



In the Loop

Centennial Christian Church
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Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to conceive and bear a son, the angel said that her son, “will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33).

The idea of a carpenter’s son ruling over the House of David forever was absurd. But that was hardly as absurd as God impregnating a young woman who was still a virgin. From the moment of Jesus’ conception, then, we have the premonition that if the boy is going to grow up to become a king who rules forever, he is going to be a very different king than his ancestor David. He is going to lead with his heart and expect the members of his kingdom to do the same.

He will be raised in a backwater of Galilee rather than a palace. His attendants will be a small group of men of humble origins, many of them fishermen. Jesus would not wield a sword. Neither did he compete for the kingship with anybody. Rather than run a military operation, he let the Roman military operation run him up a cross.

It is only after the cross and resurrection of Christ that we begin to understand that God is love and nothing else. And we begin to understand that perfect love *never* forces itself. It never passes on the hurt. However, whenever we get outside God’s influence of love, we pass on the hurt, the bad stuff, the hate, jealousy, resentment, and seek to control or force another. Yet love never forces itself. In the cross of Christ, we see that love even takes the hurt upon itself and turns it back into love.

Jesus, as one who became one of us among humans, the Spirit of Christ is within us, and we are glorified to God in Christ. God wants your hands and feet to extend God’s Love. When we remain open to God’s love being born into this world through our actions of serving all with compassion, then we are now living in the “Realm of God,” on this earth.



So, this season of Christmas is not just the telling of Jesus’ birth long ago. It is about the possibility of Christ’s love being born into the world again through you and me. It is about you and I saying with Mary, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” And then looking for the ways God’s love can be born into the world through our acts of loving service.

Blessings to all as we share and live in God’s Love together!

We Are Participating in a New Epiphany Theme

Our overall theme throughout the 2025 season of Epiphany is “*A New Vision of God.*” The season of Epiphany will begin when we celebrate Epiphany Sunday on January 5th and will continue until Transfiguration Sunday, March 02, 2025.

This is the agenda of our sermon series, “*A New Vision of God,*” by Pastor Tom:

<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Scriptures:</u>	<u>Themes:</u>
Jan 05, 2025	Matthew 2:1-12	Epiphany Sunday
Jan 12, 2025	Psalms 42:1-3, 5, 7-8	Trust in one another: The Body of Christ
Jan 19, 2025	Psalms 57:1-3, 5, 7-11	Healing Presence of Christ
Jan 26, 2025	Psalms 77:1-14	Order to Disorder to Reorder (Renewal)
Feb 02, 2025	Psalms 86:1-12, 15	Our Images of God Shape Us
Feb 09, 2025	Psalms 102:1-2, 11-12, 17-18, 24-28	Christ Is Our Foundation
Feb 16, 2025	Psalms 131	Experiencing Christ Through Humility
Feb 23, 2025	Psalms 146:1-8	See Christ in the Lowly

In the narrative of the Magi visiting Jesus the Christ Child, the Magi received directions from the writings of the Prophet Micah and Second Samuel to determine Bethlehem as the physical location (Matthew 2:5-6). What they found was a very different kind of ruler than the usual kings of Israel or Rome. Instead of a violent ruler who wields a sword, they found a humble sovereign ruler who wields merciful justice, love and peace to bring the “*Realm of God*” into our world.

In the same manner, we can determine from some of the Psalms how to find and experience Christ during these troubled times. Many people are experiencing shock, disillusionment, and loss of orientation. Many people are hurt and angry. We may ask, “Where is Christ now?”

During my vacation, I spent a few days studying The Psalms, the longest and arguably the most read book in the Bible. I was immediately strengthened and “resourced” when I found seven psalms of lamentation that deeply spoke to my present experience, and perhaps yours, too. I offer them to you in hopes that they might do the same.



OUR VISION STATEMENT
Spreading the message of God's Love,
in our church and in our community,
through caring for each other.

Listening to Pastor Tom “Live” on YouTube!

Pastor Tom has been doing his “Daily Inspirations” on YouTube since 11/21/2024. These are a “live” podcast in which Tom can receive “Chats” online while he’s recording the Daily Inspiration. To see videos of his podcasts, visit our website: www.centennialcc.org. Once you are on our website, click “worship” at the top of the page, and then click “online.” You will have a choice: Tom’s videos are on the left (click the image of Pastor Tom), and our worship services are on the right (click the image of our church). Once you’ve listened to the current video, you can listen to previous videos by clicking on the three “bars” in the upper right corner of Tom’s image and choosing a podcast from the list.

Here is a schedule of Tom’s upcoming podcasts:

December 23 and 24 at 1:30 p.m.

December 30 and 31 at 1:30 p.m.

January 6 – 10 at 1:30 p.m.

These are actual “live” podcasts. Anyone can “chat” with Pastor Tom during the podcast from 1:30 to 1:35 or longer.

Pastor Tom will no longer be putting his “Daily Inspirations” on the church’s Facebook Page. New ones are only available on our website. This will free up our Facebook Page and make our worship services easier to find during the week. We hope this will be beneficial for you and our community. Please let us know how we are doing and how we can further assist you. Thank you!

Daily Inspirations by Pastor Tom Cici



Sunday Worship 10:15AM





Greetings Centennial Christian Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Thank you many times over for the numerous ways you support your church with your time, your talent and your treasures. You have been and continue to be faithful servants of our living savior Jesus Christ.

Centennial has fallen on difficult financial times. Our general (operating) fund that supports all the necessary expenses of Centennial is being depleted.

We come to you asking you to prayerfully exam your personal situation. Can you find it in your heart to contribute “a little” more for Centennial’s well-being? If you think it’s impossible, God says all things are possible through me.

As you well know, in each of our homes many of our expenses tend to rise every year, and the same is very true with the expenses of the church. But when was the last time you considered increasing your giving to support the many ministries of Centennial? Maybe it’s time to do just that. Whether it is a generous one-time special gift to help your church or an increase to your normal weekly or monthly tithe for the church’s ministry, it is still true that “God loves a cheerful giver!”

Thank you for considering this request, and may God continue to bless you and your family.

Centennial Christian Church
Janet Keefe & Bill Wetzell
Finance Department

DECEMBER 2024/January 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				19 Worship Mtg. 10A-FH Monthly Prayer Service: 5P-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Book Club 6:30P	20	21 Christmas Caroling-5:15P Meeting at the Peebles' 1005 Lake Fork Rd. Blm
22 Fourth Sunday in Advent-LOVE Worship 10:15A	23	24 Christmas Eve Christmas Eve Service-7P	25 Christmas	26 Church Office Closed TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	27	28
29 Loose Change Offering Worship 10:15A	30	31	January 1 New Year's Day	2 Outreach 11A-FH TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah	3	4
5 Worship 10:15A	6	7	8 Bridge 12P-GH Chor-6:30P	9 TOPS#559 5:15P-Isaiah Board Meeting 6P-FH	10	11

Tuesday, Dec. 24 – Participate in our Beautiful 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Program.

January 05, 2025 is the Beginning of Epiphany, and we are dedicating our marquee to Christ.





Continuing Prayers

Western North Carolina, Nathan, David, Randall, Perry Watson, Hope's baby August, Debbie Holiday, Sisters Kelly Bestful and Lisa Behl, Jeff Kanchak, Randy Seibert, Tim, Kris Carius, Leonard Bates, Greg Firkus and Pat Murphy, Taylor, Charlie Middleton, James, Neil and Tammy and their caregivers, Cameron Cook, Angie Simpson, Jackie Steinhilber, Megan Brown, Mannie Martinez, Ann Burmaster, Cole, Ron Geske, Pam, Dick Tarter, Scott Griffith, Jessica, Marsha, Pete Rasmussen, Robin, Fern Scaggs

At Home/Assisted Living

At home-Doris Miller, Frieda Foland; The Pointe, Pontiac-Rae Geske;

Nursing Home

The Arc-Rev. Barbara Short, Don Short; Westminster-Anita Poling; Earl McIntyre; Evergreen Village-Pat Iloff; Hopedale Nursing Home-Dick Tarter; Accolade, Pontiac-Ron Geske;

Military

Mark Brien, Keyla Folsom, Troy Guyran, Benjamin Horn, Michael Iverson, John Thomas, Darrell Walton, Glen Whitecotton, Christopher Wilson-Poston

January Birthdays and Anniversaries	
Becky Hines	01/10
Esther Sengpiel	01/12
Kay Davis	01/15
Laurel Poshard	01/27
Ron and Rae Ann Geske	01/29

**Our challenge for the week –
Pray this prayer every day –**

Loving and merciful God, give me courage to faithfully allow your divine Love to flow through me into all my relationships. Help us to live in and through your Love to spread justice in the community.

[Wait and listen.]