

Children's Ministry News & Upcoming Music Events

by Kelsey Mathis, Music & Children's Director

Make plans to join us Sunday evening, December 15th at 6:00 pm, as our Adult Choir presents *The Mystery of Christmas*. You will not want to miss this special celebration of the birth of our Savior as our adults, children and drama team come together to present the Christmas story through drama and music.

ATTENTION all children rising 1st grade through 6th grade! Kelsey Mathis is not taking registration and deposits for Summer Camp 2020! We will be attending Merriwood Christian Camp again this year. Rising 1st - 4th are eligible for Day Camp and Rising 4th - 6th are eligible for Junior Week overnight camp. For more details, please see Kelsey Mathis or email her at kelseymathis@gmail.com.



I SAW
A GREAT MULTITUDE
FROM EVERY NATION... **REV 7:9**

Highland Park's Goal
this year is \$20,000

imb | LOTTIE MOON
CHRISTMAS
OFFERING

Thank you for supporting
International missionaries!

Get Connected!

By Rocky Oakes, Sunday School Director

We are in the midst of the holidays. It is hard to believe! At the time I am writing this, it is Thanksgiving week. As most of us do, I have been thinking of all the things I have to be thankful for. One of the many things I am thankful for is that we have wonderful teachers teaching our children in Sunday School each week. In the nursery, the kids are playing and hearing a Bible story; in preschool, they are learning and doing wonderful crafts. On up through elementary school-age, the teachers are dedicated to teaching our kids meaningful Bible lessons.

Our preschooler Anna has a nightly ritual of asking, "What is tomorrow?" If it is Saturday night when she asks, we say, "Sunday." She follows with, "What do we do on Sundays?" She is answered with, "It is church day" and she excitedly says, "Yaaayyy!" She loves going to church and she loves Sunday School. And I love that she loves it! I am very thankful!

In His Service,
Rocky Oakes



YOUTH *Student* Ministries

By Ann Riggs

The youth are excited to worship with you during the December 8th evening service. We hope you can join us as we minister through multiple forms of traditional and not-so-traditional methods. Performances will include "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "Mary, Did You Know," "The Hallelujah Chorus," and "It's About the Cross."

The song, "It's About the Cross" was new to me and entails the true meaning of it all as revealed in the following lyrics:



It's not just about the manger
Where the baby lay
It's not all about the angels
Who sing for him that day,
It's not just about the shepherds
Or the bright and shining star
It's not about all the wise men
Who traveled from a far.

It's about the cross
It's about my sin
It's about how Jesus came to be born once
So that we could be born again
It's about the stone
That was rolled away
So that you and I could have real life someday
It's about the cross.

May we keep the cross as the focal point of our hearts and minds as we celebrate the birth and life of Jesus Christ! We look forward to worshipping with you!

In His Grip,
Ann Riggs

WMU News & Views

by Annie Laurie Smith, WMU Director

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God."
Philippians 4:6

I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving. We have so much to be thankful for and are so blessed! We carried a meal to our sick and shut-ins in November, and helped in giving to the Foothills Food Pantry for food to needy families for Thanksgiving. In addition, we deliver food bags to the medical ministries each month. We are thankful that we can share God's blessings upon us with others! May we never forget to thank you all for your on-going support and for your prayers!

In His Service,
Annie Laurie Smith



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Something Incredible Happened Here

by Dr. Darrell Tate, Senior Pastor

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Is. 9:6

An old pioneer traveled westward across the Great Plains until he came to an abrupt halt at the edge of the Grand Canyon. He was astounded at the sight before him: a vast chasm one mile down, eighteen miles across, and more than a hundred miles long! Removing his hat and wiping the perspiration from his face he said, "Something incredible must have happened here!" As we approach the Christmas season and witness the lights, the beautiful decorations, the trees and the parades, one can't help but say, "Something incredible must have happened here!" Indeed something did happen. Something incredibly wonderful! "A child is born," "a son is given," "The Word became flesh," "the fullness of the Godhead," slipped out of the throne room in heaven and entered this world as a tiny helpless baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and placed in Bethlehem's manger. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, Isaiah the Prophet described him as, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Jesus is wonderful in His birth. As the virgin born Son of God, Jesus was sent from heaven by supernatural conception and a star from heaven marked his arrival. He is wonderful in His power. During his earthly ministry Jesus calmed the storm as his disciples stand in awe and say, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the waves obey His voice?"

Jesus is the only perfect and complete counselor. A counselor is one who gives advice, leads, or defends someone. But we must be careful to whom we turn for counsel. The story is told of two bums sitting together on a park bench. One of them said to the other, "I'm a man who never took advice from anybody." The other said, "Shake my hand, old buddy, for I'm the man who followed everybody's advice." Following the counsel of Jesus only brings blessing for he alone is truth. Whatever He speaks is truth. Whatever He advises is right. Whatever He commands is perfect.

Isaiah also said that Jesus would be called, "The Mighty God." This is one of the most powerful statements of Jesus Christ's deity found anywhere in the Bible. The Hebrew term for mighty means champion or hero. A champion is one who is left standing after a conflict is over. A champion is one who stands tall

when all others have fallen and failed. A hero is one who gains the respect of people because of his exploits. This is a beautiful picture of Jesus, our Lord. He is the all-time, undisputed Champion.

Jesus isn't simply called a Father but "The Everlasting Father." Literally, He is the Father of eternity. Jesus existed long before his birth in Bethlehem. He is without beginning and without end. He is the "Everlasting Father."

Finally, Isaiah refers to Jesus as The Prince of Peace. Throughout the history of mankind the earth has been filled with war and conflict. To a world that talks much about peace but experiences very little of it, God promised that the Prince of Peace would be born. There is coming a day when Jesus will sit upon the throne of David and rule the world as The Prince Peace.

In the person of Jesus, God came into our sin-darkened world on the first Christmas morning bringing light and life to all who believe. The scripture says, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." He could have easily burst on the scene as a full-grown man, a military general or a conquering hero. In fact, this was

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what many people were looking for but it wasn't how God did it. God chose the humble surroundings of a cattle stall, the narrow confines of a manger and a quiet backdrop free from pomp and circumstance to enter this world as a baby. God incarnate was wrapped by the hands, carried in the arms and nursed on the breast of a teenage girl from Nazareth. Something incredible happened here. Jesus Christ is born! Now 2000 years later we continue celebrate his birth, the birth of Jesus our sweet Savior and Lord. The announcement by the angels as recorded in Luke's gospel says, "...fear not for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord." God gave His only Son to die in our place so that we could know and experience mercy, grace and forgiveness. Jesus came so we could know what love feels like, real love – love that never leaves, love that never disappoints, love that is never betrayed.

As you celebrate the Christmas season I pray that you will sense the unconditional love of our Savior, the warmth of His presence and the beauty of His holiness. Remember, "something incredible happened here."

God Bless and Have a Merry Christmas,
Pastor Darrell

Hope for the Holidays

By Rev. Jim Richland, Associate Pastor

It seems sadly ironic that it is around the season of Thanksgiving and Christmas; two holidays that emphasize love, peace, hope, and togetherness; that many people find themselves stressed, lonely and depressed. In fact, the National Alliance on Mental Illness found that those who struggled during this holiday season listed the following reasons: financial strains, loneliness, unrealistic expectations and inability to be with loved ones.

These are not the typical things we want to think about during this time of the year, but not only is this the reality for many people, but it can also point us to what's so wonderful about Christmas. None of the burdens mentioned above are unique to our time or culture. These have been shared experiences in everyone's journey. So it may be helpful for us to remember those who witnessed the first Christmas and how it interrupted their broken lives with unexpected hope.

Far from the quiet, idyllic nativity scenes we're often presented with; the people of the first century Israel inhabited a dangerous world that offered very little hope. The Roman empire maintained peace by keeping the people down with heavy taxes or lifting them up with wooden crosses. There were the powerful few at the top, the rejected few at the bottom and the forgotten masses who scrambled to survive another day. Sadly, people expected hardships like these in the world at that time; what arguably hurt the most God's silence. Often a refuge and a source of comfort in an otherwise chaotic world; God had remained silent for four hundred years. No new prophets; no new word of hope.

It was into a world full of hurting people who felt like God was not listening to their cries for help that God brought His greatest message of hope. God was not going to send a word through a prophet; He sent the Word in flesh (Jn.1:14). He was not going to free Israel from Roman bondage, but free the world from sin (Gal. 5:1). He was not going to whisk us away from a broken earth to a perfect heaven, but make all things new by making heaven and earth one in Christ Jesus (Rev. 21:1-5)!

So as you celebrate this Christmas season, remember the wonderful message of the hope God has given us through the birth of Christ. Encourage those around you who may be struggling under the weight of our sin saturated world that there is hope in Jesus. And be sure to take time in the business of everything to thank our Heavenly Father for His goodness and grace!

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Jim

The DEACONS CORNER

by David O'Neal, Deacon Chairman

As we begin our planning for the Christmas season, it is certainly a time to share gifts with our friends and loved ones. But there is so much more! As I watched the Lottie Moon video Sunday morning, it was so moving to see the impact of our gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. Think of the souls saved as a result of the gifts to missions. My father stressed the importance of giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering every year. My family makes a donation in his memory each year to this offering.

Some of the other avenues of giving include the backpacks for the needy Appalachian children. They will be delivered on December 13th. Our dear brother in Christ, Terry Hardy, has worked diligently to make it a special time for these children. Many of you brought backpacks to support the need. You also prepared OCC shoeboxes for 354 children!

In addition to the Shoebox ministry, Samaritan's Purse also has a program where you can donate cows, chickens and other livestock to families in need throughout the world. This is a great family project to teach our children the importance of giving to those who are less fortunate.

In a few weeks, we will go shopping for the Angel Tree children, supported by our Brotherhood. It is a great time for the family to enjoy shopping together for someone in need.

As I close my eyes and think about the birth of our Savior, I think of the hope, love, joy and peace that He has brought into my life. What a gift!!! What a Savior!!! My prayer for each of us that that we will cherish the "Greatest Gift" and do what He expects us to do--give to those in need. I pray that God will bless you and your families this Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Merry Christmas,
David O'Neal

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1

Chrystal Brim
- 2

Jeff Barley
- Kimberly Collins
- Addison Nixon
- 3

Jay Bolen
- Camrie Dowell
- 4

Bill Juno
- 7

Kory Cox
- 8

Linda Brindle
- Gale Hamilton
- Adalie Hiatt
- 9

Wade Cruise
- Samuel Hawks
- 11

Amy Morrison
- Jay Rosendahl
- 13

Corey Bumgardner
- Wanda Dobbins
- Ruth Handy
- 16

Tim Dowell
- John Nixon
- Sherri Sexton
- 17

Shannon Phipps
- 19

Aubree Smith
- 20

Reneice Gravitte
- Clara Richland
- 21

Emily Diaz
- Jonathon Wood
- 22

Carson Roberts
- 23

Carlene Creed
- Jimmy Gillespie
- Samantha Surratt
- 24

Twainette Boyles
- Will Marion
- Vera Parsons
- 25

Ann Collins
- Ronnie Miller
- Anna Oaks
- Macie Abigail Whitaker
- 26

Amber Burkhardt
- Jamie Martin
- Adison Phipps
- Casey Utt
- 27

Turner Bowman
- Hal Nichols
- Jenna Richland
- Manley Stovall, Jr.
- 28

Stephen Berrier
- Jessica Parsons
- 31

Tyler Weddle

DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

Infant Nursery ➡	Dec 01	Jennifer Wall & Madison Easter
	Dec 08	Rocky & Jessica Oakes
	Dec 15	Tyler & Audra Chilton
	Dec 22	Rhonda Parker & Estelle Terry
	Dec 29	Wesley & Cathryn Lawson
Toddler Nursery ➡	Dec 01	Susie Roberts & Cassie Roberts
	Dec 08	Nikki Hopkins & Scarlet Hiatt
	Dec 15	Alisha Shupe & Lisa Haynes
	Dec 22	Will & Danielle Marion
	Dec 29	Cory & Teresa Wilkins
Children's Church ➡	Dec 01	Jane Utt, Molly Willey & Team
	Dec 08	Jane Utt, Molly Willey & Team
	Dec 15	Jane Utt, Molly Willey & Team
	Dec 22	Jane Utt, Molly Willey & Team
	Dec 29	Jane Utt, Molly Willey & Team
Greeters ➡	Dec 01	Stacy Combs & Krystyn Haynes
	Dec 08	Terry & Marilyn Childress
	Dec 15	Howard & Rita Tucker
	Dec 22	Glenda Weddle & Frances Nixon
	Dec 29	Thomas Marsh & Phillip Hopkins
Lock-up ➡	Dec 01	Jeff Nixon
	Dec 08	Monty Vernon
	Dec 15	David O'Neal
	Dec 22	Mildred Gillespie
	Dec 29	Mike Osborne



SUN, Dec 1	8:30 am - Early Worship Service 9:45 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Worship Service 6:00 pm - Children's Musical <i>Away in a Mango</i>
Dec 1 - 8	Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions
TUE, Dec 3	9:00 am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study
WED, Dec 4	6:00 pm - Building & Grounds Comm. Meeting 6:00 pm - Snack/Supper for Awanas 6:30 pm - Awana Clubs 6:45 pm - Youth Student Ministries 7:00 pm - Family Enrichment Night 8:00 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal
SUN, Dec 8	Lottie Moon Christmas Offering 8:30 am - Early Worship Service 9:45 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Worship Service 6:00 pm - Youth Stick/Drama Performance
TUE, Dec 10	9:00 am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 12:00 pm - Agape Grief Support Group Meeting
WED, Dec 11	6:00 pm - Finance Committee Meeting 6:00 pm - Snack/Supper for Awanas 6:30 pm - Awana Clubs 6:45 pm - Youth Student Ministries 7:00 pm - Prayer Meeting 8:00 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal
SUN, Dec 15	8:30 am - Early Worship Service 9:45 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Worship Service 6:00 pm - Adult Christmas Presentation of <i>The Mystery of Christmas</i>
TUE, Dec 17	9:00 am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study
WED, Dec 18	6:00 pm - Snack/Supper for Awanas 6:30 pm - Awana Clubs 6:45 pm - Youth Student Ministries 7:00 pm - Prayer Meeting 8:00 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal
SUN, Dec 22	8:30 am - Early Worship Service 9:45 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Worship Service 6:00 pm - No Evening Service
MON - WED	Church Offices Closed for Christmas
TUE, Dec 24	Christmas Eve
WED, Dec 25	Christmas Day - No Evening Service
SUN, Dec 29	8:30 am - Early Worship Service 9:45 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Worship Service 6:00 pm - No Evening Service
TUE, Dec 31	New Year's Eve 9:00 am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study