

of miracle workers of our scriptures as Moses or Elijah or Jesus; we could also include Mary and Joseph and others involved in the Christmas narrative as being “miracle workers.” The true miracle of Christmas is that seemingly ordinary human beings accepted and facilitate the birth and survival of Jesus the Christ. Would you count Mary and Joseph as “workers of miracles?” What others would you include as miracle workers? Mediate on these ideas and questions and write your thoughts here.

### **Thursday, December 1**

Read once again Luke 1:26-33. The birth of Christ was made possible through the partnership between God and human beings called by God toward that mission. All followers of Christ are called toward the work of God’s Kingdom on earth. We are called to seek justice, bring healing and promote peace in this world. St. Augustine is credited with the words, “Without God, we cannot. Without us, God will not.”

We are modern day miracle workers! Pastor Jack challenges us to give toward the work of God here at Central Church. That challenge is to give as much as you’ve spent on yourselves for Christmas. If that is not possible, create your own challenge perhaps make a tither of all you spend on Christmas (give 10% of what you spend toward our Christmas Offering). Meditate on these ideas and accept the call to be a modern miracle worker! Write your thoughts here.

### **Friday, December 2**

The challenge mentioned during the message and in yesterday’s devotion is specific in supporting our mission and ministry at Central Church. What other ideas do you have for a modern miracle mission? What seed could you plan and share that could lead to future miracles? Be blessed to be a miracle-bearing blessing to others! Write your ideas here.

## **Message Notes – November 27, 2022**

### ***Christmas Is Not Your Birthday - The True Miracle of Christmas\****

- I. What does \_\_\_\_\_ look like? How we view our \_\_\_\_\_ shapes our identities as Christ followers.
  - A. Pastor Mike Slaughter is the Pastor Emeritus of Ginghamburg U.M.C in Tipp City, \_\_\_\_\_.
    1. Pastor Slaughter offered a different view of Jesus – \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.
    2. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are not going to lift us onto their knees asking what we want for Christmas.
    3. I’d suggest that it’s almost the exact \_\_\_\_\_: God through Jesus challenges us to work a \_\_\_\_\_ in response to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christmas.
  - B. If our picture of God is \_\_\_\_\_, our life perspective will then be \_\_\_\_\_.
- II. Christmas is the celebration of a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. A \_\_\_\_\_ is defined as “a visible interruption of the laws of nature, understood only by divine intervention and often accompanied by a miracle \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - B. God worked a miracle 2000 years ago as Jesus was conceived by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit and a young maiden bore the child of God.
    1. The miracle of Christmas is far more than the \_\_\_\_\_ birth and those who engage in that debate are missing the point.
    2. The Miracle of Christmas 20 centuries ago involved a whole lot of miracle workers, from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to the unnamed

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\*Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 1:26-33

Innkeeper to anyone who encountered the Holy Family as they fled to \_\_\_\_\_.

- III. Not lest you think I'm a real \_\_\_\_\_ about Christmas; for those who don't know me, I am not!
- A. I love all the traditional observances that mark this time of year; it just never occurred to me to \_\_\_\_\_ those traditions to the miracle of Christmas that happened 20 centuries ago.
- B. Pastor Slaughter writes, "Christmas is about a miracle. Miracles don't just happen; they are born through the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
1. All of us are \_\_\_\_\_ by God to be and do something in our world.
  2. Pastor Slaughter writes, "Every miracle of God is conceived in the \_\_\_\_\_ of a \_\_\_\_\_, grows in conviction and clarity, and then is delivered through a committed \_\_\_\_\_."
- C. As we enter this season of Advent, I want to challenge you to consider what it would mean to \_\_\_\_\_ a miracle through your \_\_\_\_\_ today.
1. What would it mean to you to live more \_\_\_\_\_ so that others can \_\_\_\_\_ live?
  2. Are you ready for God to birth a Christmas miracle through \_\_\_\_\_?

## *Daily Devotional Guide*

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

### **Monday, November 28**

Read John 14:1-10. This scripture is part of what are sometimes referred to as the farewell discourses; the final teachings of Jesus during The Last Supper. It was said during the message, "How we view God and Christ has everything to do with the shaping of our faith and values." So how do you see God? What does God

look like to you? Is your view of God gender specific? Do you think of God as pure light? Is your concept of God more like Santa Claus or Jesus? Read John 14:1-10 once again, meditate on these questions and write your reflections here.

### **Tuesday, November 29**

Read Isaiah 9:2-7. This scripture represents the hopes of the Israelite people; they want a military and political leader to rise up, conquer their enemies and preside over them in a peaceful nation. It's a tall order! They want a miracle. What do you think of when you hear the word "miracle?" What images come to your mind? Do you believe miracles still happen today? Without looking at your message notes, how would you define a miracle in your own words? Contemplate these questions and write your responses here as you pray for God to clarify and expand your definition of miracles.

### **Wednesday, November 30**

Read Luke 1:26-33. What do you think was going through Mary's mind as she was greeted by the angel Gabriel and told that she was to become pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit? What do you believe Mary was thinking as that pregnancy progressed and she was beginning to tire of the weight gain, the back aches, stretch marks and any other physical challenges she may have experienced?

Pastor Mike Slaughter, author of *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday*, discovered a definition for miracles online: A miracle is "a visible interruption of the laws of nature, understood only by divine intervention and." The last part of that definition is interesting: "often accompanied by a miracle worker." While we may think