

December 2024



FOX RIVER  
BAPTIST CHURCH

# Fox River Life



## December 2024 Newsletter

*The following article is written by David Mathis is executive editor for [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org) and pastor at Cities Church. He is a husband, father of four, and author of “Workers for Your Joy: The Call of Christ on Christian Leaders” (2022).*

*December is the darkest month. January may be coldest (at least here in the northern hemisphere), but December has the winter solstice, least daylight, and most nighttime hours. Without a fresh layer of snow to reflect the moon and stars, December is as dark as it gets. This makes it both a surprising and wonderful time for the light of Christmas — and for the season of waiting we call Advent*

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From now until December 21, the days will grow shorter, and we'll be waiting with increasing expectation for the light to return and grow brighter. Advent itself is a season of waiting, and an ancient invitation to slow down (during the month that has become the busiest of the year). The season bids us to mark the days and make them count, to relearn a pace of life that is more unhurried (and more human) in the midst of December's consumer chaos. Advent invites us to wait for Christmas with patience and hope, and to be ready, when Christmas finally arrives, so that we're not caught off guard, but actually enjoy the great feast.

## **Short and Sweet**

The English "Advent," from the Latin *adventus*, means "arrival" or "coming." The advent in view each December is the first coming of Jesus, and with it, his promise to come a second time. Advent begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve.

Each year, in our season of waiting to rehearse the arrival of God himself in human flesh, Christians remember the people of faith who waited centuries — not months and years but centuries! — for the coming of God's promised Messiah. They had God's precious promises: a seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20), a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22; 7:37), a priest who would surpass the first-covenant order (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:4–6; 7:11–17), a son of King David and heir to his throne (Isaiah 9:7; Matthew 1:1; 22:42) who would be greater than David, as his Lord (Psalm 110:1). For centuries, God's people waited. And they "did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us" (Hebrews 11:39–40).

Now we live, with fantastic privilege, in the era of the Messiah. Christ has come as the climax of history and revealed the Godhead and his gracious purposes. It is good for us, though, to rehearse the patient waiting and anticipation of God's ancient people, to renew and deepen our appreciation of what we now have in him. And like them, to wait for the advent that is to come.

## **Baby Steps for Jesus**

To be clear, the risen Christ, Lord of the church, has not mandated that we celebrate Advent. Or Christmas, or Easter, for that matter. Observing Advent, or any other season or calendar square, does not secure (or keep us in) God's favor (see Galatians 4:10–11; Colossians 2:16–17). Christ has finished that work, and through his Spirit, we are joined to him, receiving the Father's full acceptance by faith alone. Advent, then, is an opportunity, not an obligation — an occasion to make much of Jesus. Here at the outset of another December, we might consider three concentric circles in which to take up some modest initiative to point ourselves and others to Christ

And if I may, let me emphasize modesty. New seasons can bring the temptation to endeavor more than we can realistically sustain. Wisdom often chooses small but significant beginnings that ultimately add up, day by day, to a more Christward, worshipful Advent.

### **In Our Own Hearts**

First, ask about your own soul. How might this new and brief season be an opportunity to tend to your own heart and faith? The length of Advent makes it ideal for habit formation. Ask how you might seek to warm your soul during the darkness of December. What fresh initiative might you take in personal devotions or your spiritual habits to both quiet your soul in all the noise, and lead you into a new year, with spiritual buoyancy rather than discouragement?

You might lay out some Advent reading (and meditation) plan in Scripture — in the birth narratives of the Gospels, or in Isaiah (the great Christmas prophet), or working through the minor prophets, or even the book of Revelation. This time of year, many reach for Advent devotional books (two options from *Desiring God* are *Good News of Great Joy* and *The Christmas We Didn't Expect*). You might identify certain passages of Scripture to memorize and meditate on. Or you could ask yourself, Has some particular means of God's grace been absent from my life in recent months? Consider fasting or renewed practices in prayer or local-church fellowship.

### **In Our Families and Churches**

Moving out from our own hearts and private practices, ask how you might draw others into the joy of waiting well for Christmas. Special Advent plans for family devotions have been a favorite of ours over the years (including the very spiritual use of chocolates for the kids). Long readings can be a challenge with small children. One idea for young families is to plan for one particular Advent verse (or short passage) for each day, with a brief, heartfelt explanation from mom or dad. Without small children, you can aim higher (yet remember the wisdom in small beginnings).

Beyond family devotions, consider other Advent traditions, whether adjusting old practices or starting new ones, to bring Christ-intentionality to the season. One we've enjoyed now for many years is trying to make the most of a social custom, the family Christmas card. Each year, we strive not only to send a new family picture and give updates on the kids, but also to say something clear and compelling about Jesus.

As for church families, pastors and elders might think how to make Advent special in the rhythms of our fellowship. I know an old pastor who wrote Advent poems for each Sunday in December. It was a labor of love for 27 years. Many churches do Advent candles with special

extended worship in song. Some keep largely to the minor chords and Advent mood of waiting up until Christmas Eve, and then bring in the bright, major chords of the Christmas season from December 25 to January 6.

## **in Our World**

Wonderful as it may be to warm our own hearts at the fires of Advent, we find an outward impulse at the very heart of that first Advent. Advent marks the greatest missionary act in history: God himself, in Christ, came into our world to dwell among us and save us from our sins. Heaven forbid, then, that we keep all the warmth of Advent indoors and to ourselves. There is no better time than Advent and Christmas to speak boldly of Christ's love and seek to show it through acts of love.

Each December we see our world convulse in the irrationalism of sin. Remarkably, the secular world both stops for Christmas, like no other day of the year, and at the same time tries so hard to paper over Christ with Santa and reindeer. Advent is a call to take a risk and speak into the tension. Pull back the curtain. Make the pinprick of light into a beam.

## **Another Lost Opportunity?**

Scottish theologian Donald Macleod, who died last year, once lamented,

“Every year the world — and the church — experiences Christmas, that curious amalgam of paganism, commercialism, and Christianity which Western civilization has invented to tide it over the darkest days of the winter. Christmas is a lost opportunity, a time when the world invites the Church to speak and she blushes, smiles, and mutters a few banalities with which the world is already perfectly familiar from its own stock of clichés and nursery rhymes.” (From *Glory to Golgotha*, 9)

What surprising word might you speak, or act of generosity might you take, toward unbelieving neighbors and family and coworkers? Might Advent be an occasion, and excuse, to take the potentially awkward initiative for Jesus you've been wanting to take all year? Perhaps your words and faith-inspired efforts will prove to be their turning, from darkness to light.

May the opportunity not be lost on us this year. Make this Advent your invitation to make much of Jesus in your own heart, in your home, with your church, and in our world.

In His Name & For His Glory, Pastor Tim

## Children's Church/ Deaconesses

The Deaconesses welcome you to attend the Children's Church's production of "A Personal Journey to the Nativity". They will be describing the events that took place on the evening that Jesus was born. It is told through the experience of Anna who was a witness of the events that night. The kids have been working hard on their roles for the play and are eager to show it to you. There will be a reception immediately following the play in the Fellowship Hall and you are all warmly invited to attend.

Merry Christmas from the kids and the Deaconesses.





## Single Women's Ministry

Single Women's Ministry is taking a break till after the New Year, and reassessing the need to go forward. Thank you for your support.

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### Fox River Baptist Church

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E-mail: [office@foxriverbaptist.com](mailto:office@foxriverbaptist.com)

Website: [foxriverbaptist.com](http://foxriverbaptist.com)

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday  
& Thursday - 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm



Here at FRBC, we have a prayer chain meant for the sharing of prayer request needs and for sharing praise for the awesome & mighty work God does in our lives. Please feel free to share any praise or request at our new Prayer request email address:

[Prayer@FoxRiverBaptist.com](mailto:Prayer@FoxRiverBaptist.com)

**Care to be part of the prayer chain?**

Email or call Becky Godfrey at

[becl.godfrey@gmail.com](mailto:becl.godfrey@gmail.com) —

(920) 277-1526

St. Joseph Food Program

!

# December

## Meal Mixes



Help us reach our goal of 1,000 boxes  
Drop off Boxes in the foyer near the Baptismal area

### December's Birthdays

- 19 Elaine Mehn
- 25 Carol Smith
- 26 Ellen Rudzinski

### December Anniversaries



## **Intentional Discipleship**

### **The changes in schedule for the December calendar.**

December 6th Children Advent Play @4:30 pm

December 11th Celebration of Lights and Dinner 4:30 pm meet  
at Church

December 13th Christmas Concert 4:00 pm

No Evening Service December 1, 15 and the 29.

No Sunday School December 1, 22 and 29.

No Saturday morning Bible Study December 21, and 28.

No Women's Prayer December 18, 25, and January 1

No Women's Thursday Bible Study December 26 and January 2



# Women's Ministry News

## **Women's Ministry**

December brings Women's Ministry to the completion of a number of projects. First, we thank the whole congregation for contributing so generously to our Vida giving opportunities. This fall we not only delivered your donated items to the Vida clinic. We were also able to purchase for Trinity House a bedside sleeper bassinet, an infant car seat, and other needed items such as infant sleepers, diapers, and onesies; prenatal vitamins for the moms-to-be; and other baby needs.

We also give thanks for your generous contributions for Vida's Adopt-a-Family Christmas project. Every ornament on the tree was taken, and was returned with the specified gifts. These were delivered to Vida November 14. The smiles from the volunteers at Vida are just the start of the joy these gifts will bring to the families who receive them.

Another completed project is our "Crafting with a Purpose." Thanks to all the women who put their hands to the task of making Coasters and Sun Catchers to bless the residents of Brewster Village and Care Partners. A Christmas tract is also given to each resident. May these gifts be a wonderful Christmas blessing.

Just one more reminder—Vote-Vote-Vote for Vida, as Vida's videoed rendition of Silent Night competes in Thrivent's "Carols for a Cause" competition. Vida hopes to win the grand prize of \$15,000. Voting information will come to you by email as soon as Thrivent announces the voting instructions.

## Sunday Evening Services Schedule

December 1—NO Ask Pastor Tim  
December 8—Corporate Prayer  
December 15—NO Sol Fide  
December 22—Corporate Prayer  
December 29—NO Evening Service



### Financial Update 2024

Budget needed weekly: \$ 2836.35



Contact Mark Wildenberg 920-378-3380 with questions.

### December

*Women's Prayer*

*Wednesdays at 9:30am*

*Women's Bible Study*

*Thursdays at 1:00pm*

*Men's & Women's  
Bible Study*

*Saturdays at 8am*



**December 1**

Pat Groff

**December 8**

Scott Smith

**December 15**

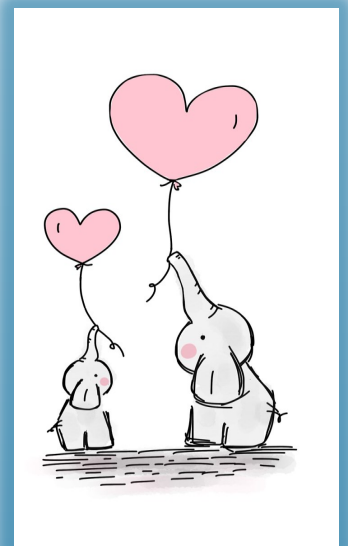
Ray Rudzinski

**December 22**

Jeffrey Smith

**December 29**

Kyle Tubbs



Please contact the  
Church Office at 920  
-734-6162 or Carol  
Smith at (920) 475-  
8727 to volunteer  
for Nursery  
Ministry.

# Anne of Green Gables

By Lucy Maud Montgomery

Anne Of Green Gables takes place in the early 1900s. Anne Shirley is a beautiful 11-year-old orphan who has an optimistic Spirit and will power to live her life with creativity and the imagination to make the best of any situation. She is sent to Avonlea as help for the Cuthberts, a brother and sister. Marilla requests a boy to help with the farm, but the orphanage got their messages crossed and sent Anne to the Cuthberts by mistake. The Cuthberts had a beautiful farm called Green Gables in Avonlea on Prince Edward Island, Canada.

This novel recounts the struggle that Anne Shirley faces as she navigates going to school and living with the Cuthberts. Anne brings the magic of imagination and her joy to life and adapts quickly, thriving in a close-knit farm community. Her imagination and talkativeness start to brighten up The Green Gables.



*Nikki Ovenshire*

# Young at Heart

## Celebration Of Lights

Wednesday, December 11th, Traveling to Oshkosh in a van to view the holiday lights at the EAA grounds. Meet at the church at 4:30 pm. Dinner at Pizza Ranch in Oshkosh.

Sign up sheet at the Welcome Desk

Questions please call Lynn Abitz 920-788-9482

## Missions

The Mission board is sending out yearly report requests to our missionaries, hoping to have them back by the end of December: and we have submitted our budget to the Elders.