

Reflecting On Christ's Coming To Earth

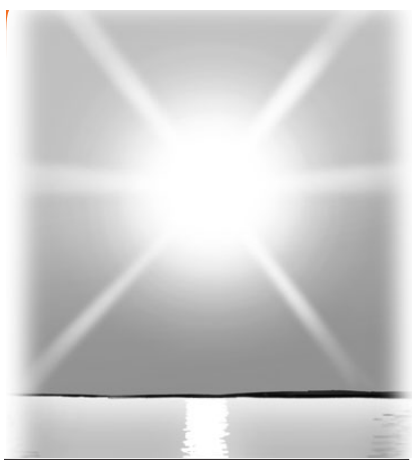
BY PASTOR ROBERT MASON
 Kingsway Christian Church

In the history of the Christian Church December 25th is the day the birth of Jesus Christ is remembered and celebrated. Nativity scenes of the babe in the manger with the shepherds present along with the wise men from the east appear in front of Churches and homes during the holiday season. This birth represents the fulfillment of prophecy recorded in the Scriptures promising Israel that a messiah (holy one) would come to deliver the nation from the bondage of servitude and suppression and the people from their sin (Offences against God and neighbor). This life that began in Bethlehem of Judea would have more effect on the lives of people than any other one that ever lived. To some, he was the greatest liberal, for the world would never be the same again, to others the greatest conservative, for he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill and restore mankind. To others he was the greatest teacher, for the ones he disciplined turned the world upside down. Still others, he was the greatest failure, for he died the death of a criminal, executed on a cross designed to bring about the most painful death and rejection that

the world could give. He himself had said the world hated him.

Those who believed him would never be the same. They saw him come back alive again from the dead and they even touched him. And as they broke bread and listened to him their hearts were burning within. He opened the scriptures to them and revealed how they pointed to him as the fulfillment of the prophecies. From this even they themselves would not love their own lives even unto death. They set aside their own aspirations in order to live for Him. One would write that the world itself could not contain all the books that should be written about Jesus while He was on earth.

Reflecting upon this, his coming to earth was to serve; for he came not to be served, but to give himself to serve, meeting the demands that called for a perfect sacrifice of one innocent for all who are guilty. This was the only way that justice could be satisfied and fellowship restored between the creator (God) and his creation (that includes us). In becoming one of us he was yet himself without our shortcomings (sin). He allowed himself to be executed as a criminal. He broke through the bondage of death and separation and appeared unto many eye witnesses. He was totally innocent of any offence to God or man, and he took upon himself the sacrifice re-



REFLECTIONS

quired to appease the demands of the creator for the restoration of fellowship that was lost in the Garden of Eden in the beginning.

With all that accomplished at his first coming, throughout his ministry he would be remembered speaking of his second coming. There is much controversy and confusion over just how this will come about. As to the date, he made it clear that even he did not know when the time would come. He would only come when instructed to do so by

the father.

Many have ignored this teaching and tried to declare the date which only results in total failure and embarrassment for others looking forward to his return. In what is known as the Olivet Discourse given shortly before his crucifixion, he was asked by his disciples privately what would be the sign of his coming, and of the end of the world. In answering them, Jesus warned them not to be deceived by false prophets who would deceive many. In spite of all attempts to bring about peace, wars and rumors of war would continue along with famines, pestilences, and earthquakes increasing like birth pangs in frequency and intensity. An interesting statement follows, that the good news of the kingdom will be preached to all nations in the world and then the end will come.

Through radio and television the good news has been spread around the world. One evangelist, Billy Graham, is credited to speaking before more people through electronics than any other person in history. It is my understanding that the Bible has been translated into more languages and has a circulation higher than any other book ever written. Bible translators report that the time required to learn and translate the

Bible into an unwritten language has been shortened. Due to the availability of portable solar electric generators information of an unknown language from a remote location such as a jungle can be sent in seconds contrasted to what use to take days to facilities needed for further development of a written language. Reports are coming back from Bible translators that in a very short time every known language will have their own Bible written in their own language!

The second coming of Christ will not be of a babe in a manger but rather the King of Kings and Lord of Lords coming in Total Victory! Death is defeated and there will be no more pain and suffering! However, to be a part of his kingdom a decision must be made to receive him as your personal lord and savior. To receive him is to be born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of god. Reader, do you have the assurance that if you were to die today that you would go to heaven? Or are you seeing yourself as part of this world that rejected Jesus and put him on the cross? Ask him to forgive you, as he is anxious and just to forgive you, and receive you into his kingdom as you receive him to be Lord and King of your life. Don't put it off. Do it today!

Most Cherished Holiday Decorations Are Ones Filled With Memories An Evening At The Stable To Be Presented

BY KIM PALMER
 © 2011 Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Looking for some meaning behind Christmas? Enjoy these folks' cherished holiday traditions:

CHAIN OF FRIENDSHIP

Julie Petersen was 13 when she met her best friend, Wendy. It was 1962 in Spencer, Iowa, and the girls quickly bonded over shared misfortunes: their long, boring bus ride and having to wear braces.

Gum was forbidden, because of their orthodontia, but they chewed it anyway, folding and weaving the wrappers into a chain.

"It was our little rebellion," Petersen recalled. "Every time we found a new kind of gum, we added it to the chain."

Their fingers flew through gum wrappers, week after week, for four years. "We'd do it at the back of the bus and whenever we stayed overnight at each other's house and when we should have been listening at school. Once we even got in trouble, for doing it in the back of Mr. Lee's science class."

The chain wasn't their only shared interest. Wendy had a vivid imagination and was full of energy and "fun ideas," Petersen said. The girls were in 4-H together and went to the county fair. "We'd sit in The horse barn and giggle."

By the end of their junior year, the gum-wrapper chain was very long — and the friendship had started to "drift" a bit. Wendy had a new friend, a girl who was a little too "boy-

crazy" for Petersen. But she and Wendy still shared rides to and from school, now in the Ford Fairlane convertible that Wendy's parents had given her for her 16th birthday.

"It had an eight-track tape player — it was so cool!" Petersen recalled. In August 1966, Wendy drove them to school to register for classes. "I was going to ride home with her," Petersen said. But Wendy and the new friend had plans to follow some boys. "I didn't want to," Petersen said, so she came home on the bus.

Later, she heard on her transistor radio that Wendy's car had crashed into a bridge and plunged into the river. Wendy was dead.

The loss cut so deep that Petersen still chokes up when she talks about it. But life went on. She graduated, got married, had a daughter. For years, the gum-wrapper chain sat in a box. But after her husband died and her daughter grew up and left home, Petersen downsized to a smaller Christmas tree and wanted to decorate it with personal mementoes. She remembered the chain, took it out and carefully unrolled it. It was intact, its colors still bright, packed with a hand-lettered inventory of all the brands and flavors she and Wendy had chewed to make it. It was a history of friendship.

Petersen decided to hang it on her tree as a garland.

"Life is fleeting. You get older, and your friends become very important to you, especially at this time of year," she said. "As I decorate my tree, I treasure what friendship means."

GIFT FROM A STRANGER

It was well below zero, with gusts of freezing wind, on Christmas Eve back in 1992 when Ellen Bernardson, a single mom, took her boys, ages 7 and 11, to a nearby Arby's in Columbia Heights, Minn., for a bite to eat after a day spent wrapping gifts.

They ordered roast-beef sandwiches and potato wedges, and as they waited, she noticed a boy about 13 in a light jacket, holding a half-filled pillowcase. "He was shivering," she recalled. She asked if someone was picking him up, and he said, no, that he'd accidentally gotten off the bus too soon, and was warming up before he walked the rest of the way.

"I told him it was too far for him, dressed as he was, to walk — that he'd freeze," she said.

So she offered him a ride. He hesitated, then said OK. Their food arrived. The boy looked hungry, so Bernardson offered to buy him a meal. He said no, but with coaxing, ate some of their potatoes.

As they talked, the boy told them he'd been sent away from home because he'd been causing trouble. Bernardson started having second thoughts about offering him a ride, wondering if she was endangering her own boys.

But when they walked to her car, the bitter wind convinced her she was doing the

right thing. As she drove, they asked the boy what kind of trouble he'd been in. He'd stolen a car, among other things, he said. Bernardsons' sons in the back seat exchanged wary glances. Then, as they came to a stop, the boy reached into the pillowcase. The family froze in fear.

"We're going to die," John Watercott, Bernardson's youngest, remembers thinking.

Instead, the boy pulled out a small wrapped gift and handed it to Bernardson. She told him it wasn't necessary, but he said, "Lady, don't worry, it's not much."

Bernardson wanted to walk him to his door, but the boy said no, and insisted on being dropped off at a church.

Back at home, Bernardson and her sons unwrapped the gift to find a small, inexpensive Christmas ornament: a bell in the shape of a penguin, with red pompom earmuffs.

She hung it on their tree — something she's done ever since.

The encounter reminds her of the original Christmas story. "They were cold; they had no place to stay," she wonders about the boy she helped and why their paths crossed.

"It was so odd, and it was out of character for me (to pick up a stranger)," she said. "Every year, when I place the ornament on my tree, my thoughts go to that cold little boy, and I hope and pray he is happy and safe."

CHURCH SCHEDULES

Abundant Life

ABUNDANT LIFE MINISTRIES, 517 Burleigh, Lawrence and Barbara Hladky, pastors, 665-0889. SAT 7pm Praise and worship celebration. SUN. 10am Worship. WED. 7pm Worship. Teens prayer daily 10am.

Alliance of Renewal Churches

LIVING WATER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, Sun. 10am Yankton Middle School (2000 Mulberry) Weds. 7pm Prayer. David Olson, pastor. (605)260-2138.

Assembly of God

ASSEMBLY OF GOD, 801 W. 25th, Jeff Mantz, pastor. 665-6362 (office). SUN. 10am Worship Celebration. WED. 6:30pm Midweek service and Bible study for all ages.

Baptist

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH, 221 W. 3rd, Kevin Caskey, pastor, 665-0066. SUN. 9:30am Sunday School. 10:45pm Preaching Service, 4pm Afternoon Service. THU. 7pm Preaching & Prayer Service.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, 303 Ohio St., Wakonda. Mike Lindsay, pastor, (605)759-5020. SUNDAY Worship. 11:00a.m. evening 6:00pm WEDNESDAY Bible Study 12Noon.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, SUNDAY: 9:00 Sunday School for all ages, 10:30 Worship Service. MONDAY: Service broadcast 7:30pm Channels 3 & 98. WEDNESDAY 6:30pm AWANA, 7-8th Grade Youth Group: 7:00pm 9-12th Youth Group, Adult Bible Study. Pastor Jon Cooke, Associate Pastor Rick Slattery, Youth Pastor Jeremy Nelson, Children's Min Dir Laura Kotalik. www.cbchurch.com 2407 Broadway, (605)665-5594.

HARVEST INDEPENDENT BAPTIST, 100 W. 3rd, Mission Hill. Pastor Nathan Martin, 668-0708 (ch.) 665-1481 (home). SUN. 9:30am SS. 10:30am Worship. 5:30pm Worship. WED. 7:00pm Worship.

Baptist

YANKTON BAPTIST CHURCH, SBC, Pastor Matt Green, 607 East 15th St., Yankton, 665-7587. SUN. 9:30am Bible study, SS; 10:45am Worship. WED. 7pm Midweek service.

Bible Church

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH, Meeting at Pierson Ranch recreation area 10:30am Sundays. From Memorial Day through Labor Day. Call Pastor Joel Finck for more information. (605)760-4701.

Catholic

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Immaculate Conception), St. Helena, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen. (402)357-2400. Mass: Saturday 5pm.

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Sacred Heart), Wyanot, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen. (402)357-2400. Mass times, Sundays at 9am.

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Sts. Peter & Paul), Bow Valley, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen (402)357-2400. Mass: Sundays 11am.

MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE, Peace Chapel, MMC campus. SUN. 10am Mass with the Sisters in the Bishop Marty Chapel. Public is welcome to attend.

SACRED HEART, 509 Capital, Yankton, Rev. Mark Lichter pastor. 665-3655 (office). SAT. 4:30pm Mass. SUN. 8am, 9:30am, 11am Mass. THUR. 12:30pm, 2:30pm and 7:30pm Confessions.

ST. AGNES PARISH: SIGEL, rural Utica. SUN. 9am Mass, confessions 1/2 hour before Mass.

ST. ANDREW'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, Bloomfield, NE. Fr. Michael Schmitz. SUN. Mass: 10:30am; TUE. Mass: 8am; THUR. Mass: 7pm. Confessions: THUR. 6:30-6:55pm.

ST. BENEDICT CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1500 St. Benedict Drive, Yankton, Father Ken Lulf, 664-6214 (church). Masses: SAT. 5pm. SUN. 8:30am&10:30am.

ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH, Menominee, Neb., Rev. David Fulton, pastor. SUN. 8:30am Mass.

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, Constance, Neb., Fr. David Fulton, pastor. SAT. Mass: 7:30pm.

Catholic

ST. BONIFACE CHURCH, rural Freeman. DECEMBER WEEKEND Mass Sundays 9:00 a.m. or call Rev. Matthew Vazhappily. (605)583-4318. Christmas Eve Mass Dec. 24th 5pm.

ST. COLUMBA CHURCH, rural Irene. DECEMBER WEEKEND Mass, Sundays 10:30 a.m. or call Rev. Matthew Vazhappily. (605)583-4318. Christmas Eve Mass: Dec. 24th 7pm.

ST. GEORGE CHURCH, Scotland, SD. Rev. Matthew Vazhappily. DECEMBER WEEKEND Mass Saturdays 4:30p.m. or call (605)583-4318. Christmas Eve Mass Dec. 24th 8pm. Christmas Day Mass: Dec. 25th 9:30am.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC, Fordyce, Neb. Rev. David Fulton. SUN. 10:30am Mass.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC, Lesterville. SUN. 10:30am Mass.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC, Wakonda, Rev. Scott Trayner, 624-2697. SUN. 8:30am Mass.

ST. ROSE OF LIMA, Crofton, Neb. Fr. Michael Schmitz. SAT. Mass: 8:00am & 5:30pm. SUN. Mass: 8:30am. WED/FRI Masses: 8:15am. Confessions: WED. 11am-11:30am, SAT. 5-5:20pm.

ST. WENCESLAUS, Tabor, (605)463-2336. Rev. Joseph Puthenkulathil, SAT. 6pm Mass. SUN. 8:30am Mass.

THE HOUSE OF MARY SHRINE, 6-mi. W. Yankton, Hwy.52. Masses: Monday 8:30am through October. Masses Saturday 9:00 every Saturday. Rosary Sunday 4:00. Rosary 4:00. Open 7 days a week for prayer. thehouseofmaryshrine.org

Charismatic

YAHWEH-SHALOM CHARISMATIC, St. Benedict Catholic Church. MON. 7:30pm prayer meeting

Christian

KINGSWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 19th & Burleigh, 665-6317. Joseph Mason, Pastor. 9am-SS; Worship 10:15am. Wed-6pm-Kids games; 7pm Kids for Christ & Adult Bible Study. firsthope@santel.net

Church of Christ

CHURCH OF CHRIST, 1114 West 12th, Yankton, 665-6379. SUN. 9:30am Bible study; classes for all ages. 10:30am Worship.

Church of Jesus Christ

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 2300 Douglas, Yankton. Randy Campbell, (605)565-2016. Family History Ctr 665-0901. SUN. 10am Sacrament meeting.

Episcopal

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 517 Douglas, Yankton. Rev. James Pearson, (605)665-2456. Sunday 9:00 AM Serenity 10:15 AM The Holy Eucharist Wednesday Noon The Holy Eucharist Saturday 5:00 PM Candlelight Mass 11:00 PM Candlelight Mass.

Evangelical

Cornerstone Evangelical Church, Pastor Oliver Omanson, Stewart Elementary School; Morning Service 10:30 a.m. Wednesday College Bible Study 1306 Maple Street. Mike Stevens 665-8750.

EMMANUEL CHURCH YHS Theater, 1801 Summit, Sunday School at 9:30am Worship Service 10:45 am www.emmanuelnyankton.com (605)665-0404.

Lutheran

CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH: 305 W. 25th, Yankton, 665-8848. Rev. Dani Jo Ninke. SUN: 8:30am & 10am Worship, SS-9:45am.

FAITH UNITED LUTHERAN, 44874 303rd St., Volin SD 57072, (605)267-2277. SUN. Worship Services 9:30am. Children's Education WED. Evening (WOW) 6:30-7:30pm.

FIRST AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, (AFLC) 300 S. Carpenter St., Tripp. (605)935-6941 9:30am Sunday School; SUN. 10:45 Worship firsthope@santel.net

GAYVILLE-BERGEN LUTHERAN Pastor Ralph Egbert. (605)267-4342 (church) Sunday: SS-10:15am GLC SS- 9:15am, GLC Worship-10:30am.

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH, AFLC 200 South Wilson, Delmont. (605)935-6941. SUN 9am Worship. 10am Sunday school. firsthope@santel.net

Martinius Lutheran Church, Utica. Pastor Dean Schroeder Sunday Divine Service 10:30am (605)589-3195 www.MartiniusLutheran.org

Lutheran

OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN, rural Irene. 263-3724. SUN. 9am Worship.

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN, LCMC/NALC, Menno. Interim Past 9:00am with brunch to follow; Sunday School 10:20a.m. Questions call (605)387-5256

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN, LCMC, 12th and Elm, Springfield. Rev. Kenneth Johnson, pastor. SUN. 8am Worship. 9am SS. THUR. 7pm Adult Bible study.

PRINCE OF PEACE, Wisconsin Synod, 201 East 25th St., Pastor Werre, 665-4793. Sat. 6pm Worship.

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South Dakota Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, MAIN STREET LIVING television program, 10a.m. (CST) on KDLT-NBC; and 11a.m. (CST) on KAUN-PAX; and 10a.m. (MST) on KKRA-PAX.

St. John Lutheran Church, Tyndall. Pastor Dean Schroeder. Sunday Divine Service: 8:30am (605)589-3195. www.StJohnsTyndallLCMS.org

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH (LCMS), 1009 Jackson. David Gunderson, Pastor. SUN. 8am Worship, 9:15am Education Hour, 10:30am Worship.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, 403 Broadway, Yankton, 665-7415. Saturday-5:30p.m. Worship; Sunday-8:15a.m./10:45a.m. Worship; 9 a.m.-Breakfast; Classes-9:30a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Hartington/Crofton, NE. Justin Wise, interum pastor; (402)254-6606. SUN. 9am Worship (Hartington), 10am SS (Hartington), 11am Worship (Crofton).

TRONDHJEM LUTHERAN CHURCH (AFLC), rural Volin. 263-3841. SUN. 9:15am; 10:30am Worship.

Non-Denominational

FAITH ALIVE, 501 Cedar St., Yankton. 665-4797. Contemporary Worship & Family Values. SUN: 10am service. WED. 7pm Care-Cells "Small Groups For Building Relationships" Various Locations.

Non-Denominational

GLORY CHRISTIAN CENTER, 901 E 11th St. Yankton. Gail Ryken, pastor, 665-2369. SUN. 10am Service. WED. 6pm Prayer. GC School, call (605)665-1988.

Presbyterian

PEACE PRESBYTERIAN (PC/USA), 206 E. 31st. 665-0448. Rev. Dr. Nelson Stone & Rev. Marilyn Stone. Sun-10am worship, Coffee to follow. SS for kids 10:30am. Aired at 8pm Fri. on Ch. 3 & 98.

Reformed

RIVERVIEW REFORMED, 17th St. & Burleigh, Rev. Rodney Veldhuizen, pastor. 665-9204. SUN. 9:30am Worship, 10:15am SS. WED. Youth group & adult choir.

Seventh-Day

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST, 722 Locust St., Yankton, 665-1032, SAT. 9:30am Sabbath School, 11am Worship. 665-4496, 665-4881. Pastor George Shaver Home phone (605)369-5496.

United Church

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Newcastle, Neb., 303 Highway 12. Rev. Gary Kimm, pastor. SAT. 6PM Church school, 7PM Worship. Second THUR. 2PM Ladies Aid.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 301 W. Franklin, Hartington, NE, (402) 254-6563 or 664-5310. Rev. Gary Kimm, pastor. SUN. 8:15am Church school, 9am Worship.

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL UCC, 103 S. Elm St., Coleridge, Neb., (402) 283-4824 or 664-5310. Rev. Gary Kimm, pastor. SUN. 9:30am Church School, 10:30am Worship.

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, (Congregational) 210 West 5th St., Yankton. (605)665-7320 Dr. Richard W. Jensen, Pastor. SUN-10am Worship, 11am-Fellowship, 11:05am Church School.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Crofton, Neb., 412 W. Main St., (402)388-4124, Pastor Les Parmenter. SUN. 10:00am Worship.

United Methodist

FIRST UNITED METHODIST, Yankton. Rev. Ron Johnson Pastor. 665-2991. Sunday, Contemporary Worship 9:00; Trad. 10:30. Childcare 8:45-11:45. 8:30 UM Hour, KYNT.

GAYVILLE-VOLIN UNITED METHODIST, Rick Pittenger, pastor. 624-2179. 9am Worship Service. 10:00am Sunday School.

WAKONDA, IRENE, VIBORG, UNITED METHODIST, Pastor Mark Gronseth. SUN. 8:30am Worship at Wakonda; 9:45am Worship at Irene; 11am Worship at Viborg.

KYNT 1450 AM Radio

KYNT 1450 AM Radio SAT. 10:30am "Saturday Morning Live." SUN. 8:30am United Methodist Hour. 9:05am "God's Good News." 9:30am St. John's Lutheran Church

WNAX 570 AM Radio

WNAX 570 AM Radio. Lutheran Shows-6:30am, 8am, 11am. Wings of Healing-7:30am. Words of Hope 8:30am. Prop. Ref. Church-8:45am. Voice of Prop.-9:30am. Hr. of Hope 10am.ChristianCrusaders-10:30am.