

Falls Fellowship



It's OK to be a Grinch!

It's that time of year again! The time we commemorate God's ultimate gift of His son by getting in the hustle and bustle of the season, buying gifts, lighting trees, and celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Some people, I won't mention any names, think some of it is too much and don't join in with all the reindeer games. We might refer to these people as grinchers or scrooges, but if you've seen the films with these characters, you know they really aren't that bad ... at least not in the end. Scrooge sees the light and helps Tiny Tim get surgery for his condition. What happened when the grinch saw the light? "Well, in Whoville they say — that the Grinch's small heart grew three sizes that day. And then — the true meaning of Christmas came through, and the Grinch found the strength of ten Grinches, plus two!"

I don't know if Dr. Seuss was thinking about Saul when he wrote *The Grinch* or not, but it's basically the same thing Saul went through in the Bible. Saul had been persecuting the disciples of Jesus for some time. In Acts 9, when Saul is on the road to Damascus, he sees the light, literally.

See Grinch on page 2

It's Time to Celebrate!

It was five o'clock, a few days before Christmas, when the door opened in the offices' services area where I worked while a student in seminary.

One of the stenographers came rushing in and said, "It's time to celebrate!" By that she meant that it

was time to begin our office Christmas party. Our supervisor, Trish Gardner, had planned every detail of the party starting with her bringing in a Christmas tree several days earlier and decorating it with colorful ornaments and blinking lights. Now it was time to bring out the punch and the cookies and other treats that we brought from home. The IBM typesetters were quiet, the whirl of the printing presses was silenced, and the long line had disappeared at the copier. It was time to celebrate.

See Celebrate! on page 4



Event Calendar

- December 2 — Movie Night 6:30 PM
- December 9 — Church Christmas Dinner 6 PM
- December 24 — Normal Church Services
- December 24 — Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service 5 PM
- December 25 — Merry Christmas!
- January 1 — New Year Day Covered Dish Luncheon Noon
- January 14 — Quarterly Church Conference Noon

Special Offering

In December we will be collecting money for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. All of your contributions go to the International Missions Board.

Stay tuned for more ways you can help our missions team.

Continued from page 1

Grinch continued ...

It's a light from heaven, and it makes him fall to the ground. It's Jesus, and He says, "Saul, Saul, Why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4) Saul changes his ways too, and is later referred to as Paul.

All these characters had to go through great transformations to be who they should be. Hopefully, if you are feeling grinchy this year, you won't have to go through anything so drastic. Remember, Christmas is far more than the commercial aspect of it. Even the grinch realized this when he said about Christmas, "It came without ribbons, it came without tags. It came without packages, boxes, or bags.

Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more." And indeed, it does! So, it's ok if you're a grinch this year, just be the grinch from the end of the movie!

— Alan Watkins

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service December 24, 5 PM

No Meetings in December

Due to the busy holiday season, there will be no Men's Breakfast in December. Also, our board of deacons will not meet in December. If you need anything or have questions please contact one of our deacons listed on page three of this issue.

Treasurer's Report

Our financial statement for the month of October 1, 2023 — October 31, 2023.

Tithes - \$12,083.00

Budgeted/expected tithes - \$12,083.33

Other Income: Special Gifts - Other Than Memorial (Maui) - \$25.00

Memorial - Hubert Jenks - \$1,000.00

Parsonage Rental - \$0

Total Income - \$13,108.00

Actual expenditures - \$9,470.35

Budgeted expenditures - \$12,046.51

(Seriously, tithes came in that close to budget!!!)

— Craig P. Jackson, Treasurer

December Birthdays

- 4 Cheryl Jenkins
- 7 Derick Foster, IV
- 9 Parker Jenks
- 15 Mark Young
- 15 Taylar Bub
- 20 Barbara Barham
- 20 Phil Jackson
- 21 Rebecca Davenport
- 24 Sarah Tart
- 28 Nikki Creech



Ready for Change

Renewal, change, the dream of a fresh start. Perhaps the dream of a more stress-free, burden-free life. A happier life. A healthier life. A less lonely or less impediment-filled life?

How many out there wish for that in the coming year? [You can ask for a show of hands.]

December tends to be the most stressful, difficult, financially burdensome, grief-ridden month of the entire year. Never mind that Advent is supposed to be a time of peace, of prayer, of patient waiting. Ever try to shop on Black Friday? Or get into a shopping line anytime from now until Christmas? People are anything but still and calm. Forget about “silent nights” or “heavenly peace” in the public realm.

In many cases, December seems to make a lot of people more ornery, less tolerant, more in a rush, and more anxious than all the other months combined!

Why?

People are financially strapped and feeling the anxiety and expectations upon them to serve up Christmas cheer, gifts, and all of the trappings of a sufficient, commercialized Christmas experience. They feel time-crunched with shopping, preparations, and too many responsibilities, while keeping up the ones they’ve had all year round. They feel pulled in several different directions. They grieve those they’ve lost.

In fact, more people suffer from depression and anxiety at the holidays than any other time.



Fresh start? Relief? Renewal? Something to take away the pain?

Yes, please.

At first glance, Jesus’ message to his disciples in Mark 13 looks very dark indeed (pun intended). But like the visioner of Revelation and other apocalyptic prophets, Jesus means to offer hope for a new beginning, a new dawn, when things will change, and God’s reign will come. ...

— Sermons.com

The Meaning of the Advent Wreath

The wreath, as a circle, expresses God’s eternity. The evergreen symbolizes God’s unchangeableness. The lights remind us we are to be the light of the world, just as Jesus was the light. The Purple candles symbolizes the royalty of Jesus Christ who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Food Donations

We continue to collect food for Tri-Area Ministry each month. Our participation makes an important difference to helping families in need in our area.

Some items needed:

Peanut Butter, Jelly, Canned Fruit, Canned Vegetables, Spaghetti Sauce, Canned Meat (tuna, chicken), Chef Boyardee, Cereal, Grits, Rice, Dried Beans, Oatmeal, Mac ‘n Cheese, Pasta / Noodles, Crackers, Canned Soup.



**TRI-AREA MINISTRY
FOOD PANTRY**

Deacons

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Frank Powell, Chairman | 919-604-1285 |
| Victoria Neal, Vice Chairman | 919-880-1888 |
| Bill Upton | 910-358-7303 |
| Tommy Brown | 843-446-6540 |
| Johnny Ray | 919-740-7099 |

Celebrate! cont' ...

It's time to celebrate; Christmas is near. The sanctuary at Falls is beautifully decorated for the season. Garland is in place, the Christmas tree stands tall, the Advent wreath with candles is prepared for the Sundays of Advent, Christmas-themed swags are on the exterior doors and the Nativity scene quietly presides over the scene from the baptistery. I hope you will join us as we make the journey together to the celebration of the birth of our Lord. The choir, with Kevin on the keyboards, will lead us on our journey. We will read from the Advent calendar, and light the candles, sing the great songs of the season, and quietly come together on Christmas eve to celebrate the Lord's Supper and go out into the night with our lighted candles to symbolically offer the Light of the world to our neighbors.

It's time to celebrate. Prepare your heart for the celebration of Christmas by asking for forgiveness, freely offering forgiveness, and filling your heart with gratitude. Say a kind word to someone who angered you. Ask forgiveness for petty attitudes, sinful thoughts, and unkind words spoken. Christmas is not about you.



Christmas is about what happened 2,000 years ago as Mary's child was wrapped in humble cloths and placed in a manger, a feeding trough for cattle and donkeys, and his name was Jesus, Lord of Lords, Lamb of God, Reigning Savior, King of Kings, Son of God. Let's celebrate the greatest event recorded in human history, the birth of our Lord without whom we are still clothed with the rags of sin and desperately lost to wander this world without hope.

It's time to celebrate.

— Tom Jenkins



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