



Lighthouse of Iowa

Keeping in touch with Iowa's Churches of Christ

January 2024

Anno Domini and Dionysius Exiguus

We are all familiar with the terms B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini—in the year of our Lord) as a way of distinguishing the eras before and after the coming of Jesus Christ. We may also be familiar with the recent non-Christian terminology of B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and C.E. (the Common Era). What those two ways of referring to the same thing share in common is that they presume the same calendar—by which I mean they presume the same way of dating Jesus' birth.

But as any New Testament scholar will tell you, this presumption doesn't stand on very solid ground. We know something about the timing of the death of Herod of Great, and clearly Jesus had to be born before Herod died, else those Christmas stories in Matthew 1-2 are wide of the mark.

Scholars will tell you, based on evidence from Josephus and other contemporary sources, that Herod died somewhere around 4 B.C. It may have been a little before then, or it may have been a little after then, but in any case, it was well before what we now call "the beginning of the Christian era."

This in turn means that Jesus was born in B.C., which of course sounds very odd. How could Jesus be born "Before Christ," inquiring minds want to know. As it happens, it's all because of a monk known as Dionysius Exiguus (the latter Latin word meaning "the humble").

Dionysius was born in Scythia Minor, which is somewhere in modern Romania or Bulgaria, and he lived from about 470 to 544 A.D. He was a learned monk who moved to Rome and became well known for translating many ecclesiastical canons from Greek into Latin, including the famous decrees from the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon.

Ironically, he also wrote a treatise on elementary mathematics. I say ironically because what he is most famous for is the "Anno Domini" calculations that were used to number the years of both the Gregorian and the adjusted Julian calendars.

The crucial point is that he dated the current consulship of Probus Junior as 525 years after "*the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" To be honest, we have no idea how he made this calculation, but it was a momentous one. It became the basis for our modern calendar separating B.C. from A.D. Interestingly, there may have been a theological reason for Dionysius arguing for this computation; namely he wanted to silence those who were suggesting that Jesus would return exactly 500 years after the birth of Jesus.

It was not, however, until the famous Venerable Bede of Durham, England, adopted Dionysius's "*Anno Domini*" calculations to date the events in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. It was not until he completed that work in 731, that the calendar of Dionysius became the standard one that we follow even until today.

One final note: Dionysius did not calculate for a 0 year between B.C. and A.D., thus every century in our era begins with the year 1. For instance, the 21st century did not begin with the year 2000 but rather with the year 2001. What this shows is that moderns can become just as confused as ancients when it comes to reckoning times and eras. We shouldn't be too hard on Dionysius, you're only as good as your sources of information. In any case, what really matters for Christians at Christmas is not so much when Jesus came but that he came and changed the world.

Source: Ben Witherington III. <https://library.biblicalarchaeology.org/>

Chariton

Meeting times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. (no evening services)

Location: Call for information.

For information call: Albert Schreck (641) 535-2381 or Brian Schreck (641) 203-2137

- Quiet month in Chariton.



January Birthdays

- None

January Anniversaries

- None

Dean Avenue

Meeting times: Sundays: 9:30 a.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 6:30 p.m.

Location: 2907 Dean Ave., Des Moines, Iowa / P.O. Box 57398, Pleasant Hill, IA 50327

For information call: John McNeece (515) 263-9428

- Quiet month at Dean.

January Birthdays:

- ☆ None

January Anniversaries:

- ☆ None

Fairview

Meeting times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m

Location: 1001 S. 22nd St, Clarinda, Iowa 51632

For information call: Richard Negley (712)695-9001 or Marvin Negley (712)303-7106

[News received: Wed, Dec 13, 3:12 PM]

- Our hearts were saddened this past week with the **passing of our sister in Christ, Jean Negley.** But we are rejoicing in her life well lived and her devotion to her family, church and community. She leaves behind her husband, Marvin, of almost 60 years; also three sons Paul, Van, and Mark, along with the in-laws (7) grandchildren and many other friends and family.

January Birthdays:

- ☆ None

January Anniversaries:

- ☆ None

Martensdale

Meeting Times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. & Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.
Location: 10985 44th Lane, Prole, Iowa (1.5 miles east of Martensdale, IA on Hwy. 92)
Website: martensdalechurchofchrist.com
For information call: Duane Proudfit (515) 961-4470 or Mike Penick (515) 681-0279

- Mary Proudfit has been moved to the Willows memory care facility in Indianola. **Her new address is:**
Willows
Room 1340
1203 North E Street
Indianola, IA 50125
- Phyllis Bown was admitted to the hospital for pneumonia and RSV. She is back home but very tired. Dick has also been very sick. **Their address is:**
10392 55th Avenue
Prole, IA 50229
- Trent, Leah, Eva and Josie Fiorentin from the Vandalia Church of Christ met with us on Sunday, December 31st. Trent gave a good sermon on sowing good seeds and how we treat others and the impact it can make.
- Dave & Christy Henderson hosted a New Eve's Party at their home.
- There has been a lot of sickness going around our church family at Martensdale.

Visitors:

- Stephanie, Ada, Allie, Anna & E.J. Stephens
- Steve, Cerine, Amelia & Maylee Proudfit
- Kirk, Bethany & Killian Ford
- Sue Schreck
- Adam & Judah Purdy
- Trent, Leah, Eva and Josie Fiorentin
- Gerry, Ashley, Aella, Felix and Rowan Fenton

January Birthdays

- ☆ Hugh Ingle - January 9

January Anniversaries

- None

Pleasant Hill

Meeting Times: Sundays: 9:30 a.m. ♦ Wednesdays: 6:30 p.m.
Location: 5091 E. University, Pleasant Hill, Iowa
Website: pleasanthillchurchofchrist.org
Contacts: Mike Warner 515-967-4529 / Marty Williamson 515-556-2394 / Marc Hermon 515- 554-3567

Announcements: ♥ Heartfelt Love & Prayers:

- It is with sad hearts that we share sister-in-Christ, Pam Sorensen, passed away on December 22. Pam struggled with health issues for the past few years. **Most recently her quality of life was very difficult** and, unfortunately, there seemed to be no medical answers. On Thursday evening she fell and was taken to Mercy Hospital where she passed. Pam was 13 years old when she along with Patricia and

Pamela Warren were baptized at Pleasant Hill Church of Christ on October 29, 1961.

- **During Pam's adult life,** she was an enthusiastic Real Estate Agent, loved spending time with



her family (especially attending niece's activities), provided care for her mother Dessie, enjoyed golf at Toad Valley, and was an active Sunday morning Bible school teacher.

For many years Pam created/printed the weekly Pleasant Hill Church of Christ Sunday morning bulletin. She also participated in organizing children's songbooks, cookbooks, a 25th-anniversary album, and supplied a large number of muffins and breads which were delivered to brethren during the pandemic.

Heartfelt love & prayers to the Sorensen, Albright, Goltra families, and, of course, to all the Brady and Pleasant Hill church family. May everyone find comfort & strength in the promises of God.

- Marilyn McClurg had another hospitalization at Mercy Hospital this month. She is now recovering and gaining strength at Waukee Independence Legacy Pointe skilled care facility. Please encourage her with love!
- Tim and Tammy Brady are wintering in Florida now. Praise God Tim's doctors were amazed at Tim's incredible healing and recovery from hip replacement. He nearly recovered in a one-week window! Larry & Bev Brady will join them in Florida during the months of February & March.

- We enjoyed visits from Brandon Ingle and Carson George this month. Carson lives in Arizona and teamed up with cousins for work in that area. Heartfelt congratulations to Brandon for graduating first in his class from the Iowa Police Academy. This month Brandon begins training to be deployed this upcoming year as a helicopter pilot.
- Many brothers and sisters in Christ were ill or traveled this month. We are grateful to the Lord for His protection and healing.
- Praise God that many of our youth attended this year's Winter Youth Rally with Doug Twaddell at Gregory church of Christ! Be sure to ask Leah, Malachi, Taylor, Josiah, Alivia, Shea, and Gabriel what they learned and hear about their valuable experiences!
- Iowa Traveling Bible Study hosts are needed for 2024. Contact Marc Hermon or Alan Klein if you're interested in providing this good work. We are looking for an immediate need to host on January 27.

January Birthdays

Denise Waits – 1/1
 Doug Bown – 1/31

January Anniversaries

☆ Rosann & Cliff Van Vleet – 1/8

Vandalia

Meeting Times: Sunday: 9:30 a.m. and Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.
Location: 2.5 miles east of Runnells, Iowa on F70, then 1 mile north on 131st St.
For information call: Greg Ingle (515) 994-2824 or Charles Ingle (515) 238-3316
Website: <https://vandaliacoc.com>

- Quiet month at Vandalia.



January Birthdays

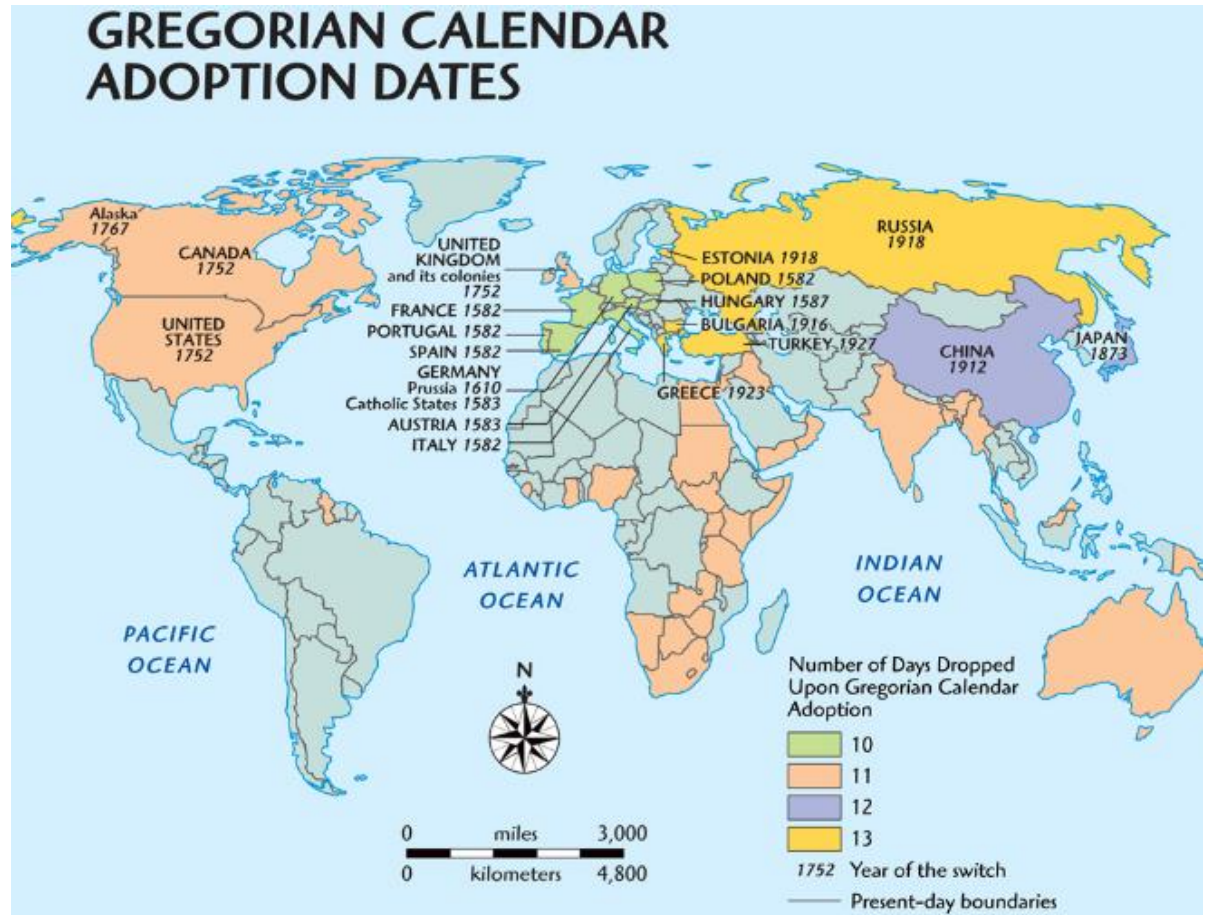
☆ None

January Anniversaries

☆ None

What calendar do we use today?

- Today, the vast majority of the world uses what is known as the Gregorian calendar.
- The Gregorian calendar was decreed in 1582 by the papal bull 'Inter gravissimas' by Pope Gregory XIII, to correct an error in the Julian calendar that was causing erroneous calculation of the date of Easter.
- , The Gregorian calendar replaced the Julian calendar, which was the most used calendar in Europe until this point.
- The Gregorian calendar lasts for a approximately 365.24 days; this means that most years have 365 days, with one extra day being added every fourth year, unless the year is divisible by 100 but not 400 (for example, the year 2000 was a leap year, whereas 2100 and 2200 will not be).



- The change had been adopted by the Italian states, Portugal, Spain, and the Roman Catholic German states.
- Gradually, other countries adopted the Gregorian calendar: the Protestant German states in 1699, Great Britain and its colonies in 1752, Sweden in 1753, Japan in 1873, China in 1912, the Soviet socialist republics in 1918, and Greece in 1923. Islamic countries tend to use the Gregorian calendar for secular life but retain calendars based on Islam for religious purposes.