

# The Epistle

**ST. PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA**

December, 2012

Volume 12, Number 12

---

## FROM THE PASTOR



Michael McCartney, pastor of Christian Hills Church in Orland, Illinois, shared a email that he recently received:

“As you well know, we are getting closer to my birthday. Every year there is a celebration in my honor and I think that this year the celebration will be repeated. During this time there are many people shopping for gifts, there are many radio announcements, TV commercials, and in every part of the world everyone is talking that my birthday is getting closer and closer. It is really very nice to know, that at least once a year, some people think of me.

As you know, the celebration of my birthday began many years ago. At first people seemed to understand and be thankful of all that I did for them, but now in these times, no one seems to know the reason for the celebration. Family and friends get together and have a lot of fun, but they don't seem to know the meaning of the celebration.

I remember that last year there was a great feast in my honor. The dinner table was full of delicious foods, pastries, fruits, assorted nuts and chocolates. The decorations were exquisite and there were many, many beautifully wrapped gifts. But, do you want to know something? I wasn't invited. I was the guest of honor and they didn't remember to send me an invitation. The party was for me, but when that great day came, I was left outside. They closed the door in my face..... and I wanted to be with them and share their table. In truth though, that didn't really surprise me that much because in the last few years it seems all are closing their doors to me.

Since I was not invited, I decided to enter the party without making any noise. I went in and stood in a corner. They were all drinking; there were some who were drunk and telling jokes and laughing at everything. They were having a great time. To top it all, this big fat man all dressed in red wearing a long white beard entered the room yelling Ho-Ho-Ho! He seemed drunk. He sat on the sofa and all the children ran to him, shouting: "Santa Claus, Santa Claus" ... as if the party were in his honor!

At 12 midnight all the people began to hug each other; I extended my arms waiting for someone to hug me and.... do you know.... no one hugged me.

Suddenly they all began to share gifts. They opened them one by one with great expectation. When all had been opened, I looked to see if, maybe, there was one for me.

What would you feel if on your birthday everybody shared gifts and you did not get one? I then understood that I was unwanted at that party and quietly left.

(continued on page 2)

From the Pastor – continued from page 1

Every year it gets worse. People only remember to eat and drink, the gifts, the parties but nobody remembers me. I would like this Christmas that you allow me to enter into your life. I would like that you recognize the fact that almost two thousand years ago I came to this world to give my life for you, on the cross, to save you. Today, I only want that you believe this with all you heart.

I want to share something with you. As many didn't invite me to their party, I will have my own celebration, a grandiose party that no one has ever imagined, a spectacular party. I'm still making the final arrangements. Today I am sending out many invitations and there is an invitation for you. I want to know if you wish to attend and I will make a reservation for you and write your name with golden letters in my great guest book. Only those on the guest list will be let into the party. Those who don't answer the invitation, will be left outside.

Do you know how you can answer this invitation? It is by extending it to others whom you care for...

I'll be waiting for all of you to attend my party this year...

See you soon.... I love you! -Jesus"

May we never lose sight of the fact that, as little Dolly put it in *Family Circus* as she held up a figure of Jesus, "He's the star of Bethlehem."

See you in church.

*Jay*



---

#### DECEMBER HYMN OF THE MONTH - #14 - "Savior of the Nations, Come"

Containing both a prayer and a hymn of praise, this text is certainly appropriate for the Advent/Christmas season. It is one of twelve texts definitely ascribed to Ambrose, 4<sup>th</sup> Century Bishop of Milan and father of Latin hymnody. It was he who introduced antiphonal singing into the Western Church. The Presbyterian Hymnal uses an altered version of the 1850 translation by William M. Reynolds, Lutheran pastor and educator who in his last years became an Episcopal Priest. The tune used in our hymnal is an adaptation of a medieval Latin plainsong dating from the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century.

---

#### **ANSWER TO NOVEMBER BIBLE KNOWLEDGE QUIZ**

*Which Bible character is credited with the invention of wine – and also the invention of intoxication?* Noah is credited with the invention of wine, and is also depicted as drinking it to excess. (See Genesis Chapter 9) Noah and his family were also the first non-vegetarians, for it was after the flood subsided that man was permitted to eat meat.



**THE WORD PROCLAIMED**

	<u>Sermon topics</u>	<u>Scripture Readers</u>
<b>December 2</b>	<b>“What Kind of Days Are Coming?”</b> Text: Luke 21:25-36	<b>Janet Walker</b> Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16
<b>December 9</b>	<b>“Get Ready!”</b> Text: Luke 3:1-6	<b>Ben Parke</b> Reading: Malachi 3:1-6
<b>December 16</b>	<b>“Say What, John?”</b> Text: Luke 3:7-18	<b>Melissa Vaughn</b> Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20
<b>December 23</b>	<b>Choir Cantata</b> Gospel: Luce 1:39-45	<b>Kathy Carroll</b> Reading: Micah 5:2-5a
<b>December 24 (Christmas Eve)</b>	<b>“Ponder This.....”</b> Text: Luke 2:1-20	<b>Jean Shuping</b> Reading: Titus 2:11-14
<b>December 30</b>	<b>“Ask the Pastor”</b> Gospel: Luke 2:41-52	<b>Roger Coleman</b> Reading: 1 Samuel 2:18-10



**IN HIS SERVICE**

DECEMBER USHERS

Eb Hancock  
Diane Hancock  
CF Houglan  
Pam Houglan

DECEMBER COMMUNION SERVERS

Sunday, December 2 – Eb Hancock  
Diane Hancock  
CF Houglan  
Pam Houglan

**TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE**

According to the Old Testament, when and by whom was the first city founded?

**\* \* \* OUR NOVEMBER RECORD \* \* \***

	<u>Worship Attendance</u>	<u>Stewardship</u>
November 4	62	\$ 3,512.00
11	53	\$ 1,410.00
18	57	\$ 1,623.00
25	53	\$ 2,777.00



Birthdays This Month

- December 3 Ron Hayden
- 4 Liz Miles
- 4 Ann Patzsch
- 8 Jack Metzler
- 11 Judy Cook
- 13 Lisa Boyd
- 15 Eb Hancock



Anniversaries

- December 17 – Aiden and Jeanetta French
- 17 – Jack and Rosalee Brewer
- 19 – Tony and Dot Jones
- 20 – Ron and Jane Lochbaum

“May my heart be your shelter and my arms be your home.”

*-Marianne Williamson*



**FOOD CART**

December is dried beans and Duncan Hines mix month. Please remember – there is a great need for food in Greensboro.



**“SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS”**

Be sure to be with us on Sunday evening, December 9 at 5:30pm for our annual Christmas Program. The “eats” this year will be a little different. The Fellowship Committee will provide chicken and ham, and we’re asking you to bring your favorite side dish or dessert. After we eat, our handbell groups will treat us to the “Sounds of Christmas,” with music from both the Biblical story and the sounds of today. Don’t miss it! And don’t forget to bring canned goods for the “White Gift.” Please sign up by December 2 if you are planning to attend. Sign-up sheets are in the Fellowship Hall and Narthex of the Sanctuary.



The beautiful Christmas trees which will be in our sanctuary this year were given in memory of Betty Perkins by her family. We will decorate the sanctuary on Saturday, December 1, 9am.

---

### CONTRIBUTIONS

A reminder that in order to be counted for the year **2012** all contributions and donations must be in the church office by **December 31**.

Offering envelopes for 2013 will be available in Sunday School classes and in the Narthex on Sunday, December 2.

---



### CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

As we have done in recent years, again this year we will use the funds from Christmas memorials and honorariums to support worthy causes rather than to put poinsettias in the sanctuary. This year, the session has voted to split the money equally between Presbyterian Disaster Relief and Backpack Beginnings. Presbyterian Disaster Relief assists those in need in many ways, and has been very active recently in helping victims of Hurricane Sandy in the Northeast. Backpack Beginnings provides food, clothing and other essentials to needy children in the Guilford County schools. Give generously to help both of these deserving organizations.

---



### CHOIR CANTATA

Our choir will present a special program of music at the December 23 worship. Featured will be a unique accompaniment that you will find both exciting and inspirational. Be with us!



**PRAYER CONCERNS:** Luke Finison, Barbara Carter, Marjorie and Jack Herndon, Tony Jones, Andy Bristow, Lucy Smith, Aiden and Jeanetta French, Beverly Long, Bob Berthold, Margaret Simmons, Georgia Giberson, Wendy Woods, Sheila Taylor, Betty Lawson, John Patzsch, Ron Ervin, Dale Holder, John Perkins, Edith Taylor, Jane Christopher, Jean Shuford, Roger Coleman, Mark Griffin, Dick Shuping and family, Luke Neal, Carl Hollman, Becky Trollinger, Kevin Tewes, Chris Westmoreland, Joyce Myers, J. D. Hall, Jo Hall, Zachary Reavis, Eric Laming, Joe Herndon, Tim Gard, the family of Bob Jenkins and our own family members in the military: James Lochbaum, Andy Bristow II, Shane Finison, Brian Fountain, Rob Salka, Brandy Zehr, and all who serve in our armed forces.



### OUR MONTHLY "REGULARS"

(Somewhat altered for December – check to be sure)



**Sunday School – Sundays, 9:45am**

**Worship – Sundays, 11:00am**

**Session meets at 12:15pm on the 2nd Sunday of each month (except July)**

**Good News Ringers – Sundays, 5:00pm**

**Bell Tones – Mondays, 6:15pm**

**Alanon – Mondays, 7:00pm**

**Men's Fellowship – 1st Tuesday of the month , 7:00am at Tex and Shirley's**

**All other weeks, Mondays, 7:30am at the church**

**Circles normally meet on the 1st Tuesday, times and places announced**

**Bag Supper – Wednesdays, 5:30pm**

**Bible Study – Wednesdays, 6:15pm**

**Choir Rehearsal – Wednesdays, 7:30pm**

**Gad-A-Bouts normally meet on the 4th Tuesday, times and places announced**



### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a congregational meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, December 9 for the purpose of electing elders to serve beginning January 1, 2013. Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the session is placing the following in nomination: For a term ending December 31, 2015, Eb Hancock. For a term ending December 31, 2013, Margaret Tewes. The floor will be open for additional nominations as well. The elected elders will be installed during the December 23 worship service.



### **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN' GATHERING**

The St. Paul Presbyterian Women's Gathering will be Tuesday, December 4 at 7:00pm in McCann Hall. A program of Christmas music will be presented by the St. Paul Chimes. The entire congregation is invited.



Dear St. Paul Family,  
Thank you so much for all your cards, calls and prayers. I am so grateful for all the people that were praying for me. Prayers were answered. Special thanks to Pastor Jay for all his calls and visits.

Love,  
Margaret Simmons



Thank you to all who participated in any way with Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child in 2012. The anticipated milestone in Operation Christmas Child's history since 1993 is 100 million gift-filled shoeboxes. St. Paul contributed 68 shoeboxes, outstanding for a congregation our size!



### **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

Our Christmas Eve worship service will be on Monday, December 24 at 6:00pm in the sanctuary. Be with us for this very special service, which will include the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.