

The Christmas Star

In December 2019, I sang with the Smith County Community Choir in what we affectionately called Lloyd Larson's Christmas Cantata. The theme of that Cantata highlights the Christmas Star:

"The star that shone over Bethlehem so many years ago still shines today to light the way, in the hearts of those who seek the warmth of God's embrace in Jesus Christ, the morning star."

There have been many attempts to explain the Christmas Star over the years. Examples are "a planetary conjunction (6-7 BCE) of Jupiter, Saturn and Mars" or Halley's Comet (12BCE), or a Chinese nova. But the problem with these attempts is that the original language in the Gospel of Matthew specifies an "individual star," and not a constellation of stars. The ancient understanding of birth and death involved the arrival and leaving of a star in the sky. King Herod wanted to know when the star of Jesus appeared so that he would know how old Jesus was, so he could issue his horrible and terrifying order against all the children who were of the same age as Jesus, so he could kill "Rachel's children" and protect his own reign as king (Matt. 2:18). To know when the Christmas star of Jesus first appeared in the sky was critical to Herod's evil plan (Mark 8:15).

One of the oldest commentaries about the Christmas star comes from Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians in the second century CE, section 19: "All the rest of the stars, together with the sun and moon, formed a chorus about the star, but the star itself surpassed them all in its light... all magic was dissolved and every spell was overthrown [that night] because God appeared in human form."

In the forefront of Father Ignatius's mind was the idea that all sorcery, all magic, all superstition, all astrology, even all knowledge, is dispelled by the birth of the Christ Child. When the wise men from the East bowed before the child, they were bowing before a superior force that eclipsed their own, a mysterious knowledge far beyond their own. When we kneel before the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, the One whose name is above all other names, we carry on a tradition started by these astrologers from the East that the reality of God's love is greater than anything we can ever know or possess.

Susan and I wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Pastor Randy

Eighteenth Question on Common Reading: Chapter One:

Mark Deymaz (w/Harry Li) The Coming Revolution in Church Economics:
Why Tithes and Offerings Are No Longer Enough, and What You Can Do About it

American's debt hit a new high of \$13 trillion in 2017. The Middle-class share of U.S. wealth has shrunk back to its lowest level since 1947. As one writer recently put it: "Americans have fallen back in love with debt" P. 29-30

- 1) Is this a message we need to hear? How do we fall out of love with debt?
- 2) County Agents often come out and give free debt counseling. Might this be beneficial to us?

God's love *visible*



2024 CHRISTMAS OFFERING
Supporting the ministries of the Oklahoma Region.
100% of your gift stays in our Region.

The Winner!!!
Hooray for Charlene!

Thank you Pastor Randy for drawing our lucky winner's name!

Thanks to everyone for purchasing tickets. Our group raised \$320 to be used for fabric purchases.

Thank you Martha Buchanan for piecing this beautiful Christmas Quilt!!



Dates for CWF

We will NOT meet to quilt on the 24th or 31st. Our next Tuesday quilting day will be January 7, 2025.



The **church office** will be closed from noon on Christmas Eve through New Year's Day.

If you need to contact Randy or Cindy, please call the church phone and

leave a message. These messages will come directly to our phones.


Current Directory Information

You can look up the latest updated info on the ShelbyNext app or if you would like a printed copy, Cindy can email or print a copy for you.

PUZZLES

Look at the Christmas PUZZLES in the Library for you and your family to check out and enjoy.

Enjoy the cold "stay at home" days with a fun puzzle.

On behalf of Putnam City West Patriot football, we wanted to take time to thank you for your continued support of our program.

The time spent preparing and serving the meals is appreciated. The time spent pouring into the football players, coaches, and managers did not go unnoticed. Words of encouragement by church members and special speakers did not fall on deaf ears. Prayers prayed over the team bridged a gap between generations and cultures. And for that we are so very thankful.

This season was hard. It didn't go the way we had hoped. But foundations were laid for a more successful program as we go forward. We ask for continued prayers on our behalf. We are hoping for your support again next year. We would like to have you attend some of our home games next year, so that we can recognize your contribution to our team.

Again, thank you for your support. We are so appreciative.

Greg Johnson
Head Football Coach, Putnam City West Football

Youth Christmas Party

December 21
Saturday

11:30 am - 2:00 pm

We will have a taco bar, play games and exchange Christmas ornaments.



Western Oaks Christian Church

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



The Best Christmas Present Ever



Thanks to all our children, youth and adults for the wonderful Christmas play!!

The excitement lingers as each year we prepare for the season of Advent and Christmas, we hear the story of Christ birth. Each year we tell the story in different ways. I wonder what the best Christmas present you've ever received has been. Could it have been a new dog, a special doll, or a brand new car? That is the question asked in this year's Christmas Play. The children, youth and adults offered us a way to remember what The Best Christmas Present Ever has been. This year's play has been a wonderful way to bring together our youngest children to our adults to share in a story that is as old as time. We appreciate how the parents and grandparents stepped into help the children, youth and adults as we practiced and got ready for our plays.

A special thanks goes to Kelli Fearing and Tobi Frank for heading up our lunch. Especially Kelli as she prepared the crafts and with the help of Roslyn Boyd played some games! We are thankful for Andrew Orr, who was able to run the Carol karaoke for the children, youth and adults! Set-up and clean-up is always important and we appreciate Fern and Bob Melton and Roslyn Boyd's aide as well as Sasha Wage, Alorah and Adele Ross, and Reeca Young. Finally, we are grateful for Skip Wood who did a wonderful job as Santa. He made the children feel welcome and at ease as they eagerly talked with him.

Blessings,

Julia

Church Staff
office@woccdoc.org



Interim Minister: Pastor Randy Hill
Associate Minister: Rev. Julia Jordan Gillett
Music Director: Andrew Orr
Pianist: Rosa McCroskey
Praise Band Leader: Ben Frantz
Praise Band: Natalie Griffin and Zach Jones
Nursery Attendant: Skylar Frank
Admin Assistant: Cindy Cannon
Sound Technician: Tobi Bessinger

Saturday, Dec 22 Christmas Offering
 Youth Christmas Party 11:30am - 2:00pm

Tuesday, Dec 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 6:00pm

Sunday, Jan 5 Board Meeting 12:15pm
 Cabinet Meeting (after Board Meeting)

Sunday, Jan 26 Chili Cookout

Attendance	9:00 am	11:00 am	TOTAL Worship
11-24-2024	35	56	91
12-1-2024	21	56	77

Giving	General	Blessing Fund
11-24-2024	\$1,360	\$30
12-1-2024	\$6,195	\$30

Upcoming Sermons

December 22, 2024 Advent Homily
 Sermon Title: Unfailing Love Scripture: Psalm 130:5-8
 Theme: To abide in the Spirit of Christmas, let us abide in the vine of love, trust and grace, realizing that all three are beyond our understanding and our deserving

Sunday, Dec 29, 2024 First Sunday After Christmas
 Sermon Title: The Making of a Rabboni Scripture: Luke 2:41-52
 Theme: Posing questions is the best way to learn about the mysteries of faith

January 5, 2025 Second Sunday After Christmas (Epiphany Sunday)
 Sermon Title: The True Light Scripture: John 1:6-18
 Theme: The True Light is Christ who manifests the Way of Restoration and Redemption

“Loving God, Serving our Neighbors”



8100 NW 23rd Street
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«Name»

«Address»

«City»