



**BRIARCLIFF**  
**BAPTIST CHURCH**

Love God, Love People, Make Disciples

**THE ILLUMINATOR**

A PUBLICATION OF BRIARCLIFF BAPTIST CHURCH

December 4, 2015

## *Happy Birthday Pastor Paul!*



*Thank you for your heart for Briarcliff Baptist church and seeing God's kingdom grow in this community. Wishing you a wonderful day as you celebrate your birthday, December 6.*

*~From the Personnel Team*



**BRIARCLIFF**  
**BAPTIST CHURCH**

*Christmas at BBC*



*Wednesday Night Corporate Prayer and Devotional*

## *The First Nativity*

*We've all heard (or will certainly hear in the days ahead) that famous line, in that famous song, "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas." I've always wondered though, "Does Christmas have a look?" I know that if I asked an interior decorator to design a "Christmas-themed" room, there would be lots of red and green, candles, bells, trees, and lights. But what if I asked Luke, the author of the New Testament gospel that bears his name, the same question? I bet his answer would be very different.*

*As I read Luke chapter 2, the narrative of Christ's birth, a very different portrait of Christmas is presented. This scene, the real Christmas, has nothing of the feeling or seasonal display that we know today. The scene is draped in rejection, poverty, and fear. The ostracized young couple, Joseph and Mary, can't find a proper place to sleep for the night. They're relegated to a smelly and dirty outdoor shed or cave surrounded by animals. Luke is clear; "there was no place for them." This isn't like the countless manger scenes we've seen in children's books. There's no peaceful serenity; but pain and uncertainty. The whole thing has the feeling of homelessness, pity, and sadness. There is no glow emanating from the baby, but rather, a shiver of the night's cold, subdued with a patchwork of cloths swaddling the child born to be King of the Jews. Is this the scene that brings us hope and joy this time of year?*

*This true Christmas scene, in all of its despair and brokenness, reminds us of the condition of the world that this newborn Savior came to redeem. It reminds us that Jesus came to a place that was muddy and fragmented where He would find people in the same condition. People like you and me, who are broken, filled with pain and sorrow, and not realizing our greatest need that only Jesus can meet. The nativity, so often depicted as cute, is actually a painful depiction of our sin. God was redeeming His rebellious world through the humility of a Son who descended from heaven to become a baby. This is where true hope is found. God meets us where we are, in the mud, dirt, and slime of sin and rebellion. It's a reminder that we never have to be alone in our sorrows, pain, and humiliation. The One who made the world entered it as a child and experienced all of its hardships and injustices so that by God's grace, He could be our comforter in the years to come.*

*Soli Deo Gloria,  
Pastor Paul Millarc*



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AS WE COME TO THE END OF 2015, WE AS A CHURCH, ARE LOOKING TO FINISH STRONG FINANCIALLY. WHEN WE BEGIN TO LOOK AHEAD IN OUR PLANNING OF MINISTRY FOR 2016, OUR FUTURE DREAMS AND GOALS ARE DEPENDENT ON HOW STRONG WE FINISH IN 2015. NOW IS THE TIME TO CATCH UP ON YOUR PERSONAL TITHING AND



GO ABOVE AND BEYOND IN THE OFFERING OF YOUR FINANCIAL GIFTS. TOGETHER, WE CAN IMPACT THE WORLD, AND GOD WILL USE OUR SACRIFICIAL GIVING TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES. PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER HOW GOD WOULD HAVE YOU GIVE SO THAT TOGETHER AS A CHURCH WE CAN FINISH STRONG. WE HAVE MANY SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN GIVE: ON-LINE, SCAN THE QR CODE, SEND IT IN, OR IN SERVICE ON SUNDAY.



## Staff Retreat

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED TO ALLOW OUR STAFF TO TAKE PART IN A RETREAT/PLANNING MEETING FOR 2016. THE OFFICE HOURS WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

**MONDAY, 8:30 AM—1 PM**

**TUESDAY, NOON—4 PM**

**WEDNESDAY, 8:30 AM—4 PM**

**THURSDAY, 8:30 AM—4 PM**

**FRIDAY, CLOSED**