



The Good News Letter

December 2011

A monthly publication of First Baptist Church, Gaston

Vol. 37 Issue 12

Emmanuel, God With Us!!

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Matthew: 1:21-23

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:6-7

Hallelujah! What a Savior

After centuries of eclipse, the glory of God shined anew and shined more brightly than ever before. After four centuries of silence, the Voice of Heaven rings again all across the land with the royal proclamation: "The kingdom of God is at hand!" (Mk. 1:14-15). The coming of the Christ, who had been long awaited by the ancient prophets, now opened the very floodgates of divine revelation.

God's first words to men after the Christ Child's birth were: "Fear Not!" The voice at the giving of the law brought only fear and quaking. The law proclaimed was holy, just, and good, but was not good tidings to sinful men. "Fear Not," the angel announced, "for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy...For unto you is born...a Saviour..."

HE IS OURS! Christ is born to us as well as to Mary. The King of the Ages is ... born! Recipients of all our gifts is ... given to us! The Long-Awaited Messiah is born ... today! The Desire of all Nations ... right next door! The Son of David ... lying in a manger! What tremendous news for the shepherds ... and for us.

"What is the news?" remarked Alfred Lord Tennyson as he entered an inn run by two godly Methodist women. "There is only one piece of good news," answered one, "that Christ Jesus has died for the sins of the world." Taken back a bit, the poet then responded: "that's old news ... and new news ... and good news!" The gospel is good news for bad people. We have a Saviour who can redeem us from all our sins!

Phillip Bliss wrote these words in 1875 How wonderful they are!

Man of Sorrows! what a name
for the Son of God, who came
ruined sinners to reclaim.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Lifted up was he to die;
"It is finished!" was his cry;
now in heaven exalted high.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
in my place condemned he stood;
sealed my pardon with his blood.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

When he comes, our glorious King,
all his ransomed home to bring,
then anew this song we'll sing:
Hallelujah! What a Savior!



WHILE THEY WERE SLEEPING

It was an evening like any other. Ordinary men were doing an ordinary job. Shepherds were "keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8). Was it chilly? Were they tired? When angels appeared with news of a Savior, had the shepherds been talking about their troubles or sharing a good joke?



How quickly, how mysteriously, how unexpectedly an ordinary night became the turning point of human history. How remarkable that God chose to set His great rescue plan in motion when only a young couple was paying attention and only a few shepherds were awake.

God's work is sometimes so secret we may wonder if He's there or if He cares. The Christmas story tells us that God works out breathtaking plans for our lives in the dark, often while we're sleeping or going about our ordinary routines.

December Music Notes

Merry Christmas... may we never take these words for granted...

Sunday Evenings in December... 6:00PM

December 4th

Beth Greer in Concert

We are looking forward to Beth kicking off our Christmas season with her beautiful voice and testimony.

December 11th

"For the Glory of the King"

Joyful Noise Jr. (Children's choir) will be delighting us with their Christmas musical. And following the program we will have our annual Christmas Drop-In in the fellowship hall.

December 18th

"The Night Before Christmas"

Our Adult Choir will be presenting our Christmas cantata and it has such a beautiful message. Make this part of your Christmas plans! Invite your friends and neighbors!

As the Christmas song goes...

"There's a song in the air" ...and we plan on singing it!!!

Joyfully Serving,

Sherrell ☺

Spiritual Warriors Luncheon

December 7, 2011

THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

A few years ago, my Christmas season centered on the arrival of a baby — our second child, due December 23. Exhausted with pregnancy, I skipped out on holiday gatherings, did less decorating and baking than usual, didn't send cards and didn't plan a holiday dinner, assuming — correctly, it turned out — I'd be in the hospital then.

It was a strangely quiet Christmas season, with our focus on the impending arrival. But once our baby was born, in the last hour of Christmas Day, all the missed parties, caroling, cookie-indulging and even present-opening paled in comparison. All that truly mattered was God's gift to our family of this one very special baby.

Isn't this how Christmas should always be? Seasonal activities are fun but hold meaning only if they deepen our focus on the coming of one very special Baby — the Christ-Child. Hold him in your heart this season, as I held my newborn that Christmas night. If the hustle and bustle distracts you from the Baby, put an end to it. If traditional activities prove more stressful than joyous, consider what you can let go of to embrace the true meaning of Christmas — the birth of Jesus, God's gift of love.

—Heidi Mann

FYI CORNER

We need to be informed and involved in what is going on in our community. We will be providing some information from time to time to help us to be able to be connected to our community.

December 12th at 6:30PM the Lexington 4 School Board will meet at LCSD 4 Administrative Office at 607 East Fifth Street, Swansea.

The Gaston Town Council meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00PM at 186 North Carlisle where the police department is located.



Christmas is here and as we celebrate the birth of Christ we also can share His love for others through many mission opportunities. .

First, let me thank everyone for their participation with the "Operation Christmas Child" through Samaritan's Purse. We collected 80 boxes for the children. Also, thanks to all that helped with the Prison Packet ministry. I don't have an exact count; however, I do know it was over 50 packets.

The GAs and RAs will be having their International Missions Study on London **December 7**. We will meet together in the Children's Choir Room. The Adult International Mission Study will be done on **January 4, 2012** and will be conducted by Pam Spires and the College & Career Class.

The **Week of Prayer for International Missions** is **December 4-11**. The church goal for the **Lottie Moon Christmas Offering** this year is **\$7,000**. The **Missions March** will be on **December 11**. Remember there are many missionaries throughout the world that these funds help in sharing the Word and God's love. Please pray about how you can be a part of this ministry.

Names for the Project Angel Tree/ Adopt a Family Christmas tags were distributed at the Thanksgiving Dinner. These are children who have been recognized in our local schools as having a need. We ask that you help make a child's Christmas wish come true as this may be the only Christmas that child may have. The packages are due to the church on **December 11** to get ready for distribution on December 16-17. Please be in prayer about this project and how you can help. Michelle Cox and Shawn Stinton will be coordinating this project. If you would like to contribute \$20.00 for a food box to go to the family, please see Helen King.

The Lexington Baptist Association Office still has a mission opportunity available to everyone.

Prayer Walking in Lexington, SC....December 7, 2011

This is conducted within various communities throughout Lexington County. If you are interested in participating in any of these events, please contact Linda Hite or David Lee at the Lexington Baptist Association Office at (803) 356-2543.

This month's home meeting will be at Collette Knight's home on December 19 at 947 Pine Plain Road. This will be our Christmas Celebration. Please bring your favorite Christmas snack food and the recipe. We will have a time of fellowship and prayer.

In January things will slow down a bit but watch for information about the Adult International Missions Study, Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, and the annual Ladies Evangelism Conference in Columbia.

As always thank you for your support with all our mission projects and continue to be in prayer as to how you can become involved in missions. —Love in Christ, Cindy Furtick & Margie Rish



We extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Bobby Ellis (Little Bobby) Yancey. "Little Bobby" was one of our "Special" attendees here at First Baptist Gaston. Bobby passed away November 13, 2011 at the age of 31. A memorial service was held here November 17 with burial in the church cemetery

Bobby touched the life of everyone he met in a positive way. He was an active member of Special Olympics and was an inspiration to other special needs children.

Bobby was the son of Terrie Ann Ott Yancey, the grandson of Bobby and June Spradley Ott and the Great-grandson of Mrs. Lizzie Mae Spradley.

"He was called a 'Special Needs' child, but to us he was just special, because it takes a special person to touch as many hearts as Bobby did throughout his life," says his aunt Robin Cotton.

He will be truly missed by family, friends, church and community. Thank you "Little Bobby" for being such a champion!!

CHRISTMAS, DISCIPLESHIP & HOSPITALITY

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors,
as though God were making His appeal through us."

2 Corinthians 5:20

Christmas is a great time to reach out to make disciples or to grow disciples. Because, we are given an amazing gift, our desire should be to give this same gift to others. During the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays we have wonderful opportunities to invite others into our homes. Our purpose is not to beat our guests over the head with our Biblical knowledge or passion for Christ, but to simply show love. In our homes we are able to share God's love face to face through the comfort of food and fellowship. Because He loved us we can choose hospitality in thankfulness for the hospitality God has shown us, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2.

Hospitality is a willingness to share, with discernment, what God has given us, including our food, family, home, and finances. It is an attitude of stewardship, where we do not own anything because we are merely caretakers. Our actions tell others who we are and who we are representing. If a seed is planted, or one is watered that is already sprouting, the glory is all His. God's desire is that we reach out to others as He has reached out to us.

"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Hebrews 13:1-2



Coming in February

Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders

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DARE TO HOPE



If you've ever given up on a dream, then you have something in common with Zechariah. When an angel brought news that Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, would soon have a son, Zechariah had trouble believing it (Luke 1:13-18).

How long had it been since Zechariah first prayed for a son? More to the point, how long had it been since he'd given up praying for a son? With the couple's childbearing years long past, Zechariah likely felt compelled to emphasize the impossibility of the angel's proclamation.

Perhaps you know what it's like to lose hope. Zechariah's story reminds us that God's plans cannot be hampered, even when the laws of nature stand in the way. Hold on to your hope because God works miracles.

"Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it is in the heart of man."

—Anonymous

"To see His star is good, but to see His face is better."

—Dwight L. Moody

"The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God."

—C.S. Lewis

A little smile, a word of cheer,
A bit of love from someone near,
A little gift from one held dear,
Best wishes for the coming year ...
These make a Merry Christmas!

Limited Space – Register Now!



Winter Youth Celebration

Friday, January 20th – Sunday, January 22nd, 2012

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

All Youth Grades 7th – 12th

Christian recording artists Leeland, Downhere, and Bellarive will be leading in worship over this weekend with speaker Dave Edwards delivering powerful messages in each session. This is always an amazing weekend of worship and praise! Please see Bobby Spires or Adam Callahan if you'd like to register for this event. The cost is \$75.00.

Also, we are always open to sponsorships for the many youth who may not be able to afford to pay the full cost. If you are willing to sponsor, or to help sponsor a youth, please let me know. It is a well placed investment in the life of a teen!

All youth grades 7-12 are invited to join us for our weekly meetings!

Sundays:



Youth Sunday School – 9:45 am ~ CrossTraining – 5:00 pm

Wednesdays:

Joyful Noise (Youth Choir and Drama) – 5:45 pm

Wednesday Night Youth – 6:45 pm

We are growing through His amazing blessings, but there is ALWAYS room for more!

Come to Youth!

Bobby Spires

SHELF LIFE WITH PETER JUMPER, MEDIA LIBRARY DIRECTOR~FILLING IN THIS MONTH IS PHYLLIS TEMPLETON

VISIT THE MAIN LIBRARY

DVD'S AND VIDEO'S

You don't like to read? Check out the Main Library for DVD's and Video's. We have DVD's and Video's for adults and children. There are several VEGGIETALE DVD's for children, as well as others. The Story of Ruth and One Night With The King, (the story of Esther) are just a couple of DVD's for adults.

Check them out!

Phyllis Templeton, Media Assistant



A CHRISTMAS BLESSING

*May you have the Spirit of Christmas, which is Peace,
The Gladness of Christmas, which is Hope,
The Heart of Christmas, which is Love,
The Gift of Christmas, which is Christ.*



SUNDAY SCHOOL WITH KEITH SPIRES, DIRECTOR

God's Greatest Gift

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11

During the month of December we will learn about this gift. Weekly lesson topics are:

December 4 – **Recognize God's Gift** – John 1:1-18. The identity of Christ. It addresses the fact that God's greatest gift is more than a baby born in an obscure stable many centuries ago.

December 11 – **Receive God's Gift** – Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38. Mary and Joseph's faithful obedience despite their fears and questions.

December 18 – **Respond to God's Gift** – Matthew 2: 1-16. The wise men and Herod responded very differently to Jesus' birth.

December 25 – **Rejoice in God's Gift** – Luke 2:1-20. Emphasizes the joy in the Christmas story.

David Packer, writer of December's commentary tells us "The greatest gift God gave to humanity was that of His Son, Jesus Christ. This study is a reminder of the life-changing significance of Christmas, and will challenge believers to carry the message of Christmas to the world. Most people agree that Christmas is a special time of the year, but not everyone recognizes the essential message of Christmas: Jesus, God's Son, coming into the world. More and more people are convinced that Christmas should be a secular observance with Christians' personal religious convictions kept to themselves. In the midst of our culture's false message relating to Christmas, Christians should celebrate the true meaning and message of God's greatest gift."

One thing we can do is take advantage of opportunities to share with others why we are celebrating Christmas. The Bible study in Sunday School this month will help you better understand the meaning and message of the birth of Jesus.

Care enough to invite someone to Sunday School

CHILDREN'S NEWS WITH RHONDA PARRISH, CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR

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Please join us on Saturday, December 10th to ride in the Gaston Christmas Parade. We will meet in the church Fellowship Hall at 8 AM and ride the church float in the parade, which starts at 10 AM. We invite all of the kids to stay with us after the parade. We will have the Clowns for Christ with us singing and face painting and we will eat lunch together in the Fellowship Hall. Please come join us for a fun Saturday Christmas celebration

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The Sonshine Sunday School Class is again sponsoring the sale of "Keep Christ in Christmas" auto magnets and decals with 100% of the profit going to the **Lottie Moon Christmas Offering**. The magnets are \$5 each and a sheet containing 3 decals will also be \$5 per sheet. For more information or to purchase please contact the church office at 794.0377 or any member of the Sonshine Class.

Thanks, David Rish



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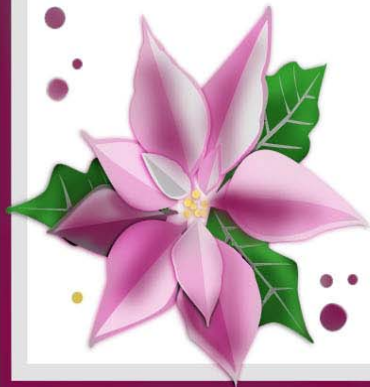
DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	MERRY CHRISTMAS			1 Kyrstin Kneece	2 Tyler Brant Jennifer Robinson Lula Rutland Scarlett Williams	3 Lee Willetts ♥Roy & Earlie Mae Davis
4 Timothy Long Brenda Spires Kimberly Yandle Beth Greer Concert 6 PM	5 Erick Gardner Graham Houghten Ray Smith ♥Johnny & Irma Dowd	6 Garrett Phillips	7 Terry Pound Spiritual Warriors Luncheon 11:30	8 Jack Carson	9 Trey Greene Stuart Pound II Steven Sharpe	10 Matthew Dawkins Nick Mooney Jonah Pound
December 4-11 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions						
11 Ricky Eberhardt Wendy Sanford Patti Sharpe Brittney Walker Missions March Children's Choir Christmas Musical 6 PM	12 Jeremy Fallaw Shannon Love Charles O'Brien II Ginger Parker	13 Jason Furtick Freda Johnson Kim Reynolds	14 Janet Fallaw Madison Hook Allen Ott Patti Reynolds Connie Spire ♥Charles & Patti Sharpe	15	16 Darla Smith Chuckie Stanley ♥Chris & Vicki Vidrine	17 Ned Frownfelter Jamie Lloyd
18 Adult Choir Cantata 6 PM	19 Natasha Brown Michelle Fallaw Noel Pound Ashleigh Rogers Christian Veasey- Chavis WOM Home Meeting 6:30 PM	20 Cidney Barnett Cathy DeLoach Donna Estep Larry Harrison ♥Johnny & Janet Fallaw	21 Rhonda Smith ♥Richard & Nancy Shuler ♥Gary & Kathy Singleton ♥Hoyt & Veronica Spradley ♥Lee & Janice Willetts Conference	22 Lisa Hutto Robbie Justice Phillip Lucas ♥Ken & Anita Nelson	23 Thomas Dowd, Sr Tessa Kelly Vicki Vidrine ♥Hoyt & Marian Fallaw ♥Hoyt & Emma Lee Dowd Office Closed	24 Jordan Hulon Hasford Ott ♥Thomas & Guyeula Bryant
25 Tony Rabon Buddy Wilson 	26 Jonathan Hudson Bo Hulon II Office Closed	27 Harold Lucas Deacon Meeting	28 Danny All Gabriel Mills ♥Stephen & Karen Willetts	29 Kathy Fallaw William Godfrey Andrew Moore Amber Pound Pat Vella, Jr. ♥James & Julia Fanning ♥Stan & Brenda Jeffcoat	30 Kendall Aycock ♥Marvin & Sara Rish	31 Frank Ayer Justin Jackson Malcom Jeffcoat Matthew Kester Shellie Lam Alton Sightler Mary Starnes Harold Tompkins

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CHRIST
THE SAVIOR
is BORN!



Weekly Schedule

Sunday
 09:45am.....Sunday School
 11:00am.....Worship
 11:00am..Children's Worship
 05:00pm.....Adult Choir
 05:00pm.....Discipleship
 06:00pm.....Worship
Monday
 3:00pm....Ladies' & Men's
 Prayer Time
Wednesday
 6:00 PM...Joyful Noise, Jr &
 Youth Choir practice
 06:45.....Youth
 7:00pm...Prayer Service
 7:00pm....GA, RA &
 Mission Friends

Monthly Meetings:
 1st Wednesday all mission
 groups meet 7:00PM
 3rd Wednesday Conference/
 Prayer Service 7:00PM
 3rd Monday Women on
 Mission Home Meeting 6:15
 Last Tuesday of Month
 Deacons Meeting
 Check bulletins & website for
 additional activities.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GASTON WELCOMES YOU!!
"THE CARING PLACE"

We are here to minister to you and your loved ones and to help strengthen your faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. If you are not currently attending a church, we invite you to join us. See our weekly schedule to the left of page.

Some parts of the Christmas story, as commonly told, aren't actually recounted in Scripture. Which of the following details are recorded in the Bible?



- A. Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem, and Joseph walked alongside her.
- B. Angels announced that a Savior, the Messiah (or Christ), had been born.
- C. There were three wise men.
- D. Shepherds and wise men (or Magi) worshiped Baby Jesus together.
- E. None of the above.

Answer: B (See Matthew 1:18-2:12 and Luke 2:1-20, especially v. 11.)



"Thank you for this turkey and dressing which you have provided, and the broccoli which the devil has slipped in."