

## “THE LITTLE LORD JESUS” BY JOHN RIVERS

I always look forward to the music of the Christmas season. There is something for every taste from Bing Crosby and Burl Ives to George Frederic Handel and J.S. Bach. I especially like the carols that are sung in traditional Christmas services. I am certain that we all have favorite carols. There are many songs to choose from and as I pondered Christmases past, I realized that my favorite carol is *Away in a Manger*.

The lyrics are familiar and when I hear them I can not help but see that tiny baby who, though equal with God, “made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:5-7 KJV) He was born in lowly circumstances at the right place and at the right time to bring peace and salvation to a fallen world. At one time, I preferred some of the “louder” carols like Hark, the Herald Angels Sing and Angels We Have Heard on High. I suspect that my experiences as a father and grandfather have led me to the carol that recalls that quiet and holy scene in the stable.

We do not know the identity of the author of the lyrics to *Away in the Manger*. Some have suggested that it was written by Martin Luther, but this assumption probably arises from the fact that the carol apparently was brought to the United States by Lutheran immigrants. The words first appeared in this country as a poem read to children during the celebration of the 400th anniversary of Luther’s birth in 1883. The first published instance of the lyrics is in *The Little Children’s Book for Schools and Families* in Philadelphia in 1885. A search on Google reveals that over forty different tunes are used with this carol in hymn books. Here are the lyrics:

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay, The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.  
The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.  
Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, And fit us for Heaven to live with Thee there.*

These words bring to mind the scene described in Luke’s Gospel when Jesus taught us that we must approach Him with the faith of a little child. “Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” (Luke 18:15-17 ESV)

As we celebrate this Christmas Day, we need to take the time to join Mary and ponder in our hearts all that occurred on that first Christmas. (Luke 2: 19) Consider the wonder of it all. Jesus was the King of Heaven, yet He laid that down for a while to be born as a human to live a sinless life so that He could be the perfect sacrifice that God required for the payment of our sins. He did not do it for nations or “people groups.” He did it for each one of us. You were bought with a price to honor God. (1 Corinthians 6:20 KJV) A perfect gift. The thought of that can lead us nowhere but to join that “heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14)

**Thought for the Week:** “The greatest and most momentous fact which the history of the world records is the fact of Christ’s birth.” – **Charles Spurgeon**

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA REMEMBRANCES

In memory of **Venable Merck** by **Dixie Merck**.

In memory of **Our Loved Ones** by **Eloise Crowder**.

In memory of **Clyde & Zella Wilbanks** by **Tim & Debbie Wilbanks**.

In honor of **Annabelle & Abram Wilbanks** by **Tim & Debbie Wilbanks**.

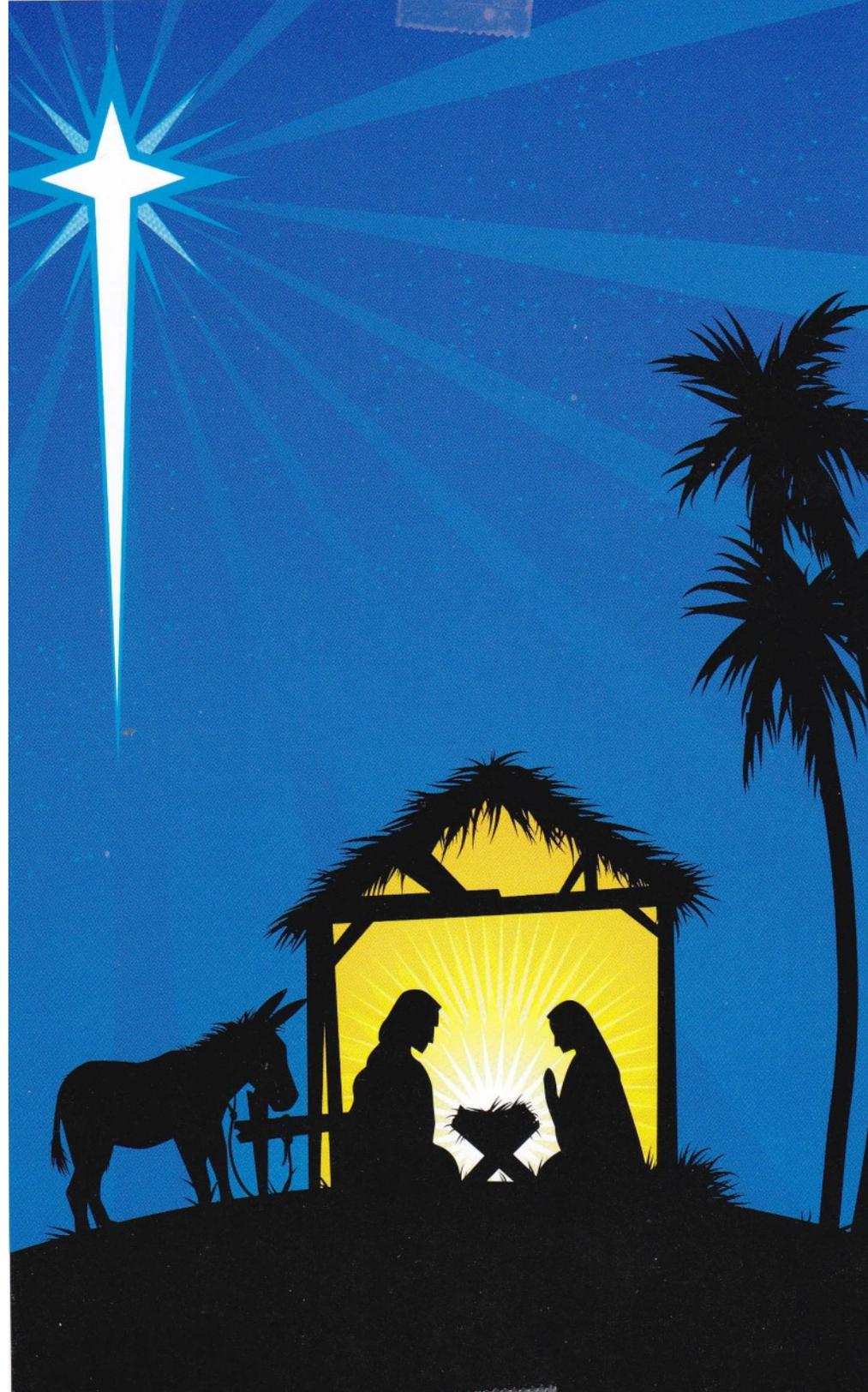
In memory of **Loy Crowder, Nathan Crowder & Ryan Crowder** by **Fred & Judie Wendt**.

In honor of **Eloise Crowder** by **Fred & Judie Wendt**.

In memory of **Joe Krause** by **Paul & Robin Krause**.

In honor of **Our Grandchildren** by **Harlee & Jackie Pearce**.

In memory of **Jason Caudell & Don Carroll** by **Reid & Helen Caudell**.



# Service of Divine Worship

Saturday, December 24, 2016 – 5:00 P.M.

**Christmas Eve**

**Altar Color: White**

*Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine; Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign. Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine; worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign? Love shall be our token love be yours and love be mine; love to God and all men, love for pleas and gift and sign.*

## COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

THE GATHERING

THE RINGING OF THE HERITAGE BELL

THE CHORAL INTROIT

THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

\*THE HYMN No. 220

Angels from the Realms of Glory

\*THE CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH No. 208

St. Luke 1:68-79

\*THE HYMN OF PRAISE TO GOD No. 70

The Gloria Patri

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

THE COLLECT

*O God our Father, you have brought us again to the glad season when we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome him to reign over us. Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old. Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

THE MUSIC SPECIAL

O Holy Night

Anne Moon & Judie Wendt

THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Mary

The Chancel Choir

\*THE HYMN OF PRAISE TO GOD No. 95

The Doxology

THE SPOKEN WORD

Rev. McLendon

## THE GREATEST GIFT

(Pew Bible: NT, St. Luke 2:1-20; pg. 58)

THE HYMN No. 218

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

The Invitation

The Service of Word and Table

The Music Special No. 219

What Child is This?

The Administration

\*THE HYMN No. 230

Silent Night, Holy Night

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

St. Luke 2:1-20

Lane Seahorn

THE MUSIC SPECIAL

Gloria!

The Chancel Choir

\*THE DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Carson Todd

\*THE TAKING OF LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

\*THE RINGING OF THE HERITAGE BELL

\*THE POSTLUDE

*\*Denotes standing if you are able & so desire.*

## CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

Thank you for contributing to our Pastor's Local Relief Fund.

A very merry Christmas to each and everyone!



Wilbanks.

## ASSISTING WITH WORSHIP

**Bell Ringer:** Collin Coulter; **Acolytes:** Grace Cospers & Ella Smith; **Cross Bearer:** Cody Palenzuela; **Communion Assistants:** Hunter & Jimmy Cochran; **Liturgist:** Lane Seahorn; **Greeters:** Reid & Helen Caudell; **Music Special:** Chancel Choir, Anne Moon, Judie Wendt; **Dismissal:** Carson Todd; **Worship Leaders:** Rob Mabry, Dianne Cochran, Darlene Brown; **Nursery:** Dixie Merck; **Sound System Engineers:** Fred Wendt, Mike McLendon, Tim

## USHERS

**Harlee Pearce**, Chairperson

Chuck Enslin, **Offering Steward;** Matt Chambers, Carl Gibson, Harlee Pearce, Kevin Thomas, Fred Wendt. **Offering Counters:** Chuck Enslin & Usher.

## “THE UPPER ROOM” NOW AVAILABLE!

Great news for new year's! The popular devotional booklet, “The Upper Room”, is out and can be found on tables at the entrances to our buildings on both sides of the street. The issue is for both January and February and comes FREE OF CHARGE. Limited copies of LARGE print are also available. Begin your new year off right by resolving to use “The Upper Room” daily as your personal or family devotional guide.



## EMILY MAINOR TO BE CONFIRMED NEW YEAR'S DAY

**Emily Mainor**, daughter of **Wayne & Cindi Mainor**, will receive confirmation and be welcomed as a full member of the church next Sunday, January 1, at the 9:45AM worship hour. **Rob Mabry**, worship leader, will preach at the same service. Make your plans if possible to attend this first worship opportunity in the new year and congratulate young **Emily** upon her decision to accept Christ as her Savior and receive confirmation.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS! FROM THE McLENDONS

**Brother Jim, Miss Marilyn, Brother Mike** extend our love and best wishes to everyone within the church family for a blessed Christmas and happy new year. They count their blessings continually through the year, and one of their greatest always is that of the Homer Methodist family of God. Thank you for your love and support these past twelve months and for each victory won to the glory of God. Our prayer is that even more successes than ever await us in the year ahead as we minister together meeting individual needs and winning souls for eternity.

*B.L.O. Jim*

## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

(Please remember Homer UMC in your will or trusts.)

**December 18, 2016** — OFFERING: Budget, \$6,085. Pastor's Local Relief Fund, \$30. Youth Fund, \$30. TOTAL: \$6,145.