



The Messenger

THEME: "GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME"
(DECEMBER 2017)

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* ARTICLES NEED TO
BE SUBMITTED TO
PETE BY THE LAST
SUNDAY OF THE
MONTH - FOR NEXT
MONTH'S PUBLICA-
TION.

Carl's Comments - Reverend Carl Thompson



Once again Advent is upon us. It is a time to prepare our hearts to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. Evelyn and I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The season of Advent begins a new liturgical cycle in the church. Every year we trace the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, from his birth to his resurrection. The central themes of Advent, a Latin word which means "coming" or "arrival," are expectation, and longing for the birth of the Christ child. It is the season to focus on the gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, that God gives us daily, through the Gift of His Son over 2000 years ago.



One of the blessings of Advent is that it counteracts the hype of the commercial Christmas madness, inviting us to a deeper and more fruitful spiritual renewal. Keeping a balance between the spiritual and the secular will require a little planning on our part. Start by making a list of everything that needs to be done. Don't let the list scare you, or get you into a panic mode. Then block into your calendar specific times every day for personal prayer, spiritual reading, and reflection. As you move closer to Christmas you will begin to relish those quiet moments in your day. The spiritual insights will help to keep you focused. You may like it so much that you'll decide to carry over into the New Year the practice of setting aside daily quiet time with God. God Bless You. *Carl*

Reformation Note: The first person to bring a Christmas Tree into a house, in the way we know it today, may have been the 16th century German preacher Martin Luther. A story is told that, one night before Christmas, he was walking through the forest and looked up to see the stars shining through the tree branches. It was so beautiful, that he went home and told his children that it reminded him of Jesus, who left the stars of heaven to come to earth at Christmas.



Army Cold Hat

Calendar of Events

Worship Services at 10:00 AM

Adult Sunday School each Sunday at 9:00

- Tuesdays - Men's Prayer Breakfast at 8 am
- Wednesdays - Choir Rehearsal at 5:30 P.M.
- Dec. 3 - Communion Sunday
- Dec. 24 - Christmas Cantata "King Forever" at 6:00 PM
- Dec. 25 - Christmas Day - No Service
- Jan. 14 - Ordination of Session Members/ Session Meeting after Worship

DECEMBER 2017						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 2
3	4	Yoga 1 PM	Choir 5:30	Yoga 10:30	7	8 9
			Choir 5:30			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	Yoga 1 PM	Choir 5:30	Yoga 10:30	21	22 23
24	25	Yoga 1 PM	Choir 5:30	Yoga 10:30	28	29 30
New Years Eve 31	2018 HAPPY NEW YEAR					

Such faith!

Every year as Christmas approaches, my thoughts turn to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her story ever beckons to me.

As I imagine it, I see Mary, the young maiden, olive skinned, a covering over her long, dark hair, about thirteen years old, newly metamorphosed into womanhood. And I picture Joseph, a tall, handsome young man, likely in his late teens, yet old enough to choose a wife.

I see their families sharing the Sabbath meal together, the candles lit, the ancient words of the ritual being repeated. And Mary's mother, perhaps, as she sees the richly colored garment worn by Joseph's mother, and the fine table that is set before them, growing excited for her daughter's prospects, pleased that a young man from such a family, a descendant of David, is interested in her daughter.

And I envision the fathers, in the cool of the evening, moving out into the courtyard after dinner, to discuss the betrothal, and the eventual marriage of their children. Perhaps the



Such trust! Such Unquestioning Obedience!

talk turns to the grandchildren that they may one day share, and brings a smile of anticipation to their faces.

The happy couple, so young, so innocent, so caught up in the joy and the passion of youth, the excitement of planning their wedding day, and the life they will soon share, seem blissfully unaware of the turmoil that lies ahead of them.

But then, "The Annunciation!"

In the book of Luke, Chapter 1:26-29, we read: "Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city in Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one; the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of message this might be."

The angel Gabriel then proclaimed that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and she would bear a child, to be called Jesus, the son of the living God, the long promised and long awaited Savior of Israel.

And her response to all this? This virgin, who had never lain with a man, this newly betrothed, barely past childhood, woman?

Her response, "The Magnificat," as we know it, is found in Luke 1:46-55. It says, in part: "My soul magnifies the Lord; and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; because He has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth our generation shall call me blessed, because He who is mighty has done great things for me; and holy is His name."

Such faith! Such trust! Such unquestioning obedience to God's call on her life. Such rejoicing!

It is hard for us to fathom. And yet, we accept it as fact, and we believe it is true. For we, as Christians, know the rest of the story. And we know too that it is not yet finished. And soon we, like Mary, like the angels in Heaven, and the Wise Men of old, will be celebrating Jesus' birth.

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

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, from a very "Merry Heart," **Linda Lloyd**

Common Lectionary Readings (Carl will change topics at times due to requests or other circumstances)

	First Sunday of Advent - Dec 3	Second Sunday of Advent - Dec 10	Third Sunday of Advent - Dec 17	Fourth Sunday of Advent - Dec 24	First Sunday After Christmas - Dec 31
First Reading	Isaiah 64:1-9	Isaiah 40:1-11	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	2 Sam 7:1-11, 16	Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm	Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	Psalm 126	Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	Psalm 148
Sec. Reading	1 Cor. 1:3-9	2 Peter 3:8-15a	1 Tess. 5:16-24	Romans 16:25-27	Gla. 4:4-7
Gospel	Mark 13:24-37	Mark 1:1-8	John 1:6-8, 19-28	Luke 1:26-38	Luke 2:15-20

December Birthdays

- Mike Moore 3
- Debby Aldridge 4
- Betty Gengler 9
- Jesus Christ 25
- Carol Booher 27

About our Members and Friends

Ken and Linda Latiolais will close on their new home on December 22 and move in January. Ken continues to recover from his foot surgery. He still has a small area on the top of his foot that needs to continue healing. Overall he received a good doctor's report and returns to doctor in two weeks.

Mary Jean Boston (Ann Faber's mother) is living and doing rehabilitation at Park Place Manor in Belton. There are good days and not so good days, but she has a good attitude and cooperates with her therapists. Presently, she is being treated for edema (swelling in her legs, ankles, and feet.)

Please pray for her comfort and peace with where she is on her life's journey.

Anita Johnson's doctors are working to determine causes of her "spells". Her sister, Ellen Staples, has much on her plate as she develops a care plan for Anita. Pray for both.



May the magic of Christmas gladden your heart with the joys of the season. May the spirit of Christmas bless you with greater strength. May the promise of Christmas bring you and yours endless blessings.

Christmas Eve Service

We hope to see you at the Christmas Eve evening service, when we will be performing the Christmas Cantata, "King Forever" at 6 PM.

Thanks,
Carol and Monte Shuck



Christmas Books and Stories by June Lubowinski

What is your favorite holiday book or story? Along with our wonderful Nativity story there is a wealth of literature that celebrates the season and is enjoyable to read. I discovered this early on, when at the age of seven while visiting my grandparents for

Christmas, I found Louisa May Alcott's **LITTLE WOMEN** on one of their bookshelves and I began to read. I couldn't put it down! And since then every Christmas I think of that book, and many times I have re-read it. It begins with the sentence "Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents." This is spoken by the truthful and no nonsense Jo, who is the Louisa May Alcott character in the book. It goes on to describe the daily life of a struggling family in the Northern United States during the Civil War. It is tender, funny, lovely and touching. If you have never read this book or if you have not read it as an adult, I urge you to get a copy and read. I know of University professors in both history and sociology that have their classes read this because it is such a peek into a time and place that is foreign to most of us.

I could go on and on about Louisa Alcott, whom I believe has never received the acclaim due her for both children's fiction and adult fiction, but I want to share other stories with you. Of course we all know **A CHRISTMAS CAROL** by Charles Dickens, but he wrote other Christmas themed stories and one of my favorites is "The Seven Poor Travelers" which brings together a variety of people who can enjoy the charity of a night's stay in an Inn, and the stories they tell. It is written in first person and feels as if Dickens is the traveler telling the story of the



others. Author Jane Austen has Christmas in her novel EMMA where a festive dinner and a snowstorm lead to a very important plot development. Frances Hodgson Burnett who wrote **THE SECRET GARDEN** has an unusual Christmas story that I searched for in

many Christmas anthologies. I read it from a green book of Christmas stories that my 7th grade teacher had on a bookshelf in the back of the room. I was charmed by the story "Behind the White Brick" (or sometimes just "The White Brick") but didn't have the research sense at that age to write down the author's name. It is kind of an Alice in Wonderland tale of a young girl's Christmas adventure behind the white brick in the fireplace. It is magical, and a bit more modern than one would expect for that period.

Now the book that you must read if you have never read it or read again and enjoy is **THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER**. If you have EVER had anything to do with a church Christmas program with children, you will relate to this fantastically funny story. I give it as a gift to families I know when the children are in kindergarten. It is so well written and has so much heart and warmth, anyone will enjoy the story.

I love sharing good books and good stories, not just at Christmas time but all the time. This is a beginning, and I will leave you with a quotation from Dickens "The Seven Poor Travelers":

"Christmas comes but once a year,--- which is unhappily too true, but when it begins to stay with us the whole year round, we shall make this earth a very different place."

Adult Bible Study Classes

This Fall we are our studying Adam Hamilton's newest book, Making Sense of the Bible: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today.

The topics have shifted to questions of interpreting the Bible such as:

- 12/3 Wrestling with the issues of Sexual Relationships.
- 12/12 Is the Book of Revelations a guide to the end times?

(The class is taking a Holiday break. We will start up again on January 7th.)

Together we will study this book, watch the DVD lessons, and discuss the answers to these questions as well as many others relating to the Bible and its meaning.

I hope you will be present on Sunday mornings at 9:00 A.M., to add your thoughts and insights to our discussions.

Coffee and cookies are served!



Here are a list of the books that have been referenced during the class:

- Living the Message by Eugene Peterson
- What You Don't Have to Believe to Be a Christian By George M. Ricker
- The Good Book : Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart by Peter J. Gomes
- Congregation: Contemporary Writers Read the Jewish Bible*** David Rosenberg, Editor
- Hallelujah, Anyway*** By Anne Lamott
- Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics by Ross Douthat
- When Bad Things Happen to Good People*** by Rabbi Harold Kushner
- Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life by Eric Metaxas
- Christianity and World Religions*** by Adam Hamilton (Book and DVD)
- Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places by Eugene Peterson

*** In the church library

The Presbyterian Church of Salado Honors its Veterans

The following was written by Carl Menyhert and published in the Salado *Village Voice* on Nov. 23.

Front row sitting: Pastor Carl Thompson (left) and Renita Menyhert (right). Second row sitting from left to right: Carl Menyhert, Bob Todd, Jerry Creamer, Knox Tyson and J.C. Pennington. Third row standing from left to right: Chris Gengler, Britt Healey, Danney McCort, Jim Ervi, Mike Hart, Betsy Tyson, and Jeanette West. Fourth row standing from left to right: Rip Van- Winkle and Chine Ray.



Presbyterian Church of Salado honored those who served their country during a special Veteran's Day service on November 12.

The program opened with the hymn, "God Bless Our Native Land," followed by remarks explaining the importance of recognizing individuals who served America in the military by Reverend Carl Thompson.

The church has several military retirees in its congregation who worked together to plan a special Veteran's Day project to honor those in uniform. "As a U.S. Army soldier, I've experienced constant moves, demanding work hours and sacrifices we have to make," said Thompson. "Yet, it's never something we complain about because we understand how important it is to preserve our country. Which is why we should never forget those in uniform, past and present."

Thompson, an Army veteran of over 30 years, shared Psalm 91 with the congregation which is believed to be a prayer for Soldiers. "I learned about this tradition of giving Soldiers a copy of Psalm 91 while in the Army," said Thompson. "It quickly became one of my most cherished duties because it was obvious how much this prayer meant to them."

In charge of selecting appropriate music for the special occasion was Carol Shuck. Several patriotic theme songs were chosen including, "God Made You Free,"

"This Is My Song," "Statue of Liberty," and "I Had a Little Talk with the Lord."

"I was searching for songs that had both a patriotic and Christian emphasis," said Shuck. "Our minister specifically asked that we remember those who are in church and are there to honor Christ."

Another distinctive song, "It Is Finished," was performed by Rip Van Winkle and Mike Hart. "This particular song is by gospel music writers and performers Gloria and Bill Gaither," said Maj. (ret) Van Winkle who served in Special Forces for over 20 years. "I attended one of their concerts in Waco and bought some of their music. That turned out to be a good call because when I was looking for an appropriate song for our program, 'It Is Finished' was perfect for the program."

A military wife for over 20 years, mother and mother-in-law of veterans and member of a Gold Star family, Linda Lloyd is well qualified to judge the church's Veteran's Day program. "Our church's remembrance of veterans made me so proud to be a part of the military community, an American, and a Christian," said Lloyd. "Not to mention being a member of the Presbyterian Church of Salado."

Col. (ret) Joyce Goza described the special program as one of worship and gratitude to God, veterans and their families. "They have served this great nation, many paying the ultimate price. Veteran's Day is one of the most important days in the year

as the country has been maintained by the strength, dedication and loyalty of the veterans," said Goza. "Veterans support the United States constitution! God Bless America and all who have served and those who continue to serve."

In addition to their Veteran's Day program, church military members also provided favorite stories from their days in uniform featured in a book entitled, "*A Tribute to our Veterans.*"

The idea of the book was proposed by Thompson after receiving a similar publication from former church member, Bev Koops Jones, who now resides in North Carolina. Jones published a similar book featuring veterans at her church with pictures and information about places they served. "I was so impressed I believed we should do something similar here and add to it by including stories about our veterans," said Thompson.

"I think it's just mind boggling that we could get all those experiences from our church members," said Col. (ret) Chine Ray. "What makes this book truly significant is that it includes stories from family members as well as some touching letters praising one member who passed away last December. Contributing to this project brought back many wonderful memories for all of us."

The service concluded with the hymns, "God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

Hanging of the Greens and Social - 11/26/17

Barclay McCort, Letta Meinen, Randy Kemp, and Bill Pinkston work on the tree.



John Booher and Pat Hart place wreaths



You've got to socialize too!



Attacking the Dessert Table



**Cabbage/
Sausage
Soup**

**Carl in Veterans
Day Robes**



**Nancy Norris Organizing
the Advent Candle Speakers**

