

Grace Messenger

December 2022

Experience
the Wonder

A young child with blonde hair is looking down at a tray of lit red candles. The scene is dimly lit, with the warm glow of the candles illuminating the child's face and the surrounding area. The background is dark and out of focus.

PASTOR'S REFLECTION

I still am in awe by the lights and sounds of Christmas. You would think, wouldn't you, that I would have long since outgrown that. But no. With the excitement of a small child, I wander through the displays at the Clifton Mill or through the neighborhoods that coordinate their displays. Remember Raymar Estates?

The story of the Christ child creates the same sense of wonder for me. Mary marveled at the enthusiasm of the shepherds that Holy Night, and the Gospel tells us that everyone who heard their story was filled with wonder as well.

George Beverly Shea (the soloist for the Billy Graham crusades) would sing a simple little hymn that listed a number of wonders – sunrise, sunset, stars, springtime – but with each verse the song arrived at the same conclusion: *But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul Is the wonder that God loves me. O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all! Just to think that God loves me.*

And He does. In fact, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

During this Advent season, I invite you to "Experience the Wonder." Come with me into the Scriptures to again discover the wonder of Christmas and the story of Christ. Let God open your eyes and heart wide! We worship each Sunday morning, as usual, at 8 and 10:45 a.m. and each Thursday at 7 p.m. Christmas Eve worship services are at 6:30 and 9 p.m. We will have one service on Christmas Day at 9:30 a.m.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

During the season of Advent our adult Sunday School class will feature a RightNow media course titled simply and appropriately: Advent. Here's a description of what you can expect:

Who exactly is Jesus? What kind of God would come to earth as a human? As Christmas approaches, the season of Advent offers us a chance to reflect on our savior, his purpose, and the surprising ways he invited people near to him. Join pastor Derwin Gray in this Advent study as he unveils King Jesus—the God-man who defied expectations, the king of all creation who humbled himself to serve and die, the friend to sinners who wants to lift us up.

Everyone is encouraged to attend. We meet at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

December Outreach Corner

Giving Tree: Our annual Giving Tree is to help our Snowhill families during Christmas time. The tags on the tree reflect actual kids (gender, age, size) and what they've asked for. Please take a tag, buy that item, and deliver it to the church, no later than December 18.

January Outreach Break: Sunday, January 8th during the Sunday school hour Kermit Rowe from our local Habitat for Humanity organization will present information and updates on what their ministry is doing here in Springfield and how you can support their work. Plan to join us.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank each and every member of our congregation for their generosity over this past calendar year. This past year we hosted Safe Harbor House, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Malawi Orphan Care, and SMI Haiti for Breakfast Breaks. We have donated to Habitat's Home for the Holidays, collected items for Safe Harbor House, made a Welcome Home Kit for Interfaith Hospitality Network, collected and served at St John's food pantry and the Springfield Soup Kitchen, donated to Pregnancy Resource Center annual Blessings in a Bottle campaign, supported Urban Light Ministries' Annual Fatherfest and Juneteenth event, packed 15,000 meals with Kids Around the World to be sent to Ukrainian refugees, collected school supplies for Snowhill school, supplies for the Children's Rescue Center and HOPE ministries, collected boxes for Operation Christmas Child, collected coats for our Snovember coat drive and look forward to the Giving Tree this month. We had members help on NALC disaster relief trips with a Stuff the trunk event and had a team of 10 travel to Laurel Mission to help finish a new build for a single mom of three. - Thank you all again!!! Sandy Thompson, Outreach Coordinator



CHARITY GUILD

Charity Guild is a wonderful group of men and women who meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 1:30 -3 pm in the Fellowship Hall. We have devotions, refreshments, and enjoy fellowship with each other, then work on the pillows, taking home to finish what cannot be completed at the meeting.



In certain cases, these pillows are used to provide comfort for Hospice patients, church members, family & friends—whoever can benefit from one of our pillows. We have been told by some medical personnel, in certain cases, our pillows often eliminate the need for pain medications. New members are always welcomed, as the demand for these pillows have really increased. In 2020 we made 600 pillows, 2021, 740 pillows, as of November 2022, we made 1,077 pillows, an all time high—making a total of 2,417 pillows in the last 3 years. If interested in helping, please contact Maxine Shroyer at 937-831-1900, or Bev Przytulski at 937-717-8999.



YOUTH SUNDAY HIGHLIGHTS

Worship services on October 16, 2022 were facilitated by talented Grace high school members. During communion Garrett Piel and Sarah Angell performed the song, *My Love*, composed by Garrett and written by Sarah, lyrics are below. Thank you to all youth who gave of their time and talents to bless the congregation with Youth Sunday Worship.

My Love – By: Sarah Angell and Garrett Piel

Verse 1:

You see light in the dark
You say there's hope when I've lost heart
You are patient in the chaos
You are quiet when I'm a siren

Pre-Chorus:

I drift, I drift away
My mind engages the pain
And I'm lost . . . at sea
Assuming you're done with me
Then, in my mind, I hear you say . . .

Chorus:

I'm gonna fight for you, no matter how broken
You're worth it; I've chosen
I'm gonna give you my all, no matter the fallback
You're imperfect, I acknowledge that
Even on your darkest days, I want you the same
I don't care if you've strayed, my love will come running

Verse 2:

You are peace amidst the struggle
You see the calm when I hear the screams
You feel mercy through the rage
You give me the strength to disengage

Pre-Chorus:

I drift, I drift away
My mind engages the pain
And I'm lost . . . at sea
Assuming you're done with me
Then, in my mind, I hear you say . . .

Chorus:

I'm gonna fight for you, no matter how broken
You're worth it; I've chosen
I'm gonna give you my all, no matter the fallback
You're imperfect, I acknowledge that
Even on your darkest days, I want you the same
I don't care if you've strayed, my love will come running

Bridge:

Instrumental

Oh, oh
You don't stop just 'cause I've given up
You ensure . . .

Chorus:

I'm gonna fight for you, no matter how broken
You're worth it; I've chosen
I'm gonna give you my all, no matter the fallback
You're imperfect, I acknowledge that
Even on your darkest days, I want you the same
I don't care if you've strayed, my love will come running

DECEMBER EVENTS

Thursday, December 1

11:00 am Adult Bible Study
1:00 pm Service Quilt Guild
1:00 pm Brass rehearsal
7:00 pm Advent worship

Friday, December 2

Saturday, December 3

8:00 am Men's Bible Study
9:00 am Charity Auction

Sunday, December 4

8:00 am Worship
9:15 am Sunday School for all
10:45 am Worship

Monday, December 5

10:00 am Essence of Grace

Tuesday, December 6

8:00 am Men's Bible Study
11:30 am —1:30pm Staff meeting/
office closed

Wednesday, December 7

5:30 pm GraceNotes rehearsal
7:00 pm 9-12 Youth Group
7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, December 8

11:00 am Adult Bible Study
1:00 pm Service Quilt Guild
7:00 pm Advent worship

Friday, December 9

Saturday, December 10

8:00 am Men's Bible Study

Sunday, December 11

8:00 am Worship
9:15 am Sunday School for all
10:45 am Worship

Monday, December 12

7:00 pm Agape Guild

Tuesday, December 13

8:00 am Men's Bible Study
11:30 am —1:30pm Staff meeting/
office closed
2:00 pm Joy Guild
6:00 pm Executive Committee

Wednesday, December 14

10:00 am Hope Guild
1:30 pm Charity Guild
5:30 pm GraceNotes rehearsal
7:00 pm 9-12 Youth Group
7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, December 15

11:00 am Adult Bible Study
1:00 pm Brass rehearsal
7:00 pm Advent worship

Friday, December 16

Saturday, December 17

8:00 am Men's Bible Study

Sunday, December 18

8:00 am Worship
9:15 am Sunday School for youth
10:45 am Worship

Monday, December 19

10:00 am Essence of Grace rehearsal
6:00 pm Prayer Support Team

Tuesday, December 20

8:00 am Men's Bible Study
11:30 am —1:30pm Staff meeting/
office closed
7:00pm Grace Council meeting

Wednesday, December 21

5:30 pm GraceNotes
7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, December 22

11:00 am Adult Bible Study

Friday, December 23

Saturday, December 24

6:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship
9:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday, December 25

9:30 am Worship

Monday, December 26

Grace office closed

Tuesday, December 27

8:00 am Men's Bible Study
Grace office closed

Wednesday, December 28

12-5 pm *Grace office closed*

Thursday, December 29

11:00 am Adult Bible Study
12-5 pm *Grace office closed*

Friday, December 30

12-5 pm *Grace office closed*

Saturday, December 31

8:00 am Men's Bible Study

HEARTFELT THANKS

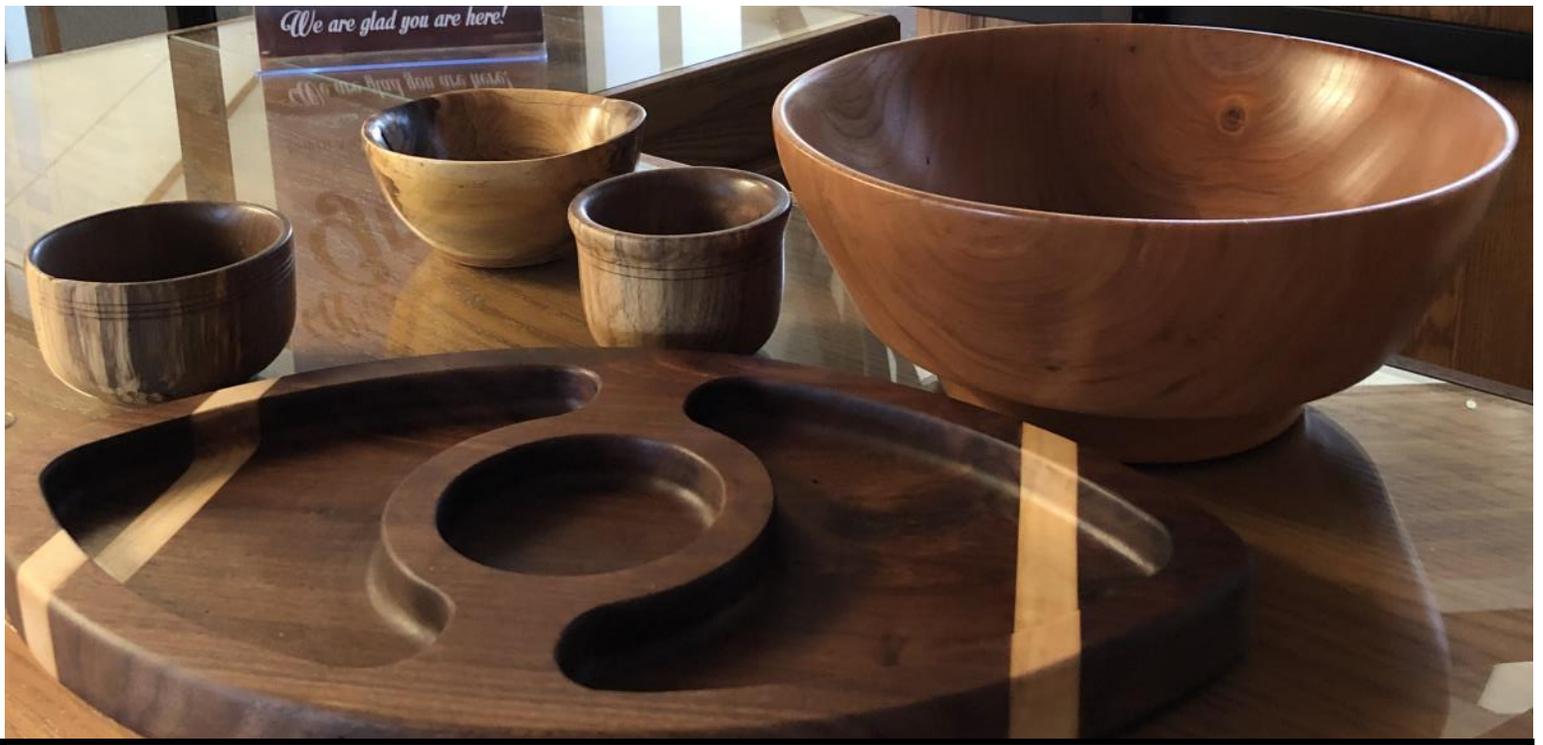
I want to thank everyone for the beautiful birthday cards that I received on my 99th Birthday. To reach the age of 99 is a blessing, and the outpouring of love that I received was so appreciated. I also want to thank those who attended the reception after church on Oct 16, as it was no nice to see so many friends. Thank you again! -Minola Bernardi

Following my surgery, and additional medical diagnosis, I was overwhelmed by receiving so many cards, calls, text messages, food, and visits. Words cannot adequately express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the outpouring of love that I received. It has helped me to keep a positive attitude, and it has also helped me to work through the latest diagnosis. Again, thank you, and blessings to all of you. - Maxine Shroyer



Joy Guild Packing Event

What a joy filled time packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. We packed 22 boxes. We are also grateful to an anonymous donor who helped with the shipping cost. Joy to the world the Lord has come!



CHARITY AUCTION DECEMBER 3, 2022

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mark your calendar for Saturday, December 3, 2022 9:00 a.m. - noon and join us in the community center for a morning of fun!

This year's charity is Young Life.

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