



New Hope Presbyterian Church

December 2013

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE
WE WILL SERVE THE LORD
JOSHUA 24:15

A Message From Keith

Friends in Christ,

Can you imagine Joseph, Mary's willing husband, hunched over a monitor telling Mary when she's about to have a contraction? Can you imagine Mary trying to decide whether to let the nurses take the Son of God into the nursery at night so she can get some sleep? Can you imagine the look on Jesus' face when they slip the anti-theft device on his ankle?

It's hard for us to imagine what that scene in the stable was like so many years ago. We speculate on the surroundings and who was there, but the reality is that we simply don't know. We have the Gospel accounts, but anyone who claims to know

for certain more than that has seen better scholarship than I have.

The actual event happened years ago, but the cosmic ramifications still reverberate in our hearts and lives today. Almighty God taking on human flesh and dwelling in our midst matters more than we can begin to understand. Not only do we have consolation in knowing that God understands what it feels like to be human, but also we can have hope for the future because of the sinless life and perfect sacrifice that Jesus Christ offered.

Christmas changed everything, and each Christmas is a chance for us to remember the perfect gift that we have been given.

Each Christmas is a chance for us to look forward in hope, to peer boldly beyond the horizon of today, through the veil of death and into the realm of the eternal, where God sits upon his throne and beckons us closer. Each Christmas is a chance to look around at the present, to celebrate our blessings and examine our shortcomings, working to make our lives a pleasing offering to God.

As we celebrate Christmas, may we celebrate the strength and wisdom of God that came down to earth in the form of a child, and may we give thanks that God is a God of redemption, peace, hope, joy and love.

In Christ,
Keith

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Elder of the Month

December
Troy Ivey

DECEMBER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

12/01/13 "An Account" - Luke 1:1-25

12/08/13 Cantata

12/15/13 "Leaping In The Womb"- Luke 1:39-56

12/22/13 Youth Choir

12/24/13 "God With Us" - Luke 2:1-7

12/29/13 "Witnesses" - Luke 2:8-21



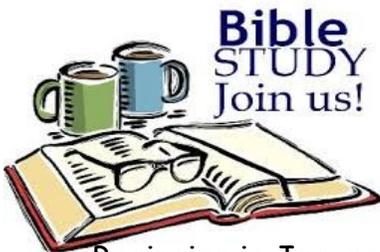
Adopted Grandparents Program

Mark your calendar!!
On Sunday, December 8th,
immediately following
the Worship Service,
we will have a
luncheon and program
for all adopted grandparents
and children.
Please plan to attend
to renew friendships
or begin new ones.



Service of Healing and Wholeness

For all the joy associated with the Christmas season, it can also be a very difficult time. For those who are sick, it's easy to long for the energy and health to gather and celebrate. We think about who isn't gathered around the Thanksgiving table or who isn't coming over for Christmas, and we struggle to make it through the days without tearing up. It's a stressful time. As a community of faith, we're called to support one another. As the people of God, we acknowledge God's presence in our mourning and call upon his healing power. On December 22nd at 6:00 pm, we'll gather in the sanctuary for a service of healing and wholeness, leaning into the redemptive love of God.



"The Fruit of the Spirit" Coming in January 2014

Beginning in January make plans to join us on Sunday evenings for a 10-week Discussion Group on Galatians 5:22, "The Fruit of the Spirit" Please speak with Andy Sanislo for more information or details.

More About Finances

Last month we began to publish our monthly giving and expense information in an effort to give you a better understanding of the financial situation of our church and where your money goes. Each month, our expenses average \$13,040. In October our giving was \$13,395. However, monthly figures can be misleading due to the nature of church giving. This can vary greatly from month to month. To expand on these figures, our total yearly giving as of the end of October was \$119,961. Our expenses during that time were \$130,400. As you can see, this gives us a shortfall of \$10,439. While this may even out during the months of November and December, you can see that it greatly effects our ability to meet all of our obligations including mission, outreach and Presbytery in a timely manner.

In the coming months Session will be looking at ways to help ease this issue and meet our obligations in a more timely manner. If you have any suggestions, please let a Session member know or drop them off in the office.





Re-Dedication Thank You



Thank you to all who made the re-dedication of the McMillan Building a success. My husband, Raymond, enjoyed working on the building when the church first began Sunday and Wednesday worship services. The dedication on November 10th reminded me he was one of many who used their talents/spiritual gifts to assist in providing a place for worship and fellowship.

Also, in addition to the mission and activities at New Hope, it is gratifying to know that New Hoppers want the appearance of the grounds and buildings to honor God and are willing to provide resources for this effort.

Mary McMillan



Our children's dresses are still in progress and we thank all those that donated pillowcases, fabric and bias tape, as well as helped with fashioning the dresses. We had a fun work day on Nov. 9th with Phuong Tran and Lizz Savard sewing and Gerai Kocher and Marilyn Suber cutting and pressing. When we have completed the dresses, we plan to display them in the Narthex before they are shipped to Kenya.

Our heartfelt thank you to everyone that contributed to the PW Thank Offering on Nov. 10th; the offering totaled \$1,056! It is a tremendous joy for us to be able to do our part in supporting mission work all over the world and we are looking forward to learning next year what grants were awarded from the 2013 offering and to whom they were given. Thank you for your love and generosity.

- Mon. Dec. 2 12:00 Noon PW Board Meeting - McMillan Building
- Tues. Dec. 3 12:15 p.m. Lunch at Beyond the Garden Gate, Ooltewah
- Tues. Dec. 10 10:00 a.m. Circle meeting & lunch at Teena Bledsoe's home

We invite all the women of New Hope to join us!

Please RSVP to Teena Bledsoe if you plan to attend either or both lunches. 423-892-1672



New Hope Presbyterian Mission Statement

We seek to fulfill Christ's greatest commandment to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, by assuaging the hunger of our neighbors and ourselves for food, fellowship, and faith to satisfy the body's longing for sustenance, the heart's longing for belonging and the spirit's longing for connection with the Triune God, revealed to us most fully in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life. Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite - telling them to help themselves to the coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of our problems and stress. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases, it is just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups...And then you began eyeing each other's cups."

"Now consider this," he continued... "Life is the coffee. The jobs, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life, and the type of cup we have does not define nor change the quality of life we live. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided us."

God brews the coffee, not the cups... Enjoy your coffee!

"The happiest people don't have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything they have. Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly...and leave the rest to God."

(Borrowed from the Trinity Presbyterian Church Newsletter)



Thank you! Your generosity abounds, and I believe that God uses our generosity to plant seeds in the hearts of others. Through your faithful \$.02/meal giving, we're able to provide sack packs to the kids at East Brainerd Elementary. Also, the Outreach Committee committed to funding a reward program at the school as well as providing food for needy families at Thanksgiving.

STAFF

Pastor

Rev. Keith W. Jones

Music Director

Janet Sump

Organist

Larisa Abrahamyan

Office Secretary

Debbie Cessna

★
For
unto
you is
born this
day in the
city of David
a saviour, which
is Christ the Lord.
Luke
2:11