

# THE CHURCH FAMILY

*Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ*

## FROM YOUR PASTOR by Scott Deneen

In a book about Christmas I've been reading the author wrote about a woman who had terminal cancer. She declined to the point of being moved to a Hospice House where she knew she wouldn't live to Christmas. The author, who is a pastor, went to pray with her.

As he sat beside her bed she said to him, "I guess I'm going to miss Advent this year." The author just nodded to convey he heard her words. Later on, though, after he reflected on the implications of her words and the theological ramifications of Advent, he wished he had said, "That's ok. Advent will come to you. In fact Advent is already here."

What the author meant was that Advent – the coming of Christ – was not only a historical reality celebrated each year in late December, it is also a spiritual reality where the Lord comes near to His people in the Spirit of Christ every day, all day long. He is Immanuel in the fullest and richest aspects – God with us.

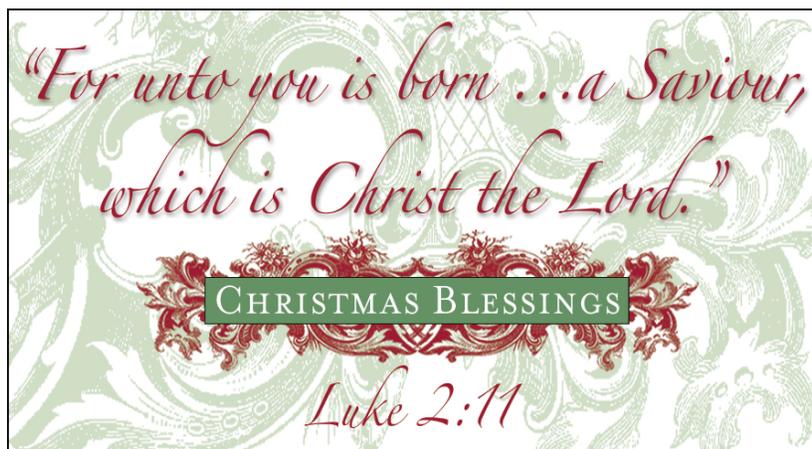
So as we begin the Advent Season by focusing on the birth of Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago, let us also be reminded that God is always coming near to us with offers of grace, mercy, and consolation by way of the Spirit. Though we are separated chronologically from Christ by thousands of years, and physically separated due to His ascension, yet He is as near to us now as the breath in our lungs and the blood in our veins.

Therefore, we can offer hope to people during the Christmas holiday by pointing to Jesus' entrance into the world at the manger, AND we can offer hope to people throughout the year by pointing to God's ongoing invitation to embrace this same Jesus who continues interceding at God's right hand.

So enjoy the Advent Season... it stretches on forever in Christ.

Blessings,

*Scott*



## PASTOR STEVE'S CORNER

On Saturday November 5, I was so encouraged to see the men of our church come together for service and for recreation. In the morning we had men serving Jesus on 10 different work sites. There were men replacing a collapsed bathroom ceiling for a single mom, repairing water damaged flooring for a cancer survivor, working at the King's Daughter's house, helping widows to clean out gutters/do home repairs/chop wood/yard work, landscaping at the church and pulling out the Christmas scenes in preparation for our church's annual outreach event Dec. 14-16. In all these areas the men were being the hands and feet of Jesus to our community. I want to thank them for their servant hearts and willingness to give of their time and talents to Kingdom work.

God has designed men to enjoy spending time together. The men had a great time serving together, then they feasted together (a delicious low country boil) and played together (tug-of-war, archery range, rock heaving, and log throwing.) This was a little bit of heaven on earth: a great banqueting table, laughter, fellowship, and service to the King. It reminds me of the verse "*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!*" Psalm 133:1 When men come together in God-honoring service and fellowship, the Lord is pleased and men are blessed.

In His Service,



## PRAYING FOR MISSIONARIES

**Thank you** to each one who has been praying for a missionary family this year.



Now would be a good time to send them a Christmas card. You can find the addresses in our church directory. Remember that it takes extra postage if you are sending a card outside the USA.

**Thank you** to the 384 people who have made a commitment to pray regularly for one or more missionaries in 2017.

You can find your prayer guide bookmarks and refrigerator magnets in the "P Mailboxes" next week.



**Thank you** to those who work behind the scenes throughout the year, sending out the prayer letters as they come in (Tracy McMinn) and posting the current letters on the missionary bulletin boards (Sharon Morton).

## CHRISTMAS SCENES UPDATE

The opening of “A Christmas Journey” is just around the corner! Here are a few important things for you to know:

1. **DRAMA PRACTICE: Sunday, Dec. 4 at 11:30am.** If you have a drama part in the production, we will be meeting after church in Founders Hall for lunch and drama practice. We should be done by 1:00.
2. **DRESS REHEARSAL: Sunday, Dec. 11 at 5:30pm.** Our only chance to do a full run through of the production. This is critical for **all drama participants, all greeters, parking lot/security crew, basically everyone who will be involved.** A light meal will be provided.
3. **PRODUCTION TIMES:**  
**Wednesday, Dec. 14** - Opening and VIP night. Be here by 6pm, production starts at 6:30.  
**Thursday, Dec. 15** - First Public Night. Be here by 6pm, production starts at 6:30.  
**Friday, Dec. 16** - Second Public Night. Be here by 6pm, production starts at 6:30.  
For **everyone** involved we will roll out the red carpet with a private Cast and Crew Break Room featuring delicious food prepared especially for you. Friday night everyone is invited to stay after the final curtain call for a big Cast and Crew Pizza Party!
4. **CLEAN UP DAY: Saturday, Dec. 17 at 10am.** Help pack everything away until next year!

### **OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES:**

**PRAYER TEAM:** There are still 1/2-hour slots available for our “prayer chair” during the event. Email SaDara at [sadarast@att.net](mailto:sadarast@att.net) to sign up.

**FOOD TEAM:** If you are baking cookies (4 dozen) please have them in a disposable air-tight container or bag labeled "Christmas Journey" and deliver them to the church kitchen no later than Wednesday morning December 14.

### **FINALLY:**

**TAKE A CHRISTMAS JOURNEY FLYER AND INVITE A FRIEND SO THAT...**

*"Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."* Romans 15:21



## WITH LOVING THANKS

*I would like to thank the men of FPC. On your recent man work day several men and young men came to my home to cut, split and stack enough firewood to keep me warm all winter long. When Roger got sick he was comforted knowing that our church would help me when I was in need. Thank you again for your willingness to give up your time and muscle and especially for your heart to serve Christ.*

*God has blessed me in so many ways through FPC.*

*Sherry Wagstaff*



## FPC P-MAIL IS BACK IN BUSINESS!

Send Christmas cards through the FPC mail system. Boxes can be found in the main hallway. Just place cards in the boxes based on the first letter of the recipient's last name.

Remember to check your appropriate box for cards addressed to your family!

## 2017 BUDGET

The 2017 Budget has been approved by the Session. You can find copies of the budget on the brochure display in the main hallway.



## WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

We are glad to report that **Suzy Deneen** is at home recovering from her surgery. The surgery went well. She will meet with the surgeon and then with the medical oncologist in the near future to get a plan for the treatment process.

Our sympathies are extended to **Judy and Mike Dixon and family** in the death of Judy's brother, **Michael Schwab** of Raleigh. Michael died unexpectedly on November 21 while hospitalized for treatment of a kidney stone. To complicate matters, Judy fell just prior to the funeral and broke her shoulder. Her accident and hospitalization caused her to miss the service. She is anticipating surgery in the near future.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

### 9:45 AM CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

We will have a congregational meeting at 9:45 AM for the purpose of electing officers for 2017. You can find a list of the officer candidates along with their brief biographies and each man's Christian testimony and sense of call to office in the November 2 newsletter. Be in prayer about this matter and come prepared to vote on Sunday.



### 10:15 am Worship and Communion

We will observe the Lord's Supper during the morning worship service. Review the following questions for self-examination in preparation for Communion.

- (1) Do I really acknowledge myself to be a sinner?
- (2) Do I recognize that it was my sin which caused Christ's death?
- (3) Do I understand that I cannot contribute one thing to my salvation, that it is all God's free gift to me?
- (4) Do I believe that Christ's work--and it alone--is what saves me?
- (5) Have I believed in Christ Jesus to the extent that I have put my full trust and reliance in him as my only assurance of salvation?
- (6) Have I committed myself to show true thankfulness to God in my whole life?
- (7) Am I sincerely trying to walk faithfully with him?
- (8) Am I honestly endeavoring to live an upright life and to live in love and peace with my neighbor – especially those other members of the church, the “body of Christ”?
- (9) Do I earnestly desire to follow Christ and leave my sin behind? In other words, am I living a life marked by true repentance?

*Do this in  
remembrance  
of me.*

Luke 22:19



# Birthdays to Celebrate in December

16 Caitlin Bumgardner

17 Brenner McMinn

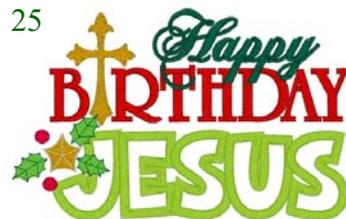
18 David Griffin  
Craig Mesimer  
Jerry Ratchford

19 Mona Kelly

20 Bobby Blackman, II  
Hannah Mosely

22 Janice Barton  
Mark Hicks  
Patrick Rhyne  
Skip Ribbeck

23 Hayley Rutkowski  
Roxi Rutledge



26 Ellen Beam  
Joseph Treat

28 Julia Treat

29 Michael Ham  
Phyllis Withers

30 David Rust

31 Carly White

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Senior Pastor, Scott Deneen • Assistant Pastor, Steve Jessen  
Worship 10:15 AM • Sunday School 9:00 AM



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