



THE GRAND COMMUNICATOR

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December 2024 Newsletter – JOY!



Pastor's Note

Luke 2:10 says "Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.'"

Part of what intrigues me about this passage is the reality that the first thing the angel had to say was 'don't be afraid.' If I had been one of the shepherds, I would have been just like them. In the dark of a Judean night, long before electric lights and far exceeding the ability of torches, or their meager campfire, they were suddenly bathed in the light of the glory of heaven. It must have been terrifying enough just by the brightness. Then within the illumination is manifested the appearance of angels. These warriors of heaven were not the baby-faced cherubs sometimes portrayed. Instead, they would have been more terrifying than the unexplainable brightness.

Immediately after the terror though comes God's comfort and reassurance in the words – don't fret, do not be afraid. But even better is that after the reassurance comes the greatest joy, the news that would split time, shine light on the entire world and bring God amongst humanity. After the fear and the comfort comes the announcement of the birth of Christ.

The greatest joys are found on the other side of fear. I hope I can remember that the next time life gives me a good scare.

The fact of the matter is that we frail humans all have something that scares us. Yet, when faith overpowers fear what we ultimately find is often more joyful than frightening. The way to find out what is on the other side of fear, is to face the fears with faith and believe that God is always in control.

This Christmas I hope you find JOY. But more than that I hope you press through whatever fears might have affected you in the past, and that you find JOY in the Lord on the other side.

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Greetings in the Name of the Lord



December is a very busy time of the year for most people. We get so busy preparing for the Christmas Cantata, special programs, family time, and Christmas parties that we forget the real meaning of Christmas.

Christmas is all about Jesus. Jesus, who created this world, chose to become flesh and blood and to dwell among us as a man. Jesus lived a perfect life. That means He never sinned. He spent 30 years preparing for 3 years of ministry. Jesus was all about His Father's business. Jesus obeyed His Father and He was baptized in the Jordan River. He spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness being tempted by Satan. Jesus came to serve and not be served. He spent 3 years ministering to all people. Jesus was arrested at night. He was tried by the Jewish Sanhedrin at night. Early in the morning Jesus was tried before Pilot. Jesus was sentence to death, and he was hanging on the old rugged cross by 9:00 am. Jesus was pronounced dead. A sword was driven into his side and out flowed blood and water. Jesus was placed in a borrowed grave owned by Joseph of Arimathea. Jesus arose from the dead three days later on a Sunday morning. Jesus appeared to over 500 people during the next 40 days and then Jesus ascended into heaven.

The Bible tells us ***"But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).*** Christmas is all about God making a way for us to be made right with Him. Just a note, all the religions in our world are trying to find a way to God. Only Christianity tells us about the God who came to our world and paid the price for us to be made right with Him.

I want to encourage you to focus on what God has done for us by sending His one and only Son into our world to make us right with Him. Let us focus on Jesus during this season. Christmas is all about God finding a way to demonstrate His love for us. ***Let us love "the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength" (Deuteronomy 6:4).***

In His Service,
Brother Gary

Gratitude Leads To JOY

My JOY is the result of gratitude for my family, my church, my health,
and my friends.

Every time JOY is felt we need to reverse the letters just as a
reminder:

You O we. J esus

He, Jesus is the One that provides.

Have a joyous day my friends.

Diana Bowman, Personnel Chairman



Sunday, December 8th, 10AM
Christmas Cantata

WHAT IS A CANTATA? It is a celebration of unity, hope, and the power of music to uplift and inspire. Each year, the Christmas Cantata creates a magical experience that leaves a lasting impression, spreading festive cheer and connecting people of all backgrounds through the universal language of music.



We would like to take a moment to say thank you!

We are so grateful for how you have served so sacrificially this past year. Whether it's leading Bible studies; serving coffee; setting up for worship; playing music; serving on ministry and committees, or any one of the countless tasks that keep our church community running, we are so grateful.

***Thank you so much for all you do!
Have a very merry Christmas and God Bless!***

Cookie Table News



I want to take this time to thank all the ladies that helped at the cookie table this year.

I only need twelve ladies for the new year and have the schedules for the new year completed. Because of your generosity and willingness to serve I now have four extra ladies who would like to join our serving team. How exciting!

I have also two ladies who have volunteered to make **"Home Made Cookies"** every week in the New Year so this will be a special treat for all of us. I want to thank Faye and Kay, as without all the store bought cookies this summer we would not have had a cookie table. Thanks to all the people that bought cookies that made the table a success.

Praise The Lord – Marie Miller and Linda Mackendrick



New Member

Patty Brenner

11/10/24



The Women's Christmas Tea

Come and join us for this special Christmas women's event. Invite your friends! Young ladies, even little young ladies, and their moms/grandmothers are invited.

We will gather on December 7th at noon in the Ministry Center. There is a sign-up sheet in the foyer noting the total attending you have invited, the type of finger food items you will bring, if you are decorating a table, and if you want green or red tablecloth for your decorating. Bring your teacup/saucer and some for the ladies you invite, if they don't have one to bring.

You can decorate a tabletop by bringing a centerpiece and/or other items to place on the table. At the recent past teas, some have decorated with place settings of china, while others do the centerpieces only. It is up to you how much you decorate. We do ask that Santa not attend the tea, as we do want to honor Jesus. Decorating the tables is available starting December 6th 10 am to 3 pm and if needed Saturday am 9am-11am.

Our speaker will be Sheila Jones, a Phoenix area pastor's wife, an author of a prayer book/study guide, a well-loved speaker among our sister churches and women's events in Arizona, a mom and grandmother. Sheila will speak on God Became Flesh. Come, hear and learn about the world/culture Jesus was born into.

We will have some singing of carols, fun, fellowship and of course, good food for all. Grace Notes is planning to sing some Christmas selections for us, which all are sure to enjoy! Please pray for the event, for Sheila, the attendees, and the helpers for the Tea. Pray that those who do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord will be impacted by Sheila's message and drawn by the Holy Spirit to make a decision for Jesus, our Savior. Come, join us and find the JOY of Jesus that others miss during this season.

Carols, Cookies & Cake

Sunday, December 15th 3PM

Come join us singing Christmas songs
before Sunday evening worship.

Cake provided by GCBC.



This will also be a Celebration of Louise Cannady's 99th Birthday!!

The Lunch Bunch met at Outback Steakhouse in November for a really joyful get-together. **December 10th will find us at Longhorn Steakhouse for our Christmas luncheon.** Santa's elves have been working on special door prizes, and the restaurant promises great food and great service. It promises to be a special occasion.



January will find us moved to the first Tuesday since the church is having a special meeting on the second Tuesday. We will be dining at Applebee's - yum, yum - my favorite lunch dish! Signup sheets are always ready three weeks before the occasion, so please sign up and put a reminder on your calendar

Sometimes folks don't show up and tell me they "forgot!" We miss you when you're not there!!!! Hope to see lots of you at the Christmas Luncheon!! What a joyful season is right before us! Merry Christmas to all!! *Virginia*

STUDYING GOD'S WORD



Hebrews 4:12 in the Bible states, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart".

According to the Bible, God's word is powerful and has many uses, including:

Revealing truth

God's word is inspired and God-breathed, and it can be used to teach, train and guide people in truth.

Awakening people

God's word can reveal what's in people's heart and minds and awaken them to their motives and attitudes.

Providing direction

God's word can be used to provide direction, correction, and training.

Bringing comfort

God's word can bring comfort by stating God's promises and reminding people who they are in Christ.

Providing an eyewitness account

God's word provides a truthful and detailed account of thing about God and human existence that people could never know otherwise.

Bible study is powerful in bringing God's word to people. A Bible study is useful and necessary in Christian growth. JOIN US AT GCBC FOR AN INDEPTH STUDIY OF GOD'S WORD. Classes each Sunday morning beginning at 9am or classes scheduled during the week. Rick Webb

Invitation to Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Tuesday, December 24th 5PM



Peace, hope, **JOY**, love. These are not just words on cards you get every December. They're things we need but often can't find.

Join us as we share how you can find them. You are invited this Christmas Eve to encounter **Immanuel**, "**God with us.**" Please invite family and friends to join us in celebration of the season.

Celebrating the Birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ

News from the Mission Field



Angel, one of our missionaries from West Africa, wrote updates about the funds our church gave her through the love offering we gave when she visited us last August.

She purchased 100 plastic desks and chairs for the women's department at the college. The cost was \$1500. These will replace the heavy wooden desks



which were very uncomfortable for the students' wives, especially those expecting babies soon. There is joy in the women's group over the chairs. Angel will likely put some of the funds toward 2 wells at \$600 each, then put the rest of the funds toward some of the many current needs.



In addition, the Mission Committee donated \$1200 to Angel's team for 2 wells to be dug (wells are hand dug) for the displaced refugees in her region. On November 17th, Angel sent word the rainy season has ended, and they have started digging the 2 wells. One digging project has hit water already for which Angel wrote, "Praise God"! There will be joy expressed when the wells are finished from those needing the water source. May they find the Living Water through the new wells and the presentation of the Gospel.

Operation Christmas Child (OCC) Update

The OCC tag line is *"Delivering Great Joy and the Good News of Jesus Christ"*



With great joy the OCC project team announces an additional box was able to be packed with shipping covered and 4 boxes were able to be built online through the OCC website. These 5 boxes, added to the 330 boxes the church commissioned on Nov 10th, bring the total of boxes sent this year to 335! This number is due to your

generosity as GCBC members and attendees as you have given supplies and funds to support this ministry. Thank you for making it possible for 335 children to receive a once in a lifetime OCC shoebox gift, to hear and respond to the Gospel, and the potential to join the Greatest Journey 12-week discipleship training course. Pray that the children's and potentially their families' lives will be impacted by Jesus through the Gospel message that goes along with each box. Pray each box makes the journey safely into the child's hands it is meant for. Watch for information in the next several weeks regarding the region(s) of the world the boxes will head to.

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering – The Great Pursuit

Christmas means the Lottie Moon Offering for our International Missionaries has arrived. The month of December there will be videos highlighting some of the missionaries' service in various places around the world. The theme is The Great Pursuit. Our offering goal this year is \$15,000. *Pray about what you will give toward this goal.*



A little information about this offering, named after Charlotte (Lottie) Diggs Moon, who did not accept the Jesus as her Savior until she was in college. Actually, Lottie was opposed to the Lord and fought Him for quite a while. Lottie turned down marriage and followed the Lord's call on her heart to go to China. When she was 32 years old, she was appointed a missionary to China on July 7, 1873, she survived the Boxer Rebellion or 1900-1901, was in China 40 years, before sailing home to Virginia, due to illness in 1912. She died on the ship while it docked in Kobe, Japan on Dec 24, 1912.

There is much more to Lottie and her experiences, but it would take a book to tell of her life. Lottie was a contemporary of Annie Walker Armstrong, here in the US, and together these women made a lasting impact on Southern Baptist Missions at home and abroad. They are both honored with the naming of our two Southern Baptist national missionary week of prayer emphasis and offerings after them.

Stephanie Short for the Mission Committee