**CHRIST**mas **IS CALLING**

How is Christ calling you at Christmas-time?   Is it a time of year that you've considered a response to calling, or have you mostly considered it a time of celebration?   In the secular sense, Christmas calls to us through the music we hear, the displays in stores , shopping , TV shows, movies, parties, baking,  and the list goes on!

 As Christians the struggle is real as far as balancing the secular tugging with the spiritual call.  But if Advent is a season of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus then we need to see where God is calling us in the midst of the worldly activity to indeed be "prepared" for the birth of the Christ child.

The world was waiting for a Messiah and prophecy was about to be fulfilled.  But God did not want to do it alone, he chose ordinary people to be a part of this great event! Thankfully, the people God chose responded!

Mary, visited by angel Gabriel, was unsure of how she could bear a child being that she was a virgin.  But she answered God's call and responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled."

Then Joseph was called upon by God to be the father.  Joseph too had an initial response of leaving the situation in order to not disgrace Mary publicly.  Yet after a holy visit by an angel in his dream he heard that this was the doing of the Holy Spirit and that he was called to stay with Mary and have the child and name him Jesus.  When Joseph woke up he did as the angel of Lord instructed him to do and took Mary as his wife.

After the birth of Christ, the callings continued.  The Magi, following a star in the sky, felt called to visit and worship the Christ child  and the shepherds responded to the angels that appeared to them in the fields while they were working, to go visit the Christ child.

What brought all of these people together ?  God!  And he still brings his people together today to respond to the Christ child and we can't help but be changed by this beautiful event!

Jesus' birth required the response of God's people to respond to a call.

What about you ?  Where is Christ calling you this season and in the days ahead?  Or where has he already called you to that you can further his message of hope, peace,  love  and joy?

Random thoughts and Ideas:

Each week could emphasize a Biblical person's response to God's call and allow us to examine how that person's call relates to us today:

Week 1: Mary-  the HOPE of having a child, the hope for new life in our spiritual walk

Week 2: Joseph  - the PEACE he received when he accepted the dream's message, the peace we receive when we accept God's word

Week 3: The Magi -  the LOVE they showed by bringing gifts, the love we show by following God's guidance

 Week 4: Shepherds- the JOY they demonstrated by running to where Jesus way lying in his manger, the joy we receive when we set down our work to run to the joy of our relationship with God.