



**"My soul magnifies
the LORD,
& my spirit rejoices
in GOD my savior."
Luke 1:46-47**

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

222 Boulder Drive, Gallup, NM 87301

Sunday School - 9:00 AM

Youth Group - 6:00 PM

Worship Service - 10:15 AM

Edge - 6:00 PM

Prayer Time - 6:00 PM

John W. Luginbuhl, Pastor

Steve Yoder, Youth Pastor

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Youth Pastor's E-mail: forevertrustinghim@yahoo.com

www.gracebiblegallup.org

Grace Bible Church
~ The Lord's Day ~
December 22, 2013

WELCOME

9:00 AM
10:15 AM

Sunday School for all ages
Worship Service

Call to Worship
Welcome/Announcements
Praise & Worship*
Special Music

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:21-38

Message

John Luginbuhl

“Christmas: What Are You Looking For?”

Closing

*Offering will be received during the third song; children age 3 - grade 4 will be dismissed to Children's Church after the Special Music.

SERVING IN THE NURSERY TODAY:

Crawlers/Walkers Anya King & Donna Damon

SERVING IN THE NURSERY NEXT SUNDAY:

Crawlers/Walkers Pam Keller & Amber Beard

LATER TODAY...

6:00 PM Prayer Time in 3rd & 4th grade Classroom
6:00 PM Youth Group (entering 6th grade through
Entering 12th grade) meets
6:00 PM Edge Group (after High School) meets

PRAISE & PETITION



“And you shall call His Name Jesus, for it is He Who will save His people from their sins.”

~ Matthew 1:21

Praise the Lord for:

1. Jesus' mission: to save people from their sins! Praise the Lord for salvation through Jesus, as we trust in Him!
2. Forgiveness of sins, a place in heaven reserved for us, deliverance from Hell - all through faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work for us at Calvary.
3. Opportunities for ministry during this Christmas season.
4. The privilege of worship and prayer!
5. His sovereignty!
6. Family and friends, both “near and far”.

Petition the Lord for:

1. Those who are lonely and/or depressed this holiday season.
2. Those who will be traveling to see family and friends.
3. Families in our church going through the rough waters of life at this time. (Isa. 43:1,2)
4. College students “home for the holidays”. Pray for a refreshing time with family and friends.
5. Opportunities during the Christmas season to share our faith in Jesus with family and friends.
6. Couples preparing for marriage: CJ Landmann & Savanna Johnson (Feb. 1, 2014, Albq.)
7. David & Barbara Irving and family, during this time of the home-going of David's mother, Mildred Irving.
8. Healing for Kelly Stapp (had ankle surgery), Steve Tobey (surgery)
9. Ricky Lee (Nellie Lee's son), Sean Begaye, and Jana Sheffield (Nixons' niece), all in Afghanistan; Adam Sowers (Ft. Hood); Kyle Prendergast (Ophelia Krupica's son), stationed (Air Force) in Germany.
10. Our President, military advisors, military men and women.

“Christmas: What Are You Looking For?”

Luke 2:21-38

What are you looking for this Christmas? Certain presents? The fun that comes with school being “out”? The laughter and fellowship of family and friends? Christmas to be “over”? Some peace and quiet? Someone to assure you that 2014 will be a better year for you? A miracle in your life? These and many other things are what people are looking for this Christmas. There are two people mentioned in God’s Word who were looking for some very important things at the time of Jesus’ birth! We don’t hear too much about these two folks. We don’t usually sing about them or see them on Christmas cards. They are not in any manger scenes. What can we learn from them?

1. Simeon: Comfort!

2. Anna: Forgiveness!

3. You: ?

[IN MEMORY OF LOVED ONES WHO WENT HOME TO BE WITH THE LORD IN 2013]

“I’M SPENDING CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS CHRIST THIS YEAR”

- Author Unknown

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below,
With tiny lights, like Heaven’s stars, reflecting on the snow.

The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away that tear,
For I’m spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear,
But the sounds of music can’t compare with the Christmas choir up here.

For I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring,
For it is beyond description to hear as angels sing.

I know how much you miss me, I see the pain inside your heart,
For I’m spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I can’t tell you of the splendor or the peace here in this place,
Can you just imagine Christmas with our Savior face to face?

I’ll ask Him to light your spirit as I tell Him of your love,
So then pray for one another as you lift your eyes above.

So please let your hearts be joyful, and let your spirit sing,
For I’m spending Christmas in Heaven, and I’m walking with the King!

For the believer in Jesus Christ, “To be absent from the body
[is] to be present with the Lord!” 2 Corinthians 5:8

Glimpses of Christian History

1800

1900

1841 Queen Victoria popularizes the family Christmas tree



The story behind evergreens, ornaments, and holiday gift-giving.

imminent, affix to their posts, laurels doomed presently to burn: to them the testimonies of darkness and the omens of their penalties are suitable. You are a light of the world, and a tree ever green. If you have renounced temples, make not your own gate a temple.”

But by the early Middle Ages, the legend had grown that when Christ was born in the dead of winter, every tree throughout the world miraculously shook off its ice and snow and produced new shoots of green. At the same time, Christian missionaries preaching to Germanic and Slavic peoples were taking a more lenient approach to cultural practices—such as evergreen trees. These missionaries believed that the Incarnation proclaimed Christ’s lordship over those natural symbols that had

Why Do We Have Christmas Trees?

The evergreen tree was an ancient symbol of life in the midst of winter. Romans decorated their houses with evergreen branches during the New Year, and ancient inhabitants of northern Europe cut evergreen trees and planted them in boxes inside their houses in

wintertime. Many early Christians were hostile to such practices. The second-century theologian Tertullian condemned those Christians who celebrated the winter festivals, or decorated their houses with laurel boughs in honor of the emperor:

“Let them over whom the fires of hell are

previously been used for the worship of pagan gods. Not only individual human beings, but cultures, symbols, and traditions could be converted.

Of course, this did not mean that the worship of pagan gods themselves was tolerated. According to one legend, the eighth-century missionary Boniface, after cutting down an oak tree sacred to the pagan god Thor (and used for human sacrifice), pointed to a nearby fir tree instead as a symbol of the love and mercy of God.

Paradise trees

Not until the Renaissance are there clear records of trees being used as a symbol of Christmas—beginning in Latvia in 1510 and Strasbourg in 1521. Legend credits the Protestant reformer Martin Luther with inventing the Christmas tree, but the story has little historical basis.

The most likely theory is that Christmas trees

DID YOU KNOW?

In 18th-century Germany, Christmas trees were sometimes set up in cemeteries on the graves of loved ones, which might also be decorated with holly or mistletoe.



started with medieval plays. Dramas depicting biblical themes began as part of the church's worship, but by the late Middle Ages, they had become rowdy, imaginative performances dominated by laypeople and taking place in the open air. The plays celebrating the Nativity were linked to the story of creation—in part because Christmas Eve was also considered the feast day of Adam and Eve. Thus, as part of the play for that day, the Garden of Eden was

symbolized by a "paradise tree" hung with fruit.

These plays were banned in many places in the 16th century, and people perhaps began to set up "paradise trees" in their homes to compensate for the public celebration they could no longer enjoy. The earliest Christmas trees (or evergreen branches) used in homes were referred to as "paradises." They were often hung with round pastry wafers symbolizing the Eucharist, which developed

into the cookie ornaments decorating German Christmas trees today.

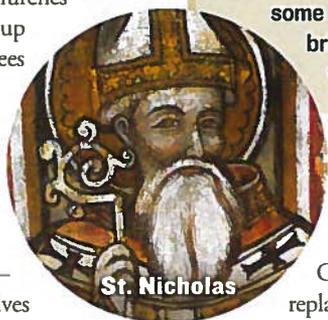
The custom gained popularity throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, against the protests of some clergy. Lutheran minister Johann von Dannhauer, for instance, complained (like Tertullian) that the symbol distracted people from the true evergreen tree, Jesus Christ. But this did not stop many churches from setting up Christmas trees inside the sanctuary. Alongside the tree often stood wooden “pyramids”—stacks of shelves bearing candles, sometimes one for each family member. Eventually these pyramids of candles were placed on the tree, the ancestors of our modern Christmas tree lights and ornaments.

Nicholas and Wenceslas

It also took a long time for trees to become associated with presents. Though legend connects the idea of Christmas gifts with the gifts the Magi brought Jesus, the real story is more complicated. Like trees, gifts were first a Roman practice—traded during

PESKY CAROLERS

The custom of going from house to house singing Christmas carols came from the long tradition of “wassailing” (or “mumming”), dating back to the Middle Ages. Poor people, sometimes in disguise, would aggressively beg at the homes of the wealthy. Often they would perform a brief play, pantomime, or musical number. It was far rowdier and more dangerous than our modern caroling, and wassailers were not above damaging property if their demands were not met. The carol “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” was originally a song of the wassailers, who sang with increasing insistence: “Now, bring us some figgy pudding, and bring some out here. . . . For we all like figgy pudding, so bring some out here. . . . We won’t go until we’ve got some, so bring some out here!”



St. Nicholas

the winter solstice. As Epiphany, and later Christmas, replaced the winter solstice as a time of celebration for Christians, the gift-giving tradition continued for a while. By late antiquity it had died out, although gifts were still exchanged at New Year’s.

Gifts were also associated with St. Nicholas, fourth-century bishop of Myra (in modern-day Turkey), who became famous for giving gifts to poor children. His feast day (December 6) thus became another occasion for gift exchanges. During the early Middle Ages, Christmas gifts most often took the form of tributes paid to monarchs—although a few

DID YOU KNOW?

New Year’s gifts were exchanged in early America, especially by the wealthy, although they were not directly connected to Christmas. The poem “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” originally began, “’Twas the night before New Year’s . . .”

rulers used the holiday season as an opportunity to give to the poor or to the church instead (most notably Duke Wenceslas of Bohemia, whose story inspired the popular carol, and William the Conqueror, who chose Christmas 1067 to make a large donation to the pope).

Like trees, gifts came “inside” the family around

DID YOU KNOW?

Christmas was not celebrated as an official holiday from work in many parts of America until the 19th century.

the time of Luther, as the custom of giving gifts to friends and family members developed in Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Often these were given anonymously, or hidden. One Danish custom was to rewrap a gift many times with different names on

each wrapper, so that the intended recipient was only discovered when all the layers were opened.

Victorian Christmas

In the English-speaking world, the union of gifts, trees, and Christmas was due to the influence of Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert, a native of Saxony (now part of Germany). German



immigrants had brought the custom of Christmas trees with them in the early 1800s, but it spread widely after Victoria and Albert set up an elaborate tree for their children at Windsor Castle in 1841. At this point, Christmas presents were usually hung on the tree itself.

German and Dutch immigrants also

brought their tradition of trees and presents to the New World in the early 1800s. The image of happy middle-class families exchanging gifts around a tree became a powerful one for American authors and civic

leaders who wished to replace older, rowdier, and more alcohol-fueled Christmas traditions—such as wassailing—with a more family-friendly holiday. This family-centered image was widely popularized by Clement Moore's 1822 poem, known today as "Twas the Night Before Christmas" (which also helped give us our modern picture of Santa Claus).

As many of us make trees and gifts the center of our own Christmas practice, we would do well to remember that they are ultimately symbols of the One who gave himself to unite heaven and earth, and who brings all barren things to flower.

PRAYER JOURNAL

Of the Father's love begotten,
ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore!

O that Birth for ever blessed
when the Virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bare the Savior of our race;
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
Evermore and evermore!

—Christmas hymn based on a Latin poem by Aurelius Prudentius (348-413)

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WE WELCOME YOU!

There are many good reasons for coming to church, but we hope that your joining us this morning includes the best reason: to thank and worship God for His amazing love revealed in the birth, life, and ministry, the suffering and death, and the wondrous resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! This is what our church is all about! If you are visiting today, please fill out a guest card and bring it to our Welcome Center in the foyer and receive a free gift. Thank you... and visit us again!

The mission of our church is to prayerfully
prepare believers for worshiping God, serving
Christ, loving one another, and
reaching out to others!

2013 YEAR VERSE

“Let us consider how we may spur one another
on toward love and good deeds.”

- Hebrews 10:24

YOU ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME to suggest a “Year Verse” for our church for 2014! Suggestions can be written out (please include which version of the Bible) and given to Pastor John or placed in the offering plate.

IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING...

1. There were approximately 65 folks who came out for Christmas Caroling last Monday night!
 2. The special Thanksgiving Offering, for relief efforts in the Philipppians, amounted to \$437.75. Thank you for your generosity.
-

OUR SYMPATHIES AND PRAYERS are extended to David & Barbara Irving and family on the December 19 homegoing of David's mother, Mildred Irving. Let's pray for the Irving family during this time.

THE ELDERS are happy to announce the appointment of Richard Matzke to the Deacon Board. Let's pray for Richard as he begins this new ministry responsibility.



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
Tuesday, December 24, 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
For the whole family! Invite your friends!



OUR THANKS to all who helped decorate our Sanctuary, foyer, café, and hallway for Christmas! Looks beautiful!

THE ELDERS are considering Lucas and Cora Lucio for "official" church membership. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please contact Mike Nye or Pastor John. Thank you!

FROM OUR FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

"Notice to donors: Donors are advised not to file their federal income tax return before they receive their contributions receipt from the church. Also, donors wishing to 'catch up' on their financial commitments to the church must deliver such contributions before Jan. 1, 2014, to be credited to 2013, (mailed-in contributions must be post-marked by Dec. 31). Backdating is not allowed by the IRS. See Paul Schell for advice."



DON'T FORGET to check out the Christmas greeting to all of us at Grace Bible! Posted on the door on the south side of the gymnasium!

This Week in Church History...

On December 24, 1816, James Montgomery's new hymn, "Angels from the Realms of Glory", first appeared in print, being published in the *Iris*, a Sheffield, England newspaper edited by Montgomery himself.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK...

"He took the form of a servant while He retained the form of God! It is exactly that which makes our salvation possible and achieves it."

~ William Hedriksen