

December 2022

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Volume 48, Issue 12

St. John's Journal

O CHRISTMAS TREE

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By the time you are reading this little article, many folks will already have their Christmas decorations up. I saw someone in town putting up their outside Christmas decorations already over two weeks before Thanksgiving. I'm sure some people have even set up their Christmas trees by now, and have them trimmed with all sorts of lights, garlands, and ornaments. And they surely are beautiful! It seems almost everyone loves Christmas decorations and especially Christmas trees. By the time Christmas Day comes, most homes and many businesses will be graced with a festively decorated Christmas tree.

But what are all these Christmas trees really for? Are they merely beautiful decorations? Are they simply convenient shelters under which to place brightly wrapped gifts? Are they nothing more than a little economic boost for the tree growers and the artificial Christmas tree industry?

Christmas trees actually originated in Germany in the middle ages, likely as the "paradise tree," a prop used in a popular play about Adam and Eve. This evergreen tree was decorated with apples. As time went on, people began to associate the tree more with Christmas, and they added other decorations, such as cookies, nuts, fruit, paper roses, painted eggshells, and candles. A story that attributes the first decorated Christmas tree to Martin Luther is probably little more than pious legend. German immigrants introduced the Christmas tree custom to the United States, where it became widely popular in the mid-1800s.

Well, all this is somewhat interesting, but is it really of any help for us Christians? Is there anything about the Christmas tree that can assist us in our life of faith in Jesus Christ? There can be! For as with so many other customs, the value lies in the symbolism we attach to it. And the Christmas tree can indeed have strong symbolic value.

The evergreen branches remind us of everlasting life! Even though most natural Christmas trees are cut and therefore no longer living, their evergreen leaves vividly point to life – that the tree remains alive even in the

winter, when deciduous trees appear lifeless. At Christmas time we rejoice that Jesus was born for the very purpose of giving us everlasting life! He came in the flesh so that, even when we die bodily and appear lifeless, our souls may remain alive with Him in glory, and so that our bodies may rise to everlasting life. All who believe in Him have this gift of life right now, even as He promises, "He who believes in Me has everlasting life." *John 6:47*

The lights on the Christmas tree remind us that Jesus was born to be the Light of the world! He is the One who gives the truth of salvation to all who will listen to Him and believe. Scripture says of Him, "The true Light, who gives light to every man, was coming into the world." *John 1:9*

The star that adorns the top of the Christmas tree likewise points us to Jesus, who is the long-prophesied Star of Jacob. (Numbers 24:17) It also reminds us how His birth was accompanied by the appearance of a special star, which led the wise men to find Him in Bethlehem. Just as the wise men rejoiced when they saw the star (Matthew 2:10), so we rejoice in the blessed reality of Christ's presence among us.

So you see, when we make these symbolic connections, the Christmas tree is much more than just a large and lovely decoration. It is a visual testament to the good news of Jesus' birth, and the gifts of life and salvation He gives us. May your Christmas tree serve to make You more mindful of Jesus, His presence, and His everlasting gifts to you!

- Pastor Bishop

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Christian Education Sunday School

Perfect Attendance October 2022

None

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Dec 02

Tomi Pfanz

Dec 04

Michelle Ferguson
Eric Harley

Dec 05

Stephen Sheckler
Joyce Wertz

Dec 06

Ronda Adkins
Joe Canterbury

Dec 07

Trevor Frankel
Tyler Frankel

Dec 09

Sofia Hicks
David McCammon

Dec 10

Owen Sumner
Diane Webber

Dec 11

Leslie Hauk
Kathy Miller



Dec 12

Louise Brickner
Tom Etter
Michael Gillespie
Bradley Wilson

Dec 13

Gage Dingerson

Dec 14

Audrey Driskell
Valerie Ferguson
Alexander Jones
Bryan Segó
Michelle Watson
Cora Wiker

Dec 15

John Neumann

Dec 16

Ace Dupent
Lilly Hicks
Lila Lisenbee

Dec 17

Tracy Dansby
Christopher Dingerson
Rebecca Worlow

Dec 18

Derrick Schumm
Sydney Webb

Dec 19

Kim Gudzinkas
Jeffrey Morrison

Dec 20

Daniel Nafziger
Cindy Smith

Dec 21

Kyle Barth
Peyton Edmiston
Kevin Rockhold

Dec 22

Timothy Althiser

Dec 23

Jamie Driskell
Nicholas Fornoff
Amanda Memken

Dec 24

Jeffrey Gauger
Ryan Stoehr

Dec 26

Zachary Allen
Penny Hoover

Dec 28

Marshall Edmiston
Raymond Hall
Noah Justi
Donna Pool

Dec 29

Jeffrey Turney
Jeremy Turney

Dec 31

Mackenzie Abatie
Ricki Belcher
Julie Hammond

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Dec 07

Daryl & Laura Dagit

Dec 10

Roy & Debra Dagit

Dec 12

Denny & Carol Jones
Richard & Kelley Ward

Dec 17

David & Lori Segó

Dec 18

Gregory & Carol Becker

Dec 27

Daniel & Karen Nafziger
William & Dorothy Sidell

Dec 30

Harold & Susan Wertz

Dec 31

Ray & Joyce Barnes

PARISH NOTES



Church Attendance

Oct 2022 **555** - 15 services
Oct 2021 **587** - 15 services
Oct 2020 **438** - 12 services

Sunday School Attendance

Oct 2022: **1,281**
Oct 2021: **1,248**
Oct 2020: **678**

Worship Chairman

Brian Fuelberth

Videographers

Jim Lonergan

Acolytes

Dec 4

8:00 Jaxon Allen
10:30 Elizabeth Sayles

Dec 7

7:00 Elizabeth Sayles

Dec 11

8:00 Briella Hoover
10:30

Dec 14

7:00 Briella Hoover

Dec 18

8:00 Elizabeth Sayles
10:30 Jaxon Allen

Dec 24

7:00 Jaxon Allen

Dec 25

10:00 Briella Hoover

Dec 31

7:00 Elizabeth Sayles

Jan 1

8:00 Jaxon Allen
10:30 Elizabeth Sayles

Elders

Communion

Assistance

Dec 4

8:00 a.m. Tom Ivey
10:30 a.m. Steve Depew

Dec 18

8:00 a.m. Randy Couch
10:30 a.m. Jon Bolt

Dec 24

7:00 p.m. Tom Ivey

Dec 25

10:00 a.m. Jon Bolt

Jan 1

8:00 a.m. Randy Couch
10:30 a.m. Tom Ivey

Ushers

8:00

Ray Barnes
Daryl Dagit
Dave Kesselmayer
Garret Kesselmayer
Dan Rees

10:30

Brian Lundeen
Mike Nauth
Dan Watson
Mike Wilson



Special Services for Advent and Christmas

ADVENT VESPERS SERVICES 2022

Sermon Series:
"Psalms of the Lord's Advent"

All services are the Order of Vespers,
TLH pg. 41 at 7:00 p.m.

Nov. 30

Sermon: "The Lord Came to do God's Will" Psalm 40:7-8

Dec. 7

Sermon: "The Lord Comes to Bring Salvation and to Receive Our Praise" Psalm 118:25-26

Dec. 14

Sermon: "The Lord is Coming to Judge the Earth" Psalm 98:7-9

A light supper will be served before the services beginning at 5:30, with health precautions in place.

THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS

SERVICE will be December 18th at 10:30 am. Practices will be during Sunday School, 9:15-10:15, Dec. 4, 11, and 18. Any child is welcome to participate. Show up during practice or contact Deanna Bishop at 309-201-9297.

Christmas Services

Saturday, Dec. 24 - 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion

Sunday, Dec. 25 - 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Festival Communion:

Saturday, Dec. 31 - 7:00 p.m. New Year's Eve Vespers

TREASURER'S REPORT **OCTOBER 2022**



HI-LITES OF ST. JOHN'S VOTERS ASSEMBLY **November 14, 2022**

	<u>October</u>	<u>Y-T-D</u>
INCOME	27,804.00	292,918.98
EXPENSES	32,944.18	341,109.21
INCOME-EXPENSES	(\$ 5,140.18)	(\$ 48,190.23)

General Fund Accounts

General Fund	(15,827.19)
General Fund Total	(15,827.19)

Educational Fund Accounts

Educational Grant Fund Checking	2,948.56
Ed Grant CD LCMS 12/23	51,928.87
Ed Grant CD LCMS 12/22	51,928.86
Educational Grant Fund #2-Vanguard	61,504.29
Educational Fund Total	168,310.58

East Bluff Property

East Bluff Property—Vanguard	37,447.38
East Bluff CD LCMS 12/21	53,837.70
East Bluff CD LCMS 12/22	53,837.70
Cat Stock at FMV	79,874.74
East Bluff Property	224,997.52

Memorial

Memorial Fund Checking	28,811.92
Memorial Vanguard	93,605.22
Memorial Fund Total	122,417.14

Building Fund Checking	30,517.19
Sunday School Fund Checking	11,904.55

TOTAL ASSETS

\$542,319.79

Checking Account Balance

Checking Account Balance	58,355.03
TOTAL	58,355.03

LIABILITIES

Payroll Liabilities	2,474.80
Misc. LCMS Orgs Fund	13.72
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,488.52

Fund Balance

Net Income (Loss)	(47,184.61)
Capital Accounts	597,015.88
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	539,831.27

TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE

\$542,319.79

Mike Nauth called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Pastor Bishop opened with devotions.

A motion was made by Randy Couch, seconded by Julie Wagner, to approve the October Parish Report. Motion carried. Pastor Bishop did make a note that the individuals listed under the Released section of the report were removals.

The October meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Bob Oliverius, seconded by Cheryl Ivey, to approve the October meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Nancy Drockelman presented the October Treasurer's Report. There were no unusual expenses for the month. We did pay the bill to City Coal & Asphalt for the resurfacing of the parking lots. Nancy also noted that in September we did get a check for \$10,000 from Comcast for rent. The budget for next year was made available and will be gone over in more detail in next month's meeting by Daryl Dagit. The proposed budget shows an increase of 4.4% over this year's budget. If there are any questions on specific items shown on the budget, please contact the committee chair. A motion was made by Dave Drockelman, seconded by Gary Pool, to accept the October Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Board of Trustees – Gary Pool reported that we have contracted with Dave Burling Excavation to handle snow removal this winter. Gary also thanked Jennifer Kesselmayr and Kathy Heisel for their help on Trustees' Work Day. Gary also noted that work continues on the men's restroom in the church basement and thanked Dan Watson for his help.

Board of Elders – Randy Couch reported that the Elders met on November 13th. Randy indicated that as noted earlier by Pastor Bishop, letters were sent to 3 individuals indicating that they are being released from the church role. The Elders also talked about possible nominees for the board for next year. The Elders are doing the Advent dinner on December 14th.

Board of Finance – Nancy Drockelman reported that the board met last week and worked on finalizing the proposed budget for next year. The CD's that were due are being renewed for 18 months at 3% through the CID. In last month's meeting Brian Ford had

brought up the topic of electronic giving. Nancy indicated that Daryl Dagit sent a note to Brian indicating that they can pursue this idea if they want.

Board of Christian Education – Laura Dobbelaire reported that Paula Norman will be joining the board. Last month's activity was bowling. Youth from our church and Sand Prairie participated. This month's activity will be helping elder members of the congregation with leaf raking, etc. Good Shepherd School will be singing at the church this month. Also, over 500 cans of food have been donated so far. These will go to the food pantries at St. John's and Sand Prairie. This week Good Shepherd will have a Grandparent's Day.

Board of Worship – Julie Wagner reported that the committee met last week. The committee will be doing the Advent dinner on November 30th. Julie indicated that they talked about their committee assignments and the same people are retaining their officer positions. The committee thanked Valerie Ferguson for the Fall banners that she donated. The committee will be decorating the church on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Anyone who would like to help is welcome!

Board of Evangelism – Pastor Bishop reported that the committee did not meet this month but we did have Friendship Sunday this past Sunday. Pastor noted that we did have some visitors.

Board of Stewardship – NR

Long Range Planning Committee – No report.

Educational Grant Fund Committee – Mike Nauth gave an update. The committee is still trying to set up a date for a meeting.

East Bluff Property Committee – No report.

Constitution By-laws Committee – No report.

Unfinished business – NA.

New business – Ballots for officer positions were made available during the meeting. Mike Nauth asked that committee chairs add any names of possible candidates to the ballot. If there are names to add, please forward those to Sandy Ferguson so she can update the ballot for the December meeting.

Nancy Drockelman brought up the topic of Pastor Bishop's wage and housing allowance as allocated in the 2022 budget. Pastor and Deanna have been doing some work on their house. In talking to their accountant, it was recommended that the allocation between wage and housing allowance be changed. Pastor's wage was shown as \$58,000 with a housing allowance shown as \$17,000. A motion was made by Nancy Drockelman, seconded by Dave Drockelman, to change the amount shown as wages to \$41,000 and housing to \$34,000. Motion carried.

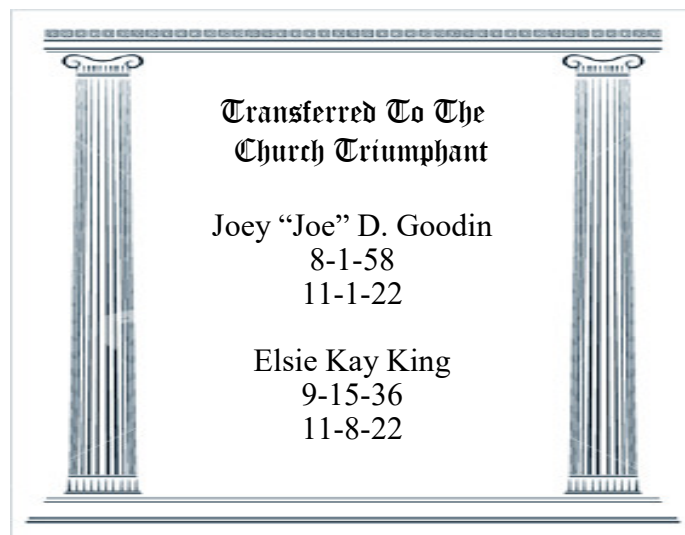
Pastor Bishop thanked those who attended the special musical event held last month to benefit the LCMS Central Illinois District Deaf Ministry. Over \$1700.00 was raised. Pastor indicated that we may try to do something similar again next fall. Bob Oliverius also indicated that he has enjoyed all the special music at the services.

A motion was made by Bob Oliverius, seconded by Jennifer Kesselmayr, to close the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wagner
Secretary





DECEMBER LIBRARY CORNER

By Eileen Tiona

*This is the name by which He will be called:
The Lord Our Righteousness." Jeremiah 23.6*

I haven't any new books to report on this month, but you are welcome to come into the Library and check out all the wonderful books that are available for your enjoyment.

Wishing everyone a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

ORGANIZATIONS

Youth Group

The Youth Group will go caroling on Sunday, December 11, at 2:00 p.m. to shut-ins. Watch Sunday bulletins for more information.

LWML

Women in Faith—St. John's LWML will meet on Saturday, December 17 at 10:00 a.m. in the church basement. After the meeting, we will enjoy a pot-luck dinner.

Our project will be purchasing gift cards and food items for the Children's Home.

WOMEN'S GUILD *By Leslie Hauk*

There is no December meeting for the Ladies Guild, but please join us for our next meeting will be Thursday, January 26 at 6:30 pm in the church basement .

POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS:

If you are interested in providing poinsettias for our Christmas service, please call the church 347-2136 or Deanna Bishop at 382-1106. Orders will need to be placed by Dec 12. Cost is \$15.00.



If you would like to bring your own poinsettias, please let Deanna know and have poinsettias at the church by Thursday, December 22. Thank you.

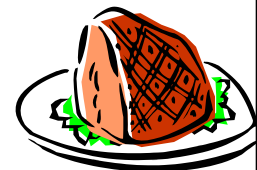
SHUT-INS of the MONTH: Even though some of our members cannot attend church, we want to keep them in our thoughts and prayers and let them know they are not forgotten. Please send a card or pay a visit to these shut-ins this month.

Shut ins for December are: Ellen Morrison, Villas of Hollybrook Memory Care ,2720 S. 14th St., Rm. 318, Pekin; Loretta Newman, Sunset Rehab & Health Care, 129 S. 1st Ave., Canton 61520; Hazel Nichols, 1106 S. 8th, Pekin and Sharon Parry, 1721 Valle Vista, Pekin.

Thank you from your St. John's Ladies Guild.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Pekin Township is still planning on serving a Christmas Dinner on December 21 - from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Pekin Township, 420 Elizabeth St. The menu consist of ham, cheesy potatoes, baked beans, roll and dessert. They also offer home delivery in the area to shut-ins and handi-capped only. Last day to call for home delivery is Monday, Dec. 19.



For more information call the Pekin Township at 346-3194.

1st Annual Christmas Bingo provided by Pekin Township

Menu consists of scrambled eggs with sausage, fruit, Danish and donuts, coffee and milk. The date is Thursday, December 8 from 10 am to 12 Noon at the Pekin Township. 420 Elizabeth St.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Wednesday, 12/7 - Dining out at Buffalo Wild Wings (Pekin) from 5 to 9 pm. (Show flyer on your phone or bring paper copy.)

Friday, 12/9 - School Improvement Day - PK-8 early dismissal, PreK @ 12 p.m. and K-8 @ 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 12/20—Early dismissal- PreK @ 12 p.m. and K-8 @ 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 12/20 - GSLS Board meets at 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Break is from December 21 to January 3.



2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Offering envelopes for 2023 are being prepared. If you do not have envelopes and would like a box, phone the church office: **347-2136**.

Envelopes will be available in the gym beginning **December 11th**.

Contributions for 2022 must be received by **Dec. 31st** in order to be

Friends In Harmony will perform its' 16th Annual Christmas Program on December 9th at 7 pm and December 10th at 3 pm. The shows will be at the F.M. Peterson theater at Pekin High School. All proceeds always go to local charities. Tickets are still only \$10 each and you can get them from Dave Drockelman 309-353-7598 or Steger's Furniture. Start your Christmas Season with a Song in your Heart!

We are back!! **St. Luke Lutheran Church**, rural San Jose, will host its annual Chili and Oyster Stew Supper and Bazaar on Monday, December 5, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Chili, oyster stew, chicken salad, ham sandwiches, hot dogs, and a wide variety of desserts will be served for a donation. There will also be cards, attic treasures, baked goods, and candy for sale. The church is located at 15757 N. County Road 3600 E., San Jose. Please come and enjoy food and fellowship!

In Our Prayers

If you know of anyone who needs to be added, please let the church office know.

All our shut-ins

Pastor Niemann
Billie Jackson
Bernice Mack
Rosetta Turner
Robert Rilea
Rhonda Lappie
Marlana Montgomery
Paula Jensen
Jeff Sayles
Joe Schiavone
Lila Lisenbee
Gabriella Kesselmayr
Don Schoedel
Melvyn Gentry
Jack Hall
Shirley Schott
Jean Jarvis
Terry Gleason
Cindy Smith
Kay King
Joyce Wertz

Sandy Morgan
Flo McClure
Larry Turner
Joyce Long
Keith Gleason
Peggy Farlin
Jeff Ferree
Addie Burling
Julie Rilea
Susan Waddell
Karen McCammon
Dan Watson
Eileen Tiona
Ellen Morrison
Lois Becker
Virginia Tackmann
Pat Sego
Carol Long
Dave Morris
Debi Thome
Louise Brickner

SHARE PROGRAM can always use canned vegetables, canned meat (ham, tuna, chicken), canned fruit, peanut butter, jelly, Scott Towels, toilet paper, detergent, etc.

We would like to include in December's baskets, cookie mix and other Christmas items. Thank you to all for your generosity.

GIFT CARDS FOR CHRISTMAS



Please consider using Good Shepherd's gift card program for all of your shopping and gift card needs for Christmas. The last day to order gift cards for delivery before Christmas is Dec. 11th! Please order as early as possible, and by the way—the Scrip company has changed its name to RAISERIGHT, so you will be hearing that name in the future.

Thank you for your support.



A VERY BIG THANK YOU to all volunteers who help decorate the church inside and outside for the Christmas Season. You are so appreciated.

SPECIAL THANKS to Pastor Bishop and my wonderful St. John's family for the prayers and cards you so graciously sent to me during my illness and extended treatment. Both are extremely important to me and I often reread my cards during trying times. Our Father always knows exactly what we need even before we ask him but even so 'Ask Boldly' because with God all things are possible. In Christian love, **Maxine Oliverius**.

Received a thank you letter from Lutherans for Life for our recent donation to them.

Received a thank you letter from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for our donation to them.

**Camp CILCA's
FIRST EVER ACT LIKE MEN RETREAT:**

January 20-22, 2023

Men in high school and up will gather for a weekend of activity and instruction, food and encouragement. Assertiveness, health & fitness, competence, vocation, adventure, piety, and more will be discussed **and practiced**. Don't miss this opportunity to gather with other Christian Men and explore what Saint Paul meant when he admonished the Corinthians to "act like men." (First Corinthians 16:13)

\$50 per person. Participants will stay in the Retreat Center, a 42-bed dorm-style house. Meals will be provided. You will need to bring your own bedding, towels, and

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ST. JOHN'S AND THE CHILDREN'S HOME ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS will partner to help provide Christmas gifts for some of the families that the Children's Home works with.

The Giving Tree is in the new addition. Gifts will be due on Saturday December 17th when we have our LWML meeting. The gifts are for children receiving services from the Children's Home in Peoria Il.

When you take a tag from the tree it will have a child's first name, age, and wish list. When you return the gifts to the church you need to attach that tag to the gifts so they know who the presents are for. If you have any questions, you can call Faye Kesselmayer at 309-202-7350. Thank you.

*The Legend of the
Christmas Candy Cane*

To celebrate Christmas, a candy maker decided to make a candy that would include several symbols of the life of Jesus Christ, so he made a Christmas Candy Cane.

He began with a stick of pure white, solid candy; white to symbolize the Virgin birth and solid to symbolize the firm love Jesus has for all of us.

The candy maker made the candy is the shape of a "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus.



Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candy maker added red stripes. He used three small stripes to represent the nails that held Jesus on the cross and a large stripe to show the blood shed by Jesus, giving us the promise of eternal life. Then he added the wonderful flavor of peppermint which is a royal gift of spice.

So perhaps the next time you look at this familiar Christmas decoration you will remember the candy make and the real meaning behind the Christmas Candy Cane: The Wondrous Birth of Jesus and His Great Love for all of us.

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Thank You !

Peoria Area Lutherans for Life is excited to announce the results of a funding effort we began early in 2022. We asked for support from members of area Lutheran churches to help provide funding for the newly-opened Living Alternatives pregnancy resource center on Peoria's south side. Many generous donors stepped forward to help us raise funds that could be matched by the LCMS Million Dollar Life Match program. Donors were asked to make their contributions to Bethel Lutheran Church. With Bethel's assistance, we applied for the matching grant. The funds we raised amounted to \$7144. We received a match of \$3500. We are presenting a check for \$10,644 to Living Alternatives. We will be in close communication with them as they decide how to put these funds to work in their efforts to help mothers and fathers choose life for their babies. **Thank you** to all who contributed to this project. May God richly bless you for standing for LIFE and generously sharing your resources.

Bob Wegner
Peoria Area Lutherans for Life - president

St. John's Lutheran Church
711 Court St.
Pekin, IL 61554

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Bible Wordsearch



Wordsearch 231

Matt. 1:16 - 2:5

A	G	C	H	I	L	D	M	A	E	R	D	M	E	O
H	N	B	M	H	P	E	S	O	J	D	A	X	E	W
N	O	G	I	O	L	O	R	D	F	G	I	I	C	L
C	I	L	E	R	T	L	H	A	I	L	R	A	R	N
O	E	G	Y	L	T	H	T	U	E	V	P	D	O	E
N	F	P	R	O	P	H	E	T	S	P	A	T	V	T
C	U	I	A	I	E	E	I	R	E	B	S	D	I	T
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S	T	S	E	I	R	P	L	E	R	E	E	Y	R	R
S	W	E	J	U	D	E	A	O	L	L	L	I	F	E
F	M	A	T	T	H	E	W	O	K	E	E	P	A	H

Birth of Jesus

AFRAID	APPEARED
ANGEL	CONCEIVED
BIRTH	CHRIST
CHILD	DIVORCE
DAVID	FATHER
DREAM	FULFILL
EXILE	HEROD
HOLY	HUSBAND
JESUS	IMMANUEL
JEWS	JOSEPH
JUDEA	MATTHEW
KING	MOTHER
LORD	PEOPLE
MAGI	PLEDGED
MARY	PRIESTS
STAR	PROPHET
UNION	WORSHIP
VIRGIN	PUBLIC
WIFE	SPIRIT
WOKE	WRITTEN

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a
Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:
<http://biblewordgames.com>

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