



Weekly Booster

CHURCH STAFF**Pastor**

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Bells & Choir Directors

Dan & Linnea Shook

Multimedia & Website

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Sunday Media Booth

Alan Hutchison

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Sunday Facebook Host

Craig Harris,

Facebook Contributors

Pastor David B. Clark,

Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Pastor David

Our Vision: *Growing* as
disciples of Jesus while
connecting with others and
serving our community.

**The “Why” Behind the Virgin Birth**

Someone asked television host Larry King, the most celebrated interviewer of his time, who he would want to have on his show if he could choose anyone from history. His reply was quick: “Jesus Christ.... I would like to ask him if he was indeed virgin-born. The answer to that question would define history for me.”

King was right. If Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin, it would indeed define history not just for Larry, but for us all.

Why Does It Matter?

I see at least two reasons the virgin birth is important theologically. First, it makes it possible for Jesus to be both fully God and fully man, which is a foundational biblical claim about him. Theologians say that the virgin birth means there was a combination of both human and divine influence in the birth of Jesus. His full humanity is evident from the fact of his birth from a human mother, and his full deity is evident from the fact of his conception in Mary’s womb by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Second, the virgin birth makes it possible for Jesus to be born without original sin. All other human beings have inherited a corrupt moral nature, thanks to our first father, Adam.

Continued on page 2

"It is never too late to be what you might have been."
George Eliot

"Don't let someone else's opinion of you become your reality." Les Brown

Reminders

December 28th

Sunday Service 9:00 a.m.
PK-6 S.S. during the message
Jr/Sr High S.S. – 10:30 a.m.
No Sunday School

December 30th

Mat Making (Loom Room) 1:00 p.m.

December 31st

Bible Study – 11:00 a.m.
Praise Team - 4:00 p.m.
Bell Choir – 4:30 p.m.
Chancel Choir – 5:30 p.m.
No Wednesday activities

January 1st

T.O.P.S.
Office closed & Dec. 26th

Meals-On-Wheels Deliveries
Sign up at the Welcome Counter

** Fellowship Volunteers and treats
needed, sign up in Fellowship Hall



Virgin Birth- continued from page 1.

But because Jesus didn't have a human father, his line of descent from Adam was partially interrupted. Also, his conception by the Holy Spirit prevented the transmission of sin from Mary as well.

How do we know? Follow Luke 1:35 closely: "The angel answered [Mary], 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So [in other words, as a direct consequence of this action by the Holy Spirit] the holy one [that is, morally pure or without sin] will be called the Son of God.'" As theologians point out, Luke specifically connects the conception by the Holy Spirit with the holiness, or moral purity, of Jesus.

"If [Jesus] were born of two human parents, it is very difficult to conceive how he could have been exempted from the guilt of Adam's sin and become a new head to the human race," said theologian John Frame. "And it would seem only an arbitrary act of God that Jesus could be born without a sinful nature. Yet Jesus' sinlessness as the new head of the human race and as the atoning lamb of God is absolutely vital to our salvation (Romans 5:18–19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22–24).

Some critics maintain that the virgin birth is a mere story invented by Christians many years after Jesus' death as a way of elevating his status. However, the evidence contradicts that charge. Actually, reports of the virgin birth are quite early—in fact, within the first generation of Christians.

Matthew and Luke were composed soon after the life of Jesus—Matthew within a dozen to fifteen years, and Luke less than thirty years. Their accounts of the birth of Jesus contained both similarities and differences from each other. This indicates that the two of them were drawing on even earlier and independent sources of information.

When we study how many times Mary and Joseph are mentioned in each gospel, we find that Luke's account is essentially based on Mary's perspective—in fact, he may well have interviewed Mary or her friends before writing his gospel. For instance, Joanna and Susanna, who are mentioned in Luke 8:3 and 24:10, undoubtedly knew the mother of Jesus.

Volunteers Needed



LAST PERSON LEAVING
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS
AND LOCK DOORS

First United Methodist Church

**Please wear your
 name tag on
 Sunday mornings**



Church Ad Board Members

Michelle Morelock - Chair
 Mary Peterson - Secretary
 Margaret Brady - Vice Chair & Trustee
 Roger Jones - Trustee
 Bob Lynn - SPRC
 Barb Lundgren - Finance
 Dave Lashier - Treasurer
 Craig Harris - Lay Member to Annual Conference
 Connie Anderson - Memorials
 Linda Haldane - Membership
 David Clark - Pastor

Church Office Hours

**** Children & Jr.-Sr. High**

Sunday School -

Starting September 7th.

PK-6 during service

Jr/Sr High 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Praise Team - 4:00 p.m.

Bell Choir - 4:30 p.m.

Chancel Choir - 5:30 p.m.

The front door to the church will be locked during office hours. Please ring the doorbell to be let into the church.

Monday

9:00-11:00

12:00-3:00

Tuesday

9:00-11:00

12:00-3:00

Wednesday

Office Closed

Bible Study 11:00

Thursday

9:00-11:00

12:00-3:00

Friday

9:00-11:00

12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in advance if you need to enter the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine, please leave your name, number, and a brief message, and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned on the next business day.

Which part of the city of Nineveh did Jonah make a booth?

- a) West
- b) East
- c) North
- d) South

The demons leaving the demon-possessed man from the region of Gerasenes, went into how many pigs?

- a) 300
- b) 500
- c) 1000
- d) 2000

Which disciple brought the boy with five loaves and two fish to Jesus?

- a) Peter
- b) John
- c) Philip
- d) Andrew

Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.



19th – Bennett Blane, Brian Blank
 30th – Kathleen Jones, Sonya Jones
 31st – Todd Lundgren, Rebecca O'Hara, Amy Zollars
 1st – Rawson Stevens
 2nd – Baylor Blank
 3rd – Scott Lundgren

****See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added? Please call the office or send an email to office@shen.church**

Shenandoah First United Methodist Church

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Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail
office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our YouTube channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192streams>

*Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: **Terry Stafford**

Call to Worship

Leader: *We come as those who wait and hope, trusting God's promises*
People: *We gather to meet the God who is faithful across generations.*
L: *In the arms of a child, salvation is revealed to the world.*
P: *We rejoice in the light prepared for all people.*
L: *Let us worship the God who meets us in ordinary time and place.*
P: *With patient hearts and joyful praise, we worship God together.*

Guest Speaker - Dan Finlay

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:21-40

Songs

Joy to the World #246
God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen #3052
The First Noel #245
Go, Tell It on the Mountain #251 (v. 1,3)

Last Week's Attendance

In-Person Worship – 90
 Online Worship – 12

Our Vision:

“Growing as disciples of Jesus while connecting with others and serving our community.”

Answers for Dec. 21st are a) gold, silver, jewellery, and clothes b) Agabus c) because of iniquity

Quiz hints – Q1) Jonah Q 2) Mark Q3) John



Food Pantry Needs

JANUARY 2025

Spaghetti Sauce and Spaghetti Noodles, Sauerkraut, Green Beans, Corn, Chili Beans, Pineapple, Brownie and Muffin Mixes, Macaroni & Cheese, Brown and White Rice, Chunky Style Soups, Soda, Graham, Snack, Animal Crackers, Shampoo and Conditioner.

There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals home with their food items. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the Community Food Pantry. We exist totally on donations; we couldn't assist those in need without your help!

If you or anyone who would be interested in volunteering at the Food Pantry, please have them contact Jeannine K. Liljedahl at 712-215-2488.

Bring Your Change to Make a Change

*Collected each Sunday after
the children's message*



Each of you should GIVE what you have decided in YOUR HEART to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES a cheerful GIVER." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

The Noisy Offering is one more way to do ministry for those in need and teach your children the importance of giving and serving. Each Sunday, a new opportunity for mission giving will take place after the Children's Message. Sunday School students will walk around the congregation, collecting your loose coins and currency in their colorful metal pails. This would be a good time to clean out the loose change from your pockets or purse. The money donated in December will go to the **Heifer International**.

Virgin Birth- continued from page 2.

As for Matthew, his account is based on Joseph's perspective. Even though Joseph apparently died before Jesus' public ministry began, he probably passed along his story to his children—and we know that Matthew and James, the half brother of Jesus, were both early leaders of the church in Jerusalem. It makes sense that Matthew might have heard Joseph's perspective of the birth story through James.

In any event, the story of the virgin birth predates both the gospels of Matthew and Luke, which means it wasn't a later legend. According to Matthew, the virgin birth was even foretold by the prophet Isaiah some seven hundred years before it took place (see Isaiah 7:14).

Why Is It Important to Us?

The dual nature of Jesus—his humanity and his divinity—is important to you and me. Thanks to his humanity—the fact that he physically entered into our world on Christmas morning—he can relate to our situation. As John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

Jesus experienced what it was like to live physically and emotionally on our planet, and so when we bring him our problems, worries, and challenges, he can personally relate to us. Hebrews 4:15 reads, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.”

And because of Jesus' divinity, he can give us supernatural wisdom, offer the power of God to help us, perform powerful miracles and wonders, and open the gates of heaven for all who follow him as the perfect sacrifice who died in our place for our sin.

Adapted from The Case for Christmas: A Journalist Investigates the Identity of the Child in the Manger by Lee Strobel. NIV Weekly Blog. All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, December 22, 2025.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Two Volunteers Needed each Thursday
to Deliver Meals
Sign-Up Sheet is on the
Welcome Center Counter



If you have plastic bags that you would like to donate to the church for making mats, those working with the loom are now ready for more plastic bags. If you have plastic bags you want to get rid of, please drop them off in the mat/loom room downstairs. The room is the first classroom on your left at the bottom of the stairs. Thank you in advance.



The church office will be closed on the following days:

Open – Christmas Eve, December 24th

Closed – December 25th & 26th

Closed – December 31st

Open – January 1st (subject to change)



The Magi's Gifts at Jesus' Birth

Every year they show up. Like clockwork. Always in threes and invariably on camels. Bearing gifts, they wear regal robes and somber looks as they make the long journey from the corners of closets or the bowels of basements onto the front lawn or the mantle.

The wise men of Christmas. So mysterious. So unexpected. Like magic—or at least like Magi—they were there, and

then—poof!—they were gone. It must be because Matthew 2 supplies so few details about these foreign visitors that we've felt the freedom to supply our own.

Matthew says they came “from the east” (Matthew 2:1) and calls them *magoi*, which is the plural of *magus*. The word doesn’t mean “king” as many have assumed. It was used to describe members of the Persian priestly class or Babylonian astrologers. Basically men who fused science and magic, philosophy and religion. Academic mystics who studied the heavens for insight into super-natural matters. Scholars—brainiacs—with lots of letters after their names, using a multitude of multi-syllabic words.

Because they presented three gifts to Jesus—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—it’s been widely assumed there were three men. However, Matthew never numbers them. Some refer to them as Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar. Yet Matthew never names them. Truth be told, most of our holiday presentations are rooted in speculation and imagination.

Matthew quotes some of their cryptic words: “We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2). We don’t know what “his star” means. And we don’t know exactly what they saw: Some sign in the heavens? A conjunction of planets? A comet? No one can say for sure.

We do, however, know what “worship” means. We do know exactly what they did. Whatever valuable research or important experiments they were working on, they set all that aside for something more priceless. Saying their goodbyes, they headed west as if their lives depended on it.

Somber? Dutiful? A command performance? Not at all. Check out Matthew’s description of the Magi when they discovered the one they sought with all their hearts and minds and strength. “They were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him” (2:10–11).

Does your nativity scene depict *that*—these curious souls, wild-eyed with hope, bowing down in worship.

Leadership Insights from the Nativity

The beauty of Christmas is that it's a profound message, yet so simply given. Three ordinary objects from the Christmas story offer profound lessons in leadership.

The Star: Be a Travel Guide



Scripture says the star the wise men saw in the east went before them, till it came and stopped over where the child was. "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed" (Matthew 2:10). The wise men rejoiced over the fact that God provided them with a remarkably accurate travel guide. They understood they never would have found Christ without the star. The Christmas star was God's gift of direction, God's travel guide for seekers.

Throughout history, God has seen to it that those who diligently seek after Christ find him. God has provided travel guides that have led, and continue to lead, others to Jesus. Now God wants you to be a travel guide for others.

Some leaders function as travel agents. Travel agents send people to places where they themselves have never been. They give them a brochure and say, "Bon voyage."

Genuine leaders, those who are effective and influential, are travel guides. Travel guides take people to places they themselves have already been and experienced. The message of the Christmas star is that in order to lead others anywhere, you must go before them.

The Stable: Be an Incarnational Leader

Why would God allow Jesus to be born in a dark, smelly stable crowded with animals? This was a strategically divine decision God made not to shelter his Son from life's harsh realities. God sent Jesus to live in the real world.

Life without advantage? He lived it.

Shortage, poverty? He's been there.

Discrimination, oppression? Jesus was a refugee before his first birthday.

Rejection? He experienced it.

Ridicule? It was part of his daily life.

Abandonment? By lifelong friends in his greatest time of need.

Death of loved ones? Multiple times.

Physical pain? More than you or I will probably ever experience.

Sometimes life hurts so deeply you want to cry out, "I can't go on because nobody understands!" The stable reminds us that Jesus understands. He's been there. He became flesh in order to live with us, identify with us, and know us. This is called the incarnation.

Incarnational leadership is a complex term for a simple concept: Good leaders must get out of their own shoes and put on someone else's. Identify with those you lead by being with them rather than above them, asking them questions and connecting with them emotionally. Get out of your comfort zone, get out of your chair, get into the stable, and get into their shoes.

The Manger: Make People Extraordinary

The only reason most of us are even familiar with the term manger is that there's a small Scripture reference that says God's Son was laid in one (Luke 2:7, 16). We don't know for sure, but it's likely that the manger was simply a shallow trough carved directly into the stone floor of the stable where Jesus was born. But because God's Son was laid in a manger, look what happened to an ordinary piece of stone. All of a sudden it had a new dignity. The ordinary became extraordinary—a feed trough for cattle became the cradle of a King. What a transformation!

The simple manger is a symbol of what can happen to an ordinary man or woman when Jesus Christ resides inside. The manger is encouragement that you, in all your ordinariness, can become a leader of extraordinary influence.

A star, a stable, a manger. Learning profound lessons from these simple Christmas objects can transform you into an extraordinary leader who points others to Jesus, identifies with people where they are, and helps them achieve their God-given potential.

Adapted by John Maxwell from the NI Maxwell Leadership Bible. NIV Weekly Blog. All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, December 22, 2025.

