



# CHRIST CHURCH PRESS

The Monthly Newsletter of Christ Church, Presbyterian  
4201 Southern Pines Drive, Evans, Georgia, 30809

Volume 11, Issue 12

December 2016

## Pastor's Selection

### Birthdays

- 03 .....Noah Edwards
- 04 ..... Marita Myers
- 05 ..... Martha Holley
- 06 .....Allyn Dyer
- 08 ..... McDonald Law
- 09 ..... John Clark
- 10..... Aaron Caruso
- 11.....Natalie Parish
- 12..... Mike Boyd  
Oliver Brown
- 17.....Jed Steed
- 18.....Al Lovingood
- 19..... Brian Moore  
Catherine Norkus  
Randy Self
- 24..... Mark Crenshaw
- 29 ..... Gloria Smits
- 31..... Whit Caldwell

### Prepare Him Room Advent Begins

*—Jon Bloom*

The season of Advent is beginning again. Advent – a season, so full of tradition, so full of memory, so full of legend. And a season so full, often over-full, bustling and bursting with the exhausting activity of keeping traditions, creating memories, and recalling legends.

And as Advent begins, Luke comes to us, as a kind of holy ghost of Christmas past, bidding us to lay aside for the moment our Christmas lists, leave the half-trimmed tree, pause the holiday movie, dry our hands from washing the cookie pans, and follow him. And as we do, all we see begins to swirl into an unfamiliar darkness.

Suddenly, we find ourselves standing in what we somehow know is a small, ancient Palestinian village on an unusually starry night. The shapes and shadows of buildings look strange. The human and animal noises sound strange. The smoky scents of fire, foods, burning oils, and manure smell strange. The utter absence of electric lighting is strange. We reach for our smartphone. It's dead.

#### Disturbing Advent Sight

Luke leads us beyond the village and down a dark, twisting rocky path to some ignored, ignoble spot where we suddenly come upon a sight that we find surprisingly disturbing. Not ten feet away, asleep on the ground, near a small fire that has burned down to embers, is a peasant girl. She has bits of straw in her long, messy, dark hair, and she is wrapped in dirty cloaks and a blanket. A split-second look tells us how difficult this night has been for her. And she is so young.

Even more distressing, we see beside her a small, crude, dirty feeding trough in which [lies] a sleeping newborn, wrapped tightly in unsanitary, blood-smearred cloths.

We take a few tentative steps forward. We know this child, and we know this girl. But the scene is strange to us. It does not look anything like the manger scenes and illustrated books of our childhood. Our Advent traditions did not prepare us for the earthy realness of the real Advent.

Mary is not serene. She's bone weary. And no divine, heavenly glow emanates from the child. He is not even especially beautiful (Isaiah 53:2). In fact, there is nothing about this child to suggest the unfathomable mystery of who he is. We are unnerved to realize that, had we not already known, we would not have recognized him at all.

### Anniversaries

- 09 .. Jackie & Dennis Hillesland
- 12.. Mary Lou & Richard Turner
- 17..... Jane & George Bowen
- 19 .....Audrey & Chris Nabholz
- 20 ..... Allyn & Stephen Dyer
- 28 .....Margaret & Scott Doss



*Merry Christmas*

(continued on page 2)



Thank you to all who participated in this year's Operation Christmas Child. The members of Christ Church, Presbyterian have had the wonderful privilege of packing 134 gift-filled shoe boxes to be delivered to boys and girls all around the world. Special thanks to our youth and Trail Life for making our total the highest in the history of our church!

A 14-year old girl in Paraguay wrote a note expressing how Operation Christmas Child has touched her life: "I'm very grateful for the beautiful gifts that I received, but the most wonderful thing was to meet Jesus through the Bible lessons," she said. "Now I keep talking to others about Jesus, telling them how much God loves them. Some of my friends have already trusted Jesus as their Savior."

Please pray that the children who receive shoe boxes this year will not only enjoy the gifts inside but will learn the true meaning of Christmas and find joy and hope as they trust in Jesus.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*  
Matthew 28:19-20

## Grounded Foster Care



There will be an informational meeting regarding Grounded, the foster family ministry of Christ Church, on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30 a.m. in Covenant Hall. Please join us if you are interested to learn how you can practically and lovingly support foster children and their families in our area. There are many opportunities available with various commitment levels. We will also have a representative from Columbia County's Department of Family and Children's Services to answer questions about becoming a foster family. Contact Dessa Edwards for more information at 706-627-9430 or [dessa.edwards@gmail.com](mailto:dessa.edwards@gmail.com).

## The Pastor's Selection (continued from page 1)

This scene, the real Christmas, has nothing of the feeling of the Christmas we know. It has all the feel of undesired, desperate homelessness – more like a scene we'd find under a bridge than under our Christmas tree. And we are hit with the shock of a truth we've known all our lives: This young girl just gave birth to a baby – the Baby – in a pasture!

Our visceral response is pity and sadness. This poor girl and her baby! We know this story, but as we see it as it really was, it seems so wrong. Our impulse is to do something to help them. We look incredulously at Luke. He, calmly looking from the child to us, quietly says, "There was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). No place? No place besides a field for the Maker of the world? The cosmic incongruity stuns us.

"Surely we can find some room somewhere!" we respond. "Can you?" Luke replies. Then he turns and begins back up the path.

We look back at the girl and the child, just as Palestinian darkness begins to swirl with a familiar light.

### Prepare Him Room

Suddenly, we find ourselves standing where Luke had found us. There are the Christmas lists, the half-trimmed tree, the holiday movie paused, and pans in the sink. The familiar stress of the bustling and bursting schedule of Advent activities reawakens.

But seared in our minds is the pathetic picture of the holy, homeless mother and child. Bustling and bursting Bethlehem had no room for the advent of Jesus. And echoing in our ears are our own words, "Surely we can find some room somewhere!"

### Can we?

The real Christmas was nothing like the Christmas we've come to know, with its traditions, memories, and legends. It was a desperate moment that occurred for a desperate reason.

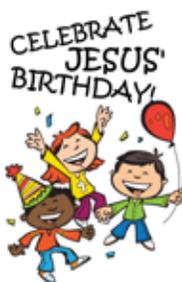
The Word became flesh (John 1:14) so that the Word could become sin for us condemned sinners, and die for us that we might be made righteous in him (2 Corinthians 5:21). He was born outside a village and he died outside a city. "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him" (John 1:10).

As Advent season begins again, call to mind the only detail the Holy Spirit, who inspired Luke's writing, decided to provide us about the actual birth of Jesus: Mary had to lay him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

It is no less ironic that Jesus can stand on the periphery of our busy Advent activities than it was that he, the Son of David, lay in a manger in a field on the periphery of the city of David.

Therefore, as we plan our Advent season, "let every heart prepare him room." Surely we can find some room somewhere.

*By John Bloom. Source: [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org)*



**Children's Christmas Party**  
Sunday, December 11, during Sunday School

Hey Kids, make plans to join us for this wonderful time of celebrating our Savior's birth! There will be snacks, games, gifts, and fun for everyone!

# Christmas Missionary Love-Gift Dinner

Each year we begin the Christmas season with a fellowship dinner that emphasizes the twenty missionary families serving in the field who are supported by our church. Letters were mailed listing the special year-end giving opportunities above and beyond the tithe. The funds collected for your missionaries will be divided equally and sent to them as a Christmas blessing. Please be prepared to contribute during the Christmas Missionary Love-Gift Dinner on Saturday, December 3, at 5:00 p.m., or by designating your giving in the offerings before December 11. We all have been blessed beyond measure. The missionaries and the officers of Christ Church thank you for your participation. Please RSVP for this dinner by visiting [www.christchurchpres.org](http://www.christchurchpres.org).

## Student Stuff

Hey Families!

I love the month of December! There is so much that happens and it is always so festive! Coffee has two purposes now: waking up and warming up. The town is all decorated, the trees are barely fitting in your house, and the ornaments come down from the attic. Though we are still stuffed from all that Thanksgiving turkey, we now warmly welcome the honey baked ham, gingerbread houses, and the hot cocoa. And the presents...oh the presents! Personally, I love giving presents rather than receiving presents. There is something about putting thought into a gift and seeing them open it for the first time. Most importantly, we celebrate the birth of Christ! We have the opportunity to be reminded of the Birth of Christ and how awesome He is!

Contact Chris Nabholz for more information: [youth@christchurchpres.org](mailto:youth@christchurchpres.org)



### Tacky Sweater Gathering, Sunday, December 4

After the evening service, the youth are invited to the Townsends' home for a Tacky Sweater Party. We will be enjoying festive food and showing off your Grandma's tacky sweater. Please bring a White Elephant gift for the gift exchange! You'll find the Townsends' home at 1538 River Island Pkwy in Evans.

### Pancake Study Break, Wednesday, December 14

Please join us for an ultimate study break from those terrible exams! Plan to come to the Youth House at 7:00 p.m. to enjoy games and food! There will be plenty of snacks, games, and of course plenty of pancakes for all! This is a perfect opportunity to bring your study group friends and hang out without worrying about your studies! In the words of Mark Twain, "Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect."



## Ministry through Music

### Sunday, December 4

The Augusta Youth Chorale (AYC) will present a Christmas Dessert Concert in our Sanctuary at 4:15 p.m. You are invited! The Concert is free though a special offering will be taken. The concert will be very worshipful and a varied Advent celebration. Afterward, in Covenant Hall, one can enjoy wonderful free desserts. What a great way to raise funds for upcoming AYC activities.



### Sunday, December 18

Evensong: A Festival Gloria involving our Sanctuary Choir, Children's Choir, The Augusta Youth Chorale, Orchestra, and congregational carols; all culminating with a message from our pastor. Invite your friends and come celebrate together! We will worship together in the Sanctuary at 6:00 p.m.



### Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship with Scripture, congregational carols, a string ensemble, and a message from our pastor. Join us in the Sanctuary at 5:00 p.m.

*"Let us come to Him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to Him." Psalm 95:2 NLT*

Stan Pylant, Director of Music



# Christ Church Press

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*Address Service Requested*



## December

**Weekly Sunday Schedule:** 9:45 a.m. Sunday School • 11:00 a.m. Worship • 6:00 p.m. Worship

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
				6:00 p.m. Young Couples Connect Bible Study	6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	5:00 p.m. Christmas Missionary Love-Gift Dinner
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4:15 p.m. AYC Dessert Concert 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m. Youth Gathering: Tacky Sweater Party	7:00 p.m. Trail Life	7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Evans 7:00 p.m. Diaconate Meeting	6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal		6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	9:30 a.m. Promise686 Meeting
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:45 a.m. Children's Christmas Party 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting	6:30 p.m. Session Prayer & Meeting 7:00 p.m. Trail Life	10:00 a.m. Women's Daytime Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Augusta: Christmas Dinner	6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Youth Gathering: Pancake Study Break		6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	10:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir & Orchestra Dress Rehearsal
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting 6:00 p.m. Evensong: A Festival Gloria	7:00 p.m. Trail Life	7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Evans: Covered Dish Dinner			6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
						