

# Citizen's Courier

## MERRY CHRISTMAS!



As we approach Christmas this year, I want to take a moment to wish you all a very Merry CHRISTmas as we get ready to enter the New Year.

As our family gathers for Christmas this year (19 going on 20 grandchildren plus 5 sets of parents in addition to Joyce and me plus a couple of boyfriends), I plan to teach the Christmas story from the book of Luke. While it has been a rough year for us in Ohio politically, we can take heart from the trials surrounding the birth of our Savior. As a preacher pointed out recently, most likely the birth of Jesus was surrounded by a lot of unanswered prayer. Consider, Caesar Augustus issues a census decree requiring everyone to travel to their hometowns to register for some silly census. So now Joseph with his wife who is nine months pregnant and about to deliver a baby has to take her and travel to Bethlehem, at least three day's journey from where they were living in Nazareth. I thought it was bad enough a number of years ago when Joyce and I were moving from Oxford to Cincinnati during the Christmas season and she had to ride in the front of the moving truck I rented while she was 8-9 month's pregnant. At least she didn't have to ride a donkey for three days, if indeed Mary did since there is nothing in scripture stating how she traveled. But can't you imagine Joseph, much less Mary, exclaiming, "Now Lord?!!, We have to travel three days to Bethlehem now?!?!?"

Of course, then they arrive in Bethlehem and because of the large crowds there was no room for them in an Inn or anywhere but an animal stable. "What, Lord?!?! No Inn or house for us in which to stay?!?! What next?!?!" Of course, what is next is that Mary has to deliver her first born there in the stable, probably a shallow cave used as a stable wherein there was a manger (the only true scriptural indication that Jesus was born in a stable). Then we learn from Matthew that Herod ordered all of the male children Bethlehem two years old and under to be murdered, "Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted" (a dual prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15). The fact that the Republicans murdered all third Parties (except for the Green Party for now) pales in comparison to what Joseph and Mary faced.

In addition to the trials and tribulations surrounding the birth of Jesus, I also plan to teach on the four songs or psalms regarding the birth of "God with us - Immanuel" "who came to seek and to save those who are lost," those who accept this God incarnate as their personal Savior. I challenge you to look at those four psalms and compare their pithiness to the inanity of many of the modern hymns and praise choruses being sung in our churches today.

**So with that, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas!**

*Don Shradler*

