

FIRST FAMILY NEWS



December 2016/
January 2017

OUR SECOND CENTURY TOGETHER

Rejoice, Advent is Here!

Advent

*A Season of Hope
& Expectation*

Recently I saw a survey regarding the most popular Christmas songs played this time of year. They are 1) *The Christmas Song*, 2) *White Christmas*, 3) *Winter Wonderland*, and 4) *Sleigh Bells*. I find it interesting that they are all secular songs that focus on the “warm fuzzies” and sentimental feelings of the season. There are no Christian or religious songs here.

These songs say something that is at the center of this season of self-indulgence and unbridled commercialism. The songs of the “holidays” urge us to be full of joy and merriment because we have been blessed. Because of all these good things that fill our lives now, we ought to be joyful and sing. In many cases we are encouraged and even pressured to spend and buy gifts, often beyond our means, as a way to insure that life is really pretty good. Self-aggrandizement becomes self-congratulations.

The explicit Christian Advent carols we sing at this time of year also express joy and happiness, but with one big difference. In these songs the source of our joy is not in the blessings of the now. We are not rejoicing because we can buy experience gifts and have lavish parties. No, the source of our joy is strangely in the past. It is an event that took place 2000 years ago; the birth of a poor child in an obscure place in an obscure time.

We as Disciples of Christ, are in the season of Advent, a season where the church refuses to be caught up in our culture’s self-indulgent plunge into the “now.” We seek to refuse to collapse into the season of Christmas. I read where one Lutheran pastor of a large and successful church decided to turn the four weeks of Advent into the four weeks of Christmas and move the season of Advent (he preferred to call it “pre-Christmas”) back into early November.

It is so easy to deuce our relationship with God backwards from our experience of the present. And since all of us want to believe that God is good, likes us just the way we are, it is all too effortless to just “celebrate the holidays” and have ourselves a “merry Christmas.”

But letting the season of Advent remain Advent and refusing to collapse it into the season of Christmas is very important. It is not just to prod everyone’s desire to get an early start on Christmas. No, on the contrary, it promises to truly let Christmas be Christmas and have its joy be grounded on something more permanent and enduring than the fleeting fluctuations and permutations of the *now*.

My Prayer this Advent Season

Creator of All, we begin our Advent journey to the lowly stable where the Christ Child was born. Be with us in our journey, we pray, and help us find the true meaning of this world-shacking event. May we learn to put our faith in a kingdom based on justice and righteousness, and commit ourselves anew to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen



The office will be closed from Monday, December 26th until Tuesday, January 3rd.

A Page of Laughter for Christmas

Top Ten Things To Say About A Christmas Gift You Don't Like

10. Hey! There's a gift!
9. Well, well, well ...
8. Boy, if I had not recently shot up 4 sizes that would've fit.
7. This is perfect for wearing around the basement.
6. Gosh. I hope this never catches fire! It is fire season though. There are lots of unexplained fires.
5. If the dog buries it, I'll be furious!
4. I love it -- but I fear the jealousy it will inspire.
3. Sadly, tomorrow I enter the Federal Witness Protection Program.
2. To think -- I got this the year I vowed to give all my gifts to charity.

And the Number One Thing to say about a Christmas gift you don't like:

1. "I really don't deserve this."

Grandma's Christmas Strategy

One Christmas, a mother decided she was no longer going to remind her kids to send thank you notes. Consequently, the kids' grandmother never received any thanks for the Christmas checks she sent to the kids.

The very next Christmas, all the kids stopped by in person to thank their grandmother for their checks.

When asked by a friend what caused this change in behavior, the grandmother replied, "Simple. This year I didn't sign the checks."

Santa and The UFO

Two aliens in a UFO are zooming through earth's atmosphere. Suddenly they're surprised by a flying sleigh carrying a large human in a red suit. The sleigh is moving at near hyper-speed. It's powered by eight hooved animals with large antennae coming out of their heads.

One alien exclaims to the other, "No way we can invade this planet! Their technology's too advanced."



A Christmas Wish

When a father asked his little boy what he wanted for Christmas, the boy replied, "A baby sister."

As it turned out, the wife was pregnant, and delivered on Christmas Eve. On Christmas day she brought home a brand new baby sister for their son.

The next year, when the father asked his little boy what he wanted for Christmas, the boy said, "If it wouldn't make mommy too uncomfortable, I'd like a pony."

The Optimist

Little Susie had been born with a sunny disposition, and was the most optimistic kid anybody had ever seen.

She loved people and animals, and no matter what happened, she always saw the bright side.

She was also an artistic girl. So one Christmas, her parents got her a big bag of clay for making pottery. They put it on the back porch next to a bag of horse manure for the garden.

On Christmas Eve, dad wrapped the presents. It was a little dark on the porch, and as you may have guessed, he wrapped the manure by mistake, instead of the pottery clay.

On Christmas morning, Susie was so excited to see what Santa had brought her. When she finally got to unwrap her big present, her parents watched with anticipation to see how much she liked her clay.

When Susie opened the package, and then the bag inside containing several pounds of stinky horse manure, the parents were aghast.

But before they could apologize, Susie said, "Oh boy! I got a pony!"

Deadline for the February Newsletter is Thursday, January 19

December Birthdays

2 Gen Ashby
3 Andrew Jensen
8 Reba Thompson
9 Julie Thompson
12 Stephen Westbrook
14 Elizabeth Anders
17 Doug Carlisle
19 Julie Mowrey
23 Sophia Coker



December Anniversaries

7 Scott & Leigh Britt



December FRF

There will be no FRF in December.

One Service

There will be one service on Christmas Day & New Year's Day. Both will begin at 10:00 a.m.



December Worship Helpers

December 4: 10:50 Reader - Marilyn Parks
Communion Meditation -
December 11: 10:50 Reader - Jimmy Peebles
Communion Meditation - Dorrie Toth
December 18: 10:50 Reader - Marilyn Parks
Communion Meditation -
December 25: 10:50 Reader - Julie Thompson
Communion Meditation - Joey Baker

Upcoming Dec. / Holiday Dates

December 4th: Leadership Council Meeting
December 11th: Cantata
December 11th: Congregational Meeting
December 17th: Live Nativity 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Presentations at 6:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
December 24th: Christmas Eve Service at 5:30 p.m.
December 25th: Christmas Service at 10:00 a.m.
January 1st: New Year's Day Service at 10:00 a.m.

Live Nativity

Our church family will present a live nativity on Saturday, December 17th from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. It will be a meaningful time for our church to come together and reach out to our community. There are many ways to be involved from inviting your friends and neighbors to baking cookies. Would you consider being in the cast? We'll need quite a few shepherds and wisemen. Perhaps you could greet people and serve cookies and hot chocolate? Please contact Pamela for more information.



December Elders/Deacons

Serving at the Table

Elders: Julie Thompson & Sanford Thompson
Deacons: Brian Ballew, Libby Ballew, Karla Johnson

Servant-Leaders

Greeter: Libby Ballew
Communion Preparation: Mary Jo Alvord & Gen Ashby

January Birthdays

- 1 Connie Worrel
- 4 Jim Mowrey
- 8 Richard Holden
- 14 Ashlyn Parks
- 15 Nicholas Anders
- 18 Melissa McAfee
- 25 Elizabeth Clackum
- 30 Noah Ramirez



January Anniversaries

- 8 Jim & Eileen McCollough

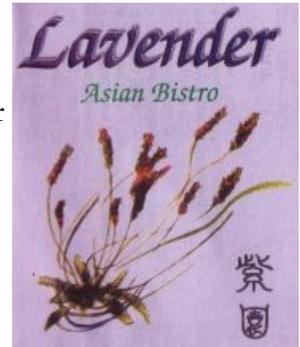


Family Promise Updates

Thanks for all of the **generous contributions** for the **Salt Light Center Blessing Bags**. We were able to fill 50 bags and have extra items to be used the next time. There is a great need for these items at the Salt Light Center for homeless women and children. When there is a full house at the Salt Light Center, 77 Blessing Bags are needed each week. The need is greater with the cold weather upon us. We will have another Blessing Bag drive soon.

January FRF

Join us on Tuesday, January 17th at 7:00 p.m. for our next FRF at Lavender Asia Bistro, located at 1195 Scenic Hwy S, Suite C8, Lawrenceville, GA 30045.



January

Youth Spaghetti Lunch

The annual Youth Spaghetti lunch will be Sunday, January 22nd after the 10:50 a.m. service. The cost is a love offering, which the Youth will take with them to the Youth Assembly in February as their offering towards Disciples Missions.



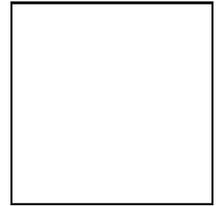
January Elders/Deacons

Servers for January will be in the weekly e-gram as they become available



First Family News

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

LFCC Staff

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jay White
Music Director: Kim Peoples
Office Manager: Linda Rowe

Joys and Concerns

We never cease in praying for the needs of: ... Craig R; Grace A's family; Karla J's family; Connie W; Dacula Community; Reba T; Alma F; Conrad H's family; Larry H's family; Steve M; Bob H's family; Tadd's family; Julie T's friend's family; Mary Jo's friends, Kris and Jim.

Homebound: Louise C; Alma F; Betty H; Bessie K; Lenora L; Eileen Mc; Nettie P; Mildred P; Barbara & Bill P; Reba T; Nancy W.

We give thanks and praise to God for...
Pam Van D's retirement; Our Country; Our Future Story; Molly B's "Reflections" project won school & region competition and is going to state; Perry W was named Honorable Mention at the Area II Gwinnett County Council Reflections "What is Your Story?" for Photography; Joey in is the finals for "Bus Driver of the Year".

Life Line Screening

Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, is pleased to offer a preventive health event at First

Christian Church of Lawrenceville on December 6, 2016. Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems related to:



blocked arteries which is a leading cause of stroke; abdominal aortic aneurysms which can lead to a ruptured aorta; hardening of the arteries in the legs which is a strong predictor of heart disease; atrial fibrillation or irregular heart beat which is closely tied to stroke risk; and a bone density screening, for men and women, used to assess the risk of osteoporosis. Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. **In order to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount, please call 1-888-653-6450 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/ community-partners.**