

Behold! Good News, Great Joy!

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:10b-11

Follow God

Matthew 1:18- *This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.*

19- *Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

20- *But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit*

21- *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

22- *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:*

23- *"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" which means, "God with us."*

24- *When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.*

25- *But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus...*

Matthew 2:-9- *After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.*

10- *When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.*

11- *On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.*

12- *And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.*

13- *When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."*

14- *So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt,*

15- *where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."*

19- *After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt*

20- *and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."*

21- *So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.*

22- *But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee,*

23- *and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets "He will be called a Nazarene."*

ELDER MEETING SYNOPSIS REGARDING BETHANY'S GIVING NEEDS

Monday night, December 8, 2008, the Elders met regarding the church's financial situation. The elders approved the financial management Team's recommendation to cut the 2009 spending plan an additional 11% - amounting to a decrease of \$266,629. This brings the Spending Plan in line with our projected income for 2009, which is based on the current level of giving. The reductions of funding for specific areas of ministry are as follows

Salaries and benefits – A 9% cut based upon a freeze in salaries, and cuts in staff benefits.

Missions – 9% in cuts, including the targeted gradual reduction of missionary support in some cases, and the reduction of funding for missions encouragement, equipping, Serve Long Beach, and Short-Term Missions.

Christian Education – A 14% reduction with decreases in ministry funding in Children, Youth, College, and Adults

Music – A 19% cut with decreases in spending in the areas of seasonal performances and Tempo music and Maintenance.

Administration – A 13% decrease with cuts in staff development, custodial services, advertising and programming.

Facilities – A 20% reduction in cost based upon a reduction in the property insurance premium and cuts in the area of upkeep.

Though these cuts will impact our ability to move forward with some ministry plans, if giving continues at its current level, these reductions will put us in a realistic position to fund the ministry.

Deeper cuts in Church Staffing and Missionary spending can only be avoided if we make up our 2008 deficit this month. If giving in 2009 is stronger than anticipated, we will be able to reevaluate some of these areas and reinstitute the original Spending Plan for that area.