



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025



The holiday season is a time of year that can't just "sneak up" on someone. It would be difficult to miss all the signs of Christmas that pop up after (or sometimes before!) Thanksgiving. Despite this, we may not be fully ready to focus on and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. The classic Christmas song "Joy to the World" instructs "every heart [to] prepare Him room" and our church has several things available to help prepare room in our hearts to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

We begin our church celebration of Christmas well before Christmas Day every year by incorporating Ad-

vent into our schedule. Each Sunday leading up to December 25, we light an Advent candle and celebrate what it represents. We will sing songs that focus on the coming of Christ and the hope, peace, love, and joy that He brings.

On December 13, we look forward to our annual Ladies Christmas Culture Exchange. All ladies are invited to enjoy brunch and fellowship while learning about and praying for God's work among the nations. Along with this, we are collecting the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering during December and January. All donations go directly to support international mission work. We hope that this focus on God's work among

the nations will help you remember that Jesus came for all people.

Finally on Christmas Eve, we will have our traditional Candlelight Service at 6:00 PM. The candlelight service is designed to focus our minds on the Lord before the celebration of Christmas Day. Through all the events, programs, and activities of the Christmas season, may you make every effort to prepare room for the Savior who has come – to know Him, to worship Him, and to love Him even more!

Treasuring and Pondering God's Word

Josh Wamble | Pastor

How often do we really treasure the words of God that we read in the Bible? How often, instead, do we pass over them quickly and get on with the rest of our day? During this season of Advent, we do well to take some time and follow Mary's example of treasuring and pondering all the things that happened in the early chapters of the gospels surrounding Jesus's birth.

Luke 2:19 says, "But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart." What exactly was it that Mary was treasuring and pondering in her heart?

When the shepherds visited Mary, they told her all that the angels had shown them. First, they told her the **good news that they brought was of great joy (v. 10)**. What greater joy could we imagine than that the God of creation has made a way to be with his creatures? No longer do we have to approach God through priests and blood of bulls and goats. No longer do we have to travel to the location of the temple to worship. No longer do we need any mediator to go between us and God. We now have a mediator who is God! We are finally able to worship wherever Jesus is found - anywhere and everywhere! We can forevermore approach God boldly not wondering and fearing whether or not our sacrifice will be accepted but knowing that Jesus's sacrifice that cleanses us is perfect and complete!

They told her that the **news was for all the people (v. 10)**. Before we were cut off from the promises of God. We were not part of the covenant people, not Hebrew from birth and, therefore, without hope and without access to God. Now, we have been brought near to God through the blood of Christ! We have access to the Father because we have been united to the Son. We are as acceptable as he is! We are as welcome as he is! We, even we, are as loved as he is! (cf. Eph. 2:11-14)

They told her that **a savior is born who is Christ the Lord (v. 11)**. Our hope this Advent season is not in a political savior or a financial savior. We do not hope in the strength of men. Our savior, the savior that we hope in, is Christ the Lord. The one true and living God is my savior—your savior! We have confidence that we can be saved because of who our savior is. It is true that we have a great need. We need to be reborn. We need to be transformed. We need to be completely changed. We do have a great need, but we rejoice with Mary and the angels because we have a great savior who can meet and exceed our needs - a savior who is himself the God of creation!

Perhaps the angels saved the most amazing of their messages for when they sang in unison **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (v. 14)**! Wow! Where there once was strife, hostility, war, there now is peace. It is possible for men to have peace with God! How unbelievable that is! However, this peace is not for all people - it is for anyone but not for everyone. This peace comes only to those with whom He is pleased. This is the meaning of the gospel. If you love the Son, God is pleased with you, and there is peace. On Christmas morning, as we celebrate and rejoice that the Son has come into the world, ask yourself this question: do you have the Son—do you have peace, or are you still at war?

Homelessness and the Hope of the Gospel

Andrew Crawford | Minister of Music

Each year, I look forward to the Christmas newsletter. I always use this as an opportunity to choose a Christmas hymn and highlight the gospel themes in the Christmas songs we sing. But this year I wanted to write about something different. It is evident to me, both in the questions I am asked, and the prayer requests I hear, that the issue of homelessness is on people's minds during the Holiday season. And it should be. What for many is a season of celebration, festivities, and time with family, can, for people experiencing homelessness, be a painful reminder of loneliness, broken relationships, and suffering. I wanted to take this newsletter article to write about homelessness, and particularly how the church should view and minister to men and women experiencing homelessness. To effectively minister to the homeless, we must rightly view people as both individuals created in the image of God, and sinners in need of a savior.

In Luke 11:4, when Jesus is instructing the disciples on how they should pray, he tells them this: "forgive us of our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us." In that line, we see two evident truths. First is that people are both sinners and sinned against at the same time. Second is the Gospel forgives our sins and calls us to forgive where we have been sinned against.

In looking at homelessness, we often want to create a strict binary in how we understand people - viewing people as either entirely victims of their circumstances, or (contrarily) viewing people's circumstances as entirely resultant of their bad decisions. The truth is both simpler and more complicated than that. People are, at the same time, sinners and sinned against. In working on the streets in homeless ministry for the last decade, I have met both victim and victimizer. And often, those are the same person. 66% of the men who come into Re:Center's residential program were physically abused as children, 10% were sexually abused by a family member, and over 50% come from broken homes. For women, 57% of women experiencing homelessness list fleeing domestic vi-

olence as the cause of homelessness and 70% of women living on the streets have been physically assaulted while homeless. Many of those same men and women have broken laws, committed felonies, abused drugs or alcohol, or even been perpetrators of abuse and domestic violence. We cannot remove personal responsibility for sin, and we cannot ignore the ways people have been sinned against. A Biblical view of sin and personal agency prohibits us from taking a victim-minded worldview that would justify sin based on past circumstance. But the Bible gives us an even better justification for sin - the perfect justification that comes from faith in Jesus Christ and the imputation of His righteousness to us. Jesus both forgives us of our sins and heals and restores brokenness. He is making all things new. Sinners, and sinned against.

Paul Chitwood said that the greatest issue in the world is lostness. And I believe that fact is ubiquitous. It is true in every facet of life and every corner of society. The greatest issue behind the brokenness in our society that leads to oppression and suffering is lostness. The greatest issue behind wickedness, crime, and addiction that leads to destruction is lostness. Government programs, housing policies, job developments, or any other social and political initiative will never solve the greatest problem in our world. The only solution is the Gospel. The Gospel breaks the chains of bondage to sin and heals the wounds of the sinned against. God transforms hearts by the work of His son Jesus Christ. God transforms society by the work of transformed people who live for Him. This Christmas, let us not just think about the homeless, let us not just pray for their situation, let us not just give out a blanket or a quick meal. We can do all those things and those are good things to do. But the greatest thing we can do is to be intentional about reaching the homeless with gospel.