



OUR MISSION: Impacting The Kingdom Of
God One Person At A Time

Pastor: Dr. Dennis Felder

USBC News

IS CHRISTMAS A MYSTERY?

By Pastor Dennis Felder



There are many mysteries surrounding the celebration of Christmas. For one, why do we hang Christmas stockings? Folk tale has it that Santa Claus wanted to give gifts to three daughters of a very poor nobleman. To accomplish this task, Santa dropped three bags of money down their chimney. By accident, one of the bags of money fell into a stocking that hung to dry by the fire. Today, this is why we hang stockings by the fireplace.

Another mystery about the Christmas season is why we exchange gifts. The custom of exchanging presents at Christmastime is commonly linked to the Magi's visit to the infant Jesus. However, history also shows that in the Roman Empire gifts were exchanged to celebrate the winter solstice. This Roman practice occurred before the birth of Christ. The American version of exchanging gifts is a combination of Jesus' birth and the Roman custom.

We also wonder, why do we use the Christmas poinsettia? The red and green poinsettia, native to Central America, has been a Christmas symbol in the United States since the 1820's, when it was first shipped north by Joel Poinsett, an American minister to Mexico. Its shape is frequently compared to the mythically symmetrical Star of Bethlehem.

To some, however, the greatest mystery of Christmas is why Christ was born. In the Bible, the word *'mystery'* refers to a mystery of divine nature that remains hidden from human beings because their normal power of comprehension is insufficient. However, Scripture shows us that God did not intend for the birth of Christ to remain a complete mystery to us.

Colossians 2:2-3 says *"My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* **Ephesians 1:9** says *"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,"*

The *"mystery"* that God revealed through Christ's birth was His plan of salvation. **Ephesians 1:7** says, *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."* Also, **John 10:10** says, *"... I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

Even though God revealed why Jesus came, we still do not fully understand how He came. God chose to use a virgin birth to bring His one and only Son into this world. If we were able to fully solve a divine mystery, we would be God. However, if we accept a divine mystery as God's truth, then we are exhibiting true faith.

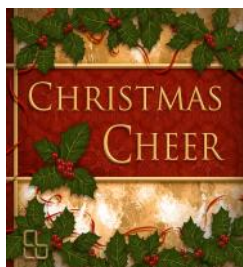
Have you accepted God's gift of His only Son? Have you trusted by faith that God sent Jesus, born of a virgin, to die on the cross for your sins, to raise again in three days and to ascend to heaven to prepare a place for you? Do you have a friend or family member who doesn't know the true meaning about why Christ was born? What better gift to give this Christmas than the gift of a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Make an effort this Christmas to put less emphasis on the shopping, the decorating, the wrapping, and the meal planning. Make this the year that you and your family emphasize the **TRUE** meaning of Christmas. Make it a celebration of the birth of God's only Son, Jesus Christ.

Ask yourself, *"Is there joy in my heart as I prepare to celebrate Christmas?"* There should be a joy in our hearts because of God's gift of love. **Psalms 105:3** says, *"Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice."* Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man. May you find that this Christmas is the most blessed and peaceful of all for you and your family.

CHRISTMAS CHEER!

By Pastor Dennis Felder



This Christmas season, USBC will be launching a very special outreach ministry entitled, *Christmas Cheer!* *Christmas Cheer* involves financial donations, gift cards, and the distribution of the *Christmas Cheer* packet.

Below is how Christmas Cheer works:

During the month of December, the church will be collecting financial donations. These donations will be used to purchase \$10 gift cards from Safeway.

These gift cards will be placed in a package like our *Share Packets*, but with a Christmas emphasis.

Then you are invited to take a *Christmas Cheer Packet* and give it to someone else. This person can be a family member, a friend, or a total stranger. The purpose of the *Christmas Cheer Packet* is to share the true meaning of Christmas with others.

In participating in the *Christmas Cheer*, you will accomplish two very important things. First, you will experience a blessing spreading a little Christmas Cheer. Second, you will bless someone else with the Good News along with a gift card that can be used. Your participate in the *Christmas Cheer* will produce a lasting impression in your life and in the life of the person who receives it.

Once you give the *Christmas Cheer Packet* to someone, please come back to the church and share your story of spreading a little *Christmas Cheer!*

CHILDREN/YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

By Pastor Dennis Felder



On December 16th immediately following our Worship Service, we invite all of our children and youth to gather in the Fellowship Hall for a special *Christmas*

Party. The *Christmas Party* will be filled with plenty of food, games, and prizes.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL TREE

By Pastor Dennis Felder



Christmas is considered to be a joyous time of year. However, for some who had a loved that has died, it can be a time of loneliness and grief. So, to help keep their wonderful memory alive during the Christmas season, we will have a *Christmas Memorial Tree* in the church

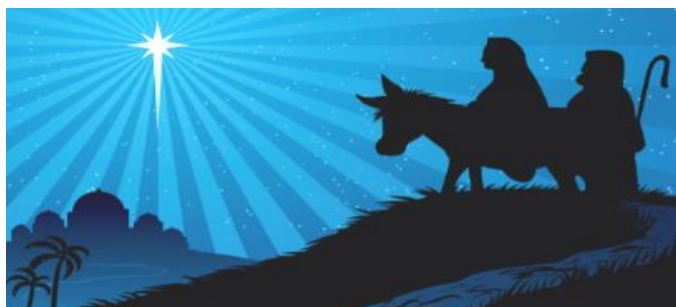
foyer. If you have a loved one who has passed, we invite you to place a Christmas ball on the *Christmas Memorial Tree* to remember them.

When you walk into the church's foyer the *Christmas Memorial Tree* will be standing in place. Beside the tree will be colorful Christmas balls. If you would like to honor or remember your loved one(s), take one of the Christmas balls and write their name(s) on it with markers provided. Then hang it on the *Christmas Memorial Tree*.

On Sunday, December 23rd, following our worship service, we will gather in the foyer for a special remembrance prayer. Then on Sunday, December 30th, we ask that you take home your Remembrance Christmas Ball and place them in safe keeping.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

By Pastor Dennis Felder



On December 24th at 6:30 p.m., we invite you to attend our *Christmas Eve Service*. During this special service, we will honor the birth of Christ through song, Scripture reading, and prayer. The service will conclude with a beautiful ceremony of everyone lighting a candle. The lit candles will symbolize the Light coming into the world who is Jesus Christ.

FOREVER YOUNG

By Pastor Dennis Felder



On November 13th, our wonderful group of *Forever Young* gathered at the Golden Corral for our monthly luncheon. As usual, the food was great, but the fellowship was even better.

At our next *Forever Young Luncheon* on December 11th, we will gather at the IHOP in Mt. Airy at 12 noon. See you there!

CHRISTMAS CARDS

By Pastor Dennis Felder



If you would like to give *Christmas Cards* to members of your church family, we invite you to bring them to church for distribution and collection. Church

directories will be available at church so that you can label your cards appropriately.



If you would like to make a year-end charitable tax contribution to USBC, please make sure that your financial gift is received by the church, no later than December 31, 2018.

CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

By Lana Felder



On December 23rd, the *USBC Choir* will be presenting a cantata entitled "*Good News From Home*" (Arranged by Russell Mauldin).

The choir has practiced long and hard in order to sing praises to God for sending His Son to be born in Bethlehem. Come and hear the Christmas message in music. You will be reminded that the best gift of all is Jesus!

CANCELATIONS

By Pastor Dennis Felder

During the Christmas season, there are two very important cancelations that you need to be aware of.

Sunday School will be canceled on December 23rd. However, we will still have our regular 11 a.m. Sunday worship with the Christmas musical entitled, "*Good News From Home*".

All Wednesday Night Activities will be canceled on December 26th.

Also, the church office will be closed on December 25th and January 1st to celebrate the holiday season.



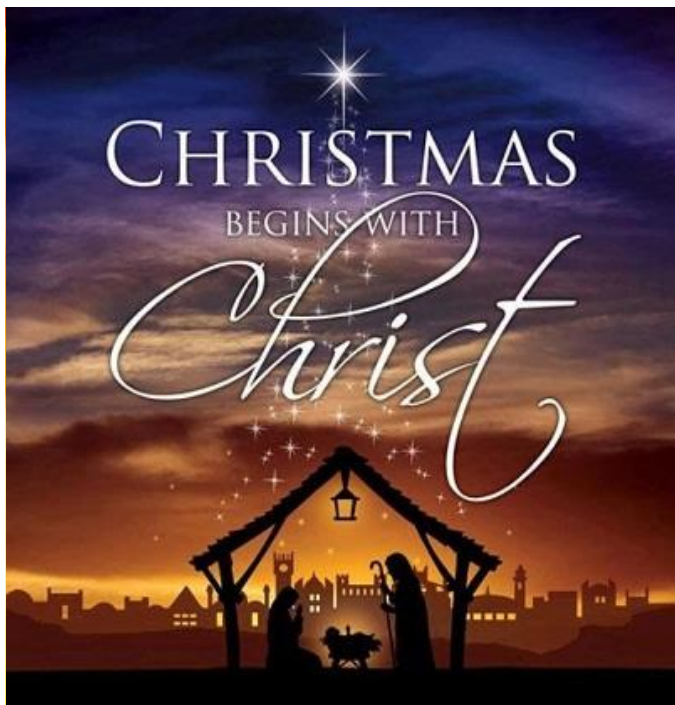
WEATHER POLICY

By Pastor Dennis Felder



If the church cancels any service or activity due to inclement weather or wintery conditions, a message will be placed on the church's voice recorder to inform you of such changes or cancelations. If you are in doubt if a particular service or activity is canceled, please call the church before you travel to the event. If no message is stated notifying you of any changes, this means the service or activity remains as scheduled. We will only post a cancelation message if a service or activity is canceled or postponed. The church's phone number is (301) 972-3686.

USBC NEWS
Upper Seneca Baptist Church
23401 Davis Mill Rd.
Germantown, MD 20876



Next Newsletter Deadline
December 16, 2018

God's Plan Of Salvation

Trust Jesus Christ today! Here's what you must do:

1. Admit you are a sinner.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23)

2. Be willing to turn from sin (repent).

Jesus said: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:5)

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you, was buried, and rose from the dead.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

4. Through prayer, invite Jesus into your life to become your personal Savior.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

What to pray:

Dear God, I am a sinner and need forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ shed His **precious blood** and died for my sin. I am willing to turn from sin. I now invite Christ to come into my heart and life as my personal Savior.

Editor's Note:

Included in this newsletter is the **USBC Church Birthday Calendar** showing the dates of birthdays of our church family, but we don't always have the information to include. So, if we miss YOUR date, we are sorry! Why not fill out a connect card and place it in the offering plate with your name and birthday noted so that it can be included in our calendar.

Also, if you have something to be included in the newsletter, an announcement, an article, a cartoon....we are always looking for information and new ideas!

Church Office: 301-972-3686
E-mail: Church@USBChurch.org
Web Site: www.USBChurch.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/usbchurch/

THE MENORAH & CHRISTMAS

By Pastor Dennis Felder



Within the Jewish faith, it is very common to light a *Menorah* during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. This Jewish holiday is observed during the Christian celebration of

Christmas. Often, in certain public displays you will see a *Menorah* next to a Christmas Tree. For many Christians, we do not understand the purpose or meaning of the *Menorah*.

On December 8th at 4 p.m., our very own Brian Altman will be sharing with our church the history, the meaning, and the purpose of the *Menorah*. Brian will teach us the significance of the *Menorah* in the Jewish faith and how it has been observed and celebrated. In addition, we will learn how the Christian faith can embrace its meaning.

To celebrate the lighting of the *Menorah*, we will observe this special occasion just like Jewish families will be doing. When lighting the *Menorah*, they also celebrate by eating fried foods. So, we also will be serving up some delicious fried desserts to satisfy our taste buds following the lighting of our *Menorah*.

This will be our churchwide Christmas Party with a Jewish flare. So, come and enjoy the Jewish tradition and to celebrate the birth of Christ. **Merry Christmas!**

PASTOR APPRECIATION

By Pastor Dennis Felder



On behalf of my family and myself, I want to express a big **THANK YOU** to my wonderful and caring church family.

The cards, the gifts, and the encouraging words were heartfelt and uplifting as you expressed your appreciation during *Pastor Appreciation Month*. It is a joy being your Pastor.

MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE

By Pastor Dennis Felder



On Sunday, December 2nd, we will be visiting the *Museum of the Bible* in Washington, D.C. Following our

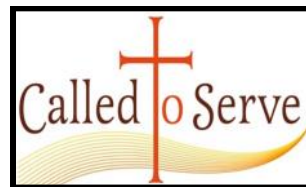
worship service, we will have a quick lunch, carpool to the Shady Grove Metro Station, and arrive at the museum around 2 p.m. The cost will be \$10 per person and you will be responsible for purchasing your fare to ride Metro. However, lunch will be provided by the church. If you would like to attend, please sign up in the church's foyer.

Here is a brief description of the museum: "*Museum of the Bible aims to be among the most technologically advanced and engaging museums in the world. Showcasing rare artifacts spanning 3,500 years of history, the museum offers visitors an immersive and personalized experience with the Bible, and its ongoing impact on the world around us.*"

If you would like more information about the *Museum of the Bible*, please visit their website at www.museumofthebible.org.

I SERVE is HERE

By Pastor Dennis Felder



On October 28th, we launched a new ministry in our church that encourages everyone to find a special place of service at **USBC**. In

Isaiah 6:8, Isaiah was asked a very penetrating question, "*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'*" We too, are also asked this same question of service.

During the month of December, I encourage each one of you to pick up the list that describes the places of service in **USBC** and prayer over it. As God leads you to a place of service, please let me know. Come January 2019, we will start meeting together to help equip you in your new area of service.