



December 17, 2023

Pastor Note:

None of the Christmases I can remember came as a surprise, too quickly maybe, but never out of the blue. However, the characters involved in the original Christmas are tied together by the unexpected. They were surprised by God's timing and activity, and they were confronted with having to adjust to God's revelations and workings.

We like predictability, it enables being prepared, it has a sense of security, it sets boundaries. Paradoxically, we are also very good at ignoring and forgetting about predictions. Here in California, a big earthquake is predicted, not as a matter of if but simply of when, but how many of us have made real preparations, have a ready and updated earthquake emergency kit? We know for sure that death will catch up with us, but how many of us have made preparations, such as getting right with God, having a will, assigning someone with our medical power of attorney?

Zachariah and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, the Wise Men and shepherds, Herod and the Chief Priests, the people of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Simeon and Anna, the entire first Christmas cast of major and minor characters were surprised by the unfolding of the coming of Jesus, by the incarnation of God's Son, by God's timing and working.

Zachariah and Elizabeth were a childless priestly couple. He was serving what was possibly his last temple assignment before retirement, taking care of the altar of incense, the symbol of prayer. Being alone and carrying out his priestly duty in the inner temple he had no expectation of Gabriel the Archangel showing up and of all things bring up a prayer he and his wife had prayed and given up on a long time ago, for God to give them a child. Talk about the unexpected.

Mary and Joseph that obscure engaged couple, living in a village far from any important town, and a genealogy only Ancestry.com™ was aware of. They were preoccupied with wedding plans and young life dreams. That's when God interrupted and turned their plans and lives upside down. You have to hand it to them though, they handled it beautifully, but talk about the unexpected.

The Wise Men knew the stars, the constellations, few things are more predictable. They saw the same Big Dipper and North Star I can see from my back porch. And then, out of nowhere, a celestial birth announcement regarding the divine and eternal King of the Jews. They were used to tracking stars across the night sky, but I don't think they ever expected they would chase after a star across land. Talk about the unexpected.

The shepherds were doing their shepherd thing out in the boonies somewhere near Bethlehem. I imagine that if they expected anything during a night it was fending off a wild animal or thwarting sheep rustlers. Not in their wildest imagination did they conceive of standing in the middle of the light of God's glory, having the Herald Angel deliver a message, and getting a glimpse and earful of the Heavenly Host, God's Angel Army. Talk about the unexpected.

King Herod expected political machinations, betrayals, and plots. However, he wasn't at all prepared for some strange Easterners claiming the stars had announced the birth of the King of the Jews, who was worthy to be worshipped. He didn't know what to think, but it seems he didn't take it all too seriously until it was too late. Talk about the unexpected.

Christmas and the unexpected go together. More specifically, God unfolding His plans and workings in history through the lives of real people like you and me. God is as much at work today as then, He is still unfolding His plan of redemption and purposes of His grace, and He still shows up in people's lives unexpectedly. What matters most in that moment is how we respond, whether we will treat that moment as an interruption and threat, or as a glorious invitation and total surrender to serve God. Or put differently, will God find a welcome mat or "don't disturb" sign when He decides to knock on your door.

May you and I always join Mary in that unexpected God moment, **"I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true."** Luke 1:38 (NLT2).

Have a most spiritual meaningful and significant Christmas. Love you, Pastor Hans



# Lord Hear Our Prayers

## PRAYER REQUEST

Mabel Mayes, Julie Ebel, Carolyn Jeffers,  
Jack (Brother in-law to Judy Mahar, Rachel Aratin,  
Bart Anderson, Rayella, Denise, Foster Children and  
those who foster, And that we do “SHARE”.

If you notice someone has been absent from Small Group or  
Worship Services for awhile, why not call them or stop by to  
let him/her know that they have been missed. A kindness that  
cost you nothing could mean everything to someone who is  
suffering in the silence of self-exile.

### Military And Those Serving

Michael Berger, Austin Downing,  
Noah Martin, John Michael Chavez,  
Chris Kelly, Austin Kroeker, Brian Sula,  
Thomas Hoffman, Joel Thelen,  
Clayton Brown, Jonathan Grinols, Joshua Grabowski,  
Christopher Sula

## CARD & FLOWER MINISTRY

If you know of anyone who is ill or hospitalized, please let us  
know by calling: **Lynnette Barrera** – (559)400-1862 and  
Rachel Aratin - (209)206-5236  
Prayer Request e-mail to: **Judy Mahar** [ldpbepayer@gmail.com](mailto:ldpbepayer@gmail.com)

## **Church Board Members:**

Hans Frei - Pastor . Richard Mayes - Head Deacon ,  
Dan Hankemeier . Sue Kluding .  
Gabi Cox . Chuck Arndt



Mark your calendars  
for Sunday January 7, 2024  
(after church)

if you are interested in helping plan for  
our Pastor’s  
**40th church anniversary celebration.**  
This will be our initial meeting to start  
planning.

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We are in need of another  
“Kids Church Caregiver”  
to serve once-a-month.  
If interested. Talk to Susie ASAP

Sermon Notes:

# December Announcements

## Upcoming Events

- Men's Gathering - Tuesdays @ 6:00 P.M.
- Women's Morning Bible Study— Wed. @ 10:00 AM
- Wednesday Night Bible Study for all ages - 7:00 P.M.
- Food Ministry - 1st Wed. & 3rd Tues. @ 9:00 AM - 11:00 A.M.
- Grief Share - Wed. @ 6:30 P.M.

Fellowship Time Snacks were provided  
By - "Dan's Class"

**Thank you**

*Next week Beverley's Class & Youth are up!!*



## Election Results:

### Deacons

Matt Garcia  
Merle Martin

### Church Board

Barb Deibler  
Sue Hankemeier

"Welcome"  
Rachel Aratin  
into church membership

**Giving**

*December 10, 2023*

**Offering:**  
\$3,499.00

**Food Basket:**  
\$1850.00

**Lottie Moon:**  
\$2,610.00

**World Hunger:**  
\$45.11

**Attendance:**  
84

**Weekly Events**

**Sunday School/Small Groups:**

9:00 AM

**Sunday Morning Worship Service:**

10:30 AM

**Sunday Evening Worship Service:**

6:00 PM

**Tuesday:** Men's Gathering: 6:00 PM

**1st Wednesday & 3rd Tuesday**

**Food Ministry:**

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**Wednesday:**

Women's Bible Study - 10:00 AM  
Bible Study/Small Group - 7:00 PM  
Grief Share - 6:30 PM

**Thursday:** Chicken Foot - 1:00 PM

**Lake Don Pedro Baptist Church**

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**S H A R E**



*1 Timothy 6:18*



**December 18th - December 24th**

DAY 1 - Matt. 20  
(Prov. 18)

DAY 2 - Matt. 21  
(Prov. 19)

DAY 3 - Matt. 22  
(Prov. 20)

DAY 4 - Matt. 23  
(Prov. 21)

DAY 5 - Matt. 24  
(Prov. 22)

DAY 6 - (Prov. 23)  
DAY 7 - (Prov. 24)

**Welcome all of you who are guests with us today. Our desire is for you to relax and be blessed by worship, God's Word, and fellowship. We, the members, have committed ourselves to underwrite the church financially. We do not expect you to contribute to the offering, but you are free to participate. We would like to get to know you and for you to know us better.**