



HILLSIDE MONTHLY DISPATCH

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

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Modeling the Truth of God's Word

December 2020

BE PART OF GOD'S DIVINE WORK

From the Pastor's Desk

The Unexpected This Christmas

Luke 2:11-14

Have you ever heard the term, "Expect the unexpected?" That is normally in reference to someone who needs to be on guard or on the alert. It is a phrase that helps someone prepare for what may be coming around the corner in the course of daily moment in time. No question about it – life does throw us some curve balls does it not?

Often we are caught experiencing the unexpected events which disrupt the ebb and flow of our existence and, let's face it, if it wasn't for such times, life might actually be a little boring or mundane. These unexpected times of interruption can be a blessing or a curse depending upon the circumstances surrounding the unexpected event as well as the way in which you embrace it.

In Scripture there was an unexpected event in the lives of many Jews two thousand years ago that should have been expected. In particular I want to focus on the passage of Luke in which an angel appeared before the shepherds who were watching over the flock by night.

When this heavenly host presented himself he commanded them to fear not, for he had a special message for them. He then went on to say, "For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 'This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased. (NASB)'"

What an unusual and unexpected event. The shepherds' lives were supremely interrupted by a great and awesome moment in history and not only was this event unexpected, so was the sign that was given to them. The sign was that the Christ child was going to be wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. What kind of sign is that?

I'll tell you what: an unexpected sign. It wasn't a sign of pomp and circumstance. It wasn't one filled with grandeur and gold. It wasn't one in a palace with servants. Nope, it was truly unexpected. Our Savior came to us in all humility and submission before the Father who is in heaven. He came to save that which was lost and draw all men unto Himself.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

Dec. 5, 8:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast

The men share a meal, then engage in a Bible discussion.

Dec. 6, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

Dec. 13 – Christmas Luncheon

Dec. 24, 6:30 p.m. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Dec. 25 – Christmas Day

Dec. 31 – New Year's Eve

Farewell 2020!

Weekly:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School and Bible Discussion

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. – Weekly Bible Study

There was no question that the sign was unexpected and unusual, but it was also obvious. For how many babies would be found in such a circumstance? The shepherds were told were to go and when they found the baby, the one and only baby, in a manger then they have found the Christ child. This child would be the one who would save the world. Jesus, the one and only. Truly an unexpected set of circumstances.

What kinds of unexpected set of circumstances have occurred in your life recently? Have things gone the way you would have liked them? Was it unwanted or wanted? God works through all our lives and He often works through those unexpected times to bring about in glory.

This upcoming Christmas season, be prepared to expect the unexpected in your life. You never know what God might do. Maybe the one in the corner of the grocery parking lot in

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On the web at <http://www.hillside-sbc.org>

Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

need is the unexpected. Maybe God will move in your life to help him. How about the one family member that has been taunting you about your faith, maybe this Christmas season she will come to you and want to know about your faith in all seriousness. Are you ready for that?

How about the need to help out your neighbor who has only shown you ill will? He might come and ask for your help because he knows you are a Christian. Are you expecting this and are you prepared to forgive him and help him?

God works in the unexpected and often it does bring him glory. There are many other scenarios that might fit the same kind of unexpected work God might do in your life this year. Are you ready? Do you have your spiritual antennas up? Are you expecting the unexpected? If you are then you will be greatly blessed.

In our story today we see that the shepherds were blessed when they followed through with the disruption in their lives. If you read a little further, they end up finding the Christ Child and then go out and praise God for all that they had seen and heard. See, God does work through the unexpected to bless you and glorify His name.

I pray that this year you will be a part of something special. Something that will mark this year as the best year you have ever had honoring Christ in Christmas. I hope that you are part of that divine work in which God will challenge you with the unexpected and that you will follow through and that you will receive a blessing because God got the glory for your faithfulness.

May each and every one of you have a blessed Christmas and may the glory of Christ shine forth this Christmas season in you.

Merry Christmas,

✠ Pastor Jim

Men's Breakfast

The last Men's Breakfast of the year takes place on Saturday **December 5th at 8:00 a.m.** We continue to work our way through the Gospel of Mark and we learn something every time we read it..

But first, we'll enjoy a home-cooked breakfast. If you can bring something to share, let pastor Jim know.

Fellowship Events

On Sunday December 13 at midday right after the Worship Service, we are having a Christmas Luncheon. Pastor Jim is supplying a turkey. Let him this week know what side dish or dessert you can bring. By doing that, we can avoid things like 10 pots of stuffing.

Property and Space Patrol

The buildings and grounds seem to be in good shape and, praise the Lord, no snow yet.

✠ Pastor Al

High Court Blocks NY Virus Limits on Houses of Worship

By Jessica Gresko, Baptist Press, November 26, 2020

WASHINGTON (AP) – With coronavirus cases surging again nationwide, the Supreme Court barred New York from enforcing certain limits on attendance at churches and synagogues in areas designated as hard hit by the virus.

The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission had filed a friend-of-the-court brief with the high court Nov. 20 in support of an emergency application by Orthodox Jews challenging New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's "cluster action initiative" intended to combat spikes in new COVID-19 infections.

The justices split 5-4 late Wednesday night, with new Justice Amy Coney Barrett in the majority. It was the conservative's first publicly discernible vote as a justice. The court's three liberal justices and Chief Justice John Roberts dissented.

For the full story, go to www.baptistpress.com.

The Birth of a Hymn

Pastor Al provided this interesting story of how a much loved hymn came to be. It is also an example of how a secular song became a rousing praise to God.

Julia Ward Howe and her husband, Samuel, pitched in to help the Sanitary Commission at the beginning of the U.S. Civil War. As a result of their volunteer work, President Lincoln invited them and some others to Washington.

During that trip, the Howes visited a Union Army camp in Virginia and heard soldiers sing "John Brown's Body," a song celebrating the man who had attacked a Southern arsenal hoping to trigger a rebellion against slavery. One line of the song read, "John Brown's body lies a'mouldering in his grave."

James Freeman Clarke, a clergyman traveling with the Howe's party, knew that Julia was a published poet. He urged her to write some decent words to the tune. By the next day, November 19, 1861, Julia Ward Howe had written her famous lines to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." She later described how the words came to her:

"I awoke in the grey of the morning, and as I lay waiting for the dawn, the long lines of the desired poem began to entwine themselves in my mind, and I said to myself, "I must get up and write these verses, lest I fall asleep and forget them!" So I sprang out of bed and in the dimness found an old stump of a pen, which I remembered using the day before. I scrawled the verses almost without looking at the paper. "

Next February, *Atlantic Monthly* printed Mrs. Howe's poem and paid her \$4.00 for it. The entire nation was inspired by the words when they appeared, and the song became literally the battle hymn of the American republic during the dark days of the Civil War. When the song was sung at a rally attended by President Lincoln, he cried out with tears in his eyes, "Sing it again!"

After the war, Julia Howe remained active in reform causes as President of the American Woman Suffrage Association and the American Branch of the Women's International Peace Association. In 1907 she became the first female member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and, we regret to say, preached in Unitarian churches.

When Julia Ward Howe died in 1910, four thousand people attended her funeral at Boston's Symphony Hall. It was a moving moment when those four thousand voices rang out with her song, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

Listening Beyond the Stars

The following daily devotion appeared in Our Daily Bread for Oct. 18, 2020. It was written by Dr. James Banks, the pastor of Peace Church in Durham, North Carolina.

Please read Isaiah 55:1-7 before reading this story.

Imagine life without mobile phones, Wi-Fi, GPS, Bluetooth devices, or microwave ovens. That's the way it is in the little town of Green Bank, West Virginia, known as "the quietest town in America." It's also the location of the Green Bank Observatory, the world's largest steerable radio telescope.

The telescope needs "quiet" to "listen" to naturally occurring radio waves emitted by the movement of pulsars and galaxies in deep space. It has a surface area larger than a football field and stands in the center of the National Radio Quiet Zone, a 13,000-square-mile area established to prevent electronic interference to the telescope's extreme sensitivity.

This intentional quiet zone enables scientists to hear "the music of the spheres." It also reminds me of our need to quiet ourselves enough to listen to the One who created the universe.

God communicated to a wayward and distracted people through the prophet Isaiah, "Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you" (Isaiah 55:3). God promises His faithful love to all who will seek Him and turn to Him for forgiveness.

We listen intentionally to God by turning from our distractions to meet Him in Scripture and in prayer. God isn't distant. He longs for us to make time for Him so He can be the priority of our daily lives and then for eternity.

Tune in to Gospel Radio

In the Concord area, get more of God's Word by tuning into New Hampshire Gospel Radio at 99.1 FM or 104.3 FM. For example, on Saturday nights at 6 p.m. the locally produced "Saturday Night Gospel Hour" offers a wide variety of southern and country gospel music. During the week, tune into well known speakers such as Alistair Begg, Chuck Swindoll, Dr. David Jeremiah, and Dr. Jim Daly.

Learn more at <http://www.nhgr.org/>.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to the following people who are celebrating another orbit around the Sun:

12/16 Connor Robertson

12/21 Juliette Robertson



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on anyone who celebrates a wedding anniversary this month. If that's you, please let the Editor know so we can celebrate it with you.

Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It is our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillside-sbc.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is Dec. 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella@comcast.net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the New Hampshire Baptist Association, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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Modeling the truth of God's Word



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