



# *maplelawn mapleleaf*

**MAPLELAWN BAPTIST CHURCH**  
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*He is Born!*

A large illustration of a nativity scene. In the foreground, three camels with riders are silhouetted against a dramatic, orange and red sunset sky. In the upper center, a bright, multi-pointed star shines in the dark sky.

## The Christmas Story



“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.” ■

## Should We Celebrate or Should We Remember?

How the believer’s heart grows heavy when there is talk of taking Christ out of Christmas. Some would say we’ve gone too far and Christians need to reclaim Christmas for what it really is. What do our children and grandchildren know of Christmas? The Christmas story is so overwhelmed by worldly trappings that it gets lost and is lost to the children. Has the true meaning of Christmas been lost in a shopping spree?

Back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the Reformation, some Protestants condemned the Christmas celebration as “trappings of popery” (Pope) and the “rags of the Beast”. The Roman Catholic Church responded by promoting the festival in a more religiously oriented form. In Colonial America, the Puritans of New England disapproved of Christmas. Celebration was outlawed in Boston from 1659 to 1681 – this list goes on.

It’s apparent, that from time-to-time, some hearts are moved to consider what we’ve done to Christmas – what it has actually become. They would seek to reclaim it and remember Christ’s birth and God’s greatest gift to the human race.

This Christmas, let us “REMEMBER”! ■



The birth of Jesus fulfilled many prophecies made hundreds of years before his birth. Two major studies are J Gresham Machen "The Virgin Birth of Christ" and Peter Sammons "The Birth of Christ" (latter published 2006). Listed are a few of those prophecies:

1. *Promised Through the Seed of Abraham:*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Genesis 22:18
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Matthew 1:1
2. *Promised Through Isaac:*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Genesis 21:12
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Luke 3:34
3. *Out of the Tribe of Judah:*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Micah 5:2
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Luke 3:33
4. *Born in the Family of Jesse:*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Isaiah 11:1
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Luke 3:32
5. *Born in the House of David (King):*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Jeremiah 23:5-6
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Luke 3:31
6. *Born in Bethlehem:*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Micah 5:2
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Luke 2:4-7
7. *Born of a virgin:*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Isaiah 7:14
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Matthew 1:18
8. *Worshipped and Presented gifts by Kings:*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Psalm 72:10
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Matthew 2:11
9. *Worshipped by Shepherds:*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Psalm 72:9
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Luke 2:9
10. *Weeping for the Children*
  - Old Testament Prophecy: Jeremiah 31:15
  - New Testament Fulfillment: Matthew 2:16

### 11. *Flight to Egypt*

- Old Testament Prophecy: Hosea 11:1
- New Testament Fulfillment: Matthew 2:13-14

### 12. *He will be called Lord:*

- Old Testament Prophecy: Psalm 110:1
- New Testament Fulfillment: Luke 2:11

### 13. *He is the Son of God:*

- Old Testament Prophecy: Psalm 2:7
- New Testament Fulfillment: Luke 3:22 (Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11)

Reviewing these prophecies and understanding the probability of casting the prophecy and having one person (Christ) fulfill them would be impossible; one begins to understand that only God could have made them. It's very sobering to consider that our creator puts great importance on keeping His word. He knows what is going to happen before it happens and makes it so. ■

## *The Nativity*



Remembering is a central way that Christians celebrate Christmas. There is a very long tradition of the Nativity of Jesus in art. The Eastern Orthodox Church practices the Nativity Fast in anticipation of the birth of Jesus, while much of the Western Church celebrates Advent. In some Christian denominations, children perform plays re-telling the events of the Nativity, or sing carols that reference the event. Some Christians also display a small re-creation of the Nativity, known as a Nativity scene, in their homes, using figurines to portray the key characters of the event. Live Nativity scenes are also performed, using actors and live animals to portray the event with more realism.

Nativity scenes traditionally include the Three Wise Men, Balthazar, Melchior, and Caspar, (their names and number are not referred to in the Biblical narrative) who are said to have followed a star, known as the Star of Bethlehem, found Jesus, and presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ■

## Lincoln Lake

Be sure to get out and enjoy the winter before all the snow melts and it's warm again – what fun is that?

If you like organized winter activities and an opportunity to meet and make new friends then Lincoln Lake has something for everyone this winter.

Many of the activities are overnight stays. Get dropped off on Friday night and play until about 7:30 PM on Saturday. What a blast!

Check out [www.lincolnlake.com](http://www.lincolnlake.com) web site for more information or call (616) 984-2125. Here are some of activities they have lined up for this winter:

### Junior Arctic Chill (3-6 Grades)

January 16-17, 2009

Speaker: Uncle Charlie

### Jr. High Arctic Chill (6-8 Grades)

January 23-24, 2009

Speaker: Andy Brubaker

### Sr. High Arctic Chill (9-12 Grades)

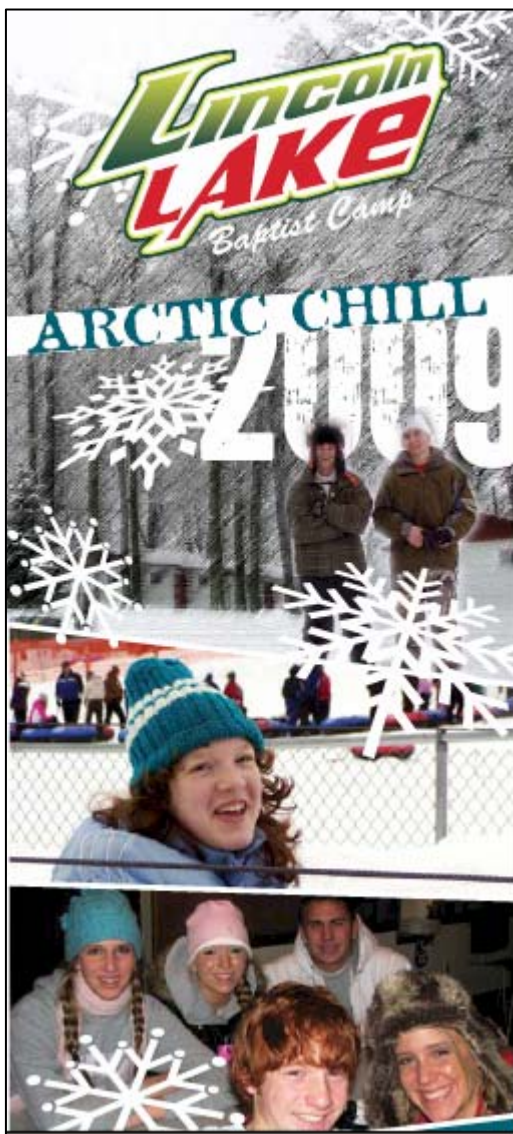
February 6-7, 2009

Speaker: Patrick McGoldrick

### Jr. & Sr. High Retreat

February 13-15, 2009

Speaker: Luke Rosenberger



## Super Bowl Extravaganza Party

February 1

Jr. & Sr. High Event!

(Must RSVP by January 29)

Cost: \$5

Come hang out and watch the super bowl with us, we'll have all you can eat pizza! The game room will be open, and you can play all the broomball you can fit in during commercials! We'll have a half-time devotional. Invite your friends! Call or email to register your group! (616) 984.2125 or [office@lincolnlake.com](mailto:office@lincolnlake.com) ■



TAMPA BAY 02.01.09

## New Year's Eve

Gathering together at Lincoln Lake to have a meal, a worship service, communion around the Lord's Table a time of reflection and prayer and some fun is a great way to bring in the new year. It's been an uplifting Maplelawn tradition for years. ■

## Andy Castillo – Honduras

Missionary Andy Castillo has been diagnosed with Fourth Cranial Nerve Palsy. The palsy causes double images, one above and slightly to the side of the other. Few causes for this non-life-threatening malady have been identified. Up to the point of diagnosis however, there was speculation Andy might have a brain tumor or have suffered a minor stroke. It's been a rough couple of months, filled with high-anxiety as he has worked his way through the medical expertise in Honduras and made his way to a specialist in Alabama.



The treatment? Ironically, it might just cure itself in time but in the mean time, he was given a pair of prism glasses to help counteract the double vision. A follow up appointment is scheduled for February.

On another sad note, while Andy was in Alabama, he got word that his uncle was kidnapped and subsequently murdered for trying to escape. Pray for Andy and his family that God's hand might be upon their lives as they deal with the afflictions and tragedy in their lives. ■

## The Cooks – Brazil



Dan, Kelly, Alex, Tricia and Dani Cook are on furlough after serving three terms on the field in Recife, Brazil. Their home church, Blythefield Hills Baptist has welcomed them home and helped to make their residence comfortable as they prepare to return to Brazil next summer.

Kelly has been cancer free for two and a half years and Dan is recovering well following the heart attack he suffered last May. He will have a defibrillator implanted this coming January 27<sup>th</sup>.

It is apparent that serving our great God is not for the faint of heart or spirit. The struggles and sacrifices of those that serve God are hard to measure. Above all there must be a belief and faith that what we do for God, is of the highest calling. ■

## George & Bonnie Bladey – Spain

George and Bonnie are missionaries at the Evangelical Christian Academy in Madrid, Spain. The school, according to their website, is a "...day school and boarding school and exists to serve missionary families by equipping students in the academic disciplines, challenging them to love God, apply His truth, and care for others."



While George and Bonnie wear many hats in this ministry, one of Bonnie's main roles is to oversee the school library. George, on the other hand, keeps changing hats and doing whatever is asked of him. He started as custodian and had worked his way up to interim school administrator.

One thing is certain, they enjoy serving in any capacity they are asked.

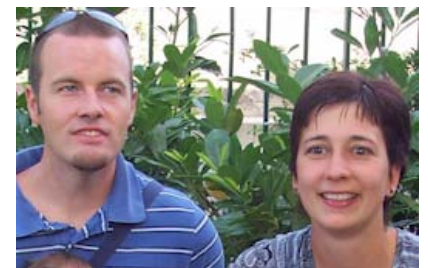
George and Bonnie share this story of a young girl named Emily. "Emily had been helping out with a VBS. She didn't care much for the church but met some of the youth and enjoyed helping out. The youth were to leave on a mission trip and Emily wanted to go too. She was tired of being unhappy. A couple of people donated the funds she needed, found they had a seat on the bus, got the o.k. from the pastor and his son who is the youth leader, and off she went.

We received a letter from the grandmother stating; "I just pray the Lord works in her heart." The next letter we received said something like: "...my 15 year old granddaughter left on a mission trip an angry person, now her life has been changed, she has accepted God in her life. Emily couldn't stop talking about it when she got home. She had a smile from ear to ear."

The Bladey's share this in their newsletter; "Our blessings never seem to end, but they start with Jesus Christ and HIS will in our lives. We are so thankful to everyone in the USA who gives and prays to make our time here possible. THANK YOU ALL." ■

## Keith & Debby Jones – Italy

Missionaries Keith and Debby Jones serve in Italy. They share the following story of a man who seeks to follow Jesus.



"...his Italian is below "poor" and his eyesight is almost nonexistent. I met him about 2 months ago and since then he has told me repeatedly that he wants to become a Christian.

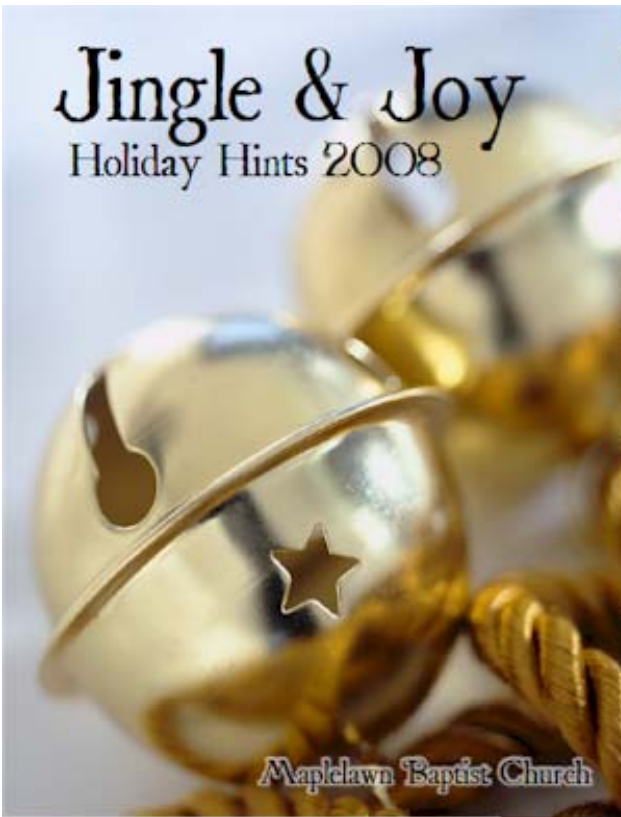
"Mohammed is no help, he's dead, Jesus is alive so he can help" the man says.

The logic seems to be solid enough. As I met with him yesterday, he told me that he would like to become a Christian, but that if he does so the 8 other men he is living with will kick him out of his house. No Christians allowed!

If he becomes a Christian he will be left without work, he will lose any connections in Italy that he has now and he will be on the street.

Remember this is Milan, Italy not Saudi Arabia, not Afghanistan. Islam is a reality."

Keith reports that he now has Swiss citizenship which will allow him and Debbie to remain in Italy. It's a long story regarding how that works but the bottom line is, it was a HUGE answer to prayer for them. ■



An impressive number of gifted and talented ladies and men, hosted our second annual Holiday Hints outreach ministry for ladies.

The auditorium was converted from seating to tables and chairs, there were gifts, door prizes, a special speaker, free Bibles, custom printed books, gourmet foods, etc.

While the trappings were colorful and festive, the theme pointed to the One who gives us a reason for the season – Christ. The evening was an opportunity for ladies of the church to invite their relatives and friends. On this evening they not only covered fun and festivities associated with the Christmas season but they gave pause to remember that we have reason to rejoice.

In times like these, when more and more people divorce themselves from the truth that Christmas is about Christ's birth, it is important to reinforce the true joy of this holiday

season. The joy of the Lord is a heartfelt condition and can be experienced no matter what circumstances we might find ourselves in. It's important to remember and share this joy with others as we prepare for the Christmas celebration.

Joy to the world,  
 the Lord has come.  
 Let earth receive her King.  
 Let every heart,  
 prepare Him room.  
 And heaven & nature sing,  
 and heaven & nature sing,  
 and heaven and heaven  
 and nature sing."  
 -- Isaac Watts

## Creation Museum



The museum exhibits are taken from the Old Testament, but the special effects are pure Hollywood: a state-of-the-art planetarium, animatronics and a massive model of Noah's Ark, all intended to explain the origins of the universe from a biblical viewpoint.

The Creation Museum, which teaches life's beginnings through a literal interpretation of the Bible, is claiming attendance figures that would make it an unexpectedly strong draw less than a year and a half after it debuted. More than a half-million people have toured the Kentucky attraction since its May 2007 opening, museum officials said.



For creationists — Christians who believe the Bible's first chapter of Genesis is the literal telling of the universe's start — the museum is a godsend. Many have returned with family and friends, some from faraway states arguing it's one of the few with a Christian worldview.

The museum has been an overwhelming success, founder Ken Ham said.

The museum in rural northern Kentucky, a 30-minute drive south of Cincinnati, has drawn more than 550,000 visitors in 15 1/2 months, by its own count.

Inside, evolution is replaced with the Old Testament stories of Adam and Eve as the first humans and Noah rescuing the human race from a worldwide flood.



Ham feels the sleek presentation puts it on par with well-funded science museums. The Book of Genesis, that famous first chapter of the Bible, which Ham's group has interpreted to claim that the universe was created in six 24-hour days a mere 6,000 years ago, serves as the blueprint for the museum. Astronomy, geology and evolution, as they are commonly understood in mainstream science, have no place here. Ham reasons that the conclusions of modern science are not to be trusted, as they are biased by the fickle reasoning of man and a modern antagonism toward faith. On the other hand, he says, the Book of Genesis is true "from the first word to the last."

### Hours

Monday-Thursday 10 a.m.–6 p.m.\*

Friday 10 a.m.–9 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m.–6 p.m.

Sunday Noon–6 p.m.\*

Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

### Admission

(Includes Special Effects Theater and Petting Zoo)

Adult (13-59 yrs): \$21.95

Senior (60 yrs & up): \$16.95

Children (5-12 yrs): \$11.95

Children (under 5 yrs): Free

Planetarium with admission: \$7 ■

## Joyce Rudduck

"I have visited all of my churches now and am getting into the "catch up" mode. Near the top of the list is thanking you for my very special time with you in September. I appreciate so much the lovely plaque you had made especially for me. It will hang in my office here at home when I finally get to that point in my settling in. Thank you so much for your show of love.



I want to thank you again for your many years of support and prayers. I hope after January 31, when I officially retire, you won't stop praying for me. I'll still remember you.

In a future prayer letter you'll hear about another ministry the Lord seems to have for me, and I'll still be reminding you occasionally to pray for BBCB in Bangladesh." ■

## Cell Phone or Bible

Ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone?



- What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?
- What if we flipped through it several time a day?
- What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?
- What if we used it to receive messages from the text?
- What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?
- What if we gave it to kids as gifts?
- What if we used it when we traveled?
- What if we used it in case of emergency?

This is something to make you go...hmm...where is my Bible? Oh, and one more thing. Unlike our cell phone, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected because Jesus already paid the bill. Makes you stop and think "where are my priorities"? And no dropped calls! ■

## Your Cross

Whatever your cross  
 Whatever your pain  
 There will always be sunshine.  
 After the rain  
 Perhaps you may stumble  
 Perhaps even fall  
 But God's always there  
 To help you through it all. ■



## Shepherds Celebrates 50 Years

I would have little knowledge of Shepherds Ministries in Union Grove, Wisconsin had it not been for a couple that left Maplelawn many years ago to go work there – their name escapes me but their passion for this ministry does not.

Over the years I've followed the ministry, marveling at the dedication to teach, train and serve a slice of society that doesn't fit in due to developmental disabilities.



It was 1957 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin when parents of a son with cognitive disabilities approached their Sunday School class and asked a probing question. "Would they consider doing something for children with developmental disabilities?" The church was Garfield Baptist (Spring Creek Church).

At first it was baby sitting and day-care, but soon this class of caring couples saw a vision for a broader ministry to other families with children who were cognitively disabled. With much prayer and even greater faith, a boarding school was established for children with developmental disabilities.

In 1964, Shepherds Home and School opened its doors welcoming 36 children. At that time, little was being done in public education to address the needs of this special population. Shepherds Home and School provided an essential service to these children and their families.

As the children grew and as public education began providing special education services, Shepherds transitioned into an adult ministry, focusing on vocational training. Today, Shepherds Enterprises provides vocational training to adults with developmental disabilities. About 150 individuals live on campus and many work at various jobs within Shepherds Enterprises.

In 2008, Shepherds Ministries returned to its educational roots with the establishment of Shepherds College, a 3 year post-secondary education program for young adults with cognitive disabilities.

Jeremiah 23:4 -- And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. ■