

Eastminster Eagle

Volume 39, Issue 12

December 2022



Notes From Fred

As has been our custom since the sanctuary was completed, we light the candles at the beginning of each Advent Sunday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. The first candle is the Candle of Hope. Hope as we celebrate the birth of Jesus and the love of God that Jesus emphasized in his teachings and hope for Jesus' return with God's love for all humans. We also have hope that God's spirit will change those hearts that harbor hate, anger, and bitterness toward others. We hope for peace and goodwill to reign over the world, and I hope that it reigns in you and me. Last year, I wrote about "Gotta Whisper Gotta Shout" a spiritual that caused me to look inside and ask, "Have I gone and told as I should?"

This recalled another Spiritual that we sing every year. "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (#136 in our *Glory to God* hymnal). I must admit that other than understanding on the surface what the text is telling us, I hadn't paid close attention to what the text is asking us to do. However, that changed when I was in an online seminar about using spirituals in worship and the presenter read some lines from the devotional book *Rise Up Shepherd: Advent Reflections on the Spirituals* by the Rev. Dr. Luke A. Powery, dean of Duke University Chapel and associate professor of homiletics at Duke Divinity School. Dr. Powery is considered one of the best teachers of homiletics and the art of preaching in the country. From now on, singing the spiritual should remind us, as Dr. Powery points out in his book that "Go Tell It on the Mountain," that we are to go and tell about God's love as shown through Jesus. Not just sing the words in the worship setting, but to tell and do, to help the poor, the homeless, those who have lost loved ones, jobs, the mentally ill, those that just need a positive voice in their lives, and so many other opportunities to share God's message of hope and love through Jesus's story and your own story.

"The "go, tell" is an invitation to experience the joy of Jesus and spread this joy wherever we may find ourselves. It's the combination that is key. We can go somewhere and never say one word. Or we can speak but never go. Witnessing to the birth of Jesus requires both—going and telling, acting, and speaking—because Jesus requires our whole being, not just part but our bodies and voices, the fullness of who we are. Let his coming come to you in such a way today that you can't help but be filled with the energy to go and tell some good news in a world full of bad news." Dr. Powery

Let us pray: Coming God, come into my life that I may receive the joy of going and telling the good news of your birth in the world. Amen.

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Continued from Page 1

P.S. The choir is working on Advent and Christmas Music. If you haven't attended our Lessons and Carols service join us on Sunday, December 18. We will hear the scriptures of Advent and Christmas, and sing carols, songs and anthems. Melody and the choir are joined this year by Jackie Akin, Flute; Robert Gonzales, Violin; Avery McVey, Percussion; Travis Ratliff, Trombone; Carlos Vargas, Cello; Sean Turner, various instruments. Sean has also composed a new anthem for the choir.

Our Christmas Eve Service will be at 6 p.m. this year. This gives us time to participate in the 5-8 p.m. drive thru Nativity at Christian Stronghold and attend Eastminster's Christmas Eve Service either before or after our worship service.

Christmas Day and New Years Day services will be at 11 a.m.



Support Eastminster while you shop!

Ask your family and friends to use this link while Christmas shopping on Amazon:
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/75-1968087>

Big news! Eastminster has been added to Amazon Smile's list of charities. Eastminster will receive 0.5% of qualified purchases made on SmileAmazon.com with Eastminster Presbyterian Church of Dallas as the designated charity. This does not cost Eastminster anything! All you have to do is shop on Smile Amazon rather than Amazon and choose Eastminster, otherwise your shopping experience stays the same. This is an easy way to support all of our ministries, like Christmas Village which is right around the corner! We serve our community every week by serving a free, delicious hot breakfast to anyone who comes. You can bless others while doing your Christmas shopping! This link is also available on the church website, go to eastminsterdallas.org, scroll down and click on the Go to smile.amazon.com box, it will take you to your Amazon account and you can choose Eastminster as your charity or you can set up an account if you don't already have one. If you don't shop on Amazon, but your family or friends do, they can easily choose Eastminster, too! God has blessed us with this opportunity to increase our capacity to care for our members and neighbors so take advantage of it! Spread the word and Merry Christmas!

This link will take you directly to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/75-1968087) in support of Eastminster, you won't have to search among almost a million other organizations. <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/75-1968087>



Isabella Venegoni and Michael Joiner married on November 19 in a small ceremony witnessed by family and close friends.

Congratulations Isabella & Michael.

House & Property

What has been done in the month of November:

- ◆ Staining the ark in the playground – Jim Lee, Rose Lee and Blair Garrett
- ◆ Touch up painting in the main hall of the education wing – Sherry Holloman, Blair Garrett
- ◆ Planted flowers in large pots in front of Sanctuary
- ◆ Lighted water heater in outside closet
- ◆ Repaired double oven in kitchen
- ◆ Serviced ice maker

Other Maintenance:

- ◆ Adjusted timers for exterior lights
- ◆ Had three heating units serviced

Remaining items from workday list:

- ◆ Clean out attic area above the kitchen
- ◆ Organize Maintenance closet
- ◆ Caulk and paint circular window above kitchen in the attic
- ◆ Finish staining Ark
- ◆ Finish touch-up painting of hallways, fellowship hall, handicap bathroom
- ◆ Adjust exit door to playground
- ◆ Replace Exit Sign lights

You can help! Pick up trash that you see in and around the building. Turn off lights if you know you are the last to leave a room. Let the House and Property Committee know if you see something that doesn't look right or is not working properly. Let's all share in the stewardship of God's house.

Blessings,

Blair Garrett, Chairman

Bruce Turner and Jo Byrd, Members

Sharing God's kingdom

When Jesus, in the Nazareth synagogue, read from Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news" (Luke 4:18) and declared the prophecy fulfilled, "all spoke well of him" (v. 22). But when he then said God's favor was not just for Israel, they grew angry. How quickly we can change our minds about leaders — sometimes in the span of a short sermon! Yet Jesus simply meant that God's grace is so plentiful we can share it without fearing that if others benefit, we won't.

It's been said you can't share light without some falling on your own path. Ministers can't baptize new followers of Christ without getting wet themselves. And neither will any of us miss out on the kingdom of God if we opt to share it with others — both in and beyond our community, people similar to and different from us.

What is Jesus challenging us to do right now? If it's something that benefits others, we'd do well to peel off from the angry mob (vv. 28-29) and think again. Perhaps not just a human being but the Spirit of the Lord is announcing good news in our hearing today.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

Chili Cook-off

If you weren't able to make it to the chili cookoff this year, you missed some mighty good entries. NINE chili cooks entered TEN different chilis this year – making it really hard to keep up with the heat.

Once again, TIM KREGER took first place with his outstanding chili. Second place this year went to VICKI COOK, and TOM WHITLEY'S chili came in third.

Check out some of our good times.



Daniel and Marybeth kept the judging honest.



Ten chilis were entered this year – more than ever before.



Miatta is a serious chili judge.



Lilly tries to decide which one she likes best



The winners and their "expensive" trophies

Puzzle!

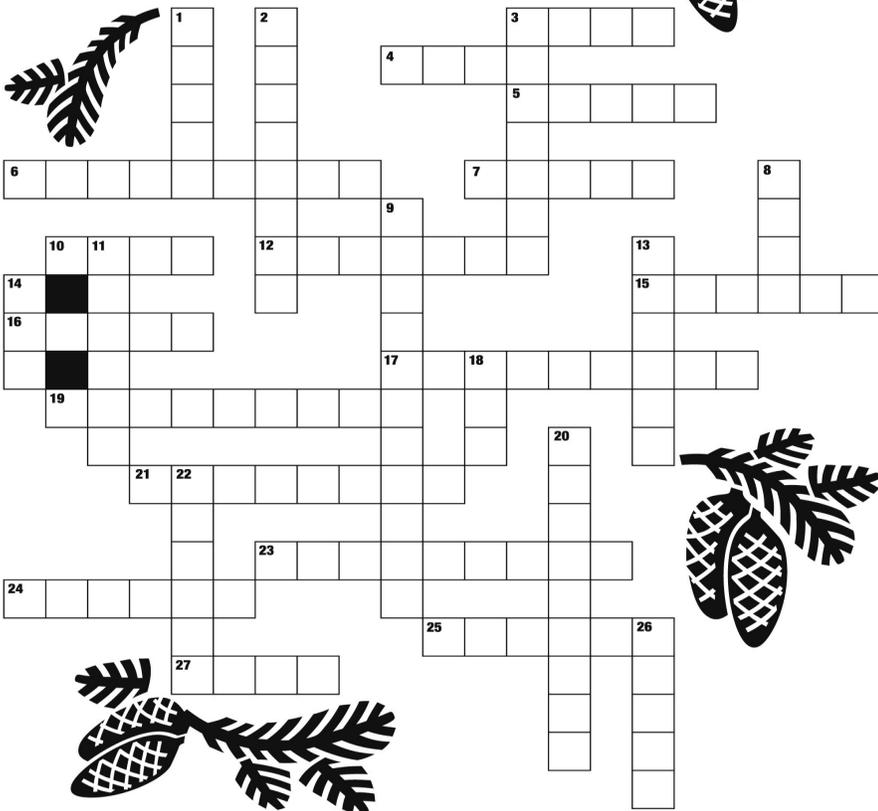
Take a break from Christmas preparations to complete this seasonal crossword.

DOWN

- 1. song
- 2. keeper of sheep
- 3. Anointed One
- 8. a gift of the magi
- 9. red plants
- 11. coming
- 13. Jesus _____
- 14. 12th month (abbrev.)
- 18. B&B
- 20. a form of holly
- 22. heavenly messengers
- 26. he ordered the slaughter of the innocents

ACROSS

- 3. wise men
- 4. author of the most famous Christmas account
- 5. red-suited gift-giver
- 6. of Ephrathah
- 7. presents
- 10. Gabriel came to her
- 12. has a red nose
- 15. "Messiah" composer
- 16. northern little helpers
- 17. patron saint of children
- 19. made flesh
- 21. home for Mary
- 23. tree decorations
- 24. crib
- 25. he was a carpenter
- 27. a nova



“The Lord is coming, always coming. ... Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.” —Henri Nouwen

“The good news of great joy changed the course of every silent night to come.” —Alicia Bruxvoort

“Christmas is a box of tree ornaments that have become part of the family.” —Charles M. Schulz

A prayer to the Christ-child

You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with your tiny hands, embrace us with your tiny arms and pierce our hearts with your soft, sweet cries.

—Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

Answer: DOWN 1. carol, 2. shepherd, 3. Messiah, 8. gold, 9. poinsettias, 11. Advent, 13. Christ, 14. dec, 18. inn, 20. mistletoe, 22. angels, 26. Herod; ACROSS 3. magi, 4. Luke, 5. Santa, 6. Bethlehem, 7. gifts, 10. Mary, 12. Rudolph, 15. Handel, 16. elves, 17. Saint Nick, 19. incarnate, 21. Nazareth, 23. ornaments, 24. manger, 25. Joseph, 27. star

Neighborhood Breakfast Update

	10/29	11/5	11/12	11/19
Guests	41	37	27	36
Servers	9	12	6	9
Total	50	49	33 (1st freeze)	45 (freeze)
Clothes (est)	23-30	11-23	23-28	31-40

The last 4 weeks have completed our transition into winter time. As Blair pointed out: historically the first serious freeze knocks our numbers way down and then they pick right back up.

We sang “Happy Birthday” numerous times and handed out lots of clothes. A special shout-out to Betty who has gotten us into the Walmart underwear and socks loop. We desperately need blankets, coats, 34-36 or larger pants, x-large and xx-large shirts and sweaters, and socks and more socks. In cold and wet weather, dry socks are critical. Two of the Saturdays, donuts were added to the menu which garnered smiles all around, especially from I____. One Saturday, Charles from Eastminster was there and played a few bars from his harmonica.

Every Saturday breakfast has been warm and filling. I challenge anyone anywhere to cook pancakes as perfectly as Christine. Everybody knows just about everybody else. There is a loud persistent hum as all the different people share all the different conversations with each other. Ivan brought 10-year-old C____ who helped serve and did an exemplary job. D, K, and I are chipping in to get D a pair of glasses (he is nearly blind). A true sense of community has grown into something very special. The food is great, but the fellowship and company are even more valuable, especially to the lonely, isolated, and vulnerable. When you add in the help and friendship of Christian Stronghold and Greater Community Fellowship Church, Saturday morning breakfast at Eastminster has turned into some place that is transformational.

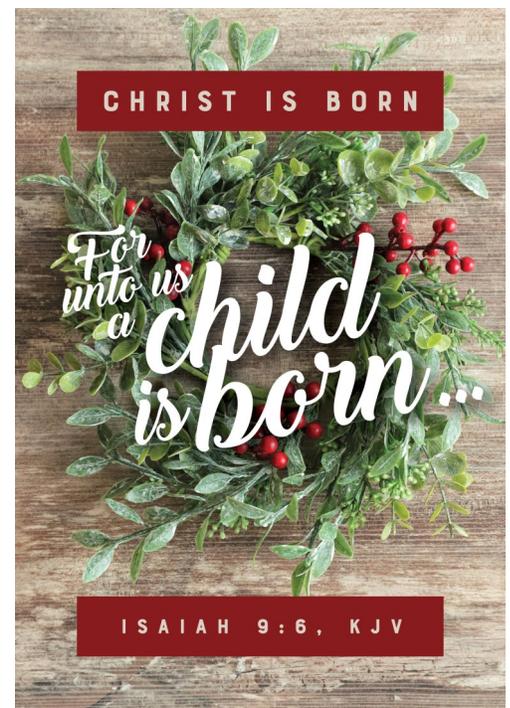
Tom

A prayer for Christmas

The internet reveals little about Wilda English — only that she lived from 1916 to 1997 and once resided in California. No details exist about her family, work or interests. Just this prayer, widely shared online. And it is no small thing. Indeed, the prayer tells much about her faith.

God bless Wilda English for sharing these words with the world. May they continue to inspire many!

God grant you the light in Christmas, which is faith; the warmth of Christmas, which is love; the radiance of Christmas, which is purity; the righteousness of Christmas, which is justice; the belief in Christmas, which is truth; the all of Christmas, which is Christ.



A collaboration across time and place

For Christmas Day worship, many churches use Psalm 98. It is fitting, then, that Isaac Watts, who interpreted 132 psalms as hymn texts, based a now-beloved carol on it.

Watts (1674-1748) was a student of language, religion and philosophy. He wanted to make Scripture more relevant to lay people and thought hymns could help. Watts composed more than 600 hymn texts, many still in use. But Psalm 98:4-9, “Joy to the World,” needed music to fit its words.

Enter Lowell Mason (1792-1872), an American choir director. He came across Watts’ Psalm 98 hymn text and sought inspiration for a melody from the famous oratorio *Messiah* by George F. Handel (1685-1759). Mason pulled musical phrases from sections of Handel’s work, resulting in the tune we now recognize as “Joy to the World.”

So it is that three men who lived across three centuries and never met — along with the composer of the original psalm more than two millennia earlier — together produced a hymn to the Christ-child, which millions have sung and continue to love.

At home in our hearts

“All hearts come home for Christmas,” according to popular sentiment. But what if your heart (and/or home) is hurting or troubled? Does this season have room for people who are struggling? Does the holiday still have meaning?

Yes, God’s word tells us. In fact, that’s why God sent Jesus, the Word, from his heavenly home to make “his dwelling among us” (John 1:14, NIV). As fully human, Jesus experienced loneliness and betrayal, loss and physical pain. He was rejected by loved ones, angered by corruption, and abandoned to die. But as fully God, Jesus

provides answers, healing and hope. Through his resurrection (which first required an earthly birth), Jesus offers salvation to all who believe in him.

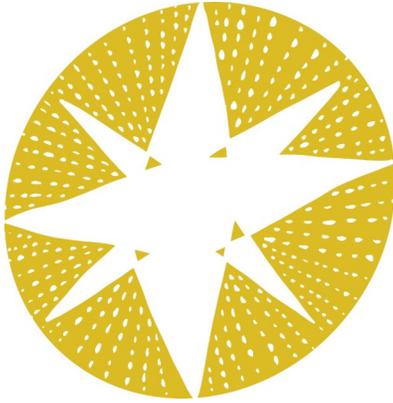
As we await the heavenly home that God’s Son is now preparing, we can welcome him and his comforting promises, even into our hurting hearts.

Rediscovering Jesus at Christmas

In *Jesus Rediscovered*, Malcolm Muggeridge reflects on visiting the Church of the Nativity, built over a Bethlehem grotto in A.D. 330. Beneath it, “a silver star marks the alleged precise spot where Christ was born.” Such shrines are common in the Holy Land, though most “are doubtless fraudulent,” he writes. Yet among Bethlehem visitors, “almost every face somehow lights up a little” as “Christ’s presence makes itself felt.”

A humble earthly shrine reminds us that God’s Son arrived as a pauper, not a prince. “Behind all this there is a real man born, growing up, reaching maturity like other men,” Muggeridge writes, “trudging through this selfsame dust, and sheltering from this selfsame sun ... this man in whose flesh God deigned to live and die.”





Complete this Bible verse: "The (1)_____ (2)_____ in the (3)_____, and the (3)_____ has not overcome it."

- A. (1) Word; (2) speaks; (3) silence
- B. (1) light; (2) shines; (3) darkness
- C. (1) kingdom of God; (2) reigns; (3) world
- D. (1) Spirit of God; (2) shines; (3) world
- E. None of the above

(Answer: B (See John 1:5))



"It was such a down-to-earth plan."

What does the gingerbread man put on his bed?
Cookie sheets.

What do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?
"Freeze a jolly good fellow!"

What is a Christmas tree's favorite candy?
Ornamints.

What goes "Oh, Oh, Oh"?
Santa walking backward.

What is an elf's favorite kind of music?
Wrap music!

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?
Nothing. It was on the house!

What kind of photos do Santa's helpers take?
Elflies.

Scripture Readings for December

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Luke 20:27-40 | 12 Luke 22:39-53 | 23 Luke 1:57-66 |
| 2 Luke 20:41-21:4 | 13 Luke 22:54-69 | 24 Luke 1:67-80 |
| 3 Luke 21:5-19 | 14 Mark 1:1-8 | 25 John 3:31-36 |
| 4 Luke 7:28-35 | 15 Matt. 3:1-12 | 26 Acts 7:59-8:8 |
| 5 Luke 21:20-28 | 16 Matt. 11:2-15 | 27 John 13:20-35 |
| 6 Luke 21:29-38 | 17 Luke 3:1-9 | 28 Matt. 18:1-14 |
| 7 John 7:53-8:11 | 18 John 3:16-21 | 29 John 7:37-52 |
| 8 Luke 22:1-13 | 19 John 5:30-47 | 30 John 7:53-8:11 |
| 9 Luke 22:14-30 | 20 Luke 1:5-25 | 31 John 8:12-19 |
| 10 Luke 22:31-38 | 21 Luke 1:26-38 | |
| 11 John 3:22-30 | 22 Luke 1:39-48 | |

From trashed to treasured

In December 2017, Jimmy Amisial, a Texas State student home in Haiti on break, noticed a crowd peering into a trash can. A 4-month-old infant lay inside, but no one moved. So Amisial scooped up the baby and took him home to his mom. They washed and clothed him, gave him milk and sought medical care.

After investigators failed to locate parents, a judge asked if Amisial would serve as legal guardian. Sensing “this had happened for a reason,” he “took a leap of faith.” Now Amisial is raising funds to adopt Emilio. “I’m glad I got the opportunity to transform his life from being abandoned in the trash to being a wonderful treasure,” he says.

Likewise, God did not leave humankind trapped amid the trash of sin and evil, destruction and death. Instead, God came to us as Jesus, scooped us into his loving arms and claimed us as his own. Like Emilio, we’ve been transformed and are treasured.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

A Christmas harvest

Christmas is the harvest time of love. Souls are drawn to other souls. All that we have read and thought and hoped comes to fruition at this happy time. Our spirits are astir. We feel within us a strong desire to serve. A strange, subtle force, a new kindness, animates man and child. A new spirit is growing in us. No longer are we content to relieve pain, to sweeten sorrow, to give the crust of charity. We dare to give friendship, service, the equal loaf of bread and love.

—Helen Keller

The upside-down of Christmas

Theologian Halford Luccock once saw a shopper “who looked like an



animated Christmas tree with packages dangling from every limb.” When he retrieved some dropped bags, she grumbled that Christmas “turns everything upside

down.” Luccock replied, “That is just what it was made for!”

He explained: “Christmas is a story about a baby, and that is a baby’s chief business, turning things upside down. ... A baby in a family divides time into two eras, just as Christmas does. There is B.C., which means ‘before child,’ and A.D., which means ‘after deluge.’”

When God became flesh, the lowly, last, least and lost were exalted, added Luccock. As a result, “the locked-up treasures of kindness and sympathy come from the inside of the heart, where they are often kept imprisoned, to the outside of actual expression in deed and word.” The Christ-child “enables all [people] to get at the best treasures of their lives and offer them for use.”



JOYFUL
Merry
AND
Blessed

Pleasant Grove Food Pantry for month of October



<i>Date</i>	<i>Families</i>	<i>Adults</i>	<i>Seniors</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Pounds</i>	<i>New</i>
3	123	233	74	157	464	8973	14
4	222	484	112	415	1011	16466	11
10	114	246	62	158	466	8326	4
11	230	514	101	417	1032	17110	14
17	128	253	77	160	490	9056	6
18	215	458	126	377	961	15421	12
24	119	231	69	160	460	8521	6
25	200	444	87	314	845	14675	18
31	124	234	70	191	495	9097	8
Month	1475	3097	778	2349	6224	107645	93



DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

Sue Bender	12/14
Denise Bennett	12/15
Christine Blair	12/15
Fred P. Watkins	12/16
Ian Kelleher	12/31



Melody & Bill Davis	12/22
Cindy & Blair Garrett	12/29



Eastminster Session

- Betty Crabtree
- Kayla Dixon
- Blair Garrett
- Kathy Kreger
- Jim Lee
- Tom Pappas
- Vicki Thiebaud
- Charlotte Turner
- Sean Turner
- Fred Watkins



Pastor	Sherry Holloman
Director of Music	Fred P. Watkins
Organist	Melody S. Davis
Administrative Assistant	Chandra Anderson
Hostess/Housekeeper	Minerva Hernandez
Child Care Provider	Betty Crabtree



HIGHLIGHTS from the STATED SESSION MEETING

November 21, 2022

- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer regarding losses and projections for budget shortfalls.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer that only 5 individuals have signed up for the “Amazon Smile” program to date.
- ◆ Was introduced to Cindy Miller, Ruling Elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Corsicana and Moderator of the Committee on Ministry for Grace Presbytery. She, along with Mary Stewart Hall, will serve as liaisons between Eastminster and Grace Presbytery. Ms. Miller provided preliminary information and suggestions for first steps in moving toward the selection of an Interim Pastor.
- ◆ Approved holding Christmas Day and New Years Day services at the normal time – 10:55 a.m.
- ◆ Approved a motion from the Worship Committee that Eastminster sponsor a music program by the Eastfield College Early Morning Brass group April 23, 2023, at 4pm.
- ◆ Heard a report from Fred Watkins regarding Commissioned Lay Pastor training.
- ◆ Heard a report from the House and Property Chair regarding steps taken to get an accurate valuation of the Eastminster campus.
- ◆ Heard a report and acted on a motion to extend the lease agreement with St. Peter’s Anglican Church through 2023.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Pastor regarding Pulpit Supply for January, 2023.
- ◆ Heard a status evaluation from the Long-Range Planning Committee.



Special dates

- ◆ Second Sunday of Advent – December 4, 2022
- ◆ Third Sunday of Advent – December 11, 2022
- ◆ Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 18, 2022
- ◆ First day of Winter – December 21, 2022
- ◆ Christmas Eve – December 24, 2022
- ◆ Christmas Day – December 25, 2022
- ◆ New Year's Eve – December 31, 2022

