



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER / 2022



For many of us, December is a hectic time of year. There are parties and programs to attend, meals to plan, presents to buy, and family to visit. One of the reasons we created our church Advent devotional was to provide a tool to help us focus on Jesus during this very busy season. Additionally, we have several events and services scheduled this month to help us center our minds on the entire reason we celebrate. Church should never feel burdensome, but we do hope that if you are able, you will prioritize some time with your church family in the coming month.

This weekend, we look forward to our annual Ladies' Christmas Cultural Exchange. All ladies are invited to enjoy

brunch and fellowship while learning about and praying for the Lord's work among the nations. Along with this, we are collecting our Lottie Moon Christmas Offering during December and January. All designated donations go directly to

support international mission work. Our church's goal this year is \$5000.

Christmas weekend, we will have two services. On Christmas Eve, we will have our traditional Candlelight Service at 6:00 PM.

This is a family service designed to quiet our hearts before the celebration of Christmas Day. The following morning, we hope that you will join us for Sunday worship at 10:45 AM as we rejoice in the promise kept through Jesus. Together we will celebrate Christmas Day through singing, prayer, and the preaching of the word. Wherever your schedule takes you this December, may you remain joyful as you reflect on the goodness of God in sending us His Son!

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

Good News of Great Joy.

Jake Beattie
Pastor



Christmas is one of my favorite times of the year. I know I am not alone in feeling this way. My neighbor who lives across the street goes all out with Christmas decorations every year. He puts lights on his house, he has lawn ornaments that light up, and even has a speaker hooked up playing Christmas music while the lights are on. Our children love to see the lights each year. They enjoy the finished product, but also enjoy watching the process of all the lights and decorations going up. I admit that I also enjoy the sight of such nice decorations this time of year.

There is something about the lights and music and decorations that get me so excited about the Christmas season. When I see houses that have gone all out with decorations for Christmas, it brings a bit of joy and happiness. This is part of the reason why we always go with our children each year to look at Christmas lights. We often go to Lights under Louisville, as well as going to neighborhoods around town that are known for going all out with Christmas lights. It's something we all get excited about.

The popular Christmas hymn *O, Holy Night* contains the line, "a thrill of hope - the weary world rejoices." Rejoicing is a good thing. When I hear this song or sing it I am reminded of the Angel's words in Luke 2, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." The Angel comes to the shepherds who were out in the field and tells them this great truth. The news about Jesus's birth was good news, it brings great joy, and it is for all the people.

Throughout our lives we need good news. Life is hard and often discouraging. But each and every year, with the return of the lights, the decorations, the music, and much more, we are reminded of good news, that brings great joy, and is for everyone. Just as the hymn says, "a thrill of hope - the weary world rejoices." Life has a way of making us weary, beating us down. In our weariness, be reminded that Jesus came. He was born of the virgin, Mary. His coming is good news. His coming brings great joy. His coming is for you.

The next time you see those Christmas lights, be reminded of Jesus. The next time you eat a Christmas cookie, be reminded of Jesus. The next time you hear those Christmas songs, be reminded of Jesus. Jesus is good news, he brings great joy, and that good news and great joy are for all who receive him. Rejoice! Merry Christmas to you!

HIDDEN IN OUR HEARTS



At the beginning of the year, our church started reciting the same Psalm every Sunday during our Call to Worship. We started in January with Psalm 100 and then switched to Psalm 23 in July.

Though you may not want to stand up in front of a group and do so, my guess would be that many (if not most!) of you who have been attending regularly this year could recite the words of these two Psalms. In the words of the psalmist himself, these words have been hidden in your heart! (Psalm 119:11)

When we memorize God's word, it is ready for us at all times. The Holy Spirit is able to bring it to mind during times of temptation or discouragement. It gives us words to pray when we don't know how to pray. God's words inform our shouts of praise and thanksgiving.

Let's continue hiding God's word in our hearts individually and look forward to new opportunities in the coming year to learn more together as a church body.

The Gospel in Our Christmas Songs.

Andrew Crawford
Music Minister

As the music minister, my favorite time of the year is Christmas time. I love all the festivities and events at the church - I love all the decorations put up around the church! But most of all, I love singing the Christmas hymns. Some of the best hymns in all church history are the Christmas hymns. The reason we sing Christmas hymns is not for the sake of nostalgia or seasonal cheer, but because these songs have a rich theology rooted in celebrating the birth of Christ. Below are five examples of why it is so important to sing Christmas hymns.

*"Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the sky"*

When we sing Christmas songs, we share in singing with churches all over the world. A short - and not exhaustive - search showed that the song "Hark! The Herald Angel Sing" has been translated and put to music in at least 49 different languages! It is such an encouragement to know that we are united with believers all over the world in singing the songs of the Church. Because of the work of Christ, all the nations can rejoice and shout for praise, and we are unified in singing that praise.

*"Peace on Earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled"*

When we sing Christmas songs, we sing about the peace that Jesus brings. In John 14:27, Jesus tells his disciples "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." The joy of Christ's birth is that it brings peace to earth through reconciliation with God. The whole earth has been eagerly awaiting with expectation and anticipation for the peace that Jesus brings.

*"Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the virgin's womb"*

When we sing Christmas songs, we sing of the fulfillment of the prophets and promises of God. Hebrews 1:1-2 says "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world." The prophets of old all point to Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promise. God sent Jesus into the world to fulfill His promise

when the fullness of time had come (Gal. 4:4). The Christmas songs we sing tell of the promise needed, the promise anticipated, the promise given, and the promise kept.

*"Veiled in flesh the godhead see,
hail the incarnate deity"*

When we sing Christmas songs, we sing a rich christology and trinitarian theology. John 1:14 says "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." The incarnation of Christ is a most wonderful mystery. The Glory of God is displayed in the incarnation of Christ - that Christ came as man to dwell with men. In Christ, all of the fullness of deity dwells in the body of Christ (Col 2:9). Full in deity and full flesh, Christ came to condemn sin in the flesh so that we might be made right with God (Rom 8:3)

*"Mild he lays his glory by,
born that man no more may die"*

When we sing Christmas songs, we sing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The glory of Jesus' birth is that he empties himself and takes the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7), so that any who believe in him will never die (John 6:54). The birth of Christ points us to the cross of Christ - and it is intentional that we sing songs that portray this truth.

