

January 2022

2022

# Prospective of the Pastor

St. John's United Methodist Church  
The Messenger

## ON LAW AND ORDER

When Jacob and his eleven sons and their families arrived in Egypt during the 7-year famine, the entire tribe numbered just over 70 persons. 450 years later when Moses led them out of Egyptian slavery to Mt. Sinai to receive the Law of God, they numbered well over 3 million persons.

Many Bible readers ponder why Moses went so far out of the way to go to the Promised Land of Canaan. The answer can be seen in what happened as they camped by the mountain of God.

After spending a month with God, Moses descended carrying the Ten Commandments and the blueprints of the Tabernacle. The Commandments were the foundation God was going to use to form the Israelites into a nation. As a nation, they needed a form of law to sustain their relationships with one another.

The ninth commandment of the Ten Commandments reads in the New International Version, "*You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*" In the modern parental version that can be reduced to "*Don't you dare lie to me.*" Or, "*Always tell the truth!*"

In Exodus 23:1 Moses repeats this commandment in a slightly varied form, "*Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a false witness.*" In this statement, Moses declares that the inventor and the receiver of false and slanderous information are both acting criminally. Not only are we not to speak

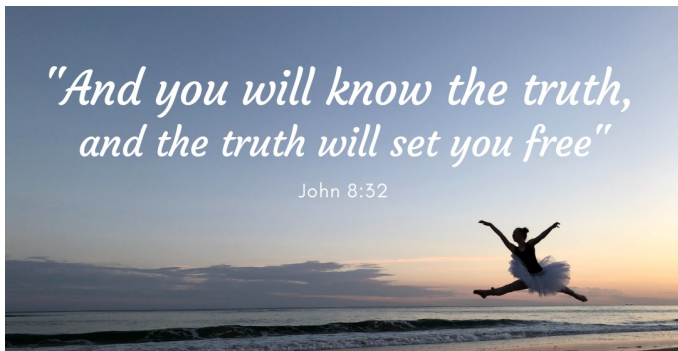
falsely, but we are also obligated not to promote known falsehoods.



In the past two months, Americans witnessed two trials in which many rushed to judgment with their indictments long before the actual trials took place. When the jury of the first trial finished its deliberations, they came back with a unanimous decision that exonerated a 19 year-old man in Wisconsin of any of the charges against him.

More recently, a Chicago jury unanimously indicted a well-known actor for deliberately making up a story of being racially attacked. After they listened to the prosecuting and defending attorneys and the many witnesses, they reached a quick conclusion that even on the witness stand the defendant lied under oath.

In both cases, high ranking political personalities and media commentators were proven to be completely wrong in their initial indictment and accusations. We patiently await any of these false accusers to be forthcoming with any apology for the slander of character and the propagation of divisive commentary against innocent persons.



Nothing destroys trust faster than lying. Once we discover that our closest friend has been lying to us, it is only a matter of minutes before that relationship is dissolved. How quickly divorce follows lying lips in a marriage. In many circles, lying has become a way of life.

But lying doesn't only destroy intimate relationships, it erodes the very foundation of a society. I cannot get away from the profound words of Jesus in John 8:31-32, *"If you hold to MY teaching you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."* In a free democratic republic, truth is critical to keep the citizens from becoming cynical and distrusting those who lead them.

There are many concerned persons who are warning us that our entire system of government is hanging in the balance. Citizens are becoming more cynical because they see our government not working as it ought and they feel they are being lied to by their leaders.



Scientists want us to believe that they are the source of truth. But Jesus said the ultimate source of truth is not to be found in the microscope, but in learning and heeding the moral principles found in God's law.

The truth is a by-product of spiritual obedience. It can be enhanced by laboratories and scientific studies, so long as the scientists remain open to observation and slow in coming to their conclusions.

Christians have no problem with science so long as it relates to truth and reality. Scientists who recognize the orderliness in our universe will find no conflict between their findings and God's truth. We need both, but they both need to be free from bias and prejudice.

Pastor Ivan L. Schwenn  
December 2022

### AFTER THOUGHTS OF CHRISTMAS

*"When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." <sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt,..."*

[Matthew 2:13-14 (NIV)].

Many believers have a tendency to focus on the life and spirit of Mary when contemplating the Christmas story. We see in her life a willing Spirit that enables her to accept and fulfill God's unexplainable purpose in her life.

What many of us miss that is exact same quality in the life and character of her fiancée, Joseph. In studying the Christmas narrative as found in Matthew's gospel, we discover they were a perfect team.

He shared the same problem of accepting the unexplainable purpose God was demanding of Him. As with Mary, the announcement of becoming pregnant by the Holy Spirit produced a scandalous



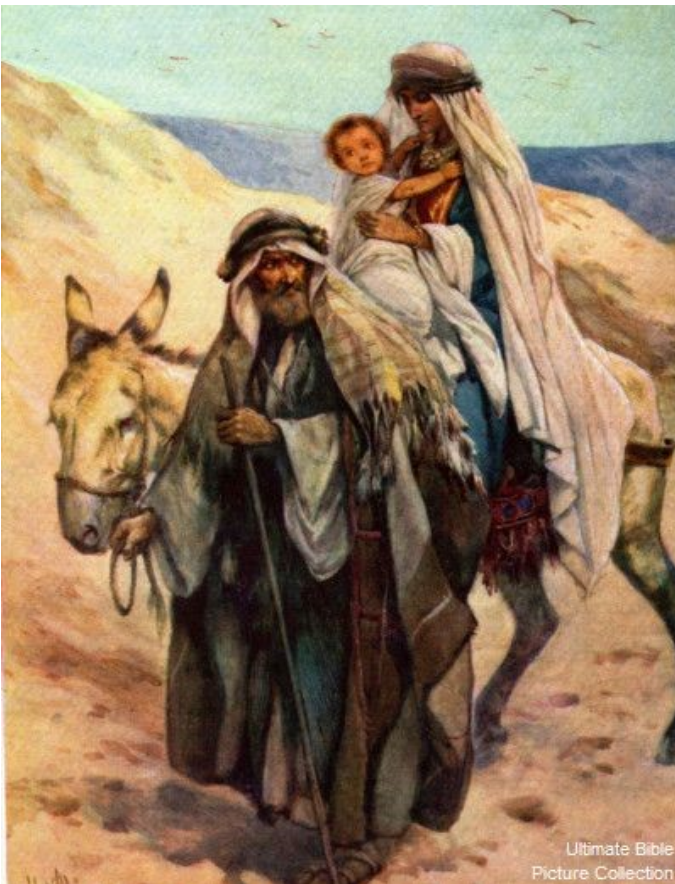
situation for Joseph. No matter the level of love he possessed for Mary, he had a scandal on his hands that defied explanation to his Family, friends, and society.

Matthew 1:19 tells us how Joseph proposed to erase the scandal from his life. He would secretly divorce Mary to spare her disgrace as well. She would be free to marry whoever was the father of her child.

However, God was not prepared to release Joseph from his marriage commitment. God sends His angel, likely the same one who talked to Mary, to Joseph in a dream and confirms all that Mary has

explained to him about her condition. Upon receiving this word, Matthew records Joseph's reaction in verse 24, "*When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.*" Joseph erased the scandal from both Mary's and his life by simple obedience to God's word.

In our text, we discover that this had now become a pattern for Joseph. After the departure of the Magi, God warned Joseph in a dream of the need to get Mary and Jesus out of Judah so Herod could not destroy the child.



Joseph went there  
to be registered with  
Mary, who had been  
promised to him in  
marriage and was  
pregnant

Luke 2:5

Knowing-Jesus.com

Joseph does not hesitate. He does not wait until morning. He gets up in the middle of the night and takes Mary and the child and begins the journey to Egypt where they live until Herod dies and it is safe to return to their home in Nazareth.

Joseph demonstrates what we are to understand by "*the fear of the Lord*". It is a reverence that demands obedience and immediate response. Someone has well said, "*Delayed obedience is disobedience.*" Joseph was not of that caliber.

There were hardships in going to Egypt to be sure. But Joseph's faith in God was sufficiently strong to accept responsibility for those under his care and the hardship that went along with it. I suspect that when we get to heaven, we will discover that Joseph, along with Mary, are the apples of God's eye.

## THE STORY BEHIND SILENT NIGHT

In 1816 Father Joseph Franz Mohr went for a winter stroll. At one point he found himself overlooking a quiet, winter-laden village. As he looked down upon that village, he sensed a village in peace. That vision inspired him to write a poem.

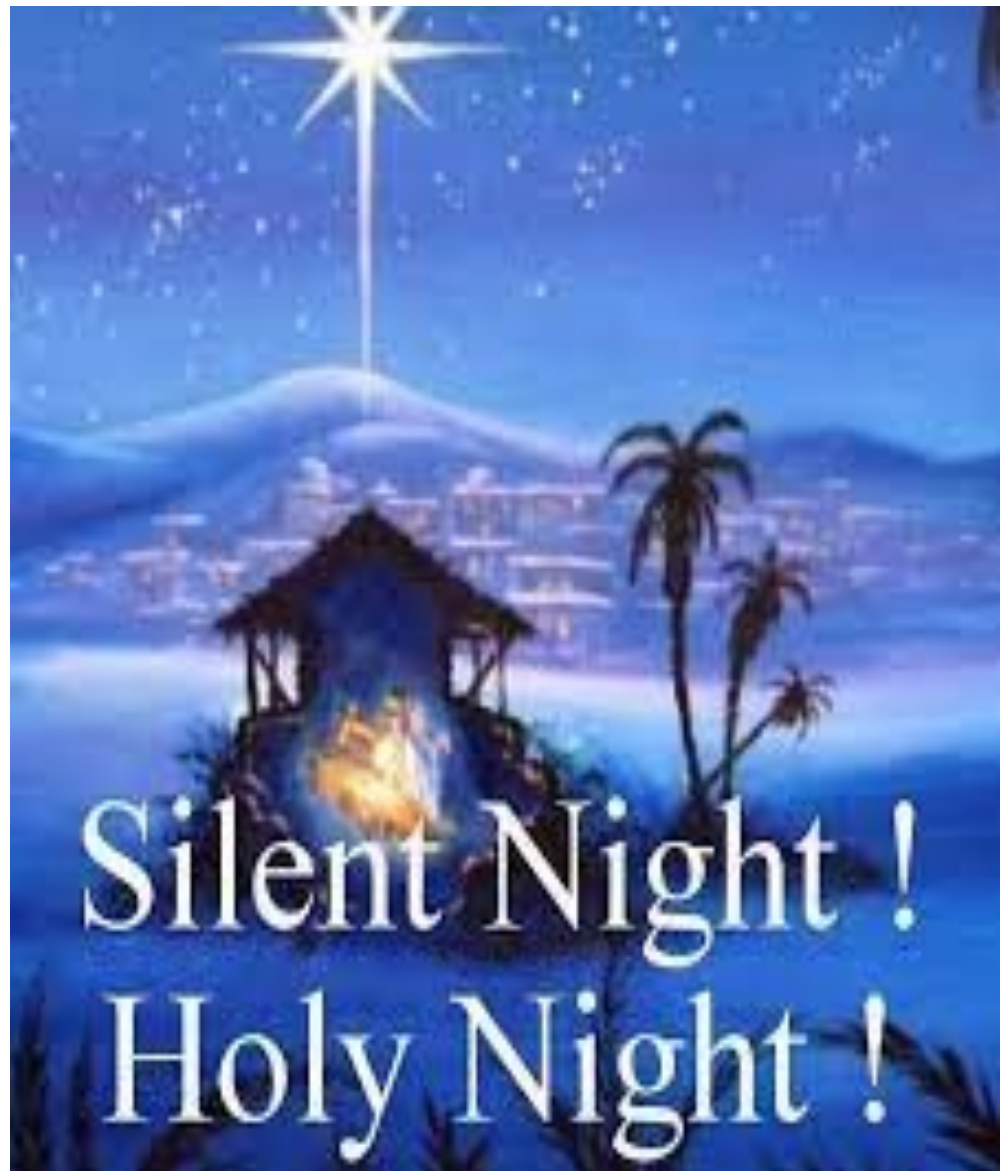
Two years later on Christmas Eve, Father Mohr walked 3 kilometers to visit his friend Franz Xavier Gruber. Mohr carried with him the poem he had written two years earlier.

The organ in Mohr's parish chapel needed repairs. Desperate to have a new carol to sing for the midnight Christmas Eve service that evening Fr. Mohr went to Franz Gruber and asked him to compose a musical score to be accompanied by a guitar. Gruber made the composition and then sang with Fr. Mohr in the service that same night.

Later when an organ repair man completed the necessary repairs, Franz Gruber played the composition to Silent Night to satisfy himself that the organ was ready for worship once again. The organ repairman took a copy of the carol to his home and gave it to some traveling singers. They sang it for the King of Prussia and in other venues throughout Europe.

Over the years some changes have been made to the music as well as the verses of the beloved Christmas carol. But its acceptance and appreciation is evident in the fact that it has been translated into more than 300 languages of the world.

During World War I, a temporary truce in the war was called on Christmas Eve. On that night in 1914, French, German, and English soldiers laid down their arms and crossed over into each other's trenches to play games, exchange gifts and to sing together. Silent Night was known to all the soldiers, so they sang it simultaneously in three different languages.





**CHUCKLES  
FOR THE NEW YEAR!**

**Q: What does the gingerbread man put on his bed?**

A: Cookie sheets!

**Q: Where does a snowman keep his money?**

A: In a snow bank!

**Q: What do you get when you combine a Christmas tree with an iPad?**

A: A pineapple!

**Q: What do snowmen eat for breakfast?**

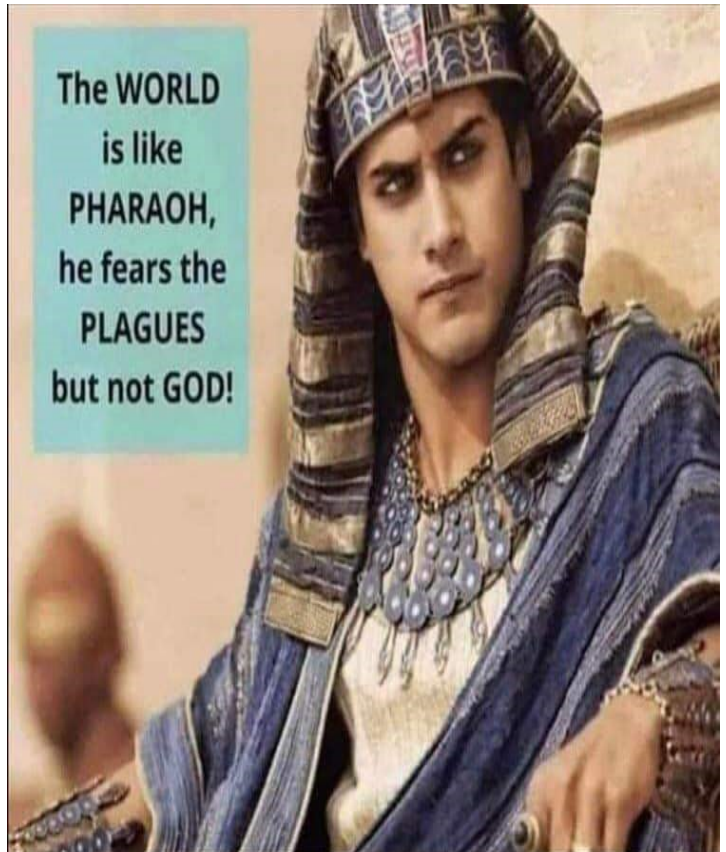
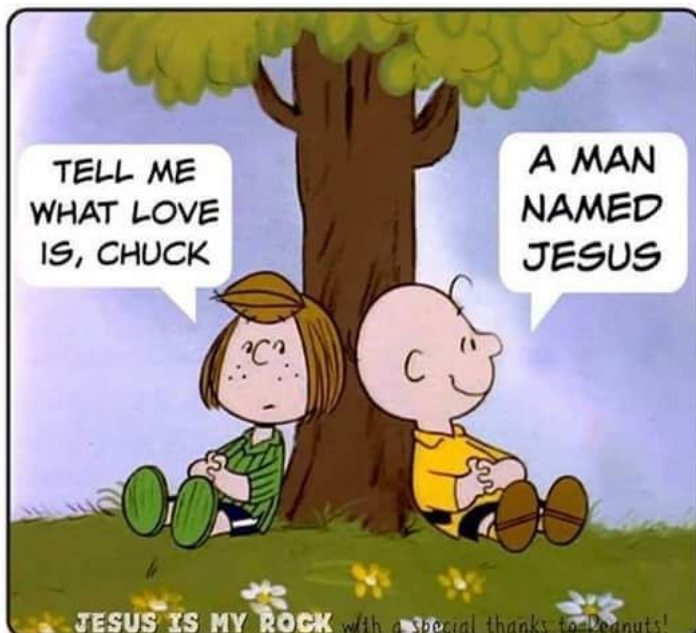
A; Frosted Flakes!

**Q: What kind of motorcycle does Santa like to ride?**

A: A Holly Davidson!

**Q: What do you get when Santa becomes a detective?**

A: Santa CLUES!



**Q: What do you call a reindeer with bad manners?**

A: RUDE-olph!

**Q: Why did the turkey join the band?**

A: Because he had the drum sticks!

**Q: What falls at the North Pole and never gets hurt?**

A: Snow!

**Q: What do you call a reindeer who wears earmuffs?**

A: Anything you want! He can't hear you!

**Q: What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?**

A: Frostbite!

**Joseph - Son of Jacob**

M	P	R	A	H	P	I	T	O	P	S	Q	R	R	H	V	C	G
R	V	U	Z	Q	G	R	N	J	E	M	I	A	R	H	P	E	R
P	A	O	C	O	O	A	U	V	Z	H	O	A	R	A	H	P	A
Y	G	C	S	R	P	U	E	D	N	L	E	A	R	S	I	S	I
D	T	H	H	H	E	N	R	A	H	C	A	S	S	I	R	V	N
F	E	I	T	E	Y	V	D	G	E	K	G	R	V	O	E	Z	M
N	A	A	R	E	L	H	L	X	A	L	E	S	L	L	T	J	E
R	L	M	A	O	N	W	R	I	C	H	I	O	D	H	S	K	M
I	E	R	I	B	H	R	R	E	S	U	C	N	R	S	A	P	O
J	S	U	H	N	E	T	E	A	K	Y	P	N	E	B	M	R	S
W	A	I	B	B	I	N	U	T	N	A	D	B	T	S	Q	I	D
A	F	C	G	E	F	E	J	A	S	R	B	M	E	M	S	S	N
R	F	A	O	N	N	Z	M	A	E	I	A	S	R	A	I	O	A
D	L	N	T	B	E	F	E	H	M	N	C	I	P	E	R	N	H
E	O	A	D	H	O	T	P	B	A	I	C	M	R	R	J	E	R
N	C	A	Q	T	E	E	R	S	U	Y	N	E	E	D	U	G	R
U	K	N	A	S	H	R	S	I	T	L	S	O	T	Y	D	Y	V
R	S	O	S	S	Z	E	V	Q	N	P	U	N	N	A	A	P	I
C	C	S	R	E	H	T	O	R	B	G	R	N	I	F	H	T	C

**THIS ONE IS A BIT OF A CHALLENGE! GOOD LUCK!!!! (Based on Genesis 30-50)**

**Words can forward, backward, vertical or diagonal within the puzzle.**

- |             |          |             |             |         |
|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| ASHER       | NILE     | GAD         | BAKER       | FLOCKS  |
| GOSHEN      | POTIPHAR | BENJAMIN    | GRAIN       | PRISON  |
| BROTHERS    | HANDSOME | RACHEL      | CANAAN      | REUBEN  |
| CISTERN     | ISRAEL   | SEVEN YEARS | CUPBEARER   | DREAMS  |
| SHEPHERD    | DAN      | JACOB       | SIGNET RING | EPHRAIM |
| JUDAH       | EGYPT    | LEVI        | SIMEON      | PHARAOH |
| WARDEN      | FAMINE   | MASTER      | FATHER      |         |
| INTERPRETER |          |             |             |         |

## January 2022 Birthdays



### January Birthdays

January 1st Rhonda Redmon's Birthday  
January 4th John Gregory's Birthday  
January 4th Dave West's Birthday  
January 14th Taylor Espinoza's Birthday  
January 24th Jackie Reigert's Birthday

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**A Sunday Worship Service is held at 9:30 a.m.  
on Sunday mornings in the church sanctuary**

Please stay safe & continue to keep each other in your thoughts and prayers.

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