



The Christian life is a journey.

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the "landscape" we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we're learning and doing.

ElderTalk: Stable Reflections

STEVE McKEE

*Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die...
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled .*

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
-Charles Wesley

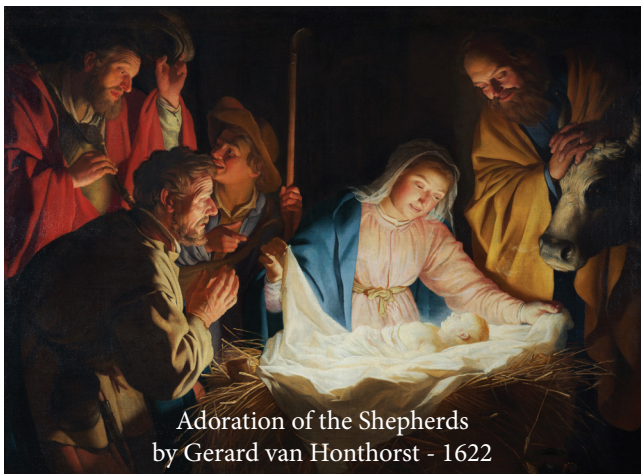
When God chose to come to earth, He didn't show up in the exquisite opulence of Herod's palace like we might expect for an event so momentous. He came to a dirty, dark stable. We all know that.

When God came to earth, He didn't even pick the middle-class route and show up in a simple, but clean and well-lit inn. He came to an offensive, smelly livestock stall, a place you wouldn't want to spend ten minutes.

God will be coming today, in the next hour and in the next minute, as He always does every day. Where will He show up?

If we are honest, He will show up, once again, in the dark smelly stable...this time; of our lives... and of our church. We work pretty hard to clean up our lives and our church to make them respectable, and that is good but God is going to show up where He is *needed most...in our smelly stables:*

(continued on p. 2)



Adoration of the Shepherds
by Gerard van Honthorst - 1622

Doug Jackson - with the Lord

NOVEMBER 1, 1982 - NOVEMBER 11, 2021

C. Douglas Jackson, 39, of Mansfield, Ohio, passed away on Thursday, November 11, 2021. Doug was born on November 1, 1982 in Melrose, MA. He was the son of Curtis Jackson, Jr. and Karen (Harper) McCluney-Jackson.

Doug was a training manager for Startek in Mansfield, Ohio. He worked his way from a floor support staff to his current position. He was on the frontline of developing new trainings to promote growth within the company. While he was a trainer, he visited multiple sites to help improve their performance. Doug helped launch training



for several lines of business, and he was strategic in creating a new coaching methodology that completely changed the way the company trained, coached and developed new employees. He also worked with multiple programs and trainers to improve training techniques that eventually resulted in his promotion to training manager.

Doug was an avid movie buff, and was the ultimate walking human "Wikipedia" of all things related to Marvel Comics, DC, Star Wars, Superheroes, Avatar, Harry Potter, etc. He also enjoyed going to concerts, especially Dave Matthews, and he loved going to Comic-Con events.

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The Power of Board Games to Connect

MIKE PERNA of INNROADS MINISTRY

There's a phrase we use at InnRoads to describe the power of board games in community building: "creating common history." It is a phenomenon that we see at every gaming event we run. A handful of strangers gather around a table and are invited to play a game together. There are some quick introductions and they settle in to learn the rules.

As the game progresses, they're laughing, planning. They're talking about something that happened at the beginning of the game. There's light-hearted joking about how one of them can't roll higher than a two on the die to save their life. They know almost nothing about each other outside of the game, but while they're playing, they don't need anything more than that.

When the game ends, those same folks often will look at each other and ask if they want to play another game. Now the banter has expanded to phrases like "remember what happened last game!" As the event moves on, catching a quick snack can lead to conversations about any number of topics, even the controversial. But they are no longer talking as strangers. They're talking as friends who have shared the same moments together. Age, race, background, religion, politics, or anything that can often be a known or subconscious divide between people doesn't matter as much. They are more willing to have these deeper, challenging conversations with each other. They aren't random people anymore. They're part of a game group together.

The Power of Board Games to Create Joy

At the end of the day, games are about creating a joyous, memorable experience. A lot of the time this can be as simple as saying games are fun. But it goes beyond that. A challenging cooperative game that beats down the players at every turn can be a joyous experience even if you lose.

Games aren't always fun, but a good one will always be compelling, driving the players back to the table for another round. With each die rolled, card played, miniature moved, and board opened, we are telling stories to each other. We are creating something beautiful every time we clear some time to be with each other, face to face, to play. I have been playing these games my entire life. I look forward to the day that I can introduce my son as we discover new worlds together, and there is no greater value than that.

MIKE PERNA is founder of InnRoads Ministries, a non-profit that helps churches bring people together in meaningful community. MIKE pursues a life of sharing God with gamers.

Al Roggio inducted into Mansfield Christian School's Hall of Fame on 10/23/21



DECEMBER 2021

- 5 Pastor Eric preaching on "God with Us," Advent II: Faith.
- 12 Eric Byrom preaching on "God with Us," Advent III: Joy. 
- 15 GFC Christmas Party, 6:30-8 pm.
- 18 Men's monthly prayer breakfast, 9 am.
- 19 Eric Byrom preaching on "God with Us," Advent IV: Peace.
- 24 Christmas Eve Service, 7 to 8 pm.
- 25 Merry Christmas!
- 26 Elder Jadae Fox preaching on I Cor. 7:1-40. 
- 31 New Year's Eve family game night, 7-12 pm.

Stable Reflections *(concluded from p.1)*

- our stables of fear
- our stables of resentment of others
- our stables of pride
- our stables of unforgiveness

Thanks be to God that we don't have to pretend we have a nice clean inn of a life. He will make sure that our valleys are made high and our mountains are laid low, to prepare a way for the Lord. I find great comfort in that. "God and sinners reconciled."

Doug Jackson

(continued from p. 1)

Church was an essential part of his life. He began attending Grace Fellowship when he was in the 6th grade. Doug played drums alongside his father, Curtis, and he followed in his father's footsteps as a worship and percussion enthusiast. Worship was his life and he put his heart and soul into it! He was a leader within his church family, teaching the high school youth group in DTS, being an excellent leader of the Jackson Circle small group and a talented drummer on the worship team.

Most importantly, Doug was a devoted Christian who walked the walk of being Christlike. He was an active part of the worship team until his death. He was very loved by everyone who knew him as being a kind and giving man. He loved cooking and sharing meals with friends.

As a football player at Madison High School, the love of football continued and he shared his mother's love of the New England Patriots throughout his adult life. His devotion and honor to his "MaMa" was so evident in his daily caregiving heart and actions during her final years of health-related issues.

He is survived by his brother, Brandon McCluney; friends who were like parents, Jeff (and Jane) Conathan and their sons, Jeff and Joe; Andy (Marie) Heininger; his aunt Ann (Tony); his uncle Robert (Joyce) Jackson; special friends: Tom (Stephanie) Trittschuh; Coach Matt Godsil; Doug's dog, Squirt; and many friends, co-workers and family.

Family and friends may visit from 2-4 pm and 6-8 pm on Thursday, December 2, 2021, at Grace Fellowship Church, 365 Straub Rd. East. An additional

hour of calling hours will be held at the church prior to the service.

Pastor Eric Byrom will officiate at the funeral service on Fri. Dec. 3, 2021 at 10 am at the church. He will be buried in Mansfield Cemetery.

Teen Ministry was near and dear to Doug's heart. Please consider making a memorial donation in his honor to Teen Ministry at Grace Fellowship Church.

The Diamond Street Home of Wappner Funeral Directors is honored to serve the Jackson family.



“Do you have a special Christmas tradition or memory?”

Ray Nethery: “We would give each girl \$1 to buy a present for everyone in the family. It was always amazing to see what they came up with!”

Heiningers: “We write Christmas cards to Jesus.”

Susan Buzza: “Going to Maine for a week—the anticipation, the travel, stopping at L.L. Bean (sometimes at midnight) and seeing family.”

Nancy Solon: “We read the Christmas Story. This year we’re starting something new on Christmas Eve. We’re having a Top Chef Cookoff. The women are putting together the baskets of food, and the men are cooking. We’ll even have celebrity judges.”

Kay Berry: “When I grew up, my parents, sister and I celebrated Christmas by attending and usually participating in the wonderful Christmas Eve service at our church. Christmas was not Christmas for me without that time of worship.

“Several years ago, I started a tradition when my mom and sister’s family gather. I hand each one an envelope containing a gift of milk, food, Bible stories, etc. Each person reads aloud the gift. Then we each pray for the person(s) to whom the donations have been made. It’s a special family time.”

The Keys bake Christmas biscuits instead of cookies—no sugar!

The Zhus hide their Christmas stockings. One year Aaron hid them in the toilet. The stockings contained Connie’s freshly-baked bread! “*I was not amused,*” says Connie!

John Kurtz: “I remember my grandfather handing out savings bonds to all the cousins. Our family has a Birthday Party for Jesus the first thing on Christmas morning. We have an angel food cake (you can tolerate that kind early in the morning!) with a big candle in the middle. The youngest reader reads Luke 2 and we sing ‘Happy Birthday dear Jesus.’ Of course we have presents at a birthday party! One year Donna was buying a birthday tablecloth for this party when the checkout clerk said, ‘*Oh, does someone have a Christmas birthday?*’

‘*Yes—Jesus!*’ ”

Fill your home with Christmas carols

DONNA KURTZ

I’m not talking about “Up on the Housetop,” or “I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus.” Those are the ones the kids already know. Often my piano students come with Christmas songs they want to learn to play and I tell them, “*Sure it’s fun to play Jingle Bells. You can do that on your own. But let’s learn one you could play at church about the real meaning of Christmas. Sing it too!*”

For a whole month now we can teach theology! “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” has it all with spectacular music by Mendelssohn. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” is full of prophecy. The tune comes from the early years of the Christian Church.

You can’t go wrong with a good recording: “*Music from Harvard Square,*” the St. Paul’s Choir School of Boston. Boys grades 4-8 sing 19 carols, some well-known and others that are old but will be new to most of us. These boys are every bit as good as the Vienna Choir Boys. Enjoy!



Grace Fellowship Church

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|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Eric Byrom | Presiding Elder/Pastor |
| Jadaé Fox | Elder |
| Andy Heininger | Elder |
| Jon Vega | Elder |
| Rick Widener | Treasurer |
| Kay Berry & Karen Gates | Women |
| Lori Barker | Missions |
| Andy Heininger | Worship |
| Judy Nichols | Prayer Chain |
| Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox | Office |
| Kathy Barth, Manfred & Janet Adalem | Communion |
| Andy Anschutz | Sound/Power Point |
| John and Donna Kurtz | TrailNotes |