



# new life *news*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NEW LIFE CHURCH OF CHRIST DECEMBER 2017

## Steve Says...

. . . that we often look back to review the year as we come to December. The question is in how and what we review. So far in 2017, New Life has had 15 baptisms and averaged 263 in attendance. That is one form of measurement. Or we could say, so far in 2017 we have sent people/teams to Honduras, Missouri, South Dakota, & Texas on mission trips of one kind or another and have contributed over \$6000 to hurricane relief. Or we could say that in 2017 we have added four new Elders and rewritten our vision statement and begun the process of training people to make disciples. Or there are a myriad of other things we could examine.

Regardless of what we examine, the thing we see is that God has been faithful in 2017. He has provided and blessed and directed us in many ways. This is no surprise. God's word tells us that He is faithful. What is important is that we recognize and remember His faithfulness. It is easy to look at the negatives and question God. To wonder why he let things happen or not happen. One of the things that will help us to maintain our faith in those times of trial is to recognize in the regular times that God is always there and always providing. He does not abandon us or reject us.

As we move through the end of 2017, I encourage you to remember that God is always faithful. He doesn't always do what we want, nor does he always provide how we want, but he does provide. The prophet Elijah spent three plus years being fed daily by God. First by means of ravens who brought him bread. (Birds are such dirty creatures, I bet it was just so pleasant to have them carrying around your food in their claws) and then from a jar of flour that belonged to someone else and appeared to be nearly empty, only having enough in it for a single meal. (I guess there would be no mid-morning snacking!) Yet the jar never became empty and Elijah was always fed! Let us learn Elijah's lesson. God is faithful. Always! Love God, Love People, Make Disciples!

## Church Events

- December 6 - Comfort & Joy Sewing 9:00am
- December 10 – Sonshine Singers Performance 6:00pm
- December 20th – NO Comfort & Joy Sewing
- December 24<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Eve Service 10:00am – one service
- December 25 – January 2 Office Closed



## Whiter Than Snow

Close your eyes. Okay, read this paragraph first and then close your eyes and imagine a pristine country vista where a fresh powdering of snow has fallen covering the tree branches with white blankets. Imagine a narrow road paved in white with hoofprints and the tracks of a horse drawn sleigh. You can feel the wet, cold flakes of snow land on your skin and stick to your eyelashes. It is a beautiful scene filled with wonder as the sun comes up over the hill causing countless crystals to sparkle in the light. You can open your eyes now.

Snow is a wonder! A speck of dust covered with an intricate lace of icy crystals falls to the ground as delicately as soft white feathers. Christmas is filled with snowy imagery and memories. As a child, we once took a plastic truck bed liner and used it as a multi-family toboggan speeding down the elementary school hill. As a teacher, I anticipated the leisure of a snow day on the couch with a good book. Nowadays, I look at the snow as a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.

We are all familiar with the story of Christ's birth. Imagine that you are a young parent who has just been told that your child will save the world. You are then forced to embark on your first family vacation in order to be counted in a census. You can find no lodging, and are up all night waiting for your child to be born. Meanwhile, shepherds are visited by angels, wise men are following a star, and a jealous king is plotting to take your newborn child's life. Finally, you are able to travel back home, but you are detoured to another country to avoid danger. This is a very different scene from the one we imagined before. Amid all of the cozy comforts and warm nostalgia of the season, we must remember that Jesus left His home in glory and became a man so that we might be saved through Him.

Why did he do it? Why did Jesus come to earth? Isaiah 1:18 gives us the reason.

... Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow... We all have a speck within us called sin. It stains our lives and separates us from the God who loves us. So His only son, Jesus Christ, took our sins and covered them with His blood. This precious flow cleanses us from guilt making us spotless and pure.

We invite you to join us for our Christmas Eve Service on December 24th at 10:00a. We will have one combined worship gathering celebrating the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ as we reflect on the true reason for the season and rejoice in the grace that makes us whiter than snow.



# Jason's Jam

Don't look Now, but it's the holiday season. All the hustle and bustle has begun. Houses need decorated, shopping needs done, and cookies need baked. Before we know it, the season has passed and we are left saying, "Where did Christmas go?".

I have a picture in my Sunday School room as well as on the door in my office that has Jesus leading a small child with the caption, "Enjoy the Journey." I love this illustration because I (and I'm guessing some of you) constantly need this reminder. To simply slow down, stop worrying, and enjoy this life we have been blessed with. I fear we miss so much because we let the stresses of this life blind us from the joys He is trying to show us.

I hope you have a very Merry Christmas and I hope you take time to enjoy the season.

## *December Birthdays*

*2 – Amy Beveridge*

*3 – David Shaffer*

*6 – Dianne Kehl, Darryl Jones, Bruce Snyder*

*10 – Eli Sharp*

*11 – Bryan Dawson, Jeff Shaffer*

*12 – Bill Bushong*

*15 – Jeremy Brown*

*18 – Renee Sharp*

*25 – Julie Clark*

*26 – Jacob Kindt*

*28 – Carolyn Awwiller, Nola Starling*

*30 – Jim Rockwell*

*31 – Jeff Dixon, Cyd McCready, Janet Ocheltree, Lorri Richards*



## Kyle's Korner

About 1,700 years ago our Christian forefathers set apart time in December for a unique remembrance of the greatest miracle in history, when God became Man. The uncreated Lord of Creation visited us by becoming a man of created flesh. In Christ, the Godhead and humanity are fused together and a great work was begun where God was pulling mankind into His very essence, so that we might 'participate in the Divine Nature' (2 Peter 1:4). The ancient Christian theologian and writer Athanasius, summed up this idea with the statement "God became man that man might become god." This isn't to say that we have the potential to become exactly what God is. He alone is God in the absolute sense. But what it does say is that by God's work in our lives we are conformed into something amazing which allows us to be an unhindered reflection of His image. Salvation then, is much more than a "ticket to Heaven" or a "free pass out of Hell." It is an invitation into the community of the Holy Trinity where we will have fellowship with God (1 John 1:3) and will find in Him the satisfactions of the desires of our heart (Psalm 37:4).

The Apostle Paul writes about this process in 2 Corinthians 3:18: *"We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory into glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit."*

God is generous with His glory. He wants to share it because there is nothing of greater value than Him and His glorious essence. We are saved and filled with God the Holy Spirit so that we can be continually renewed into God's image, growing "from glory into glory." God is infinitely glorious, and the great delight of Heaven will be the eternal experience of all the benefits of this glory. Sharing in God's glory is our great reward, and is the purpose of our salvation. It is of eternal value and weight (2 Corinthians 4:7) and it can only be shared with those who are united to God.

At Christmas we celebrate God stepping into our brokenness to save us. He clothed Himself in our cursed frailty and placed Himself under sin's bondage so that He could free us and draw us to Himself: *"Now since [we] have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding the power of death- the devil- and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death."* -Hebrews 2:14-15

We are free to share in Him because He came into our prison and broke down the bars from the inside out. At Christmas we remember and celebrate God's glorious visitation to us. In all the Christmases between now and the time He visits us again, let's never forget why we have cause to celebrate. Merry Christmas!

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN JANUARY

- Monday, December 25 through Tuesday, January 2  
Office closed
- Wednesday, January 3  
Comfort & Joy Sewing 9:00am
- Saturday, January 13, 20, 27  
Upward Games
- Wednesday, January 17  
Comfort & Joy Sewing 5:30pm
- January 28  
Image Concert 6:00pm