

The Messenger

A Publication of Community Bible Fellowship

December 2017

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

Luke 2:14





ADVENT 2017

Sunday, December 3 – Sunday, December 24

Over the 4 Sundays of Advent, we will enjoy dramas reminding us to focus on the true meaning of Christmas. Our drama team always does a great job sharing truth through acting. Bring a friend with you each Sunday for these special messages, and let's share the best gift with our loved ones this season - the gift of eternal hope found only in Christ.

SALVATION ARMY BELLRINGERS

Have you noticed that iconic red bucket and would like to help? Be sure to talk to the church office about available bell-ringing sign-up times.

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

Your help is desperately needed! We are collecting items for the Mercer County Food Pantry. While any donation is appreciated and can be given at any time, we are highlighting specific needs each week, as listed below, between now and December 24 to help fill the areas of greatest need. If you'd like to donate, please place your items in the donation basket located in the east hall. Thank you!

- November 12 - tuna (or any canned meat such as Spam, chicken, sardines) & canned corn
- November 19 - boxed macaroni and cheese & peanut butter
- November 26 - chili beans & brownie mix

- December 3 - pasta noodles of any kind & pasta sauce
- December 10 - diced tomatoes & diced potatoes
- December 17 - cereals of all kinds (hot, cold, bars)

GIFT COLLECTIONS

Would you like to show Jesus' love this season? The Outreach Team is collecting items for three local families, a veteran and children from the Prison Fellowships Angel Tree program which serves children of the incarcerated. Christmas gift tags are now available on the sign-up table in the foyer for various collections. Be sure to check the table often; more tags may be added weekly. If you'd like to help, please have your unwrapped gifts to the church by 1:00 PM on Sunday, December 17.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The children of CBF will be making a special presentation in song during worship service on December 10. Be sure to join us for this memorable occasion!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

December 10
Join us as we take the joyous sounds of the season to our local nursing homes and care facilities. The singing will begin at 1:00 PM, and to warm your bones before we head out, there will be a soup lunch for all carolers in the chapel beforehand!

JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH YOUTH PARTY

December 10; 4 – 5:30 PM
We are having a combined junior and senior high youth party! Youth, grades 5 - 12, please join

us for food, games, and a gift exchange. For the gift exchange, please bring a \$5 - \$10 (or homemade), wrapped gift. Friends are welcome and may bring a gift to join in on the fun!

3rd WEDNESDAY

Please remember that our special "3rd Wednesday" evening is not scheduled for the month of December. Be sure to join us on January 17, 2018 when these events resume in the new year.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 ~ CHRISTMAS EVE

There will be no activities or worship service on Sunday morning, December 24. Instead, please join us that evening at 6:00 PM for our Christmas Eve service. It is a beautiful candlelight service that celebrates the birth of our Savior. Please remember there will be no childcare that evening as we'll all gather in the sanctuary together to honor our King.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 ~ NEW YEAR'S EVE

Be sure to join us for our regularly scheduled, Sunday morning worship service at 10:15 on December 31. Please remember, there will be **no Sunday School** or **Homecoming** that morning. This allows our teachers and hospitality members time to celebrate the holidays with their families.





Trust and Obey

by Lynn Pauley

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us hold on to grace.[a] By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe.

- Hebrews 12:28, HCSB

Stress! It's a word we hear or read a lot about. Medical professionals are concerned with the effect stress has on our bodies. Mental health professionals are concerned with the long-term effects on our personality, our temperament, and our spirit. Stress affects every area of our lives - our relationships, our jobs, our down time, our health - you name it, stress shows up.

So how do we deal with stress as Christians? The advice and opinions available, both on the internet and from books, are overwhelming, and much of it seems to conflict with a Christian perspective. So again, how do we deal with stress and live confidently in grace so we can serve God acceptably?

First, maintain an attitude of worship. A. W. Tozer said, "To maintain a lifestyle of worship, we must attend to it on a daily basis. If you regulate worship to a once-a-week event, you really do not understand it, and it will take

a low priority in your life." Worship is not a service we attend, but it is an act of the will. I must choose to worship daily. In each moment, I decide to honor Christ, or to act on my own without thought of how my actions affect Him. We are commanded in the Scriptures to "take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). I can't say that it is easy, though. It takes determination and a conscious choice to learn to worship moment-by-moment. I will say that it becomes easier the more I practice, and the practice is so worth it! The greatest benefit is the joy of staying focused on Christ. A wonderful side-benefit is that it is nearly impossible to feel stressed when I'm worshipping throughout the day. Second, don't be afraid to seek help. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. We are commanded to bear our own load (Gal. 6:5), so we should not expect to have everyone do everything for us. Yet, while we do everything we can to the best of our abilities, there are times when we need assistance. That's why God also commanded us to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2). In Philippians 2, we are told to think about what matters to others, not just about what matters to us. Be

honest with yourself. Can you truly carry this load? Sometimes, we take on more than we should in an attempt to gain the approval of others. Or, we feel that we are the only ones capable of handling the burden. Either approach is incorrect and will lead to defeat.

If you feel stressed, stop what you're doing, or at least stop what you're thinking! Re-focus. Start with saying "thank you" about something - anything. Then, thank God for something else. Move to phrases of adoration, like "I love You, Lord, for saving me, for never abandoning me." Soon, you will be worshipping God, even if silently in your thoughts.

Next, don't be afraid to reach out to a trusted friend or advisor. In doing so, you are obeying the Scriptures, and obedience is never a sign of weakness.

It's your choice!

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,

But our toil He doth richly repay;

Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,

But is blessed if we trust and obey.

- written by John H. Sammis



How to Handle Family Holiday Get-togethers

By Cajun Pauley

Matthew 12:50 HCSB For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, that person is My brother and sister and mother."

One of the challenges of being a good disciple of Christ is dealing with the growing divide between your values and priorities and the mores of our unsaved family. Holidays seem to just exacerbate that yawning chasm. The materialism, narcissism, alcohol, unfulfilled expectations, unresolved issues and sometimes even the inebriation all combine into a foul swill of dark and twisted drama. Faced with the sin, it's easy to lean too much on this passage and say, "this is no longer my real family; my family is the set of all those who do the will of God." (cp Luke 8:21) We can even support it biblically! After all, Jesus also said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters--yes, and even his own life--he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26)

But we have to keep in mind that Jesus continued to love and serve His mother – even while hanging on a cross (John 19:26) and included her among those who first received the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14).

So how do we do the things that make for peace (Romans 14:19) during the Holidays?

Set boundaries – on the time you spend, the conversations in which you will engage and the behavior you will tolerate

Develop a thick skin – a lot of snide comments can be simply brushed off. Not every rude remark must be confronted. Remember the principles "turn the other cheek," "a soft answer turns away wrath," "forgive as you would like to be forgiven," and "love covers a multitude of sins."

Remember the mirror rule – Usually people accuse others of that which they are the most guilty. Liars accuse others

of lying. Selfish people accuse others of selfishness. When someone accuses you or someone else of something unfairly, keep in mind that it's not really about you. They see something in others that reminds them of themselves, and they hate it. Use it as a way to pray for them.

Actively focus on the good – Paul advises that we "overcome evil with good." Take action and be so cheerful and so complimentary and so positive that there simply isn't time for the darker conversations. Besides, with all that cheeriness going on, the purveyor of gossip and slander will feel more awkward in slinging their muck!

Have a buddy you can talk to – the Bible advises "confess your sins one to another." If you can't talk to your family about your family without your family blowing up...maybe you can find a friend who also struggles with these issues. Support each other in your efforts to remain Christlike regardless of the circumstances. And remember! Don't allow those conversations to devolve into negativity and gossip. That would be kind of counter-productive and hypocritical, don't you think?

Have an exit strategy – have a signal you can give your spouse when you are ready to go. Or have your own ride so you can leave any time you see fit. Plan on a certain amount of time that you think you can be there without any issues; announce that time frame as you arrive and then stick to it. Limit the damage. Leaving with everyone asking you to stay is way better than sticking around too long and having a big argument where everybody resents everyone.

Try these and see if they help. Remember, "I can do all things through Christ!"



Merry Christmas

By Cajun Pauley

Luke 2:10-11 HCSB But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: (11) today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.

In an increasingly commercialized and secular world, it can be tough to keep Christ as the centerpiece of the Christmas experience. Though we all know that December 25 is nowhere near the Lord's actual birthdate, it's amazing how little place He finds in a season that purports to celebrate His advent.

Christmas can be so busy, with presents to buy and wrap, cards to make and send, lights to hang, snacks to make, and loved ones to visit and have over, that we can easily become like Martha – overworked, stressed out and whiny (Luke 10:40-42). But the principle point of observing Christmas is to remind ourselves to be grateful; grateful to an immanent God who was willing to suffer on our behalf; grateful for the grace that saved us from our sins; and grateful for the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

People routinely call out "Merry Christmas!" They intend for us to be happy. We give gifts, trying to increase each other's happiness. But if we truly want to find happiness, we must find gratitude in our hearts. Gratitude has been shown to:

- Lessen anxiety
- Ease breathing
- Decrease depression
- Improve self-acceptance
- Make forgiveness easier
- Offer more energy
- Increase charitable giving

So how do we improve our gratitude in a season almost scientifically designed to exacerbate materialistic narcissism? There are three things I would suggest. First, realize that gratitude is a choice. We cannot necessarily change our circumstances, but we can certainly choose to have an optimistic and humble attitude about them (Philippians 4:6). Second, realize that gratitude takes practice. We must train our minds to see the good (Philippians 4:8). Third, realize that gratitude is a general attitude. We aren't to be grateful for this or that. We are to be grateful for all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

So, go about your busy-ness and do the things you normally do; but while you do, practice humble gratitude and you will discover happiness.

Heavenly hosts sing
Alleluia!



Our Greatest Need

~Author Unknown

If our greatest need had been information,
God would have sent us an educator.

If our greatest need had been technology,
God would have sent us a scientist.

If our greatest need had been money,
God would have sent us an economist.

If our greatest need had been pleasure,
God would have sent us an entertainer.

But our greatest need was forgiveness and
acceptance, so God sent us a Savior.

Need a Simple Holiday Treat Recipe?

Try these quick, candy recipes courtesy of Old World Garden Farms.
www.oldworldgardenfarms.com

PEPPERMINT-WHITE CHOCOLATE BARS



Ingredients:

- 24 round red and/or green hard peppermint candies
- 2 (12 oz.) packages white chocolate morsels
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract

Directions:

1. Line 3 (9"x5") loaf pans with multipurpose sealing wrap (such as Press N' Seal); set aside. Hint: You can also use disposable loaf pans found in most grocery stores, if preferred.
2. Place candies in a zip-top plastic freezer bag. Coarsely crush candies using a metal mallet or rolling pin. Set aside crushed candies, reserving 3 Tbsp. separately for topping.
3. Microwave white chocolate morsels in a large microwave-safe bowl for 1 minute and 15 seconds. (Morsels will not look melted.) Stir morsels until melted. Microwave again at 15-second intervals, if necessary.
4. Add peppermint extract and larger portion of crushed candies to melted chocolate, stirring until evenly distributed.
5. Quickly spread melted white chocolate evenly in prepared pans; sprinkle with reserved 3 Tbsp. candies, pressing gently with fingertips.
6. Let stand 1 hour or until hard.
7. Lift the candy out of the pans using the sealing wrap and break it into pieces.

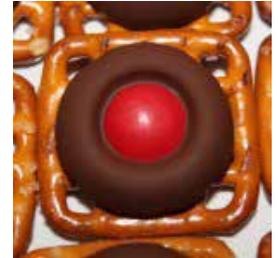
RUDOLPH'S NOSE ~ CHOCOLATE PRETZEL TREAT

Ingredients:

- Bite-size, waffle-shaped pretzels
- Hershey's Kisses or Hershey's Hugs
- M&M's candy

Directions:

1. Heat the oven to 170 degrees. Set a number of bite-size, waffle-shape pretzels (one for each treat) in a single layer on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper, then top each pretzel with an unwrapped Hershey's Kiss or Hershey's Hug.
2. Bake for 4 to 6 minutes (the white chocolate will melt more quickly), until the chocolates feel soft when touched with a wooden spoon. Remove the cookie sheet from the oven and quickly press an M&M's candy into the center of each Kiss.
3. Allow the treats to cool for a few minutes, then place them in the refrigerator to set, about 10 minutes.

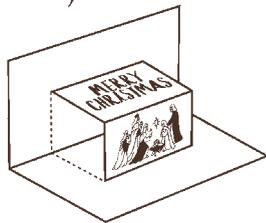


POP-UP CARD

Share the good news of Jesus' birth with this creative Christmas card.

What you need:

- Construction paper (two pieces, including one white)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Pens
- Glue stick



What you do:

1. Neatly fold the white paper in half, short side to short side.
2. Draw two parallel lines (at least 2 inches apart) from the fold to about halfway to the edge. Cut along the lines.
3. Fold the cut section back and forth so it pops up.
4. Push the section up so it pops up inside the folded paper. Draw a nativity scene on the pop-up box.
5. Fold the colored paper in half, short side to short side. Place the white paper inside it and glue the white paper down, being careful not to glue the pop-up box.
6. Write a Christmas message and give or send the card to someone.

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

12/5 Spencer Andresen	12/18 Kyle Langley
12/7 Bob Figanbaum	12/22 Ben Dowd
12/10 Jinnie Johnson	12/22 Delainee Downing
12/10 Brant Kelly	12/22 Maggie McDaniel
12/11 Madison Frieden	12/23 Navi Pauley
12/12 Marilyn Masengarb	12/27 Dawn Lee
12/18 Don & Anna Dowd	12/28 Mary Mayhew

Mark Your Calendar

- 12/02 Food Pantry Benefit – “Mayhem in Mayville”
Dinner Theater; Sanctuary; 6:00 PM
- 12/03 YA Bible Study, led by Jeanette & Nathan;
Sipes’ Residence; 2:00 PM
- 12/06 “The Book of Daniel” Bible Study, led by Bob Hoffman;
Room N2; 7:00 PM
- 12/09 Baking Class with Angie Rourke (for ages 9-18);
Main Kitchen; 1:00 - 4:30 PM
- 12/10 CBF Christmas Caroling & Soup Lunch;
Chapel (lunch);11:30 (lunch),12:30 (singing)
- 12/10 High School & Jr. High Youth Party; Activity Room;
4:00 – 5: 30 PM
- 12/13 “The Book of Daniel” Bible Study, led by Bob Hoffman;
Room N2; 7:00 PM
- 12/16 Women with a Purpose Group, led by Connie Dixon;
Room S3; 8:00 AM
- 12/16 Family Movie Night @ CBF; 6:00 – 8:30 PM
- 12/17 YA Bible Study, led by Jeanette & Nathan;
Sipes’ Residence; 2:00 PM
- 12/20 “The Book of Daniel” Bible Study, led by Bob Hoffman;
Room N2; 7:00 PM
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Service; Sanctuary; 6:00 PM
- 12/27 “The Book of Daniel” Bible Study, led by Bob Hoffman;
Room N2; 7:00 PM

CBF Financial Report - October

	Monthly	Year To Date
Total Income	\$20,373.85	\$178,333.57
Total Expense	\$13,933.43	\$151,275.00
Net Operating Income	\$6,440.42	\$27,058.57



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