

Shepherd's Staff

December 2025

We gather to worship, we go to serve our Lord.

"You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth!"

Parkersburg Christian Reformed Church

Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m. ~ Church School 10:45 a.m



THE CHRISTMAS STILLNESS

Source: <https://www.gwgladstone.ca/blog-native/2015/12/21/the-christmas-stillness>

Author: Graham Gladstone

Every year, around this time of year, people love to take shots at 'Away in a Manger.' 'No crying He makes.' Yeah right. Jesus was a healthy, human baby - of course He cried!

While I refuse to wade into the 'did He cry or didn't He?' debate, it strikes me that this artistic depiction of the tone of Jesus' birth reflects a theological reality that sits quietly behind the Christmas story - the stillness of Christmas.

Many of our favorite carols use imagery of silence and stillness to describe the night of Jesus' birth.

*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by*

*The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing*

*Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright*



Even Sovereign Grace's recent song 'Who would have dreamed' gets in on the action:
Slowly, David's city drifted off to sleep

What's going on here? Why are the hymnwriters uniform in their conviction that the night that Jesus was born was a 'silent night'?

On one level, this 'Christmas stillness' is probably an effort to explore the notion that these events are marked by a tremendous solemnity - the whole created order subconsciously in awe of the mighty work of God unfolding in its midst.

On another level though, there is something tremendously unremarkable about Jesus' birth. As far as the world was concerned, nothing impressive happened that night. It *was* a silent night. If they had had newscasts back then, the news would have been all about Caesar Augustus and Governor Quirinius, not 'this just in - two unassuming taxpayers couldn't find a place to stay and she had a baby.'

There is something incredible about this stillness.

This is the birth of the *King* we are talking about! This is the long-awaited Messiah! The hope of the world has just arrived!

Think about the triumphant entry on Palm Sunday - why was there no fanfare and exuberant mob cheering Jesus' arrival on Christmas Eve?

(OK, admittedly, the angel choir broke the silence - those heavenly beings tore the roof off to celebrate Jesus' birth).

But from an *earthly* point of view, the night of Jesus' night *was* silent and calm.

This ought to tell us something about the nature and ways of God.

He is gentle - He speaks in still, small voices and condescended to save His people graciously. The fact that He came, not as a conquering general, but as a helpless baby, unnoticed by most of the world, should tell us that God is not concerned with the flash and awe that much of the world is enamored by - God works quietly, behind the scenes, in the margins of His Kingdom, to redeem His people and accomplish His purposes. It takes God-given eyes of faith and ears to hear God at work in the stillness of Christmas.

I think this is ultimately what the writer of 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' was getting at with his third verse.

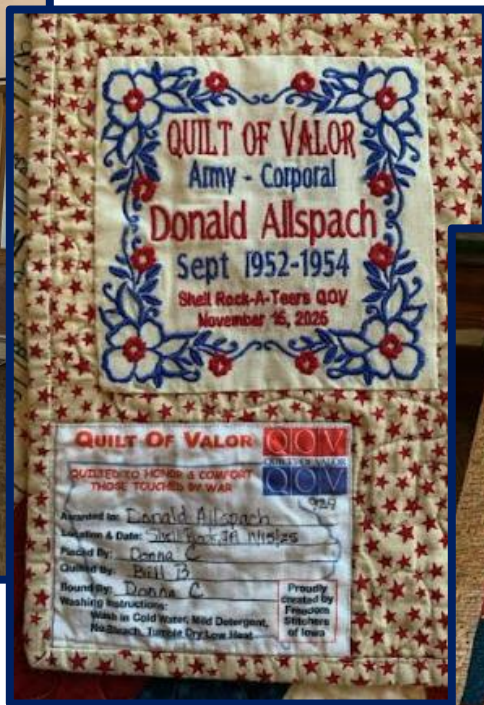
*How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.*

May you be enabled to 'be still and know that He is God' this Christmas season.



DON ALLSPACH HONORED WITH QUILT OF VALOR

On November 16, 2025, Veteran Army Corporal Donald Allspach was honored with a beautiful Quilt of Valor made by the Shell Rock-A-Tears QOV. Don's family was in attendance to share in the celebration with him that day. We thank Don, as well as all our veterans, for their service to our country. Without them, we would not be able to live in the land of the free and the home of the brave! Thank you, Don!

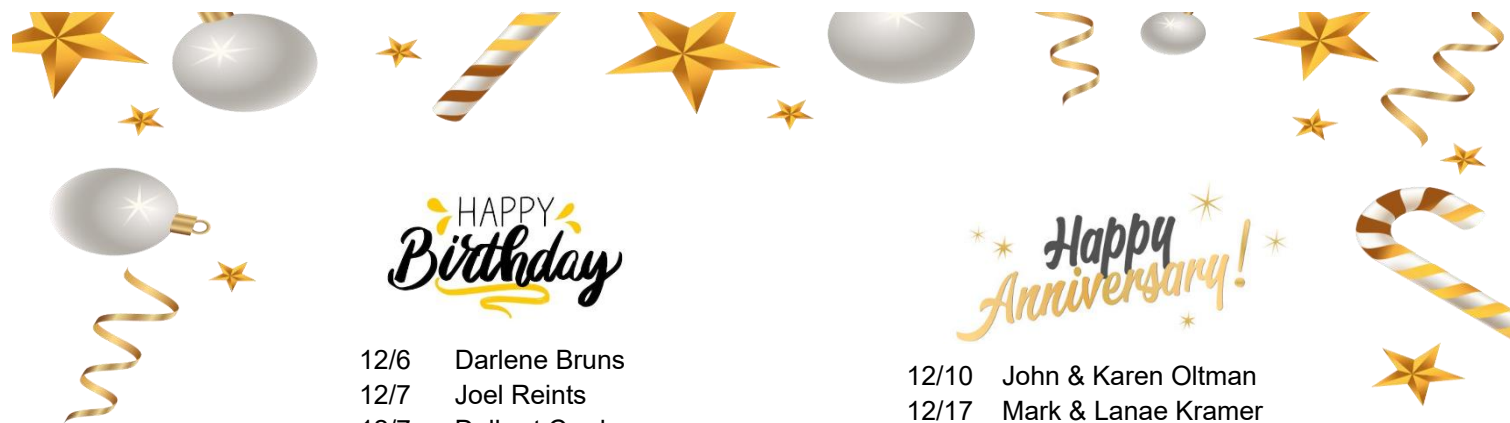


OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD COLLECTED RECORD NUMBER OF SHOEBOXES!

Our packing party on November 16 yielded 60 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. These contributed to Parkersburg CRC's, as a regional drop-off location, total record-breaking collection of 1100 shoeboxes for this area! We are so grateful for all the churches and individuals who brought in boxes, and especially thankful for all our volunteers who helped in so many ways

make collection week a huge success! Please pray for the 1100 children who will be receiving these shoebox gifts, that they may come to know Jesus as their Savior and share this news with their families and friends! The church continues to grow!





HAPPY
Birthday

*Happy
Anniversary!*

12/6 Darlene Bruns
12/7 Joel Reints
12/7 Delbert Cordes
12/12 Angie Meester
12/14 Clayton Groeneveld
12/17 Rylan Ascher
12/20 Duane Anderson
12/31 John Oltman

12/10 John & Karen Oltman
12/17 Mark & Lanae Kramer
12/27 Irv & Amy Haan



O HOLY NIGHT

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

ANGEL
ANIMALS
BABY
BETHLEHEM
DONKEY
FRANKINCENSE

GIFTS
GOLD
JESUS
JOSEPH
MANGER
MARY

MYRRH
PEACE
SAVIOR
SHEPHERD
STAR
WISE MEN

