



december 2011  
volume 9, issue 12

“my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people” . — isaiah 56:7

## FROM THE PASTOR

### *The Greatest Christmas Gift*

*By Jerry Helton*

Christmas with all its wonder is here again. From the youngest child to the oldest among us Christmas is special. For the young ones Christmas is about getting and going, wishes and whispering, and food and fun. I must still have some of the “young one” in me because some of these things still excite me. However, for the older

*“... the Gift of Christmas is that which comes from a heart of love.”*

among us Christmas may be more about the giving than the getting, more about family than the food, and more about memories than movies. Ahhhh, I am getting to that point in my life.

As parents and grand-parents there may be adjustments to be made. Less

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**Ladies Christmas Coffee**  
Saturday • FLC  
Dec. 3rd  
9:30 a.m.

**Children's Christmas Musical**  
Sunday • Dec. 4th  
6:00 p.m.

**HOPChoir Christmas Pageant**  
Sun. & Mon.  
Dec. 11th & 12th  
7:00 p.m.

**Christmas Day Service**  
ONE SERVICE ONLY  
11:00 a.m.  
No Sunday School  
HOP Choir  
Christmas Pageant

**FAMILY & FRIEND SING-A-LONG**  
Sunday • Dec. 18  
6:00 p.m.

*Read Your Weekly BULLETIN  
For More Information  
On these Events!*

**HOPE Newsletter**

is published monthly by  
The House of Prayer Interdenomina-  
tional Church

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***The mission of the House of Prayer Church is to bring glory to Jesus Christ through worship and praise, to evangelize the lost, to edify and equip the body of Christ, and to show Christ's love to all.***

- Senior Pastor, Jerry Helton
- Associate Pastor, Eric Tippens
- Minister of Music, Mildred LeCroy
- Youth Pastor, Nathan Helton
- Associate Pastor & C.E. Director, Darryl Flake

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# Future Events

NOTE: Please check your weekly Bulletin for changes in meeting locations for the month of December. *Gym floor being corrected.*

- Dec. 3rd, Ladies Christmas Coffee, 9:30 a.m. FLC
- Dec. 4th, Children's Christmas Musical, 6:00 p.m.
- Dec. 11th & 12th, Choir Christmas Pageant, 7:00 p.m.
- Christmas Day, Sunday, Dec., 25th ONE SERVICE ONLY  
11:00 a.m. *Special Christmas Pageant Presentation*

# December Birthdays

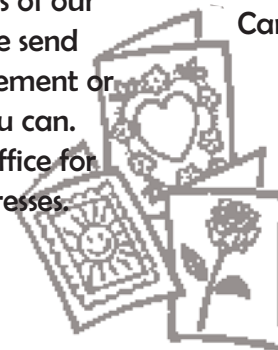
|                   |       |                    |       |                      |       |
|-------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| Hazel Daniel      | 12/01 | David Kelley       | 12/08 | Jordon Stubblefield  | 12/21 |
| Tim Scott         | 12/01 | Carol Walker       | 12/08 | Charles Allen        | 12/22 |
| Austin Dyer       | 12/02 | Robyn Woodmansee   | 12/08 | Charis Flake         | 12/22 |
| Connie Schabowsky | 12/02 | Marilyn Beason     | 12/09 | Anneliese Owen       | 12/23 |
| Mike Cheves       | 12/03 | Haley Hoyer        | 12/09 | Craig Shreiner       | 12/24 |
| Gerald Green      | 12/03 | Nathanael Allison  | 12/10 | Jenny Stanfield      | 12/24 |
| Geraldine Helton  | 12/03 | Morrie Johnson     | 12/10 | Barry DeCarlo        | 12/26 |
| Floyd Payne       | 12/03 | Charles Lawson     | 12/10 | Haley Hodges         | 12/26 |
| Rosetta Bailey    | 12/05 | Robert (Bob) Sites | 12/10 | Stephanie Chastain   | 12/27 |
| Shirley Davis     | 12/05 | Dylan Stone        | 12/10 | Carol Frey           | 12/27 |
| Evelyn Lamar      | 12/05 | Wanda Smith        | 12/11 | George Mangum        | 12/27 |
| Todd Mathews      | 12/05 | Dale Dyer          | 12/12 | Brenda Ketner        | 12/28 |
| Rick Vester       | 12/05 | Ryan Kelley        | 12/12 | Mia Vranek           | 12/28 |
| Tony Dickey       | 12/06 | Doris Wheeler      | 12/12 | Jamie King           | 12/29 |
| Keaton Dyer       | 12/06 | John Strickland    | 12/13 | Brianna Kirby        | 12/29 |
| Jo Anne Dreher    | 12/07 | Gordon Held        | 12/16 | Johnny Williams      | 12/29 |
| Travis Kelley     | 12/07 | Phil Chapman       | 12/17 | Doug Payne           | 12/30 |
| Pat Langford      | 12/07 | Kim Pemberten      | 12/18 | Phillip Stubblefield | 12/30 |
| Tony VanBeers     | 12/07 | Bob McGuire        | 12/19 | Lisa Kelley          | 12/31 |
| Terry Helton      | 12/08 | Kevin Kane         | 12/20 |                      |       |

# Remember the Homebound

You may not see them often, but they are still members of our church community. Please send them a card of encouragement or give them a call when you can.

Please call the church office for phone numbers and addresses. Blessings to all.

- James Baker
- Carl & Utha Bonham
- Hazel Daniel
- Joyce Emerine
- Sandi Lynch
- Mae Penland
- Luther Rogers



# Enrichment

## *The Wise Men from the East Went Home a Different Way!*

*By Eric Tippens*

The phrase from the east, more literally from the rising [of the sun], is the only information Matthew provides about the region from which the Wise men came. Traditionally the view developed that the Wise men were Babylonians, Persians or Jews from Yemen. While the specific country is not mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12, many believe they could have been from Babylon which had strong ties to Astronomy (scientific study of celestial objects such as stars, planets etc), or had become familiar with Balaam's OT prophecy after interaction with the Jews in Babylon in Numbers 24:17 "a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel."

The movement of the star often referred to "the star of Bethlehem" suggests that it is not a natural phenomenon (a comet, supernova or conjunction of planets) but rather supernatural, perhaps a guiding angel that appeared as a star, or a created heavenly phenomenon that had the brightness of a star. These Wise men are traditionally believed to

be three men to coincide with the three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. However, they most likely travelled with a large entourage and guards for a long journey. Assume for a moment that they travelled from Babylon's main trade route of about 800 miles, averaging 20 miles per day, it would have taken about 40 days.

The Wise men did not arrive at the time of Jesus' birth in a



manger, but up to two years later. King Herod later ordered that all male children under two years old to be killed, because he felt Jesus was a threat to his throne. According to Warren Wiersbe, "King Herod was a cruel and crafty man who permitted no one, not even his own family, to interfere with his rule...A ruthless murderer, he had his own wife and

her two brothers slain because he suspected them of treason. Herod married at least nine times in order to fulfill his lusts and strengthen his political ties. It is no surprise that Herod tried to kill Jesus, for Herod alone wanted to bear the title "King of the Jews."

The Wise men aka Magi are described in verse 11 "...and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother and they fell down and worshiped Him..." This statement in Matthew's narrative, has an important effect on Christian religious practices. This "falling down" was a sign of great respect, and typically used when honoring a king. In verse 12, these Wise men were warned in a dream not to return to Herod as he did not plan to come and worship Jesus as he had previously said, but rather to kill him. Heeding to this warning revealed to the Wise men they went home a different path. They had encountered the living son of God after following a heavenly star and they travelled a different road home as they were instructed in the dream. So it is fair to say that the Wise men went home a "different way" both literally and emotionally after they came to worship Jesus.



# Women's Ministries



## Advent: A Season of Compassion

Our children are particularly open to the wonders of our faith in Advent as the magic of Christmas begins to frame their world. We adults can choose to see even the materialistic, consumer-oriented environment through sacramental eyes. We can use the signs and symbols that overtake our television ads, shopping malls and web sites to gently guide children into more contemplative and faith-full attitudes toward waiting, giving, receiving, singing and sharing, and toward environment, color, sound, resources, decorations and celebrations. Imagine what might happen if the adults in each household made the commitment to help children make the connections between the barrage of holiday stimuli and the precious presence of God-With-Us in sacrament and table gathering. Let's not take away the fun; use what's out there to draw children into a deep sense of wonder, a sense of compassion for others, and a desire for justice—all of which children are truly capable.

### *A Lesson Learned During Advent*

Julie Reynolds of Snohomish, Washington, tells of one Advent season when all her young children came down with chicken pox. Everything planned was put on hold or forgotten altogether. They missed many church and community activities as well as get-togethers with family and friends.

But Julie discovered something during her forced hiatus. She had time to do things with her children. The children were well enough to engage in some family activities that the normal Christmas rush might have prevented.

She read Christmas stories to the children. The kids used blankets, walking sticks and other objects to reenact the story of the holy family traveling to Bethlehem. They had time together to discover the joy of family fellowship and to think seriously about the meaning of Christmas.

Julie recalled other Christmases when she had been so busy shopping, decorating, cooking and running about that she missed Jesus. She said, "I completely missed celebrating the

joy of His birth in my own heart. And the emptiness I have felt at those times brought a sorrow and regret deep in my soul."

No more! Now she deliberately schedules "open days" on her calendar, especially during Advent. They are days for waiting upon God, praying, listening and enjoying the peace of God. And they are days of truly being with her family, keeping the bond strong, and the relationships in good repair. Now, she recalls with gratitude the lesson she learned during that Advent years ago.

### *A Christmas Prayer*

*Loving Father, help us to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.*

*Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift, and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.*

*Amen!*

—Robert Louis Stevenson



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### **ABUNDANT LIFE COUNSELING for Women**

**Offered by Janice Saylor** (Free of charge)

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Please call the church office to schedule your appointment 706-745-5925.

Please see Janice's article introducing this new ministry in the May issue of the HOPE Newsletter. [www.hopb.org](http://www.hopb.org)

# Missionary News



## The Light of The World

By Pamela Keough

Christmas is coming and so are the decorative light displays. If only everyone that trimmed their homes and businesses with sparkling lights did so as a celebratory proclamation of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Hope for all nations, The Light of the world.

Light was a significant part of the first Christmas. What a miraculous, life-changing display it was: (Luke 2: 9- 11); *“An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”* Also, the Magi were led to the scene of Christ’s birth by a spectacular star: (Matt. 2:9-10) *“...and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.”*

There are many Scriptures that reveal that the Lord is Light. Jesus boldly states in Jn. 8:12 *“I am the Light of the World, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* He’s declaring His glory and His purpose for coming to earth. Jn 1:9 says, *“There was the True Light which coming to the world enlightens every man.”* Ponder light for a few minutes; its many forms, attributes and purposes; the energy and power it possesses. The most basic truth about light is that it’s the absence of darkness. Light always overcomes darkness and converts or transforms it into light. It illuminates, shines, brightens, permeates, radiates, exposes, reveals, gives sight, gives hope, warms and comforts, brings distinction and clarity, shows the way, guides, gives understanding, brings joy, has drawing power, gives power, supports life, affects growth, heals and restores. Light also repels, burns, consumes, blinds, brings fear, scatters, goes out, dims, flickers, fades, brings reproach and shame as it uncovers flaws, deficiencies, and evils that prefer to remain hidden. Light is visible, reflective and it can shine unhindered, through and around things, or it can be obscured, shut out and hidden. It can shine as narrow as a fine laser beam or as broad as daylight, and it can burn as intensely as the sun or as softly as a candle. Now, relate all of this to Christ’s identity as The Light of the world and to the purpose of His coming as prophesied in Isaiah and quoted by Jesus as He revealed Himself as the fulfillment of that prophecy

(Luke 4:18-19) *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

As if this truth isn’t mind-blowing enough Jesus also states to His disciples, His followers: *“You are the light of the world”* and this applies to you and me as well. (Matt. 5:13) He didn’t declare that some are the light, such as the bold ones, those who are the most spiritually mature, or only followers with particular strengths and abilities. It’s especially important to note that He didn’t say you will be, may be, or could be the light. He speaks emphatically, ‘you are the light of the world’. He was telling them that this is part of their new identity in Him. It is who they’ve become because of their relationship with Him. (2 Cor. 4:6); *“For God, who said: ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.”* (Eph.5:8) *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”* *“We’ve been transformed from darkness into marvelous light.”* (1 Peter 2:9). Webster’s dictionary defines “transformation” as “a change in nature.” Remember, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, **all things have become new.**”* (2 Cor. 5:17) Jesus sees you and me as the light of the world. Oh that we would all fully grasp and believe this profound truth.

We must believe *all* the words of Christ. We believe what

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Continued from page 1

### The Christmas Gift

money may demand more time spent on deciding what to give whom and less money spent. Most of us know by now that some of the most memorable gifts we have received in our lives have not necessarily been the most expensive. After all, it is very true that the value of a gift is not how much money it cost. The ability to buy gifts may vary from year to year but our ability to love and serve should only be growing stronger.

The greatest Christmas gift of all has to be God's gift of His Son Jesus. John 3:16 tells about this Gift this way, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You see our Heavenly Father declared His great love for us with that first Christmas Gift. As a matter of fact James says ALL good

gifts originate with God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17)

This can be the best Christmas ever. Less money cannot keep you from celebrating our Lord's birth with a heart full of thanksgiving and love. So, if you are blessed enough to have family near reach out to them and feast on the love of family. If that family is distant (in miles or emotionally) the reaching out may mostly be done on your knees. But it can be done. No family nearby? Then ask God to show you those He would have you invite to join you in your Christmas celebration. Remember the Gift of Christmas is that which comes from a heart of love. May this be the best Christmas ever! Emmanuel! He is with us.

*Pastor Jerry*

Continued from page 5

### The Light of The World

He says about Himself but we find it hard to believe what He says about us. We are who He says we are.

Fellow Christian, do you believe that you are the light of the world? Not in the future, but right now, just as you are? If you're like me, you've read and heard these Scriptures for years but you struggle to transfer them from head to heart. I want to be the light, I try to be the light, I even pray to be the light. I've wasted precious time and energy because I de-emphasized the little words "are" and "is" in these Scriptures. I've been striving to be what I already am, in Jesus! By accepting our Savior's perception of us we'll find rest and we'll be free to fulfill our purpose. We need to ask the Lord to help our unbelief and to help us see ourselves through His eyes. I'm sure He is eager to do so.

In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus goes on to say, "A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven."

Ponder once again the essence, forms, attributes and purposes of light. Also, reconsider Christ's purpose on earth as it's revealed in Luke 4:18-19. Relate these Scriptures to the Lord's statement about you, that you are the light of the world. You'll gain understanding of the kinds of good deeds that you're to do that will cause your light to shine brightly and give testimony to the True Light, Jesus Christ.

Is the light hidden, dim or flickering in your life? If you say 'yes' to any of these descriptions ask the Lord to search your heart and show you what the hindrance is. Perhaps you already know that it's fear, doubt, habitual sin, rebellion, bitterness, a skewed perspective of yourself, self-centeredness, pride, lack of love for others, lack of trust, or another issue. Ask Him to set you free. Notice the word *let* in Matt. 5:16 and again in the following verse. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." (Heb.12:1-2). It's up to us to get out of God's way and our own way, and allow the Lord to shine through us brilliantly. We are stewards of all that He's given us, and that includes His love, His grace, and the Light of the Gospel. The more time we spend with Jesus, in the light of His presence, the more we'll reflect His light in the world.

### Save on postage . . .

Use the Christmas Card Boxes located in the Church foyer to exchange your greeting cards. Check the boxes regularly to pick up cards addressed to you.



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# Parent Stuff



## *We Can't Afford Not To Be Generous!*

*By Darryl Flake*

That's what we will be looking at in our family experience this month. This past month we had an opportunity to share with kids all over the world as families gave over 200 shoe boxes filled with gifts and the greatest gift of all, the message about Jesus Christ.

Thanks to the OCC crew for leading us in this experience of giving.

Here is what will be happening in December:

It's official—the holidays are around the corner. How do I know? Relatives are asking for Christmas lists so they can get their shopping done and the commercials on TV are rolling out their latest toy temptations to get my children drooling.

It's so easy to lose perspective in all the hustle and bustle. That's why I'm excited to focus on Generosity this December—so kids (and adults like me) can be reminded about what we should get all wrapped up in this year! (This is the same fitting theme from several years ago, but the content itself—scripts and activities—are all fresh and new.)

In fact, James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights." So, we know that God is the giver of all good things. But we also know that God's generosity has a purpose.

In Week 1, we listen as Jesus tells the parable of a rich man in Luke 12:13-21. He gets wrapped up in storing more and more stuff and ends up losing everything that really matters. Bottom Line: People are always more important than stuff.

The brother did what we all have a tendency to do—to focus on what God can do for us, instead of thinking about ways we've already been blessed or how we can bless others. That's why our monthly memory verse says, "Be rich in good deeds . . . be generous and willing to share." (1 Timothy 6:18, NIV).

When we realize that it's really a lie that stuff makes our lives better, then it's easier for us to be generous. We define generosity as making someone's day by giving something away. We can't really live generously unless we believe this Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

In Week 2, we learn that you can't take it with you! A rich young ruler has a big question in our Luke 18:18-25. It's interesting because Jesus really wasn't after the guy's stuff; He was after his heart. Jesus knew that this guy was trapped and He wanted to set the guy free. Bottom Line: Don't let stuff get in the way of loving Jesus. Living generously shows the people around us what we love and trust in most.

In week 3, we read two different accounts in John 3:16-17 and Luke 2:1-18 about the Greatest Gift Exchange ever—when Jesus is born. God is the ultimate example of generosity. We give because God's given to us. God's original gift is our motivation for giving freely to others. Bottom Line: God gave the greatest gift when He gave us Jesus.

In one of the busiest times of year it's important to take time to remember who gave first. We can stop and remember how amazing it is that God sent His Son to show us a new way to live and later make it possible for us to live with Him forever if we just believe.

In week 4, we learn that wise men know how to be generous. Three men come to visit a young Jesus in Matthew 2:1-12. They go to great efforts and travel a long distance in order to be generous. We will focus on all the ways the wise men gave to Jesus—not just the physical gifts, but their time, energy, money and intentionality. Bottom Line: When you give, it shows others how valuable they are.

Other people should be valuable to us because they are valuable to God. When we give to others it shows God that we

value the people He loves so much that He sent His son.

God gives generously to us so that we may be generous toward others. The Bible says, "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:11, NIV)

In other words, God gives generously to us so we will have time, emotional energy, patience, and a wealth of resources to give to others. Then, when we are generous with all we have been given, others will see us and be thankful to God.

So many times we think that our ability to be generous is connected to our riches. We are afraid to give because we don't know if we have enough, and we think generosity is for those who have more than we do. But the cool thing about generosity is that we're not generous because we are rich, we are rich because we are generous. When we choose to give generously to others, we are blessed with everything that really matters in life!

*By Cara Martens. ©2011 Orange. All rights reserved. www.WhatIsOrange.org \* All rights reserved. Used by permission.*

Join us for a special Christmas FX on December 7th at 7pm. There will be no 252 Groups meeting during the Christmas break while school is out; December 21st and 28th. FX resumes January 4th as we look at a new year and the new virtue of self control.

For more information on how to help your child grow in wisdom, faith and friendship visit us online or download "parentcue" from the app store with your smartphone.

*Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Darryl*



# Decision 2012



## What You Should Know About The 2012 Election Year

*By Billy J. Turnage*

The 2012 Election Cycle has already begun. There are ten announced candidates for President, and several debates among them have already taken place, with more yet to come. The Presidential Primary Election in Georgia will be held on March 6, 2012, for determining who will be each political party's candidate to be placed on the ballot for the General Election to be held on November 6, 2012.

The every-ten-year Census that is required to take place by law resulted in lines for all Congressional Districts being redrawn this year. Union County is still in the Ninth Congressional District, but due to population growth in the state of Georgia, a new Fourteenth District was added which resulted in the Ninth District gaining five additional counties. Also, those of us in Union County will lose our current Congressman, Tom Graves, who was moved into the new Fourteenth District. This has created an open Congressional seat in the new Ninth District, and currently there are four candidates who have launched their candidacy for the vacancy. The Primary Election for this and other political offices will be held on July 31, 2012.

You should learn all you can about the candidates who are running for the various offices, mark your calendar for all of the election dates, and determine that you will take part in the selection process. If you are not registered to vote, here are some things you

need to know to help you be prepared to vote in the 2012 election cycle.

Find out now where your specific polling place is located for Election Day. Voters are assigned a voting place, or precinct, where they are authorized to cast their ballots. All polling places are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day. Your authorized voting location is shown on your voter registration card. In the event you no longer have a voter card, have recently changed your voter information, or need assistance to determine where you are supposed to vote, you can visit the Georgia Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ga.gov/mvpl/](http://www.sos.ga.gov/mvpl/), or you may contact your

polling place.

If you fail to have the necessary ID with you at the poll on Election Day, you can still vote with a provisional ballot. However, you must still provide proof that you are a registered voter before your vote will be counted.

In Georgia voters are not required to declare any political party when registering to vote. But to cast a ballot in a primary election, the voter must tell the poll officer in which party's primary he or she wishes to vote to receive the correct ballot. Also, the desired party ballot must be specified when requesting an absentee ballot for a primary election. Once you request a ballot for a specific party's primary election, the decision is binding for that primary and any run-

off of the primary only. You are not required to vote for that party's candidate in the subsequent general election and may make a different party choice in the next primary election.

In Georgia you may register to vote at any time. But, to vote in a specific election, you must be registered by the deadline set for that election. Usually, it is by the close of business 30 days before Election Day. If you have need to update an address or other pertinent personal information, simply fill out a voter registration form and provide your

previous information at the bottom of the form in Section 6 and mail it. It is free and it is easy to complete. Some things that may need to be updated would be a change of address or a name change.

There are three situations that you should be aware of so you will not lose an opportunity

### Important 2012 Election Dates

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| February 6  | Last Day for Voters to Register to Vote in the Presidential Primary |
| February 13 | Advanced Voting begins for Presidential Primary                     |
| February 25 | Saturday voting for Presidential Primary                            |
| March 6     | Georgia Presidential Primary – Voting at the Polls                  |
| May 23      | Earliest Day for Candidates to Qualify for Office                   |
| May 25 NOON | Last Day for Candidates to Qualify for Office                       |
| July 2      | Last Day for Voters to Register to Vote in the July Primary         |
| July 9      | Advanced Voting Begins for July Primary                             |
| July 21     | Saturday Voting for July Primary                                    |
| July 31     | Primary Election – Voting at the Polls                              |
| August 21   | Primary Runoff – Voting at the Polls                                |
| October 8   | Last Day for Voters to Register to Vote in the General Election     |
| October 15  | Advanced Voting Begins for November 6 General Election              |
| October 27  | Saturday Voting for November 6 General Election                     |
| November 6  | General Election – Voting at the Polls                              |

local county Board of Registrars.

One thing you must have with you when you go to vote is an approved form of photo identification. There are several forms of ID that are acceptable. If you are not aware of what these are, you may contact your county Registrar's office far enough in advance of an election to be sure that you have an acceptable form of ID with you when you arrive at the

# Dollars & Sense



## Online Shopping Requires Caution

By Sylvia Turnage

More buyers are expected to do their Christmas shopping online this year – about 47% compared with 44% in 2010, according to a National Retail Federation survey. And about half of those surveyed who own smart phones and 70% who own tablets say that they will use those devices to research items and make purchases.

The Internet makes it easy to compare prices, shop quickly and avoid the crowds. But it can also put you at risk of becoming a victim of identity theft if you don't take the proper precautions. More shoppers may become victims this year simply because more people—especially those who aren't accustomed to shopping online and aren't aware of the risks—will be using the Web to do their Christmas gift buying.

Below are some factors for you to consider while shopping online to help protect your personal information and reduce your risk of becoming a victim of a scam or identity theft:

Select your own seller. If you use a search engine to find out which online retailers might have an item you're looking for, don't click on any of the links on the search result page. As many as three results per page are poisoned results (that is, fraudulent sites that likely will misuse any personal information you enter), says Jon Heimerl, Director of Strategic Security for Solutionary. Instead, go directly to a retailer's site or use a price-comparison site, such as Amazon.com or PriceGrabber.com.

Even if you're using a site that you think is legitimate, look for a security label, such as VeriSign or Cybertrust, and for https:// in the URL on pages that prompt you to enter personal information. The "s" after "http" means that it is a secure site.

Shop at home. Never make purchases online using a public Wi-Fi connection. Hackers can tap into Wi-Fi connections at hot spots, such as coffee shops, airports and hotels, to capture your personal information. Also, never use a public computer to shop or check bank or financial accounts online.

Make sure you use a credit card when making purchases online. If a hacker steals your debit card information and uses it to make unauthorized purchases, you must report any misuse within two days of learning of the fraud to get the same \$50 limited liability that you would get with a credit card without the requirement for a 2-day notification. If you miss that deadline with a debit card but report your loss within 60 days, your liability limit jumps to \$500; after 60 days, your liability is unlimited. That said, generally, if you've been a good customer of the bank, they will credit your account within a couple of days after you report the fraud.

If you do a lot of shopping online, review your credit card accounts regularly to make sure there aren't any unauthorized purchases. Print out your receipts or put e-mail receipts into a separate folder so that you can easily check your statements against your

receipts.

Shop smart with your smart phone or tablet. These devices make it easy to shop on the go, redeem coupons and compare prices in stores. But you could be putting your personal information at risk if you aren't careful. For example, before you download shopping applications, check what sort of access they want to your phone. Opt for ones that require fewer permissions. For example, you should avoid apps that want access to your contact list because your family and friends do not want a third party calling them or flooding their phones with ads. And if you use your smart phone or tablet to shop online, click "no" when asked whether you want a site to remember your password. Otherwise, if anyone gets your phone, he'll have easy access to your accounts.

Don't fall for bogus bargains. If a Web site or individual offers a deal that's too good to be true, demands a direct transfer of funds and won't accept credit cards, it's probably a scam. This sort of offer often appears in unsolicited e-mails. Don't ever click on a link in an unsolicited e-mail to go shopping, even if the e-mail looks as if it came from a legitimate retailer. You're safer going directly to a retailer's site to see whether it's having a sale rather than clicking on a link that could take you to a fraudulent site.

Don't trust every deal you see on social-networking sites. Twitter and

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Continued from page 9

### Online Shopping

Facebook can be smart ways to stay on top of deals. But note that the URLs on Twitter (and sometimes Facebook) are often shortened, so you won't know whether you're landing on a legitimate retailer's site by clicking the link. One option is to use the notification you see on Twitter as a tip, then Google the company and research the details on your own.

Don't wire money to pay for an item. If you purchase an item from an online auction site, such as eBay, and the seller asks you to wire your payment, don't do it. Wiring money is inviting yourself to a fraud situation because you have no way to get your money back if the item you purchase never arrives. Pay with a credit card so you can

dispute the charges if you don't get what you paid for.

Don't assume an escrow service is always safe. If the seller is pushing you to use a particular escrow company to handle a transaction, be suspicious because it might be part of a scam. You can verify a company's legitimacy by checking with state regulators, or ask to use an escrow company of your choosing, such as Escrow.com.

If you enjoy shopping online, pay attention to these cautions and you should have a safe and convenient experience.

*"Don't worry about the wicked or envy those who do wrong. For like grass, they soon fade away. Like spring flowers, they soon wither. Trust in the LORD and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper."*

-- Psalm 37:1-3 NLT

Continued from page 8

### Election Year

to have your vote counted due to failure to complete all the necessary changes before an Election. (1) If you move within the same county in which you are registered and do not notify the Registrar at least 30 days prior to an election, you may still vote at your old polling place for that election. (2) Should you move outside the county in which you are registered to vote within 30 days of an election, you may vote in your old precinct for that election. (3) If you move outside the county in which you are registered to vote in excess of 30 days before an election, you have lost your eligibility to vote in the county of your old residence. You must register to vote in your new county of residence. And you must register by the deadline set for the election in which you wish to vote; otherwise, you cannot vote in that particular election.

Mothers with children are allowed to take children into the voting booth with them to vote.

There are ways that parents and grandparents can help in getting eligible family members registered before the deadlines pass so they will be ready to participate in the upcoming elections. Parents should contact all of their children who are eligible to vote and remind them of the importance of registering to vote, then ensure that they actually go to the polls on Election Day to cast a ballot for the candidate of their choice. Grandparents wield a tremendous amount of influence within most family structures; therefore, it is critical that they remind all of their children and grandchildren of the importance of registering and then following through and casting a ballot for the candidate of their choice. Children who are seventeen and one-half years old can register and vote in an election if they turn eighteen before election day.

Finally you should pray for our Nation, families and communities, and ask God to help us restore our country back to our motto: "In God We Trust."

*"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." -- Proverbs 29:2 KJV*

### Nursing Home Christmas Gift Bags

We are in need of Hand Lotion (8 oz. size) to be included in Gift Bags for the residents of the Nursing Home. Please bring your donation to the Welcome Center on Sunday. Thank You.

### Elijah's Closet • Christmas Kids •



Christmas Toy Workshop now collecting **NEW and LIKE NEW TOYS** for our local Closet Kids. To age 14. Drop off at Elijah's Closet 9 - Noon M-F.

### House of Prayer offers FIREWOOD

If you use wood for your primary or back-up heat, add your name to the sign-up sheet in the foyer and a member of the Men's Ministry will contact you.



CHURCH OFFICE RECEPTIONIST

**Involved  
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The Church Office is in need of a volunteer receptionist Friday afternoons,

12 Noon - 4 p.m. We also need a volunteer that can fill in for other volunteers when needed. If you would like to be part of this rewarding ministry, please call Carol, Karen or Jackie at 706-745-5925 M-F 9a.m. to 4 p.m.

# The Christmas Carol of the Birds

by Mrs. G. Hall

Do you know, when we are having such good times at Christmas, what sweet music they have in Norway, that cold country across the sea? One day in the year the simple peasants who live there make the birds very happy, so that they sing, of their own free-will, a glad, joyous carol on Christmas morning.

And this is why they sing on

that morning more than on any other. After the birds have found shelter from the north wind on Christmas-eve, and the night is still and bright with stars, or even if the storm be ever so severe, the good people bring out sheaves of corn and wheat from their storehouses. Tying them on slender poles, they raise them from every spire, barn, gatepost, and gable; then, when the Christmas sun rises over the hills, every spire and

gable bursts forth into joyous song.

You can well believe that these songs of the birds make the people of Norway very happy. They echo, with all their hearts, their living, grateful anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill to men!"

**PUZZLE**

**A PROMISED RULER**

Prophets told of Jesus' birth hundreds of years before it happened. Never had a baby's arrival come with such a promise.

**Directions:** To read what one prophet (Micah 5:4, NIV) said about Jesus, complete the math problems below. Then fill in the words, using the math solutions as your guide.

$7+6$  strength  
 $9+1$  shepherd  
 $30-5$  the  
 $7+5$  ends  
 $50-26$  live  
 $21-10$  will  
 $27-29$  reach  
 $10+7$  flock  
 $40-20$  stand  
 $15+9$  security  
 $8+8$  his  
 $35-31$  leap  
 $17-3$  greatness  
 $10-3$  earth  
 $10+5$  will  
 $5+1$  will

"He \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ his \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ ... And they \_\_\_\_\_, for then \_\_\_\_\_, to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_."

**MICAH 5:4, NIV**

Answers: "He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord ... And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth." Micah 5:4, NIV

## SAVIOR ORNAMENT

This Christmas, celebrate Jesus' birthday by making this keepsake ornament.

### What you need:

- Wooden clothespin with round end
- Black permanent marker
- White cloth or felt
- Small wooden star (available at craft stores)
- Yellow paint
- Paintbrush
- Gold glitter (optional)
- Glue gun (and an adult)
- Straw-colored raffia
- Palm-size wicker wreath (available at craft stores)
- Ribbon

### What you do:

1. On the clothespin's round knob, draw two dots for eyes.
2. Wrap the white cloth around the clothespin, like a swaddled baby.
3. Paint the star yellow; add glitter, if desired.
4. With the glue gun and adult supervision, glue the raffia to the bottom inside of the wreath. Then glue the swaddled clothespin atop the raffia and glue the gold star atop the wreath.
5. Tie a ribbon around the top, near the star.
6. Hang the ornament on your Christmas tree or tie it on a gift.

**Christian Christmas Alphabetical Order**  
Place the word bank words below in alphabetical order.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_

|           |        |         |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| camel     | star   | wiseman |
| straw     | manger | kings   |
| blessed   | candle | Heaven  |
| donkey    | Mary   | Jesus   |
| innkeeper | birth  | Savior  |
| shepherd  |        |         |

"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."

-- Luke 2:14 (NASV)



# December 2011

House of Prayer Interdenominational Church — 706-745-5925 — [www.hopb.org](http://www.hopb.org)

| Sun   | Mon  | Tue  | Wed   | Thu                                      | Fri                     | Sat  |
|---|--|--|---|--|-------------------------|--|
| 4 8:30am Service<br>10am Sunday School<br>11am Service<br>5pm Deacons Meeting<br><b>6pm Children's Christmas Musical</b>                  | 5 7pm Choir Practice                             | 6 7pm Men's Fellowship<br>Upward Soccer Evaluations<br>FLC 6-8pm                           | 7 7pm Prayer Meeting, Youth Meeting, FX-Family Experience   | 8 Upward Soccer Evaluations<br>FLC 6-8pm | 9                       | 10<br>9:30am Ladies Christmas Coffee—FLC<br>7pm Choir Singings at McCayesville Baptist |
| 11 8:30am Service<br>10am Sunday School<br>11am Service<br><b>House of Prayer Choir Christmas Pageant Mon &amp; Tues—7:00 p.m.</b>        | 12   | 13 7pm Trustee Meeting<br>10am FLC Assemble Nursing Home Gift Bags<br>7pm Men's Fellowship | 14 9:30am Nursing Home Ministry—Deliver Gift Bags<br>7pm Prayer & Bus. Meeting, Youth Meeting, FX-Family Experience — Christmas Caroling, Deliver Fruit Baskets | 15                                       | 16                      | 17   |
| <b>18 Communion</b><br>8:30am Service<br>10am Sunday School<br>11am Service<br>6pm Service<br>Pastor Eric Tippens<br><b># SING-A-LONG</b> | 19 No Choir Practice                             | 20 7pm Men's Fellowship  | 21 7pm Prayer Meeting, NO Youth Meeting, NO FX-Family Experience  | 22                                       | 23 Church Office Closed |  |
| 25 <b>Merry Christmas</b><br>11 am Service<br>HOP Choir<br>Christmas Pageant  | 26 Church Office Closed<br><br>No Choir Practice | 27 7pm Men's Fellowship  | 28 9:30am Nursing Home Ministry<br>7pm Prayer Meeting, NO Youth Meeting, NO FX-Family Experience  | 29                                       | 30 Church Office Closed | 31   |

House of Prayer Interdenominational Church  
P.O. Box 1475 • 1400 Pat Colwell Rd.  
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**Get connected...**



[www.hopstudents.org](http://www.hopstudents.org)

## *The Christmas Heart*

“Let us remember that the Christmas heart is a giving heart, a wide open heart that thinks of others first. The birth of the baby Jesus stands as the most significant event in all history because it has meant the pouring into a sick world of the healing medicine of love which has transformed all manner of hearts for almost 2,000 years ... underneath all the bulging bundles is this beating Christmas heart.”

—George Matthew Adams

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