



CARMEL MONTHLY

A PUBLICATION OF MT CARMEL COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

"How December 25 Became Christmas."

On December 25, Christians around the world will gather to celebrate Jesus' birth. Joyful carols, special liturgies, brightly wrapped gifts, festive foods—these all characterize the feast today, at least in the northern hemisphere. But just how did the Christmas festival originate? How did December 25 come to be associated with Jesus' birthday?

The Bible offers few clues: Celebrations of Jesus' Nativity are not mentioned in the Gospels or Acts; the date is not given, not even the time of year. The biblical reference to shepherds tending their flocks at night when they hear the news of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:8) might suggest the spring lambing season; in the cold month of December, on the other hand, sheep might well have been corralled. Yet most scholars would urge caution about extracting such a precise but incidental detail from a narrative whose focus is theological rather than calendrical.

The earliest mention of December 25 as Jesus' birthday comes from a mid-fourth-century Roman almanac that lists the death dates of various Christian bishops and martyrs. The first date listed, December 25, is marked: natus Christus in Betleem Judeae: "Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea."³ In about 400 C.E., Augustine of Hippo mentions a local dissident Christian group, the Donatists, who apparently kept Christmas festivals on December 25, but refused to celebrate the Epiphany on January 6, regarding it as an innovation. Since the Donatist group only emerged during the persecution under Diocletian in 312 C.E. and then remained stubbornly attached to the practices of that moment in time, they seem to represent an older North African Christian tradition.

In the East, January 6 was at first not associated with the magi alone, but with the Christmas story as a whole. So, almost 300 years after Jesus was born, we finally find people observing his birth in mid-winter. But how had they settled on the dates December 25 and January 6?

The most loudly touted theory about the origins of the Christmas date(s) is that it was borrowed from pagan celebrations. The Romans had their mid-winter Saturnalia festival in late December; barbarian peoples of northern and western Europe kept holidays at similar times. To top it off, in 274 C.E., the Roman emperor Aurelian established a feast of the birth of Sol Invictus (the Unconquered Sun), on December 25. Christmas, the argument goes, is really a spin-off from these pagan solar festivals. According to this theory, early Christians deliberately chose these dates to encourage the spread of Christmas and Christianity throughout the Roman world: If Christmas looked like a pagan holiday, more pagans would be open to both the holiday and the God whose birth it celebrated.

DECEMBER NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- 1st - Rosa Parks Day
- 2nd - Special Education Day
- 3rd - Roof Over Your Head Day
- 4th - National Cookie Day
- 5th - International Ninja Day
- 8th - National Brownie Day
- 9th - Christmas Card Day
- 10th - Human Rights Day
- 11th - National App Day
- 12th - Gingerbread House Day
- 13th - National Violin Day
- 14th - National Alabama Day
- 15th - National Wear Your Pearls Day
- 19th - National Hard Candy Day
- 21st - Crossword Puzzle Day
- 24th - Christmas Eve
- 25th - Christmas Day
- 26th - National Whiner's Day
- 28th - National Card Playing Day
- 29th - Tick Tock Day
- 30th - Bacon Day

**WATCH NIGHT
WORSHIP SERVICE**
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31ST
MORE DETAILS TBA

NEW BIBLE STUDY TIME
WEDNESDAYS AT 6PM
SEE YOU THERE!
IN-PERSON OR ON FACEBOOK LIVE!
708 N 5TH ST, STEUBENVILLE, OH 43082
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THE MOUNT CARMEL MUSIC MINISTRY PRESENTS



SUNDAY . DECEMBER 22ND . 10 AM

A closer look at what a Choir Rehearsal is really like!
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We Are A Community of Believers Transformed In Him To Be Agents Of Change In The Home, Church, Community, And The World.

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Check out our website
www.mtcarmelconnect.com
for all upcoming events!

GIVING TUESDAY
DECEMBER 3, 2024

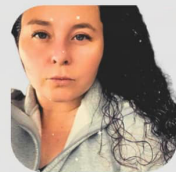
MOUNT ZION TRUSTEES PRESENTS



DECEMBER 7, 2024 | AMMISSION: \$10.00 | MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH
TIME: 5:00 | 221 NORTH 7TH STREET - STEUBENVILLE, OHIO 43952
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT MISSIONARY HAZEL SWEETENBERG @ 1 (540) 718-4208



YOUTH BAKING CLASS



Taught by:
MASTER CHEF AND BAKER
Alice Swaengen

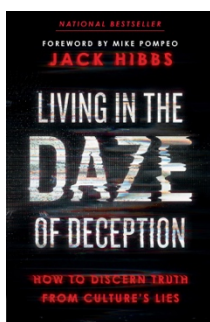
Wednesday, December 11, 2024
Starting @ 6:00 pm
221 North 7th Street
Steubenville, Ohio 43952

Pastor's Pick! Book of the Month!

Living in the Daze of Deception: How to Discern Truth from Culture's Lies by Jack Hibbs

Living in the Daze of Deception explores the many ways error is masquerading as truth—and how you can discern the difference. From pastor Jack Hibbs, you'll learn

- the characteristics of deceivers and how they have brought harm to both secular culture and the church
- the many deceptions that are altering and replacing the truth, and how to recognize them
- the keys to standing strong as the spiritual battles surrounding us intensify



This month, help us wish...

- Cheryl Johnson.... Charne Gilliam.... Glenn Freeman....
Kareese Minefield.... Laurene Stubbs....
Leroy Hilson Jr. Terrance Lawson....
Deounlee Young.... Gloria Martin....
Whitney Lawson.... Harriet Stackhouse....
Shayla Thompson.... Eliza Kelly.... Dazon Murray....
& Jordan Montgomery a...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Mt Carmel Community Baptist Church
708 North 5th St. Steubenville, OH 43953

Rev. Benjamin L. Calvert II, Pastor

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE
@10:00 AM

Wednesday Night Bible Study @ 6:00 PM

(740) 282-9257 | mtcarmel_c@comcast.net
www.mtcarmelconnect.com

