



The JPC Monthly

DECEMBER 2024

THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR JAY

Advent Effort



This year I am struggling to get in the Christmas spirit. Perhaps it was three funerals in a week or the unexpected repair of the furnace or the annual battle that is leaf removal from Woodley Court, but I just can't shake my Christmas blues or jump alive with the spirit of Christmas. Maybe it is because for the time in 15 years we won't be together as a family as Julia will be traveling with my mom. Whatever the reason, I just am having a hard time. I have done a good job shopping early and I may have even broken down and put up the tree! I needed something to break me out of the funk.

Last week I traveled with our group from JPC to the Operation Christmas Child processing center in Charlotte. I want to encourage you to consider doing this sometime if you ever get the chance. The building is loud and after a few hours the concrete floor kills your back, but you get something in return. I am not talking about the T-shirt or ornament that they offer to you on the way out the door. I am not talking about the fun music and fun people that you work with. I am not even talking about the powerful moments when you stop, and everyone touches a box, and a pastor offers a prayer for the children that will receive them! I am talking about a full heart. I am talking about pure joy. It is a real wake up call.

Even as I write this, I am realizing that I was a victim of a Facebook scam. I have given my credit card information to someone that is not who they say they are. There is so much pressure to get the best gift, find the perfect thing, that we lose focus on what truly matters. It is so easy to judge the success of Christmas on how much we give or having a better gift than the other grandparents and we lose track of the true meaning of Christmas.

My challenge to you this Advent is to be intentional. You can do this by adding some extra time for prayer, reflection, study, or some other way of drawing closer to the Lord. I am offering a Bible study on Sunday nights that looks at the birth narratives in the gospels. It is nothing that needs any preparation and the first one was great. Maybe that can be your thing. Perhaps you can be intentional in attending worship? Yesterday was a wonderful day at JPC and next will be even better with you there.

You can be intentional in other ways too. These can happen in your home, workplace, or out there in the wild. What I am saying is that we can all be better this Advent season. I am not talking about major transformation, rather I mean a concerted effort on the little things. I get snippy when I am tired or hungry. I get short when I am nervous or very busy. I get controlling, well all the time. I would argue that making these little changes can be more meaningful than the perfect gift, delivering food, or any grand gesture.

I am always willing to do this for others. Just last night I was leaving Walmart and there was a mother with

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a smaller child walking in. Of course, there were no carts. Well, that's technically *not* true. There was one cart, but it was dented in, had a wheel that obviously wouldn't turn, and it was way down that shoot in the darkness. I only had a few things and so I offered her my cart. She was overjoyed. The only thing I didn't like about the exchange was that I guess I am now old enough to be called, "Sir!"

But what about at home? Or in the workplace? Are we as willing to spread that Christmas cheer? Advent is the season of preparation. This year may our preparation include going that extra mile to be nice, and kind, and loving, even with those who are willing to put up with us.
Merry Christmas

DONATIONS

Donation to JPC Outreach Endowment (Angel Tree) Fund

In memory of Jo Burroughs by
Jim & Darryl Ray

Donation to JPC Outreach Endowment Fund

In memory of Carroll Miller by
John & Sharon Wilson
Peggy King
Suzette Adams
Betty Skipper
Charles & Betty LaBella

Donation to JPC Music Fund

In memory of Carroll Miller by
Jim & Darryl Ray
JPC Morning Circle

Donation to JPC Music Fund

In memory of Joye Wentz by
Michelle, Randy, & Rusty Wentz



Gift Idea from Jamestown Presbyterian Preschool

Do you need a gift for a loved one?

What do you get that one person who has everything?

Give an honorarium to the Avery Snead Preschool Scholarship!

What is that you say, you didn't know we had a Preschool Scholarship?

Why yes, we do! In the last 6 years we have awarded approximately 8+ scholarships to Preschool Families in need. These needs come from job losses or changes, medical needs, and sometimes genuine poverty. All scholarships are awarded based on need, some for the short term, a month or two, and some for the school year. All scholarships applied for and awarded are completely confidential, but I can tell you that the families are very appreciative. Help a child get a great start on their education and a foundation in their Christian journey by donating to the AVERY SNEAD PRESCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP this year. All donations are tax deductible.

Make a difference in a child's life this holiday season.



JPC Hurricane Helene Relief

Thank you to all that donated to this urgent fund for our dear neighbors in our beloved mountains that were devastated by Helene! Our congregation contributed \$8500. Then our Service Ministry team added an additional \$500, giving us a total of \$9000. With this wonderful amount JPC was able to contribute to several grassroots-organizations that we identified.

These are local organizations aided that have direct connections to us!

- Feeding Avery Families (Food Ministry in Avery County)
- Montreat Conference Center (the camp the high school students go to annually)
- Camp Grier, the Presbyterian Camp housing workers and feeding/housing people without power.

In addition to our local organizations, we were able to extend our support to Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach in the Lake Lure area.

There was a bit leftover that we were able to donate lesser funds to, that have been crucial to the relief efforts in the mountains:

- Samaritan's Purse disaster relief fund
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

What a great outpouring of love and prayers your generous gifts have been able to provide the many people touched by these organizations! Thank you all again!

Submitted by Peggy Maynard peggymaynard@att.net 919-394-2458

LEISURE FELLOWSHIP

Please come join Leisure Fellowship December 19th at 12 noon in the Fellowship Hall for great food, fellowship and fun. We will have surprise entertainment. Please join us or else you may have a blue Christmas, and your blue suede shoes might not fit. We think you'll be all shook up by our entertainment who you just can't help falling in love with.



Please bring a dish to share and join the fun. We promise you won't regret it.



Chrismons

The Chrismons ornaments were first developed by Frances Kipps Spencer (1917-1990) at Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia. She originated them in 1957 when she set out to create decorations appropriate for a church Christmas tree. Chrismons are not to be bought, sold or put into kit form.

An evergreen tree, which symbolizes the eternal life, which our Savior has won for us forms the background for tiny white lights and white and gold Chrismon designs. The **lights** speak of Him who is the light of the world and the **CHRISMON = CHRIST + MONOgram** proclaim the name, the life and the saving acts of Jesus Christ.

Chrismons proclaim our Lord Jesus Christ through the use of symbols. These symbols, which are interdenominational and the heritage of all Christians, are the elements of the Chrismons.

All of the Chrismons are made in either white or gold or in a combination of the two colors. **White** is the Liturgical color for Christmas and suggests innocence, purity and perfection of our Savior. Scripture often uses white to portray purity and equates it with light to denote completeness. Isaiah 1:18; Mark 9:3, Revelation 20:11

Gold is a symbol for the glory and majesty of God and the son of God and is also derived from Biblical usage. Exodus 25:11; Revelation 1:13-16; 21:18-21

The **CROSS** is a reminder of our Lord's saving work of redeeming mankind through His sacrifice for our sins, by which we receive forgiveness and salvation. Different forms of the cross point to various aspects of our Savior's work.

STARS are formed by crosses set at various angles, and show the close relationship between the birth and death of our Redeemer.

ANGELS as winged beings suggest the spirits that God created to praise and serve Him. As God-sent messengers, angels told men of the Birth, Resurrection, and Ascension of His Son. The Gospels also tell how angels ministered to their Lord and ours during His Life on earth. Portraying these beings as winged symbolized the fact that as spirits, angels can go anywhere. Showing them in human form implies that they can communicate with man. Specifically, herald angels symbolize the Nativity of our Lord and God's redeeming love.

PLANTS & FLOWERS – Some people consider Isaiah’s prophecy, “The desert shall...blossom (35:1) a Messianic Promise. Thus, the flower became a symbol of the Messiah. **WHEAT & GRAPES:** Bread and wine, Body and Blood of our Lord. Luke 22:14 **THORNS:** Our Savior’s crown of suffering. Mark 15:17 **WHEAT:** Bread of Life: John 6:35 **VINE:** I am the vine, you are the branches. John 15

The **FISH**, an ancient symbol for the Christ, was a secret sign during early Christianity’s persecutions. On catacomb walls, **FISH** pointed to places of worship and served in devotional art. **BUTTERFLY:** Our Lord’s Resurrection: Resurrection of those who die in Christ. I Corinthians 15:20-23. **DESCENDING DOVE:** The Holy spirit at our Lord’s baptism. Mark 1:10. **LAMB:** A scriptural symbol for Christ. **SERPENT ON TAU CROSS:** Prefiguration of the sacrifice on the Cross. John 3:14. **PEARL:** Word of God. Matthew 7:6

BOOK: The written Word. The Bible **BREAD:** The Christ. John 6:48 **CHALICE:** The Last Supper. Holy Communion. Mark 14:22 **CROWN:** The Kingship of our Lord; His victory over sin and death; His place of honor at the right hand of God the Father. 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 14:14; Romans 8:34 **LIGHTS:** Our Lord’s followers, “You are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14 **MANGER:** The Nativity of the Christ. Often with nimbus to suggest the divinity of the child. Luke 2:7 **SHEPHERD’S CROOK:** Our Savior, I am the good shepherd. John 10:11 or the shepherds at the manger.



Reprinted from bulletin at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Staley, NC

We would like to give a special thank you to our own Jo Brech for being instrumental in making most of the Chrismon ornaments you see displayed on the Chrismon Tree at the entrance of the Sanctuary (pictured above). Much love and hard work have gone into the ornaments JPC has enjoyed over the years!



Did you Know? By Becky Robinson, Worship Ministry Chair



Did you know this is a special time in the life of JPC? At a time in our society when many young people are walking away from the church for a variety of different reasons including not feeling connected to church members, conflicts with schedules, etc. JPC is in a uniquely different spot. This past Sunday, December 1st was Confirmation Sunday. On this day we witnessed ten confirmand youth (ages 12 – 16) acknowledge they are sinners, and Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior. In response, they each agreed to enter a covenant relationship with our Lord. About two weeks earlier, each of these confirmands spoke before Session and shared individual statements of faith. These statements of faith not only reflected the individuality of each youth, but an insight into their faith journey and growth thus far. It isn't easy to speak to a roomful of adults (Session members, the confirmands' mentors, and family members), yet each youth spoke personally and openly about what their faith has come to mean to them. Having been a Session member in that room, I can say it was an incredible experience to witness and one that gives me hope for the future of the church seeing how these youth are coming to discover their faith and belonging with Jesus Christ.

While 10 confirmands are certainly noteworthy and celebratory in the life of the church. It is a special time at JPC for another reason! We have two older youth, Nick Brotherton and Leah Robinson who both feel called by God to attend seminary. Nick is currently finishing up his first semester of seminary at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and Leah will be attending Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey beginning the fall of 2025. As we discussed during last month's Session meeting, in JPC's 54 years there has never been a youth member become a seminary student and now JPC is about to have two! Here is a little more about each of them.

How or when did you know you felt called by God?

Leah: I knew I wanted to go to seminary when I was about 14 years old. I had grown up in the church and it was always a safe place for me! I was always enthralled with religion and loved trying to find answers to many, many questions. I became super involved at JPC and eventually accepted some leadership positions, that was a big turning point for me! It was the most fulfilling thing I had ever done! I began discerning with the Lord if ministry is what He had for me and have felt nothing but "YES" ever since. Ministry is what lights my soul on fire, and I am counting down the days until seminary!

Nick: I felt called by God when I was in a moment of deep personal crisis, Jesus came to me and showed me the path forward.

What parts of ministry interest you the most?

Leah: I am interested in so many aspects of ministry and look forward to discerning and narrowing down my options a little more in seminary. Right now, I have a huge love for preaching and pastoral care. With a strong emphasis in pastoral counseling! But I have always loved kids and outreach! So, I am excited to see where the Lord calls me!

Nick: I want to work on nurturing communities and advocating for those in need. I think it is important to work in a ministry that challenges us to always turn back to God when the world offers so many subtle distractions.

How has JPC played a role in your calling?

Leah: JPC was the catalyst for my love of the Lord and of ministry. They have been a steady place to ask questions and encounter a real Christ-like community. JPC has always believed in me, my leadership, and my ministry. They have given me opportunities to lead such as being the youth representative on the APNC, directing VBS, and now preaching. They have cheered me on, sent cards and gifts, encouraging texts and hugs. I would not be where I am today without JPC! Going forward, I would love prayer, and I will never turn down a hug or a card!

Nick: I have been at JPC my entire life. The ministry and community at JPC held me before I went away from the church and welcomed me back without judgment for my season of doubt when it was time to return.

Many research studies show a leading reason why young people are not remaining in church is the lack of connection they feel to other church members. This is one of the reasons I love our JPC confirmands have the support and encouragement from a non-familial mentor within our JPC membership during their confirmation journey. In fact, the last couple confirmation classes had mentors, and many of these relationships have continued over the

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years with notes, meeting for coffee, or supporting our youth at their extra-curricular events. Our youth are feeling connected with our church and its' members!

We also have immediate opportunities to support Nick and Leah. Each of them will be filling in as pastor supply in Jay's upcoming absences. So, mark your calendars... Nick will be preaching on Sunday, December 29, 2024, at 10:00 in the sanctuary. Leah will be guest preaching the services on Sunday, January 19th. What a wonderful time to show these future ministers how much we love and support them on this journey by filling the seats at JPC. As I said in the beginning of my article, JPC is in a special time, and we have many special young people who need us to continue to do what JPC does best.... Love and care for each other.



December 8
Christmas Cantata
9:00 am / 11:00 am Sanctuary

December 15
9:00 am CLC / 11:00 am Sanctuary

December 22
9:00 am CLC / 11:00 am Sanctuary

December 24
5:00 pm CLC
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 29
10:00 am Combined Sanctuary

Breakfast with Santa

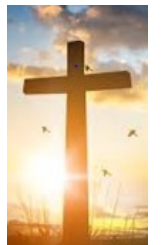


Please join us this Saturday, December 7th in the CLC for a yummy pancake breakfast with Old Saint Nick! Doors open at 8:30 am and there is a special story time that begins at 8:45 am! Bring your cameras for festive photos! Craft activities will be available. Santa asks that you kindly bring canned food to help us stock our pantry for our community friends!

WELCOME CONFIRMANDS OF 2024!

Sunday December 1 we welcomed 10 new members from the youth group who worked tirelessly with their confirmation class.

We have seen great growth in the youth this month. During youth group we enjoy playing games, eating delicious food and going in depth about being a Christian in the modern world. We spin a prize wheel and discuss a topic that it lands on, as well as discussing bible verses that go along with that topic. After we do our group discussion, we break out into small groups and we discuss a few talking points. We end up having some really great discussions and I can't wait to continue to see the growth the rest of this year!



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JPC SESSION

Class of 2024

Vivien Carson
Carlos Frontera
John Martin
Clayton Robinson
Brian Stroud
Joanne Vitelli

Class of 2025

Mike Bryant
Bill Carter
Charles Graham
Angelin Ham
Linda Honeycutt
Becky Robinson

Class of 2026

David Bean
Becky Brown
Nancy Seay
George Wissmiller
Anne Wright