

December Calendar

Sunday 2nd Dec: Sunday service 10:30am, John Lavric
Monday 3rd: Prayer meeting, 7pm at Jill's
Wed. 5th: Bible study, 7.30pm at Glen & Debbie's
Thursday 6th: Bible study, 10.30am at Margaret's
PFI prayer meeting, 7.15pm at Ruth & Tony's
Friday 7th: Bible study, 7.30pm at Andy & Karen's

Sunday 9th: Hanukkah Service, 10.30am, Andy King
Monday 10th: Prayer meeting, 7pm at Ruth & Tony's
Israeli Dance, 2.15pm, Scartho Library
Wed. 12th: Bible Study, 7.30pm at Glen & Debbie's
Thursday 13th: Bible study, 10.30am, location TBA
Friday 14th: Bible study, 7.30pm at Andy & Karen's

Sunday 16th: Sunday service, 10.30am, Dr. Annang
Food donations for local charities
Monday 17th: Prayer meeting, 7pm at Steve & Nicky's
Tuesday 18th: Ashgrove service, 2.30pm (to be confirmed)
Wed. 19th: Bible Study, 7.30pm at Glen & Debbie's
Thursday 20th: Bible study, 10.30am, location TBA
PFI prayer meeting, 7.15pm at Ruth & Tony's
Friday 21st: Bible study, 7.30pm at Andy & Karen's

Sunday 23rd: Christmas Carol Service, **6pm**, followed by mince pies, cakes and teas & coffees. Speaker John Lavric. This will be a Christmas Gospel service. Please note changed start time.

Sunday 30th Dec: Sunday service, 10.30am, Ivan Daniel-Sam
Wed. 2nd January: Bible Study, 7.30pm at Glen & Debbie's
Thursday 3rd: Bible study, 10.30am, location TBA
PFI prayer meeting, 7.15pm at Ruth & Tony's
Saturday 5th Jan: Men's Prayer Breakfast, 7am at Andy's
Sunday 6th: Sunday service, 10.30am, Andy King



Welcome

...to Scartho Celebration Church!



And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them (the shepherds), and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:9-11

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:12

December 2018

Newsletter & Calendar

May you know

the Light of the world
this Christmas! John 8:12



Scartho Celebration Church

meeting at Scartho Community Library, St Giles Ave, Scartho, Grimsby, NE Lincolnshire, DN33 2HB.

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Christmas Would Be Impossible Without Hanukkah *An abridged article by David Brickner, from Jews For Jesus.*

That's right, without Hanukkah there would be no Christmas. Yet Hanukkah, also known as the Feast of Dedication" or the "Festival of Lights," is not among the holidays God commanded Israel to celebrate in the Old Testament. In fact, you will only find one mention of the holiday in the Bible: "Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the Temple, in Solomon's porch." ([John 10:22-23](#)) Jesus chose to be in the Temple during this festival. The startling statement He made there is best understood against the background of this feast.

Hanukkah commemorates events that took place during the inter-testamental period, that gap between the Old and New Testaments. The Jewish people were under foreign domination, ruled by the Syrian king Antiochus, who forced them to abandon their culture and religion. He made sure the Jewish people could not use the Temple to worship our God. He erected idols in the holy place—and worst of all, he sacrificed a pig on the altar. The Jewish people were utterly defeated and demoralized—until a small band of guerilla soldiers known as the Maccabees rekindled their hope. Within three years, these warriors miraculously recaptured Jerusalem and the Temple. Note that Hanukkah—which means dedication—was not named for the brave warriors. The real victory was being able to worship the God of Israel once again. The Temple was rededicated on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev, in the year 165 BC.

A common Hebrew phrase connected with Hanukkah is "nes gadol haya sham," which means, "A great miracle happened there." Two miracles plus a common theme link Hanukkah and Christmas in a way I hope will heighten your appreciation of both. The first miracle is the preservation of the Jewish people. Had Antiochus been successful, Israel would have lost her unique identity and God's precious promises would be unkept. If Antiochus had gotten his way, there would have been no recognizable Jewish culture for Messiah to be born into. Without Hanukkah, there would have been no Christmas. Whenever you are tempted to doubt God's saving power in your life, remember the miracle of His saving power as seen through Hanukkah, and how the small band of soldiers prevailed despite all odds. The way God preserved His people Israel reflects the way He continues keeping all of us, Jews and Gentiles, who trust in Him today.

The second miracle associated with Hanukkah is the miracle of light. According to this tradition, the menorah—the seven-branched candelabra that was to burn continually in the Temple—had been extinguished by Antiochus' henchmen. When the Maccabees recaptured the Temple they cleansed it and searched for fresh oil to rekindle the sacred flame. But they discovered only enough to last one day—and it would take eight full days to procure fresh oil. According to tradition, in their zeal to rededicate the Temple they used what oil they had to rekindle the flame—and miraculously, it lasted for eight whole days. According to this tradition, that is why we celebrate Hanukkah for eight nights, and why we use a special Hanukkah, or nine-branched candelabra. The *shamash* or "servant" candle is lit first, and in turn it lights all the other candles, beginning with one candle on the first night. Each night, another candle is lit, until the eighth night, when the entire Hanukkah is aglow.

The book of Maccabees gives another explanation for why Hanukkah lasts eight days. The people rededicated the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles (an eight-day holiday which would have been observed the previous month had the Syrians not occupied the Temple). King Solomon chose to dedicate the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles ([2 Chronicles 6](#) and [7](#)) so it makes sense that the people would wish to do the same. The Jewish historian Josephus referred to Hanukkah as the Festival of Light, but light was also a big part of the Feast of Tabernacles celebration. Four giant candelabras—each holding four huge bowls of oil—were lit in the Court of the Women. The blaze from these 16 flames could be seen all around Jerusalem. How appropriate it was that Jesus chose this area of the Temple to declare, "I am the light of the world. He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" ([John 8:12](#)).

Jesus, like the servant candle on the Hanukkah, lights our way, and sends His Spirit to ignite us as well, so that we can shine His light in a dark world. We do not have enough "oil" to live a life dedicated to God, but Jesus has miraculously provided for us. So the miracle of preservation made Christmas possible, and the miracle of the light reminds us of Jesus, whose advent the prophets predicted would be, "a light to the Gentiles" whose salvation would reach "to the ends of the earth" ([Isaiah 49:6](#)).

Finally, the common theme that links Hanukkah and Christmas is that of God with us—Immanuel. God was present with His people in a way that pulled the rug right out from under the evil Syrian king. When Antiochus entered into the Temple to defile it, he declared himself Antiochus "Epiphanes" meaning "God manifest." The Jewish nation rejected his outrageous, counterfeit claim to deity. Counterfeit because God had promised to be present with His people, not only in a miraculous military victory, but in flesh. He promised to actually *be* what Antiochus, in his insanity, had claimed—the incarnate God. This promise was wrapped up in the special name by which the prophet Isaiah predicted the Messiah would be known: "Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" ([Isaiah 7:14](#)).

It is only because Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, that He could sacrifice Himself as an atonement for our sin. He was born to die and rise victorious, born to light our way and make us to be lights, born to be adored by Jews and Gentiles who will bow and worship the One who is the hope of Hanukkah and the Christ of Christmas. These two holidays share their ultimate significance in the person of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah.

The Miracle of the Virgin Birth *by Ron Graham from simplybible.com*

Mary was betrothed to Joseph. Before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. Joseph took her as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to her firstborn son. This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold! A virgin will be with child and will bear a son, and she shall call his name "God with us"" (Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-7, Isaiah 7:14).

The Virgin Birth Is a True Story: Matthew and Luke tell story of Christ's birth as fact. Millions of people believe it around the world, in every generation throughout the Christian age. Some professing Christians, however, do not believe in anything miraculous or supernatural. They are like the Sadducees among the religious leaders of Jesus's day. Pharisees believed in the supernatural, but the Sadducees did not (Acts 23:8). Some people today won't accept the virgin birth of Jesus as a real event.

The supernatural is woven inextricably into the whole Bible story —especially the story of Christ Jesus, his virgin birth, his signs and wonders, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, his sending the Holy Spirit —all must be rejected if the supernatural and miraculous is rejected. Taking the supernatural element out of the story of the Bible, is like taking the thread out of a garment. You undo the entire garment except for a handful of buttons.

The Virgin Birth is Not Like a Myth: The gospel nativity bears no resemblance to myth. Were it written that Mary picked a pumpkin and found the baby Jesus inside, then well might we think we are reading a myth. The account, however, is straight forward and contains none of the trappings of fables. The story's extraordinary point is that Mary was a virgin when she conceived, and was still a virgin when she gave birth. This, and the rest of the story, is presented as straight facts and real events among real people. The account bears no resemblance to the myths of the Greek and Roman gods or the unscriptural Jewish fables.

Myths, fables, and legends, are written not to embody great truths, but to make a hero out of one who, in real life, falls short of the ideal. If faith in Jesus requires myth or legend to bolster it, then it is a vain faith, because the real Jesus, stripped of the legend and myth, is just another Ned Kelly, Robin Hood, or Davy Crockett. Peter testifies, "We did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye witnesses of his majesty..." —a clear, evidential refutation of the assertion that the story of Christ is a myth (2Peter 1:16).

The Virgin Birth was a Sign: The virgin birth was to be a "sign" from God (Isaiah 7:14). A birth in the ordinary course of nature is not a sign. As wonderful as it may be, human procreation occurs every minute of every day. If Jesus's birth were an ordinary natural event, how would it be a sign of anything? On the other hand, if the mother had conceived being a virgin, and was still a virgin when she gave birth, then that would indeed be a sign. Matthew is clear that Joseph kept Mary a virgin until she gave birth to Jesus (Matthew 1:24-25). Nothing less than that fact makes the birth of Jesus a sign, and Jesus the unique son of God in whom we should believe (John 3:16).