

Monocacy Church of the Brethren

Rocky Ridge Congregation

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The Real Reason for Christmas

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- [Philippians 2:8](#)

Do you plan on taking the time this Christmas to tell your children or friends about the purpose of Christmas? If so, what will you tell them?

Although we usually meditate on the [birth of Jesus](#) at this time of the year, His purpose in coming to earth was *not* to give us the sweet picture of a baby in a Bethlehem manger. That little baby was born to die for you and for me and thus pay for the forgiveness of our sins. He was born to die on the Cross that we might be reconciled to God.

For this reason, I always told our sons when they were young, "Don't just think of a baby in a manger at Christmastime. Christmas is about much more than that. It is about God coming to earth in human flesh so He could die on the Cross to pay for your salvation and destroy all the works of the devil in your lives! That is what Christmas is all about!"

People rarely think of the Cross at Christmastime because it is the time set aside to celebrate Jesus' birth. But in [Philippians 2](#), Paul connects the two thoughts. As Paul writes about God becoming a man, he goes on to express the ultimate reason God chose to take this amazing action. Paul says in verse 8, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

So on Christmas Eve, use this *Sparkling Gem* to discuss the real reason for Christmas, which is contained in the truths found in this verse.



[Philippians 2:8](#) says that Jesus was "...found in fashion as a man...." That word "fashion" is the Greek word *schema*. This is extremely important, for this was precisely the same word that was used in ancient times to depict a *king who exchanged his kingly garments for a brief period of time for the clothing of a beggar*.

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How wonderful that the Holy Spirit would inspire the apostle Paul to use this exact word! When Jesus came to earth, it really was a moment when God Almighty shed His glorious appearance and exchanged it for the clothing of human flesh. Although man is wonderfully made, his earthly frame is temporal dust and cannot be compared to the eternal and glorious appearance of God. However, for the sake of our redemption, God laid aside all of His radiant glory, took upon Himself human flesh, and was manifested in the very likeness of a human being.

This is the true story of a King who traded His kingly garments and took upon Himself the clothing of a servant. But the story doesn't stop there. Jesus - our King who exchanged His royal robes for the clothing of flesh - loved us so much that He "...humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"!

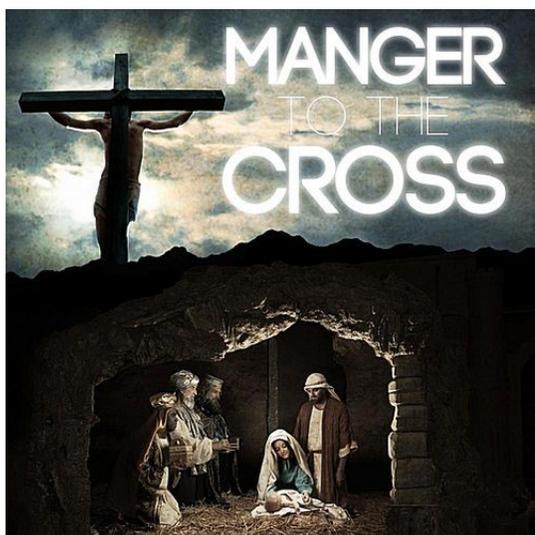
The word "humbled" is the Greek word *tapeinoo*, and it means *to be humble, to be lowly, and to be willing to stoop to any measure that is needed*. This describes the attitude God had when He took upon Himself human flesh. Think of how much humility would be required for God to shed His glory and lower Himself to become like a member of His creation. Consider the greatness of God's love that drove Him to divest Himself of all His splendor and become like a man. This is amazing to me, particularly when I think of how often the flesh recoils at the thought of being humble or preferring someone else above itself. Yet Jesus humbled Himself "... and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The word "obedient" tells me that this was *not* a pleasurable experience that Jesus looked forward to in anticipation. To humble Himself to this extent required Jesus' deliberate obedience.

As preexistent God, Jesus came to earth for this purpose. But as man dressed in flesh, He despised the thought of the Cross ([Hebrews 12:2](#)) and could only endure its shame because He knew of the results that would follow. For Jesus to be obedient as a man, He had to choose to obey the eternal plan of God.

The word "obedient" that is used to describe Jesus is the Greek word *hupakouo*, from the word *hupo*, which means *under*, and the word *akouo*, which means *I hear*. When these two words are compounded together, they picture someone who is *hupo - under someone else's authority*, and *akouo - listening to what that superior is speaking to him*. After listening and taking these instructions to heart, this person then carries out the orders of his superior.

Thus, the word *hupakouo* tells us that obedient people are 1) *under authority*, 2) *listening to what their superior is saying*, and 3) *carrying out the orders that have been given to them*. This is what the word "obedient" means in this verse, and this is what obedience means for you and me.



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You see, even Jesus had to come to this place of obedience. Although He knew that He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, that didn't mean His flesh was excited about dying as the Lamb of God on the Cross. According to this verse in [Philippians 2:8](#), Jesus had to humble Himself and become "obedient" in order to follow God's plan. He wasn't looking forward to the experience of death on a Cross; He made a choice to humble Himself and to go to any measure in order to accomplish the Father's plan.

Part of the Father's plan was for Jesus to humble Himself "...unto death, even the death of the cross." The word "unto" is from the Greek word *mechri*, which is a Greek word that really means *to such an extent*. The Greek word *mechri* is sufficient in itself to dramatize the point, but the verse goes on to say that Jesus humbled Himself unto death, "...even the death of the cross." The word "even" is the Greek word *de*, which emphatically means *EVEN!* The Greek carries this idea: *"Can you imagine it! Jesus humbled Himself to such a lowly position and became so obedient that He even stooped low enough to die the miserable death of a Cross!"*

I heartily recommend that you take the time today to read the April 24 *Sparkling Gem* order to refresh your memory on the full process of crucifixion. It was genuinely the worst death a person could ever endure. For Jesus to humble Himself to the point of death, *EVEN* the death of the Cross, demonstrates how much He was willing to humble Himself to redeem you and me.

Just think of it - Almighty God, clothed in radiant glory from eternity past, came to this earth formed as a human being in the womb of a human mother for one purpose: so that He could one day die a miserable death on a Cross to purchase our salvation! All of this required humility on a level far beyond anything we could ever comprehend or anything that has ever been requested of any of us. Yet this was the reason Jesus came; therefore, He chose to be obedient to the very end, humbling Himself to the point of dying a humiliating death on a Cross and thereby purchasing our eternal salvation.

So as you celebrate Christmas, be sure to remember the real purpose of Christmas. It isn't just a time to reflect on the baby boy who was born in Bethlehem so long ago. That baby was God manifest in the flesh. He was born to die for you and for me. Jesus was so willing to do whatever was required in order to redeem us from Satan and sin that He humbled Himself even unto death on a Cross! *That is what Christmas is all about!*

This devotional reading is from CROSSWALK.com



Pastor's Notes

Did you Know? December got its name from the Latin work "decem" (meaning ten) because it was originally the tenth month of the year in the calendar of Romulus c. 750 BC which began in March. The Anglo-Saxons referred to December-January as "Geolamonab" (in modern English—"Yule month").

7 Quotes for the Month of December

1. "December, wintery breath is already clouding the pond, frosting the pane, obscuring summer's memory.." - John Geddes—"Familiar Rain"
2. "Chill December brings the sleet, blazing fire, and Christmas treat." - Sara Coleridge
3. "For many, December is also a month of a bit more reflection than usual. People are reminded of loved ones who are no longer around, and how important family truly is." - Steve Coats
4. "You have again made your way in, cold and beautiful. You are December, and I love you." - Thomas R. Parsons
5. "Of all the months of the year, there is not a month one half so welcome to the young, or so full of happy associations, as the last month of the year." - Charles Dickens
6. "True love is a reflection of the Savior's love. In December of each year we call it the Christmas spirit. You can hear it, you can see it, you can feel it." - Thomas S. Monson
7. "Take Christ out of Christmas, and December becomes the bleakest and most colorless month of the year." - A.F. Wells

As the saying goes, "Keep Christ in Christmas!"

May you and yours have the merriest of holidays as we remember the "Reason for the Season"

Join us for our Candlelight Service on Sunday, December 19th @ 7:00 pm

Season Greetings & have a blessed Christmas Day!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Wisers!

Ladies Aid—Flowers will be put in the church windows as usual you can make a donation in memory of your loved ones

DON'T forget to save your Stamps for the Brethren Cross Keys Village Stamp Club

We still have two spots open for the cleaning of the church—

The week of December 27th and the week of January 10th This will cover cleaning through the end of the year and the month of January

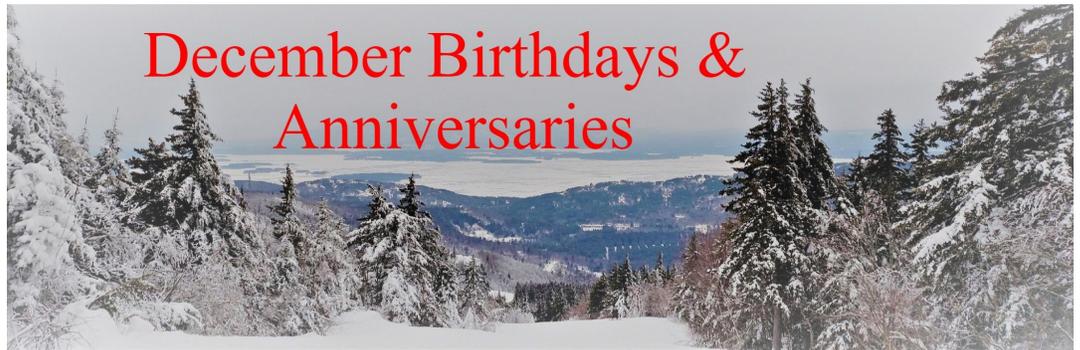
Souper Bowl is coming up in January—Let's see how many cans of soup we can collect this year.



DECEMBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 HEBREWS 13:16	2 PSALM 5:11	3 PSALM 130:5	4 LUKE 23:34
5 DEUT. 8:5-6	6 LUKE 21:28	7 PROVERBS 20:22	8 II THESS. 2:13	9 LUKE 11:13	10 II TIMOTHY 2:22	11 II COR. 7:10
12 PSALM 40:11	13 I SAMUEL 7:12	14 ACTS 26:22-23	15 GENESIS 8:22	16 PSALM 96:2	17 PROVERBS 3:7-8	18 PSALM 99:9
19 PSALM 84:4	20 PROVERBS 20:19	21 I COR. 6:19-20	22 LUKE 1:32	23 LUKE 1:45	24 MATTHEW 2:1-2	25 MATTHEW 2:11
26 PSALM 40:8	27 ROMANS 6:22-23	28 I CHRON. 16:34	29 I JOHN 1:9	30 ZECHARIAH 2:5	31 REVELATION 1:8	

Dawn Free 1st
 Donna Ritchie 2nd
 Liam Ecker 2nd
 Michael Kilcoyne 4th
 Kathy Peters 6th
 Conner Orndorff 7th
 Terrene Price 8th
 Lynette Free 8th
 Colton Eyler 10th
 Artica Eyler 10th
 Landen Andrew 11th
 Frank Free 13th
 Wilma Stover 19th
 Tatum Belanger 20th
 Jean Knipple 23rd
 Jesus 25th
 Piper Eyler 26th
 Jacob Boone 27th
 Summer Belanger 27th
 Brayden Andrew 27th



Tracy and Pat Wiser 1st
 Allen and Joyce Seiss 4th

Merry Christmas to everyone! Please keep our service men and women in your thoughts and prayers whether they are deployed or not. But for those deployed, keep the entire family in your thoughts and prayers.

We wish you all safe and happy holidays!

The Reeds

Thank you for your Service!



Elijah Moser
Air Force



Caleb Peters
Marine



Kyle Petrosky
Navy



Matthew Stephens
Marine



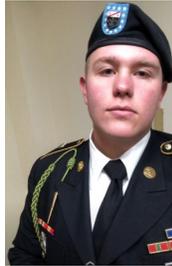
James Updegraff III
Marine



Joseph Speck
Navy



Isaiah Fannin
Marine



Jacob Fannin
Army



Bryce Estell
Marine



Ethan Pennington
Navy



If you know anyone in the service and would like to add them to our Military page, please send me their name and a service picture. It is nice to have the names associated with a face.

We need to keep praying for our Nation and those who decided ON THEIR OWN to protect us!

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Elijah Moser
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Military/National Guard

Tyler Ramey, Marines

Alex Nee

Travis Smith

Michael Hobbs

Robert Wolfe, Air Force

Sgt. Kara Stambaugh

Sgt. Alexander Stambaugh

Ariel Vanderhout

Mike Vanderhout

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to share a poem that I ran across the other week. As I read it my heart filled with a mixture of sadness and fear. Over the past couple of years this poem has become a reality for a few of the smaller churches in the surrounding communities. As I pondered I couldn't help but think what if this happened to my church....our church....the little stone church that sits on the hill in Rocky Ridge.

My dear church family as we are drawing to a close another year let us work together in love and harmony to insure our little church on the hill continues to have its doors open and that the "light" within shines bright.

For you see all though we consider this church to be our church it is first and foremost God's house! Let us never forget that we are His children and we should be doing whatever we can to assure His house is open for business....His business....saving souls....helping those less fortunate....as well as giving of ourselves to tasks that are needed within.

May God continue to bless His church. May He send joy and good health to each of you in the coming year!

Love and blessings,

Deb

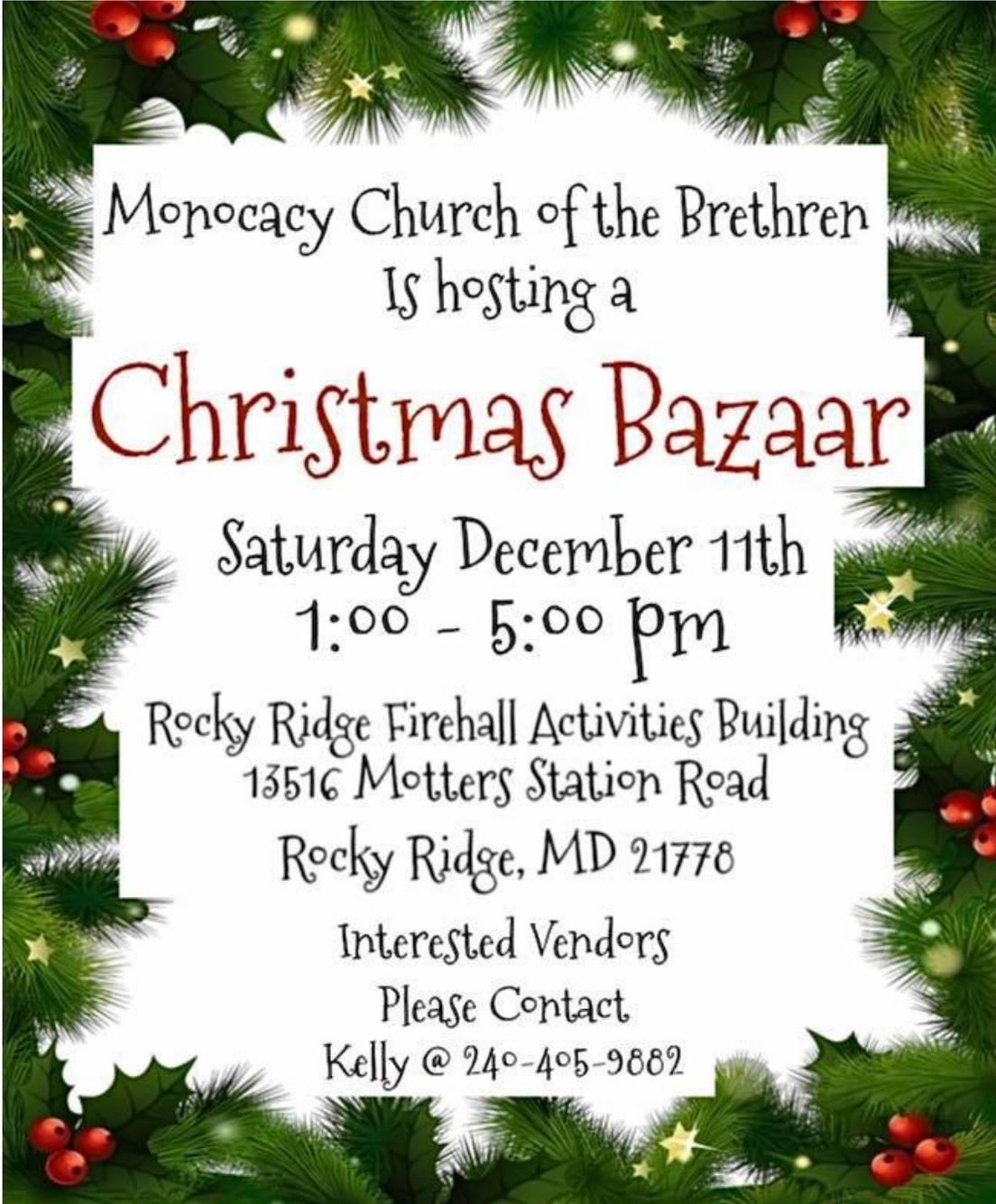
[The Church Closing](#)

I hate to see a church close down
Where folks for years were blest.
Little babes were holy made
And souls were laid to rest.

There brides were wed and kids were taught
To know the right from wrong.
Suppers drew a goodly crew,
And preachers preached too long.

The church bell rang. The choir sang
As best a few could do.
Teachers taught what truth was sought,
And that was all they knew.

The church is closed. An era passed.
What once was good is gone.
Those who care a sorrow share,
But memories live on.



Monocacy Church of the Brethren
Is hosting a

Christmas Bazaar

Saturday December 11th
1:00 - 5:00 pm

Rocky Ridge Firehall Activities Building
13516 Motters Station Road
Rocky Ridge, MD 21778

Interested Vendors
Please Contact
Kelly @ 240-405-9882

Food will be available for purchase by Fire hall Auxiliary. Church will have a bake sale if anyone would like to donate! Hope to see you there!

Check us out on the WEB you can hear the sermons here also

<http://www.monocacychurchofthebrethren.org/>

Check us out on Facebook Monocacy Church of the Brethren

If you have anything to put in the newsletter, please contact Lisa Reed 240-315-5331 or email mcobnewsletter@gmail.com