



*Central  
Connection*

December 16, 2015

Dear Friends,

I believe that most people when asked to recall Jesus' birth would tell a story which includes Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, various farm animals, and three wise men. Part of the reason we tell the story this way is the way we learn it by setting up and interacting with a crèche or nativity set. Many of us learned the narrative by participating in a nativity play or Christmas pageant. It is a beautiful story we tell. However it is scripturally wrong. The story we most often tell is the blending of two different narratives from different gospel accounts in Matthew and Luke. Matthew does not have a weary couple turned away from an overbooked inn. (Neither does Luke but that's a different topic for another day.) Matthew starts with a genealogical list followed by a discourse on Joseph, a declaration that Mary gave birth in Bethlehem, and then magi speaking to Herod. The shepherds are not in their fields. The heavenly hosts are nowhere to be found. There is not a manger nor are there any farm animals. In Matthew's version of Christ's birth a child who would grow to be the King of kings and Lord of lords is born and visited by an undetermined number of magi who bring him strange gifts and then disappear into the East. The story is not so much about the condition or nature of Christ's birth as it is the recognition that something divine has entered the world and there is a proper response.

This time of the year we spend a lot of time thinking about gifts as we exchange them in recognition of what the magi did. I wonder though if we have not missed the point of the gifts. The gifts were not random objects of immense value just given to a king as tribute. They said as something about the nature of the recipient as they do the giver. Gold was really the only gift fit for a king. Frankincense and myrrh are perfumes and spices used to prepare a body for burial. The magi seemed to know that there was something peculiar about this child and how he would affect the world as they knew it. Their gifts were in a way a foreshadowing of what was to come in the rest of the story about his life. The gifts they brought to him in many ways defined him and what he wanted for the creation over which he is lord. If Christ were to come back today what gifts would we bring? Would we bring something appropriate to his nature even if it looks odd to outside observers?

When we think about gifts we should think about who is receiving them and offer something appropriate to the recipient but also something appropriate to ourselves. We cannot give something that we do not possess. What is it that you have which says something unique about your relationship with God? It can be something grand like the singing in the choir or playing an instrument to supplement our common worship or proclaiming the gospel to an unknowing person, or it can be something simple such as handing out bulletins or caring for the youngest among us or driving the bus so that others can participate in the communal life of the church. Each individual response is desperately needed to confirm what we believe about the One who calls us to be the Body of Christ. Our gifts and how we use them speak to what we believe about God and God's promises to us. In this season of gift giving please consider what you can bring to Christ even if it seems odd to others. They will be used.

Joy and peace,

*Brian*

## *Birthdays & Anniversaries*

Chuck Olson.....	12/21	Bettye Brittenum.....	01/05
Jean Turner.....	12/21	George Reid.....	01/06
Mary Baker.....	12/23	Jon Clements.....	01/09
Rita Goodman.....	12/23		
Jacob Loyd.....	01/01	Jerry & Renee Delone.....	12/22
Paula Reid.....	01/02	Dwight & Camille Talburt.....	
Jessie Qualls.....	01/04		12/31

## *Prayer Concerns List*

*A special prayer that you'll be blessed with tender care and needed rest, warm thoughts of friends that mean so much and most of all, God's healing touch.*

### **Members of Central:**

Ann Shields	Mary Baker	Steve Zimmer	Ivana Salmans
Janet Roys	Richard Perkins	Carol Wilkins	Evelyn Porter
Elizabeth Hopkins	Crutch Aikman	Jeanice Falls	Bill Wade
Mary Henson	Jerry Ratzlaff		

### **Friends of the church:**

Lorene & Whit Evans	Delores Bryan	Winn Corpes	Gunner
Ron Reid	Julie Session	Pat Landrum Odum	Brenda Ballard
Eddie Carrington	Emile Brown	Linda Sanders	Flave Peters
James Young	Pam Mathis	Marty & Gary Hayward	William Reid
Sheree Hodge	Barbara Webb	Tim Gutierrez	Pam Staggs
Rhonda James	Mr. Delone	Myra Ballanger	Robert Reynolds
Harris Family	Sherry Felder	Jim Gifford	Scott Brownlee
Denney Jordan	Robin Rylander	Diana Rambo	Jan Schutt
Edward James Family	Judy Powley	Dorothy Walker	Ariel Pishney
Margie Nance	Steve Erwin	Liz Frank	Wanda Brewer
Tracey Salzan	George & June Workman	Richardson Family	Jeff Pike
Frank McCarron	Betty Turner	Sam Ake	Ed James
<b>Doug Perry</b>	<b>Maylene Hatfield</b>	<b>Mystee Carnahan Crowell</b>	

### **Family of Vance Jones**

All military personnel including: Will Porter, Riley Whittenburg, Timothy Dann, Callie Latimer, David Gordon, Brandon Gortemiller, Stephanie Williams, Will Holland, Mark Hendron, Dustin Clark, Joshua Johnson, Andrew Bellocchio, Jacob Randle, Jason Harrison, Robert Barber, Carter Stone, and Travis Sloan.

## *Memorials*

*In Loving Memory of Don Myers by Garrie Kellam*

## *Thank You*

Thank you to Sally Ramey and Jimmie Coker for help folding the *Central Connections*.  
Thank you to Jimmie Coker for sitting at my desk while I was out.

## *Central Welcomes Visitors*



**December 6:** Amy Wetzel, Eldon Clary, Shelly Fine, JJ & Judy Thornton, Angel Watts, Rhonda James, Mike Kiser

**December 13:** Eldon Clary, Ed, Claire and Shelly Fine, Angel Watts, Kamrynn Bond, Jacob and Clarisse Davis, The Belongia Family

## Notes of Interest

**Beginning in 2016** potluck Sunday will be the 2nd Sunday of the Month.

**The church office will be closed** Thursday, December 24, Friday, December 25th and Monday, December 28th for the Christmas holiday.

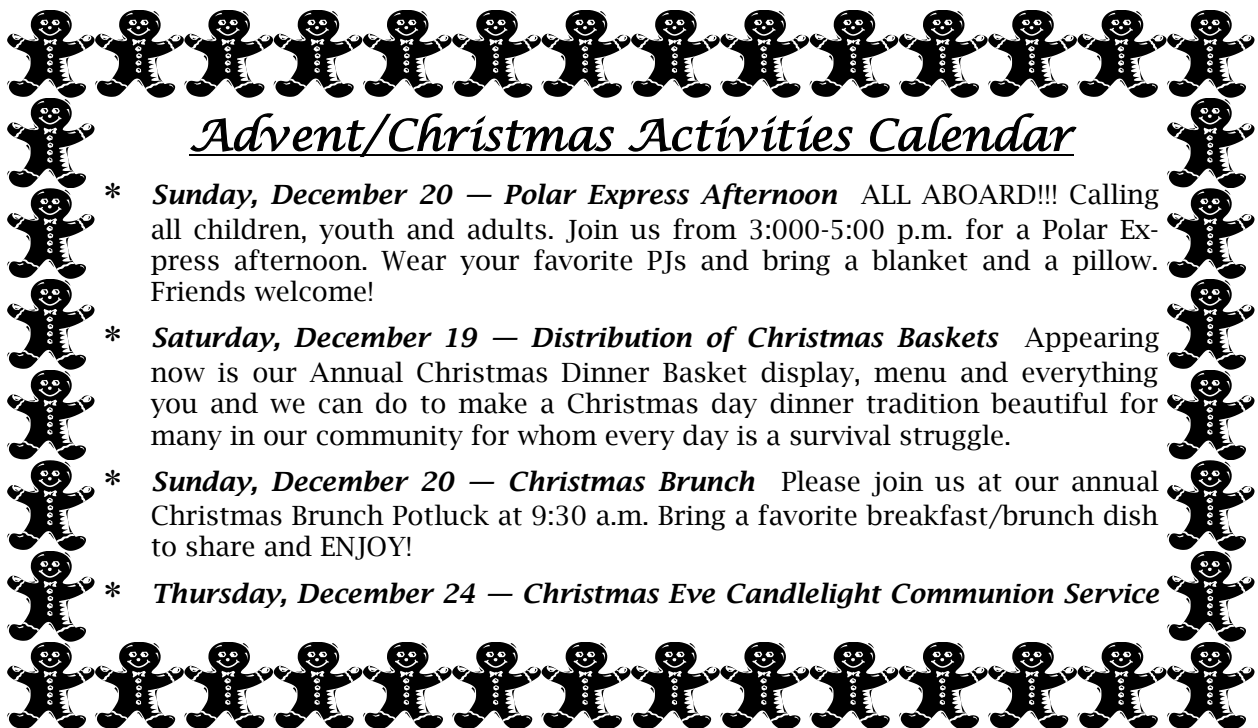
**Session Class of 2018:** Garrie Kellam, Jessica Boudra, Cheryl Massengale, Michael Stoker

**Deacons Class of 2018:** Maggie Brock, Todd Sweeden

**Youth Ruling Elder:** Natalie Aikman

**Barb Clements** will have a table set up after Church this Sunday and next Sunday. She will be looking for volunteers for the **After Church Coffee Host**. If you would like to serve, please stop by and provide Barb with your name and phone number. Coffee will be served on Sundays where there is no volunteer.

The **2016 1st quarter volunteer schedule has been prepared and will be going out this week**. It has been very difficult this quarter to pull the schedule together, as we continue to run short of volunteers in some areas. We need more **ushers, nursery volunteers and bus drivers!** If you can help in one of these areas please call or email Karen Onyett with your contact information by December 31, 2015. Thanks you so much!



### Advent/Christmas Activities Calendar

- \* **Sunday, December 20 — Polar Express Afternoon** ALL ABOARD!!! Calling all children, youth and adults. Join us from 3:00-5:00 p.m. for a Polar Express afternoon. Wear your favorite PJs and bring a blanket and a pillow. Friends welcome!
- \* **Saturday, December 19 — Distribution of Christmas Baskets** Appearing now is our Annual Christmas Dinner Basket display, menu and everything you and we can do to make a Christmas day dinner tradition beautiful for many in our community for whom every day is a survival struggle.
- \* **Sunday, December 20 — Christmas Brunch** Please join us at our annual Christmas Brunch Potluck at 9:30 a.m. Bring a favorite breakfast/brunch dish to share and ENJOY!
- \* **Thursday, December 24 — Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service**

#### General Fund Revenue & Expenditures

November 30, 2015

November Revenue	\$ 16,098.58	YTD Revenue	\$ 194,738.73
November Expenditures	<u>-21,003.22</u>	YTD Expenditures	<u>- 307,536.72</u>
	(\$ 4,904.64)		(\$ 112,797.99)

Mortgage Beginning Balance	\$528,415.56
Interest Payment	( 1,739.37)
Principal Payment	( 4,691.52)
Mortgage Ending Balance	\$523,724.04

## Looking to Sunday

<p><b><u>December 20</u></b>          Scripture.....Micah 5:2-5a; <i>Luke 1:46b-55 or Ps. 80:1-7</i>; Heb. 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45(46-55)          Worship Assistant.....Andy Brock          Children's Sermon .....Susan Jordan          Children's Church.....no children's church          Ushers..... Kelli &amp; Jimmie Coker, Garrie Kellam Steve Heaton          Nursery Volunteer.....Roy Monroe          Bus Ministry .....Don Carnahan          Acolytes .....Izzy Clements, Marley Johnson          Coffee Host .....Christmas Brunch</p>	<p><b><u>December 27</u></b>          Scripture.....1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26; <i>Ps. 148</i>; Col. 3:12-17; Luke2:41-52          Worship Assistant.....Ken Coker          Children's Sermon .....Pastor Brian          Children's Church.....Barb Clements, Any Brock          Ushers.....Steve Zimmer, Susan Jordan Toni Bachman, Jackie Gardner          Nursery Volunteer.....Sally Ramey          Bus Ministry.....Bill Aikman          Acolytes .....Day Stoker, Maddie Clements          Coffee Host.....</p>
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<b>Upcoming Events:</b>			
Sunday, December 20		Monday, December 28	
9:30 am 10:50 am 3:00 – 5:00pm	Christmas Brunch Worship Polar Express, Fellowship Hall		Office Closed
Tuesday, December 22		Tuesday, December 29	
1:30 pm	Central Prays	1:30 pm	Central Prays
Wednesday, December 23		Wednesday, December 30	
5:30 pm 6:30 pm	Bible Study Koinonia Worship	5:15 pm 5:30 pm 6:30 pm 7:30 pm	Handbell Choir Rehearsal Bible Study Koinonia Worship Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, December 24		Thursday, December 31	
5:00 pm 5:30 pm	Office Closed Central Prays Candelight Service Joy Offering	5:00 pm	Office Closed Central Prays
Friday, December 25		Friday, January 1	
	Merry Christmas—office closed		Office Closed
Sunday, December 27			
9:30 am 10:50 am Noon	Sunday School Worship Fellowship, Knox Hall		

MERRY  
CHRISTMAS

The text "MERRY CHRISTMAS" is rendered in a decorative, calligraphic font. "MERRY" is in red and "CHRISTMAS" is in green. The letters have a slight 3D effect with shadows. The text is framed by elegant, thin black scrollwork. Three holly leaves with red berries are scattered around the text: one on the left side, one between the two lines of text, and one at the top right.



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