

On The Wind

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Presbytery of Southern Kansas
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www.pbysk.org

A Christmas Miracle for Zechariah and Elizabeth

The Bible offers high praise to Zechariah the priest and Elizabeth his wife, describing them both as righteous and blameless in fulfilling all the commandments of the Lord. But although they had prayed for a child for many years, they had received no answer.

The Gospel of Luke reports that once when Zechariah was on duty in the temple, an angel appeared to him. As always seems to happen when an angel shows up, Zechariah was terrified, and the angel told him not to be afraid.

The angel went on to tell Zechariah that their prayers for a child – which by now I imagine he and Elizabeth had stopped praying – had indeed been heard, and Elizabeth would bear a son whom they were to name John. Right from his birth this baby would be what the Bible calls a Nazirite: someone dedicated entirely to God's service. John's ministry would bring great joy and gladness to the people, and would turn many hearts to repentance. Wow!

Except that Zechariah was skeptical. He asked for a sign. Better, perhaps, to have kept that skepticism to himself, since once he got back home it would become clear soon enough whether or not Elizabeth became pregnant. But the angel responded: "You want a sign? I'll give you a sign. From now on it will be sign language for you, because you did not believe my words, which will in fact come true." (Okay, I paraphrased that last part a little. But only a little.)

And indeed the words of the angel did come true, despite Zechariah's skepticism, and John the Baptist was born, who would be the forerunner of the coming Messiah. At Christmas we celebrate the incarnation of God the Son: God becoming human to restore us humans to God once again. That's the great message of the gospel. Yet within that great message there are many small stories of faithful individuals and families, like Zechariah and Elizabeth, who fulfill their role even when they feel like giving up because their prayers don't seem to be answered – and even when they find themselves chastened for not believing as well as they should have.

Here comes Advent, and then Christmas. What miracle of grace might be on the agenda for you? God intends to bless the world: maybe through you, maybe through your child. That's right: through your family. Do you have the courage to believe that?

Jay Ayers



With the **First Presbyterian Church, Winfield**, celebrating 141 years, Lou Tharp, (Clerk of Session, Records, and Church Historian), displayed the pictured exhibit, along with scrap books, and church relics. The exhibit was featured at the Cowley County Fair as an antique booth. It did receive both a blue ribbon and sweepstakes award.

WELCOME!

At the November Presbytery meeting the **Rev. Mark Miller** (pictured left) became a member of the Presbytery of Southern Kansas. He will serve First Presbyterian Church, Hutchinson.



Please welcome **Rev. Patrick Southam** and **Rev. Kitty Lum** to the Presbytery of Southern Kansas. Rev. Southam will be leading the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Larned, and Rev. Lum will serve First Presbyterian Church, Liberal.

Congratulations!

Rev. Joseph Rychcik, New Covenant Presbyterian Church, Hutchinson, and **Rev. Lowell Knauss**, First Presbyterian Church, Hutchinson, were granted the status of Honorably Retired during the Presbytery meeting in November.

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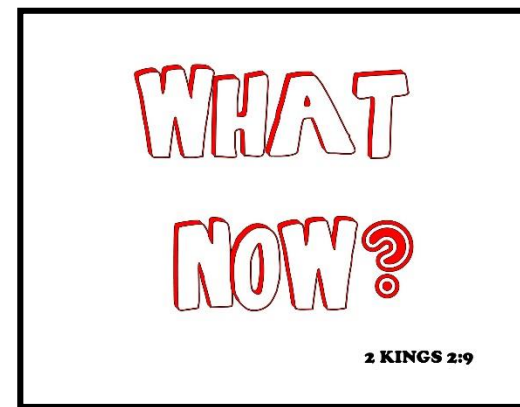
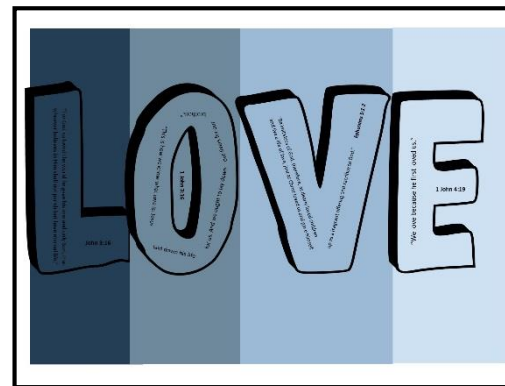
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Updates on John and Gwen Haspels
are posted on the following website:

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/world-mission/>

Register NOW!! 2015 Winter Pastors' School at Hastings
College. Sponsored by Omaha Presbyterian Seminary
Foundation and Quad Presbyteries. The school will be
held Feb 2-5, 2015. For more information please visit:

<http://omahapresbyterianseminaryfoundation.org/Winter-Pastors'-School.html>