

## ***In Our Prayers...***

***Lee Gates- COVID-19***

***Tacketts (Mark's sister's family)- COVID-19***

***Christy Holley- Blood clots***

***Koben Puckett- Paralyzed***

***Cancer- Andy Smith,***

***Sharon, Denny, Paula***

***Powell, Sarah Wilmon,***

***Linda Ragsdale, Cheryl Lin***

***Recovery- Kim Provost,***

***Mary Orbison, Linda***

***Johnston***

***Health concerns- Rosa Lee***

***Cundiff, Ruth Sutherland***

***-COVID-19***

***-Evangelistic opportunities***

***-Pray for our nation***

## **Worship & Studies**

### **Sunday**

Bible Study- Suspended

Worship- 10:30 a.m.

Afternoon Worship-  
Suspended

### **Wednesday**

Bible Study- Suspended



**Happy Sunday!**

**December 25- Christmas**



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## ***Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays?***

I was talking to a friend the other day and the topic came around to Christmas. My friend was telling me that when someone says, "Merry Christmas" to him, he likes to respond with "blessed Christmas." It wasn't entirely clear which definition of blessed he was meaning. Blessed in some contexts means thankful and in others it means fortunate. Since he was thinking of the birth of Jesus, both would be appropriate.

I got to thinking about that after the phone call. The greeting I hear most often in this area is not "Merry Christmas," but "Happy holidays." Some people that I have talked to are upset by the more "politically correct" term. They likely see it as a way of "taking the 'Christ' out of 'Christmas'." That is, of course, possible, and maybe some of our atheist neighbors do mean it that way, but I suspect most are wanting to be more inclusive of our Jewish friends. Hanukkah, by pure coincidence, falls almost exactly the same time as Christmas. The date fluctuates a bit because it is timed by the Hebrew calendar which follows the phases of the moon. But there really are more similarities between the two holidays than most people know. *(Continued inside)*

\*Cover photo by Amy Collins.

The church of Christ in Durango meets at:

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Scripture Reading: *Philippians 1*

## News & Announcements

- The number of COVID-19 cases seems to be declining and we could go back to “Orange” in a few weeks, although there is concern that the Christmas holiday will bring about another surge. For now, we will continue to have worship at the building. Mark will continue to upload the service to YouTube for those who need to worship from home.

### *2 Corinthians 4:16-18*

*Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not to the things which are seen but at the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (NASB)*

### **Weekly Bible Reading Schedule**

Dec 21	Mon	Revelation 12	Micah 4-5
Dec 22	Tues	Revelation 13	Micah 6-7
Dec 23	Wed	Revelation 14	Nahum
Dec 24	Thurs	Revelation 15	Habakkuk
Dec 25	Fri	Revelation 16	Zephaniah
Dec 26	Sat	Revelation 17	Haggai
Dec 27	Sun	Revelation 18	Zechariah 1-4

## Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays?

*(Continued from the front)* Hanukkah had its beginnings in the 400 year period between where the Old Testament ends and where the New Testament begins. That 400 years saw a great deal of activity, including wars. One of those wars was between the Syrians and the Jews. Jerusalem was, at one point captured and, to humiliate the Jews, a pig was sacrificed on the alter in the temple. Ultimately, after several years of fighting, the Jews retook Jerusalem. In 164 B.C, (about 250 years after the close of the Old Testament), the temple was cleansed, and the Jews re-dedicated it to God. A holiday was proclaimed to always remember that dedication event and was then referred to as the Feast of Dedication. Today that holiday is called Hanukkah.

The celebration of Christmas had its beginning about 250 years after the close of the New Testament. In 350 AD Pope Julius I of the Roman Catholic Church declared December 25<sup>th</sup> to be the day that Christ was born. All Roman Catholics were to celebrate this holiday on December 25<sup>th</sup> each year as a celebration of the birth of Christ.

Both Hanukkah and Christmas are holidays that were started by man. Unlike the three Jewish feasts that God commanded in the Old Testament, The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and the Feast of Booths, neither Hanukkah nor Christmas was a result of a commandment of God. Both holidays are a “tradition of man.” Jesus warned against that kind of religious teaching. In Matthew 15:9 Jesus told the Pharisees, “BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.”

The outtake of all this for me, is to not be offended when someone says “happy holidays” but rather see it as an opportunity talk about the gospel. Many don’t realize that Hanukkah is mentioned in the Bible (John 10:22 “*At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.*”) There is a conversation starter: “Did you know that Hanukkah is actually mentioned in the Bible?”

Happy holidays!

**-Ray Sherman  
Durango, CO**