Holy Spirit in prayer. The church has been here for us beginning 10 days after Jesus ascended; when the Holy Spirit came into believers hearts. As Jesus ascended the angel proclaimed: " Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven". THIS IS THE CHRISTIANS BLESSED HOPE, JOY AND PEACE! JESUS WILL COME AGAIN, AND WE WILL BE CAUGHT UP INTO THE CLOUDS TO MEET WITH HIM IN THE SKY AND WILL BE WITH HIM FOREVER!. LOOK AT THE CHURCH, WHAT IS MISSING? WHO WOULD LIKE TO OPEN THIS GIFT? IT IS A CROSS (Make a special ornament to be put on top of the Church Model) LET'S PUT THIS ON THE CHURCH AND TALK ABOUT WHAT THE CROSS MEANS. Just as the Star is a symbol of the "guiding light" the Cross is a symbol of the Christian Faith being the guiding light for all men to follow. The Cross is our symbol of How much God loved us and our belief in His saving Grace. Perhaps you don't think of Mary as a great thinker, but she had a lot to think about. Maybe all of her thinking about the wonder of Jesus 's birth helped her to raise him—to say goodbye to him when he left home, and to stand beneath his cross on Calvary. She certainly needed a lot of courage! She may have been thinking about all those things on Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon her and the Apostles and all of the believers . In thought, in reflection and in wonder, Mary was given the strength to follow her son—all the way to heaven! Just as we must do. Let us pray for that strength: Holy Lord, give us strength and courage to follow You no matter what the cost! In Jesus Name, Amen

The candles of preparation and hope, and joy and peace are all a part of the Candle of Christ, so we extinguish them , but the Light of Christ shall be kept-to relight here at church Sunday after Sunday and taken out into our communities and world, as we continue the story of our King, Jesus Christ, the Light of the World and we can rekindle our fire and our light by continuing to meet together; worshipping our Lord—we are to be incorporated into His Flame, just as we are all incorporated into one Body, and the flame of Jesus is within our hearts as we continue worshipping in Joy, Hope and Peace until He comes again. LET US SING TOGETHER the story of the wise men who came from the east following the star to find the only one WHO IS WORTHY TO BE WORSHIPPED!!JESUS CHRIST IS KING OF KINGS! LET US SING: "WE THREE KINGS"

**FOOTPRINTS TO A CLOSER WALK**

**DECEMBER DEVOTIONALS**

**FOURTH WEEK**

**“MY SHEPHERD LEADETH ME”**

**DAY TWENTY TWO.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FOURTH WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM**

**Scripture Reading: Matt. 2:1-8:**”After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the East came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet (Micah) has written, “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the Shepherd of my people Israel.” “Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

The Magi , which some have called philosopher/priests, wise men, princes, or even pagan Zoroastrians, have been prompted to find out the truth of the prophecies surrounding the birth of a “great one” and the origin of a strange star that has appeared in the heavens. The star apparently, has been sighted in the skies as far away as the eastern Asian country, where they have seen it. Then the Star has moved forward to guide these inquisitive scholars onward. It was apparently a few months after Jesus’ birth when they finally reached Jerusalem. Was the Star actually over the place where Jesus was born?

Rev. 22:16: “Jesus states that He is the bright, morning Star” The morning star precedes the full brightness of the sun’s light. In 2 Peter 1:19: “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts” These are mysterious scriptures that help us to unravel some of the secrets of our story. Jesus is the Morning Star, and the Light of the World. There were millions of Angels worshiping Him on the night of His birth, and there had to be many “signs and portents in the heavens” that night. It was a momentous occasion! Surely the Star of Bethlehem was over the place of Jesus’ birth! It wasn’t until later that Herod heard about it from the wise men. God’s plan was for the wise men to get to Jesus before there was any harm done, even though Herod tried to kill him, by sending soldiers out to kill all the male babies age two and under, similar to the story of Passover, when the Pharoah tried to kill all the male first born of the Israelites and God turned it around on the Egyptians and the Death Angel came to kill the first born of Egypt, passing over the Israelite first born who put the blood of the Lamb on the doorposts of their homes.

**Prayer**

**Father, Your watch care over us is awesome. You are our shepherd and You take care of your sheep. No harm can come to those who are in Your flock. But we must obey You so that no harm will come to us. We must follow You carefully so that we will not stumble.**

**Amen**

**DAY TWENTY THREE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FOURTH WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE SURPRISE BABY SHOWER**

**Scripture Reading: Mt. 2:9-12:**

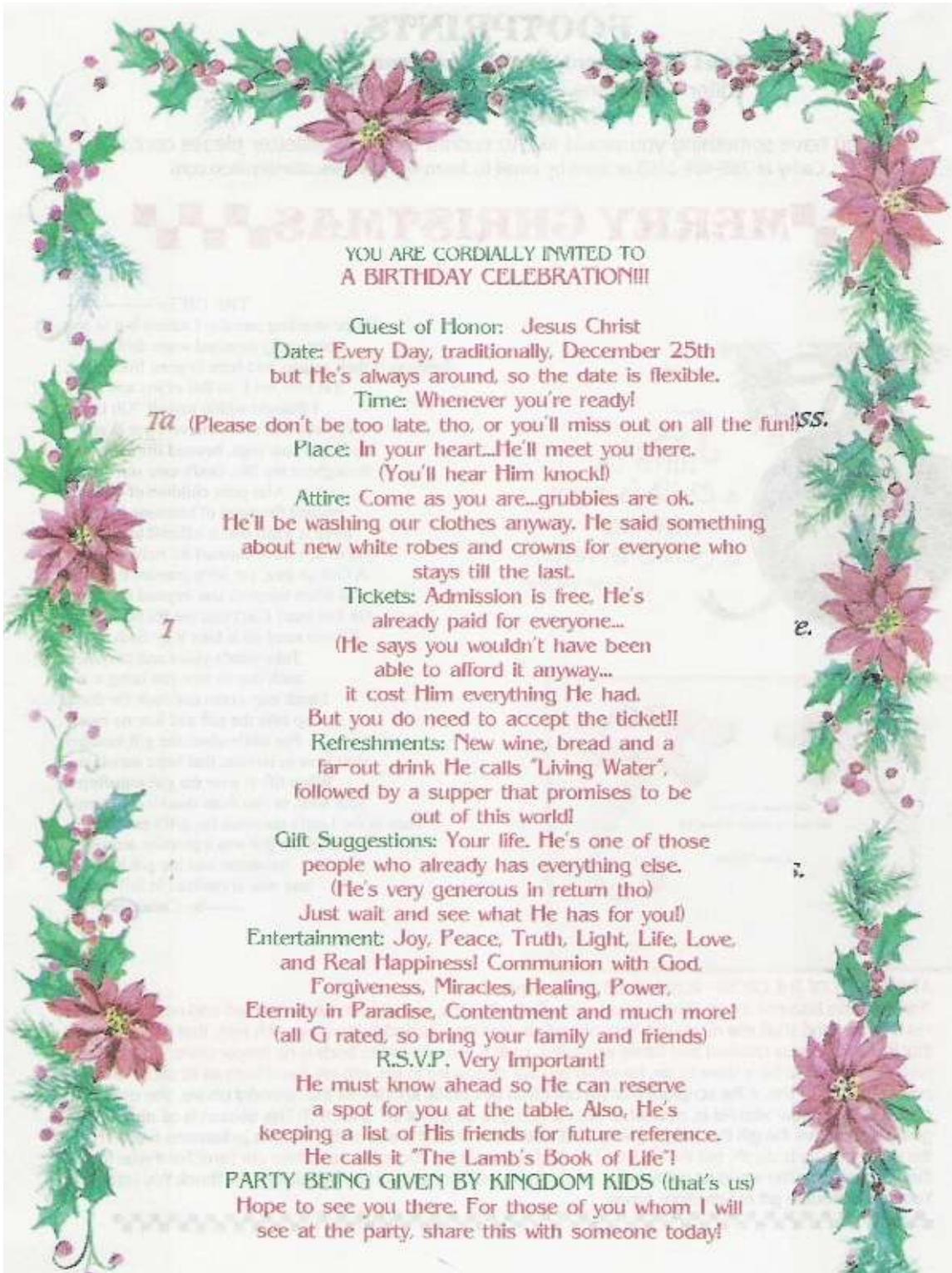
**”After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.”**

**We see here that the Star was moving ahead of them and then stopping over the house; directing them to the place where Jesus was. This scripture shows that the Family had moved to a place of abode by this time, pointing to the fact that some time had elapsed since the birth of the child. The Magi even had names; obtained from other sources; Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. The gifts of the Magi were very significant gifts. The Gold for Jesus, as King; the Frankincense spoke of Jesus as the Son of God, and was used in the anointing oil used to anoint the priests, for Jesus is our High Priest; and the Myrrh spoke of His death, as myrrh was used in preparing the body for burial. The Magi were warned not to go back to Herod. They had a dream, it must have been some dream. These men came from far away to worship the Lord. This is the time of year to visit our loved ones, wherever they may be. We bring them gifts as a token of our joyous celebration of the One who broke the darkness, and came to set the captives free. Christmas is so commercialized that we have come to have a diminished view of it’s true excellence. Do yourself a favor and meditate heavily on the Story of Jesus so that you can rediscover the wonder of Christmas. This year could be the time for His return, we never know. Let us all draw closer to Him, and to each other at this beautiful time of year, given to us as a gift, where there are those wonderful days off from work, and everyone is celebrating and everyone wants to sing and give their love and generosity flows and such a wonderful thing, too, is the Cards that give a witness for Christ ready made and welcomed most of all this time of year. What an opportunity!**

**I think of the wonderful scripture verse that brings us new understanding and meaning at this time: 2 Cor. 4:6-7: “For it is the God who commended Light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” The Wise Men of this world give their treasures to the Lord in worship and adoration.**

**Praise You Lord for Your wonderful Gift to us in this wonderful holiday, the best time to share Your story, let us all share from our hearts. Amen**

**DAY TWENTY FOUR.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FOURTH WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO  
A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!!!

Guest of Honor: Jesus Christ

Date: Every Day, traditionally, December 25th  
but He's always around, so the date is flexible.

Time: Whenever you're ready!

Place: In your heart...He'll meet you there.

(You'll hear Him knock!)

Attire: Come as you are...grubbies are ok.

He'll be washing our clothes anyway. He said something  
about new white robes and crowns for everyone who  
stays till the last.

Tickets: Admission is free, He's  
already paid for everyone...

(He says you wouldn't have been  
able to afford it anyway...

it cost Him everything He had.

But you do need to accept the ticket!

Refreshments: New wine, bread and a  
far-out drink He calls "Living Water",

followed by a supper that promises to be  
out of this world!

Gift Suggestions: Your life. He's one of those  
people who already has everything else.

(He's very generous in return tho)

Just wait and see what He has for you!

Entertainment: Joy, Peace, Truth, Light, Life, Love,  
and Real Happiness! Communion with God,

Forgiveness, Miracles, Healing, Power,

Eternity in Paradise, Contentment and much more!  
(all G rated, so bring your family and friends)

R.S.V.P. Very Important!

He must know ahead so He can reserve  
a spot for you at the table. Also, He's

keeping a list of His friends for future reference.

He calls it "The Lamb's Book of Life"!

PARTY BEING GIVEN BY KINGDOM KIDS (that's us)

Hope to see you there. For those of you whom I will  
see at the party, share this with someone today!

**DAY TWENTY FIVE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FOURTH WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**CHRISTMAS MEDITATIONS**

Today you are very excited about gathering around the Christmas Tree and opening the presents, and especially excited to see the loved ones expressions when they open the gifts from others. Invite Jesus to come and be with you all, before you begin the day. Gather round the Tree realizing now that this represents God's Family Tree of which each one is a branch if they have accepted His Free Gift of Salvation. It is a sacred place now, now that you know how each one of us has been wonderfully and fearfully knitted together in our mother's womb, following along the same schedule of development as the schedule of the Feasts of Israel. I would like to have additional confirmation here from a quote from Beth Moore, noted authoritarian of scripture and writer and teacher: (From her study book on "The One and Only") "Fulfilled prophecy demonstrates the incredible veracity of the Word of God. In the specific promises fulfilled by Jesus' birth, we have enough fact to build our faith from now until Christ returns. God chose the season of the Passover to be the first month of His own sacred calendar pertaining to planet Earth. The first month falls according to the new moon over the last half of March and first half of April. Look again at the wording in Leviticus 23:5. The timing God assigned to the Passover has significance to all of us who have carried children in our wombs. The 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month is the day of conception. If by any chance our God, the God of perfect planning and gloriously significant order, happened to overshadow Mary on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of His calendar, our Savior would have been born toward the end of our December. We have absolutely no way of knowing whether or not He did, but I would not be the least bit surprised for God to have sparked His Son's human life on one Passover and ended it on another."

She has seen one piece of the puzzle that we have put together completely this month. I would to God that she would somehow find a copy of Zola's little book so that she could see an even more amazing thing about God's Word. But at least we see here, that someone else has put 2 and 2 together here and gotten the 4. In the Advent segments that I have placed at the beginning of each week's devotionals, there are many truths being taught and some that I did not even have the time to touch upon.

My prayer today is that each one of you would spend time in His Presence and receive the Gift of Jesus and open that gift (He is the Door) and let Him into your heart and life more significantly than ever before, renewing and allowing Him to Transform your life for the New Year ahead of you. Please pray about this at this time.

**DAY TWENTY SIX.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FOURTH WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE MORNING AFTER**

There is sometimes such a let-down after a special time like Christmas, that I wanted to touch upon that for a moment. After the birth of her son, Mary, too may have had some what of a let-down. A “hang-over” from the euphoria that the night before had given her. The shepherds, also, may have reflected on everything that had occurred and wondered if, in fact, it was just all a dream. After all of the wonderful visiting and feasting at the table, and opening of the gifts and all that is the perfect holiday, it may seem to be quite still in your house today. All that is left is the clean-up! But the memories are still there, still lingering like a thick fog through the house. The ornaments are still there, all the decorations that were so full of promise and excitement. After the Joy, there is reflection. Being over-stimulated, can lead to a sense of loss, a sense that all that was there is now gone.

Wanting to hold on to all of the wonder, we try to recall each moment of splendor. This works for a while, but then the light of day brings with it the present realities. The meaning of Christmas will linger and be known for its’ eternal truth, and the fact that it was the story of the beginning of all hope for mankind; knowing the future that took place in our Savior’s Life and teaching on this earth, it is still going forward. Onward and Upward! It is Good to commemorate His Birthday—each year, as we do our own. And since our lives are connected so directly to His Life, we can be grateful and thankful that He has granted us another year. Let us on this day begin to reflect on what we need to do and what the Lord’s will is for our lives in the year to come. This is the time for sober reflection on what the Lord has done for us this year, and what lies ahead for the next. In the remaining days of December, let us focus on this task.

**Scripture Prayer from Romans & John**

Father, thank You for Your Love, that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which You have given to us. Thank You Lord, for this gift of the sweet Holy Spirit, which is our guarantee that there is no condemnation to we, which are in Christ. We now walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, because we have not received the spirit of bondage and fear, but we have received the Spirit of Adoption. We are now free to call out, “Abba-Father”! All praise and thanksgiving for adopting us into Your family, for You have grafted us as branches into the Vine of Your divine Tree! Now help us to continue abiding in the Vine, our precious Lord Jesus, by doing Your will, so that we as branches will bear much fruit. Only by bearing fruit will we glorify You, Father, and be Jesus’ Disciples. Help us to know Your perfect will which is; that not one of all those that are Yours, would be lost but that all should be raised to eternal life at the last day and we cling to Your great promise that Your Son is our Shepherd and we are His sheep, that we will always hear His voice for He knows us and we follow Him and He gives us eternal life, and that we shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck us out of His hand. In Jesus precious name I pray, Amen

**DAY TWENTY SEVEN.....CHAPTER TWELVE**

**TWELTH MONTH.....FOURTH WEEK**

**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT-THE REST OF THE STORY**

**Scripture Reading: Matt. 2:13-18: “After the Magi had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ‘A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning. Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.’”**

**Here is the real down-side of the Christmas Story. But it is because of the evil in man’s heart. Herod was furious with the wise men for not coming back and reporting to him. Herod was jealous of the Christ child, because it was said of him that he was “King of the Jews” and Herod coveted that title. Herod was afraid that this child would truly rise up and be a new ruler. Herod’s pride was at stake, his very authority could be at stake, it was of little consequence to him that innocent children were being slaughtered. It was for the sake of convenience, for the sake of his own prominence, for the sake of his own future.... People trying to play God; people trying to change the shape of the future; people with no regard or respect for human life, people trying to manipulate and calculate for their own gain....sound familiar? What a stark contrast to what has just been the most wonderful miracle to ever come to the planet earth. These are the TWO realities—God’s World View vs. Humanism (secular man’s view). God’s View is seeing things from Above—Humanism is the world’s view from below. Who has a better View? I think I know, it is pretty obvious when we put it into “perspective”. This brings us to our “reflection” time today. Seeing things God’s way is probably the biggest goal that we could ever have for starting out a new year.**

**Prayer Song: “Open My Eyes”**

**Open my eyes, that I may see; glimpses of Truths Thou hast for me; Place in my hands the wonderful key, that shall unclasp and set me free. Open my ears that I may hear; Voices of Truth Thou sendest clear; and while the wave notes fall on my ear, everything false will disappear. Open my mouth and let me bear, gladly the warm truth everywhere; Open my heart and let me prepare, love with Thy children thus to share. Silently now, I wait for thee, ready my God, thy will to see, open my eyes, my ears, my heart! Illumine me, Spirit Divine!  
Amen**

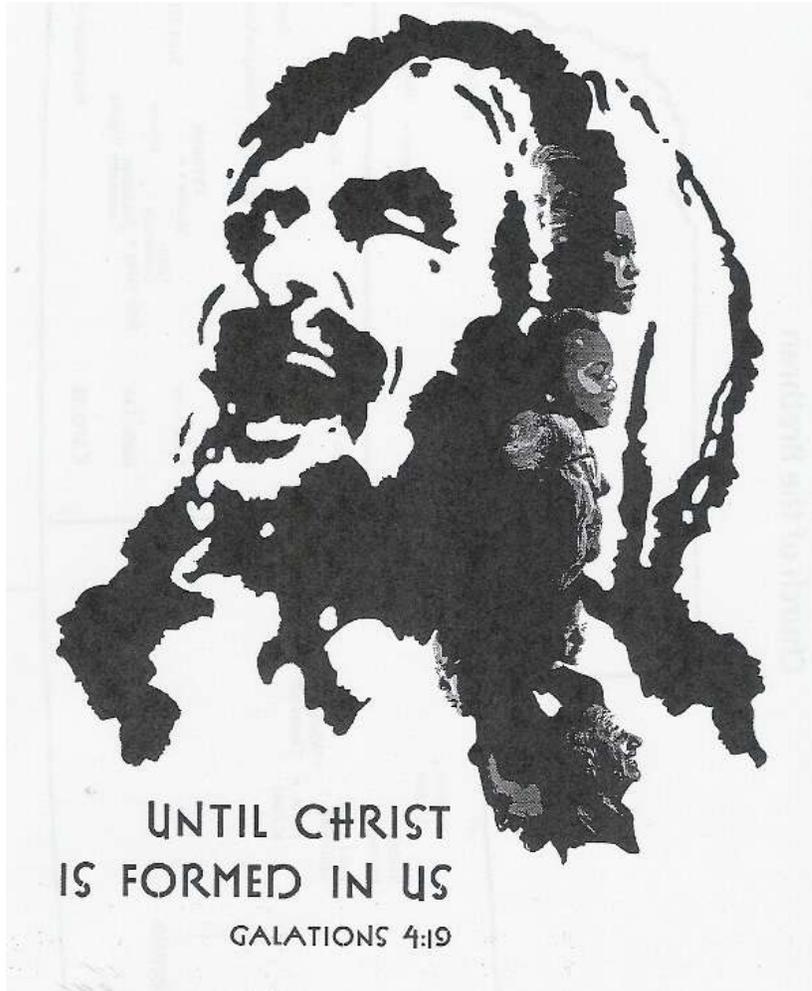
**DAY TWENTY EIGHT.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**TWELTH MONTH.....FOURTH WEEK**  
**(devotional).....(Bible Study)**

**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**

***Scripture Reading: Luke 15:3-7: "Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, "Rejoice with me, I have found my lost sheep!" I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."***

***This is our opening scripture that is on the Shepherd Footprint for the month. I chose this footprint to be representative of our celebration of the birth of our Savior. I think that I cannot take credit for that either, it is always the Lord that moves me to do certain things that I have no idea why I do. Our greatest gift is Jesus. It is His presence that we long for most of all. The sheep know the shepherd's voice. Jesus promised us that He would never leave us, and He would never forsake us. Jesus came to make available for all of us, a way that we could experience His presence when by faith, we receive Him into our hearts, He then never leaves us and is as close as our own heartbeat. He rejoices in being involved in our lives and being our Leader and our Counselor, our Protector and our Physician. That's why I liked so much the wonderful drawing of Him that was displayed at the Western Plains District Conference 2011. Many wondered about His smile. I shared why I thought He was smiling—it is His rejoicing over our allowing Him into our lives and His involvement in all of our particular experiences that He finds amusing as well as amazing. You see, we were once that lost sheep that He searched out and found and lifted us up onto His shoulders, taking all of our sins and burdens upon Himself so that we could find complete Rest In Him. Yes, He raised us up and took us home—even now we are in that home with Him—because the Kingdom is invisible, but it is the Kingdom that Jesus is ruling and reigning in even now, dear friend, and we are there with Him and He is here with us, and like the one scripture said, we can go in and out and find pasture. Why would we ever want to go back out of such a lovely place? .....For the same reason Jesus came to this, so sorrowful, earth. He stepped out of Heaven, so that we could step into Heaven. Yes, some day the Kingdom will be a Visible Earthly Kingdom and He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. But our foretaste of that Kingdom is our participation in His***

*Church, where He is the Head and we are His Body! His Blood is still cleansing sinners and making them white as snow, and just as we, they have become building stones for that beautiful glorious Holy Temple of God, The New Jerusalem that will be coming down from heaven in the future. It is being built NOW! That is what His Word is telling us, and we are all a part of it and as we gaze upon this image of Christ let us realize that all of those that are seen in His image are "In Christ" and as Jesus has said "The Kingdom of God is within you." Speak to my heart through this image, dear Lord. Amen*



Another revelation suddenly came to me as I read over and over again, the above portion of scripture. Why did I choose to insert this image here? God had a reason. Jesus wants to relate to each one of us. It is not until we allow Him to do this, that He is formed in us. His form becomes visible in us. He took upon Himself our Humanity, so that we would be able to take on His Deity (He has clothed us in righteousness) and actually be His Heirs in His Kingdom. Praise His Holy Name.

***FOOTPRINTS TO***

***A***

***CLOSER WALK***

***CHAPTER TWELVE***

***DECEMBER DEVOTIONS***

***FIFTH WEEK***

***"THE SECOND ADVENT"***



**DAY TWENTY NINE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**

**TWELTH MONTH.....FIFTH WEEK**

(devotional).....(Bible Study)

**A NEW BEGINNING**

**Scripture Reading: Today I will share a scripture prayer segment from the Book of John and 1 Corinthians:**

**“Our most gracious Heavenly Father, we praise You for Jesus Christ, the Word, that became flesh and dwelt among us here on earth, for He is the creator God; nothing exists that He did not make. Lord, thank you for the eternal life that flows from Him, for this life is the light that shines to all mankind, through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish that light. For those of us who receive Jesus are given the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who believe this are reborn! This is not a physical rebirth, but one resulting from the will of God. In Your Word, You have told us how to be reborn, and given us a warning as well, that unless we are reborn we will never enter the Kingdom of God. Then You even explain to us that unless one is born of water and the Spirit we can never enter Your Kingdom!” “For we are baptized into one body, and are all made to drink of the one Spirit.” Amen**

**Let us pause and continue our quest to seek God’s Will for our lives in this coming New Year. Perhaps it will help to ask a few basic questions.**

- 1. What have I done this year that has helped me grow spiritually?**
- 2. What do I need to do next year to grow closer to the Lord?**
- 3. Have my relationships with others become closer or more distant this year?**
- 4. What have I spent the most time on this year, worrying about finances, working on projects, or helping others in need?**
- 5. What is my biggest failure this year?**
- 6. What do I already know is God’s Will for me next year?**

Prayer

**Lord, like a shepherd, lead me. I want to know Your voice and obey. I know that You will lead me into paths of righteousness. Show me more of Your Glory this next year, and help me to go to others in wild abandonment, telling the story of Jesus to whoever will listen. In Jesus Precious Name, Amen**

**DAY THIRTY.....CHAPTER TWELVE**  
TWELTH MONTH.....FIFTH WEEK  
(devotional).....(Bible Study)

HE IS COMING SOON

Scripture Reading: 1Cor. 15:20-23; 1Thess.4:16-18: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming." "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. "

Even tho these are familiar words to most of us who read the Word of God regularly, we all have questions as to how this is all going to come about. The main theme is that He Is Coming. This will be His Second Coming because His first coming was of course His Birth. In the advent services we talked about preparing for His coming, or the celebration of His birth. Our hearts were to be prepared for this season, renewing ourselves in His presence and allowing Him to have more room in our hearts was also the message of Christmas. We also, must now prepare ourselves more fully for His Second Coming as we begin the New Year with the Footprints Devotionals I am hoping that it will be a special year of preparation for us. A special year of growing closer to Jesus through understanding from His Word just who He is and what His will is for each one of us specifically. We should live our lives in preparation for eternity. Here are some things that should be on our list of "resolutions" for the New Year from 1 Thess. 5:12-23: "And we urge you brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one render evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for others. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. "

**DAY THIRTY-ONE.....CHAPTER TWELVE**

TWELTH MONTH.....FIFTH WEEK

(devotional).....(Bible Study)

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Scripture Reading: 1 Thess. 5:23; Rev. 22:12-13: "NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY; AND MAY YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. HE WHO CALLS YOU IS FAITHFUL, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT." "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last!"

CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE

We have come together to Watch the New Year Come Forth,. We have been worshipping together in this season of the year as one Body. Let us share scriptures at this time that reflect upon Christ's Journey upon this Earth and all that He did for us. (Come forward to read selected scriptures)

Let us come up and light our candles remembering all of the Advent Candles of Preparation, Hope, Peace and Joy that were all lit by the Light of Christ. We light them now from the flame of that candle. We are overwhelmed with gratitude and praise to God for all that He has prepared for us.

Let us offer our prayers up to Him at this time. (Let those who would like to pray out loud do so now) Amen. You may blow out your candles.

Let us worship Him with songs of praise. Song Service.

Communion Service

Testimonies

Close with prayer awaiting the countdown to midnight.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!