



Christmas Greetings

December 25, 2009

We wish you and yours
a Blessed Christmas
and a
New Year of Peace and Joy!



The Lay & Clergy Leaders in Southeast District

Christmas Message

from Superintendent Stryker

Carols are playing, families visiting, shoppers are shopping and many are preparing to celebrate another Christmas by worshipping Christ our Lord and spending time with family.

On the first Christmas, the parents of Jesus found themselves in a predicament. They were in a strange city, Bethlehem, and away from home, Nazareth. The political decision to register all persons under Roman control left them victims at a time when they could least afford to be away from their home.

The result was that Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable because “there was no place for them in the inn.”

On that first Christmas, the shepherds heard from an angel, followed by multitude of the heavenly host telling them of this event.

The shepherds left their work and ran to see this magnificent act that the angel spoke about. The people

were amazed at the story of the shepherds and Mary treasured all these things in her heart.

We’ve come a long way since that first Christmas but some things are similar even in the 21st century. There are many people without their homes; some are spending time with family while others have to go to homeless shelters. Many children are without a stable roof over their heads and some even without their parents.

God visiting us identifies with the world we are called to reach. Maybe the modern church can learn from the ancient shepherds who at the spur of the moment and with passion spread the good news of what they had seen and heard.



The Magi, wise men, upon seeing the star had more time to plan and respond to this magnificent Godly event in human history. By the time they reached the child and his mother, it is safe to say that the first Christmas was over. Undaunted, they found the child Jesus and his mother and “they knelt down and paid him homage. Then opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.” (Matt. 2:11) The wise men gave as part of their homage and the church seeks to do the same all year round.

The church remembers the determination and generosity of the wise men when the church celebrates Epiphany on January sixth each year. Epiphany is the manifestation of Christ to the Gentile world.

May the spontaneous spirit of the shepherds be with you at Christmas and the adventurous, generous spirit of the wise men be with you at Epiphany and throughout the year. Merry Christmas!!

Richard Lane Stryker