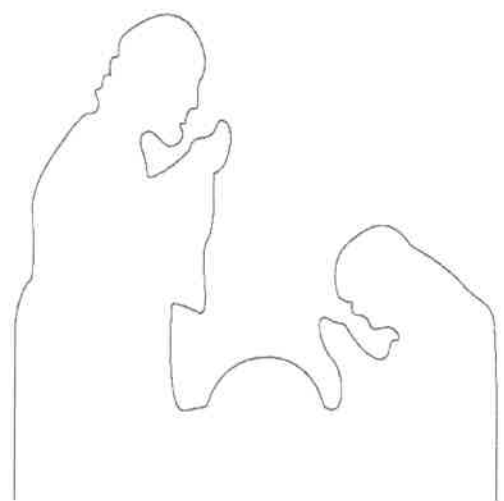




THE LIVING
NATIVITY
A JOURNEY FORETOLD
BROADUS CHURCH

December 5-7 & 12-14, 2025

**Pole Green Road Campus
5351 Pole Green Road
Mechanicsville, VA 23116**

**Hebron Campus of Broadus Church
3407 King William Road
Aylett, VA 23009**

Welcome!

Thank you for participating in "The Living Nativity - A Journey Foretold." This event is a gift to our community that is presented every other year by members and friends of Broadus Church. It is our hope that you will have the opportunity to renew in your hearts the true meaning of our holiday season or, for the very first time, hear and see the wonderful Gift of God that is the "Reason for this Season."

This booklet contains four devotions written by Rev. Howard Rhodes to encourage you to ponder and pray about your relationship with Jesus Christ, God's Son. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you further and to share with you the hope, joy, peace, and love He brings into the lives of those who choose to follow Him.

At the conclusion of your program in the woods, we will take you to our Worship Center for some special events.

- Wonderful desserts, hot chocolate, coffee, tea are available.
- We also have crafts to share with the children.
- There is a beautiful background provided for a free Christmas picture of your family.

Sunday Schedule

Pole Green Campus	9AM Sunday School 10AM Worship
Hebron Campus	9:30AM Worship 10:30AM Sunday School

On Christmas Eve at 5PM there will be special Worship Services at both campuses.

Making each one a witness!

Broadus Church

Belong. Believe. Become.

Christmas “Timing”

Galatians 4:4-5 “But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship”

When do we celebrate Christmas? Hobby Lobby had their Christmas merchandise up in August, before school started, and to my surprise, the aisles were busy and carts were full. It tells my age when I say that we never talked about Christmas until after Thanksgiving. The Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade proclaimed the holiday season could begin. As a child, I thought Thanksgiving to Christmas morning was an eternity. Now, we’re reminded in August that Christmas is only four months away and we need to get ready. However, that is nothing compared to how long God’s people had waited for that first Christmas.

The birth of Jesus, “the reason for the season,” happened in a unique time. The Roman Empire stretched far and wide establishing a common language and freedom to travel great distances. Such a time enabled all lands to be open to the message of mercy and love that was coming. For over 400 years the Jews had waited for a word from God. A passionate commitment to the law had swept through their land. The temple had been rebuilt and rituals of worship reestablished. Synagogues and Rabbis diligently oversaw the teaching and observance of the law, even adding to it to be sure it was observed correctly. There was also a renewed hope for the One who would free them from Roman dominance and influence. They longed for Messiah, the Anointed One, a Deliverer to come. They longed for the prophecy made by Isaiah, over 700 years earlier, to be fulfilled. Christmas is the celebration that God’s “set time” was at hand.

The Living Nativity is a celebration of that time. Amidst all the excitement of the holiday season, we are given the opportunity to pause and celebrate that “God sent forth His Son.”

Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and shall call his name, Immanuel.”

- “Therefore”- The timing is right; the preparation has been made.
- “Lord Himself”- All-knowing, all-powerful, all-present God is accomplishing His purpose.
- “Sign”- An announcement, a signal of what is ahead, a promise of God is being fulfilled.
- “The virgin”- “The” is specific. A young, never married woman will be chosen by God.
- “Conceive and bear a son”- Though unplanned by Mary, this child is unique, purposed in every way.
- “Immanuel”- Meaning “God with us,” this is the most dynamic truth of Christmas. This is the heart of all that happens from this moment on, even to this very day.

The Living Nativity is a celebration of Immanuel’s coming. It’s a simple event that happened in a stable to an ordinary couple at what was thought to be an insignificant time. Yet, it was God’s time and the most significant event in the history of mankind happened. Today, that event is just as significant. It is a “time” appointed for each of us. Are you ready for “Christ” time?

Prayer: Father God, lead us to understand your perfect timing in our lives that, in the midst of this busy holiday season, we might bring glory to You.

Christmas “Miracles”

Luke 1:38 “I am the Lord’s servant, may your word to me be fulfilled.”

Most of us have a favorite Christmas movie. They capture the minds and hearts of children of all ages everywhere. Most of them have a “happily ever-after” ending of restored relationships, a stronger faith, and renewed trust. For children, the miracle is Santa—his knowledge of whether we’ve been good or bad, his ability to visit every house in all the world, and, best of all, how he leaves gifts behind that are exactly what we wanted. He has to be real because the cookies are gone.

In our world today, it’s becoming harder and harder to tell truth from fiction; especially since we all seem to be able to speak our own “truth.” With AI, pictures are no longer “worth a thousand words” and “what you see” is not always what you get. What is declared “truth” is not always true.

So, what is true about Christmas? I think we must admit that the Christmas events recorded in Matthew and Luke do seem a bit out of this world; but that does not make them untrue. Angels filling the sky and singing, a miracle pregnancy, a traveling star—these are just a few of the characters and events of the Christmas we celebrate in The Living Nativity.

- Mary didn’t understand what the angel Gabriel was telling her -“How will this be since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:34)
- Joseph wanted to divorce Mary, but he trusted the voice of an angel. -“He did what the angel of the Lord told him and took Mary to be his wife.” (Matthew 1:24)
- Lowly shepherds, relaxing around their campfire, were terrified when angels told them to look for a baby wrapped in swaddling cloth, lying in a manger. -“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.” (Luke 2:15)
- Astrologers traveled for weeks believing a new star was a sign of the birth of a new king for the Jews -“We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.” (Matthew 2:2)

These out-of-this world events seem unbelievable, yet they are really precursors of other events in the life of Jesus and those who follow Him. A miracle is defined as “an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers.”

The message of Christmas is that God’s word will always be fulfilled. While Santa brings what we want, Immanuel, “God with us,” brings what we need. To the shepherds, the angel proclaimed, “Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you.” The Christmas “Miracle” is not about what Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the Wise Men did. It is about what God did. It is also about what God is still doing. What He has done since the beginning of time.

As you experience The Living Nativity, think about the “miracles” in your own life; the “God” things and events that really have no logical explanation. The “Christmas Miracle” is real.

Prayer: Father God, help us to hear Your voice and see Your miracles in our own lives each day.

Christmas "Music"

Ephesians 5:19 "Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord."

How do we celebrate Christmas without music? I don't think we really can. We hear it all around us. It may be as simple as the Salvation Army bells calling us to be mindful of those in need or as elaborate as a stage production of The Nutcracker.

Of course, we can celebrate without music but why would we? Music helps us focus on the reality of what happened in the small village of Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. It helps us understand the significance of Jesus' birth not only for our world but for each one of us personally.

- "O Come, O Come Immanuel" is a plea for One who will rescue a people from the darkness of the world around us; a reminder of God's purpose.
- "Silent Night" quietens our hearts and truly does bring a calmness, a peace that transcends the chaos around us.
- "Away in a Manger" reminds us of both the simplicity and magnitude of Christmas as we imagine the God of our universe sending His only Son to be born in a lowly stable to sleep on a bed of hay.
- "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" declares that the splendor of heaven is in full display as the birth of God's Son, is announced, not to kings, presidents, or religious leaders, but to lowly shepherds.
- "We, Three Kings" reminds us that the door to heaven is opened for ALL mankind, not just those of a particular belief, ideology, ethnicity, or economic standing.
- "Joy to the World" gives us the privilege to join with the angels in proclaiming the birth of God's only Son and to be reminded of our responsibility to share the good news of His coming.

"Messiah," by George Frideric Handel, was written in 1741 is a Christmas staple. Performed in its entirety would take almost 3 hours.

We usually hear only portions but always the amazing, "Hallelujah Chorus." It is customary for the audience to stand as this final song is sung. This tradition is traced back to King George II who was so enthralled by the beauty of the music that it is believed that he could not remain seated. Some believe he stood because he thought the choir was singing about him. Regardless of his reason, we have our own reason, the King of Kings has come!

Christmas music celebrates Immanuel, "God with us." Mary sang praises to God as she awaited the birth of Jesus - "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior; for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant" (Luke 1:47-48). The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace to those on whom His favor rests" (Luke 2:14).

As you experience The Living Nativity, it is an opportunity to sing praise to God for His "indescribable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Prayer: Father God, may our hearts be filled with the sounds of worship and praise for who You are and what you have done.

Christmas "Promises"

Luke 1:37 "For no word from God will ever fail."

What was your last promise? The last promise someone made to you? Were those promises kept? Was it made with fingers crossed behind your back? Promises are only as strong as the person who gives them.

The Christmas events the fulfillment of God's promises to His people. This is wonderfully demonstrated in the keeping of Jewish tradition as Joseph and Mary take their baby boy, Jesus, to the temple "to present him to the Lord." This was an act of ritual law that fulfilled the decree that every firstborn male was to be dedicated to the Lord.

There is much more to the story, however, than what was a normal, everyday temple occurrence.

First, God's promise to an elderly Simeon is fulfilled. Simeon was righteous and devout and waiting for the "consolation of Israel." Consolation means comfort, relief; the removal of a burden. Simeon's heart longed for the fulfillment of God's promise made through the prophet, Isaiah. Upon seeing Jesus, Simeon proclaimed, "My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations" (Luke 2:30-31).

Secondly, God's promise to Anna is fulfilled. Anna was 84 years old and a widow for many years. She "worshipped night and day, never leaving the temple, fasting and praying." Upon seeing Jesus, Anna gave thanks to God and "spoke of the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Israel" (Luke 2:36-38).

We often forget that the real promise of Christmas is not just what happened in Bethlehem. There is so much more to the story. Joseph escapes the anger and wrath of a jealous King Herod by taking Mary and baby Jesus to Egypt where they live for some 3+ years. He then brings his family back to the town Nazareth where he supported them as a carpenter and taught Jesus how to be a carpenter as well.

We know very little of growing up years of Jesus except that, at the age of 12, He visits the temple with Joseph and Mary. He makes

quite an impression as He sat among the teachers of the law. They were amazed at His "understanding and answers" concerning Jewish scripture.

At the age of 30, Jesus begins His journey to fulfill God's promise and purpose for His coming. His teaching and miracles cause the people to ask, "Could this be the Messiah, the Deliverer promised by God."

The earthly life of Jesus ends tragically when He is unjustly arrested, beaten, mocked, and left to die on a cruel Roman cross. That is not, however, the end of the story. It is in the celebration of Easter that we find the real miracle of God and the fulfillment of His promises.

The child we celebrate at Christmas is the sacrifice for our sin that opens the way for each of us to have a relationship with God. He is the "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). God keeps His promises.

As we experience The Living Nativity, we have the opportunity to remember "the reason for the season;" however if we only see "the season," we miss "the reason." It's more than a production put on by our Broadus family. It is an invitation to know the joy, peace, hope, and love of our Living Savior, Jesus. He truly is Emmanuel, "God with us."

Prayer: Father God, may our hearts be open to the truth of Jesus, the One who came in Your time and by Your plan to show Your love for each of us.