



Hebron Community Church

December 2024 Newsletter

Christmas is Not Your Birthday

Where has the year gone? It seems like just yesterday we were getting ready for Christmas last year, and here we are again. It has been a good year, with a lot going on in the ministry here at Hebron. We have reached out in many ways to show the love of God this year, in our community and in other places in the world. And here we are, preparing for Christmas yet again.

It seems like everywhere we go, we are reminded that Christmas is right around the corner. The stores seem to put up their Christmas displays earlier and earlier each year. I remember a time when the stores set up for Christmas after Thanksgiving. Now, they can't even wait for Halloween. The stores are trying to get us in the Christmas spirit, so that we can do what they really want, which is for us to spend our money. And that is something we are good at. We often spend a lot of money on gifts that people don't really need and could do without. I'm not saying that it is wrong to give gifts to those we love, but just that we need to be careful not to get caught up in the commercialization of the season. Let us remember what Christmas is truly all about. We celebrate the fact that God gave of Himself and sent His Son, who took on humanity in the form of a vulnerable, little baby born in a stable. Maybe this year, we can rethink how we celebrate that wondrous gift of God's love.

Mike Slaughter, a well-known pastor from Tipp City, Ohio wrote a book entitled "Christmas is Not Your Birthday," in which he reminds us of that basic fact which is often overlooked. We celebrate Christmas as if it's our birthday or the birthday of our loved ones, and in doing so we spend money on things that aren't needed. If we remember that it is Jesus' birthday that we are celebrating, how might that change the celebration? How might we give more to Jesus? Perhaps we can focus more on serving God in this season of giving. Maybe instead of spending so much time in stores, we can spend our time helping those less fortunate, for we know that when we serve them, we are in fact ministering to Jesus himself. Maybe instead of spending so much for things that aren't really needed, and might be used or played with only a few times before being laid aside (or broken), we could give more to missions that give to those in need. If we can do that we will experience more fully what

this season is all about and experience the joy of serving God and neighbor.

Think about this from the back cover of Mike's book: "Every year, we say we are going to cut back, simplify, and have a family Christmas that focuses on the real reason for the season— Jesus. But every year, advertisements beckon, the children plead, and it seems easier just to indulge our wants and whims. Overspending, overeating, materialism, and busyness rob us of our peace and joy and rob Jesus of his rightful role as the center of our celebration. This Christmas, cut through the hype that leaves you exhausted and broke at the end of the year. Instead, experience the peace of knowing that God is truly with us, the joy of giving sacrificially."ⁱ

I'm not saying that we can't enjoy the time with our loved ones and exchange gifts, but just that we be more intentional about keeping Jesus as our focus. It is His birthday, and we should show our love and gratitude for all that He has done by serving Him instead of ourselves this Christmas. If we do that, we will experience the true joy of the season.

I pray that God will richly bless you and yours this Christmas, and that you will see that He is truly Emanuel—God with us.

Your Servant brother in Christ Jesus,



Pastor Dustin D. James

ⁱ Mike Slaughter, "Christmas is Not Your Birthday". Nashville: Abingdon Press. 2011.

Info for the December newsletter from the Friendship Circle.

Our next bake sale is Saturday, November 23, in conjunction with the men's stew sale. We welcome your support by contributing items to sell and by purchasing items to consume!

November 30 is the day the church will be decorated for the Christmas season. Everyone in the church is invited to help at this joyous time. With generous help, decorating is finished quickly.

Friendship Circle will have no meeting in December but will join for lunch on Sunday, December 15, 12:30, at El Toro in Mebane. A reservation has been made but a final count is needed. All women of the church are welcome to be with us that day. If you haven't already made your reservation, please let Martha know you will be with us, and we look forward to this time together.

Our treasurer, Betty Boney, prepared a list of our income and outgo for 2024. We took in \$3,833.34 and shared \$3,596.09 with various groups. What a blessing for us to be able to do this.

December Birthdays

8th Ashley Martin Green
Phillip Martin
Ronnie Price
12th Aaron Walters
13th John Whited, Jr.
14th Julia Cook
Don Mitchell
Marleigh Lankford
15th Drake Williams
Gloria Martin
18th Ben Boney
19th Matthew Jones
Laura Lankford
Nolan Martin
20th Sam Cook
21st Bill McPherson
22nd Rebecca Sykes Jackson
25th Jennifer Warren
28th Bruce Mullis
29th Dana Culberson
Don Windsor

Up Coming Events in January

5th Communion
11th Un Decorating of the Church at 9 am
20th Friendship Circle at 7 pm
21st Newsletter Deadline for February
25th Day Apart at 9 am
Every Tuesday night at 6 pm is Prayer meeting in the Prayer Room
Every Wednesday night at 6 pm Bible Study

Outreach and Missions 2024

Outreach has taken on a greater far-reaching meaning in the past few months. Our neighbors in the mountains have lost much because of Hurricane Helene. Some have lost everything. As expected and appreciated, the Hebron Community has reached out with supplies and clothing, and generous contributions to Samaritan's Purse. A portion of profits from the Fall Festival was donated to Samaritan's Purse for mountain restoration. Employees and volunteers have been instrumental in providing hands on cleaning up and rebuilding of homes and communities. More importantly, they take time each day to pray with and pray for the people in our mountain communities. They also provide Bibles for everyone who lost theirs in the floods.

Hebron again participated in Samaritan Purse's Operation Christmas Child ShoeBox Drive. Our membership also has been bringing in food and non-perishables for S.A.F.E. to help feed people in Alamance County who have very little.

Moving forward for December, we will provide Christmas for a family in Alamance County who might otherwise go without. In conjunction with Garrett Elementary and the Christmas Cheer Program, our Angel Tree will be filled with wish list gift tags for the children. Look for the Angel Tree in the vestibule beginning Sunday, December 1st. Take a tag or two and write your name on the list corresponding to your gift tags. Instructions will also be available on the table.

Blessings,

Pat

December 2024 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Communion Angel Tree/Advent	2 9-4 ALM	3 9-4 ALM	4 9-4 ALM	5 9-4 ALM	6	7
8 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Christmas Dinner	9 9-4 ALM	10 9-4 ALM 6 Prayer Meeting	11 9-4 ALM	12 9-4 ALM	13	14
15 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12:30 Friendship Circle	16 9-4 ALM	17 9-4 ALM 6 Prayer Meeting Newsletter Deadline	18 9-4 ALM	19 9-4 ALM	20	21 5:30 to 8 Christmas Movie/pizza Popcorn kids night
22 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Angel Tree deadline	23	24 6 Prayer Meeting	25	26	27	28
29 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 4 pm New Beginnings 5 th Sunday Service	30	31 6 Prayer Meeting	1	2	3	4

Nursery Schedule

Greeters

Acolytes

December 1 st	Jenny Allred & Jay Wilson	Chris & Bob Perea	Marleigh Lankford
December 8 th	Becca Bartlett & Markie Roberts	Jay & Joannie Wilson	Carlos Montejo
December 15 th	Betty Albright & Robin Sykes	Junior & Robin Sykes	Peyton McBride
December 22 nd	Joannie Wilson & Pat Snipes	Lois Dixon	Annabelle Allred
December 29 th	Brenda & Maddie Moss	Michael & Renee McPherson	