

# Falls Fellowship



## How do you keep Christ in Christmas?

**I**t gets harder and harder each year to keep Christ in Christmas. Whether it's people telling you to say 'Happy Holidays' instead of 'Merry Christmas' or the office Christmas party now being called a 'holiday mingle,' you can't seem to get away from it. You don't buy a Christmas tree anymore, you buy a 'holiday tree.' Is there a new holiday at the end of the year we associate with evergreen trees that I've somehow missed which necessitates we make such a change? The birth of Jesus, Christmas, is what I'm doing these things in December for, so I'm sticking with saying "Merry Christmas" and putting up a Christmas tree.

What else can we do? Well, no set of Christmas decorations is complete for a Christian without a nativity scene. We have one with a small piece of plastic stained glass in it that you can either sit in a window and let the sun shine through or turn a little light on behind it which will light up the window.

I like this one because it reminds me of the stained glass in our church. There are also ornaments out there that are Christian themed.

*See Christmas on page 3*

## Come Home for Christmas

**Y**ears ago, the Catholic Bishop of South Carolina used the medium of television to invite the Catholics of South Carolina to attend mass at Christmas time.

I remember seeing some of the television spots with the Bishop dressed in the elegant garments of his office. He would end his remarks with a simple, yet profound statement: "Come home for Christmas." I have often used that phrase in promoting church attendance at Christmas. Some of you who have not frequented Falls in months or even years, I hope, will think about coming home to Falls during the Christmas season this year. You even have the once-in-seven-years opportunity of attending services on Christmas day.

There are some understandable explanations for not attending church. Physi-

*See Come Home on page 4*





## Worship Precautions During December

The church is taking several precautions to make attendance as safe as possible during this Covid-19 pandemic. Even though a few in our congregation have or have had the virus, we are aware you could have the virus and be without symptoms. Therefore, we are requesting that all follow these guidelines:

1. If you are ill, please do not attend until all your symptoms have disappeared.
2. Maintain six-foot social distance except for family members living in the same household.
3. Boxes to receive tithes and offerings are placed at the doors so we do not have to handle offering plates. Some members fall into the category of having

underlying conditions which make them uncomfortable to be in groups. We understand they may not be willing to attend now. Hopefully, this pandemic will soon pass and we can truly get back to normal worship services.

During the month of December, Wednesday Bible study will be in the Fellowship Hall at 6 PM for supper and continue on Zoom at 7 PM for those who can not attend in person. If you plan on attending for supper please sign the sheet each week in the vestibule.

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service December 24 at 5 PM

### Treasurer's Report

Our financials for the month of October 1, 2022 —October 31, 2022.

Tithes - \$12,958

Budgeted/expected tithes - \$11,583

Actual expenditures - \$15,500.23 (includes \$6,306.71 for security camera system)

Budgeted expenditures - \$11,524

Special offerings thru 10-31-22:

NC Baptist Men - \$200

NC Children's Home - \$100

### 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



## Falls Baptist Church On Mission

Our church collected 350 pounds of food for part of October and three weeks in November. We helped feed 2,400 hungry families as well. Thank you!

So far for 2022 we have collected a total of 2,615 pounds of food. It would be great to reach a total of 3,000 pounds by the end of December. Please continue to donate!

In December we will be collecting money for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. All of your contribu-

tions go to the International Missions Board.

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

*Continued from page 1*

## Christmas continued ...

We have one that says, “For God So Loved The World ...” to remind you of John 3:16. If you’re looking for a movie to watch at Christmas, it’s hard to beat “A Charlie Brown Christmas”! It’s one of the few movies you can point people to, even children, to tell us what Christmas is all about. If you don’t have time to watch the whole thing, here’s a link where Linus tells us, directly and to the point, what Christmas is all about:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJ8qjdxzzE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJ8qjdxzzE)

Basically he tells us what’s in Luke 2:6-14, which at first glance is only the birth of Jesus, but the scriptures in Luke allude to something much more than just birth. They talk about the baby Jesus being the hope for humanity, and that’s something worth celebrating every year, every week, and every day! So make sure you are keeping Christ in Christmas this year as you are celebrating, decorating, and attending festivities!

Merry Christmas!

— Alan Watkins

## Out of Darkness Comes Light

The Christmas story begins in darkness. There was the darkness of oppression, for God’s people were a conquered people. They were a beaten and a defeated people. There was the darkness of persecution. Indeed, it was a despised universal taxation that brought the participants in the story together on that fateful night. There was the darkness of disillusionment. There was an ever-increasing number who felt that violence, not faith, was the most effective path. Yes, on that first Christmas, the mood was one of despair and resignation.

And thus it was then and thus it is now. We too live in a world of darkness. There are wars and rumors of

## Event Calendar

December 3 — Annual Christmas Dinner 6 PM

December 5 — Deacons Meeting 6 PM

December 24 — Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service 5 PM

December 25 — Christmas Day Service, Church at 10 AM, no Sunday School

January 1 — New Year Day Covered Dish Luncheon Noon (after church)



wars, hunger and unemployment, racism, loneliness, and a sense of emptiness. Perhaps the poet Robert Frost worded it best when he wrote: “I have been acquainted with the night. I have walked in the rain and out of the rain. I have been acquainted with the night.” I don’t have to tell any of you about the darkness, because in one form or another, at one time or another, it has touched the life of each person here. You have been acquainted with the night. Thus, we do not come here this evening to naively deny the existence of the darkness. Nowhere in scripture do we receive a prep talk and an argument that things aren’t really as bad as they seem. Rather, it affirms that the darkness is real and it is present.

But, it also affirms that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. ...

— Sermons.com

## Deacons

Frank Powell, Chairman	919-604-1285
Victoria Neal, Vice Chairman	919-880-1888
Mike Harris	919-746-5697
Bill Upton	910-358-7303
Tommy Brown	843-446-6540
Johnny Ray	919-740-7099

## *Come Home cont' ...*

cal conditions may impede your doing what your heart wants you to do. I talked with a gentleman the other day who used to attend Falls and sadly said he no longer attends because of health issues. He has the desire in his heart, but his legs won't cooperate.

Christmas and home: they are first cousins. I don't think about Christmas without also thinking about the home of my childhood. Christmas was marked by symbols, traditions, and predictable routines. Each had its place in the celebration of the season for our family and today each one evokes pleasant and vivid memories.

I remember the holly which was wrapped around the entrance from the living room to the dining room. It was fresh and, therefore, had to be replenished several times during the season. A large bough was suspended from the chandelier above the dining room table. The Christmas tree, brought fresh from the woods by my father and me, stood before the double windows in the living room dressed in ornaments and lights that were so old, they had to be gently placed on the tree. Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, shepherds, and various farm animals formed a nativity scene on the coffee table in front of the sofa. Nearby was a Bible opened to the Christmas story found in Luke's Gospel.

There were the sounds and aromas of Christmas.

Mother baked special treats. If I close my eyes and think about them, I can smell her chocolate layer cake even today. The record player (this was before the revolution of the digital age) sent Christmas music throughout the house.

The memories of Christmas for many people are closely tied to memories of home. Those memories are so powerful that millions of people will go home for Christmas to reunite with family and attempt to reclaim both the memories and innocence of childhood.

The glad news of Christmas is that we can return home. Perhaps not to the house where we grew up or to the biological family who nurtured us, but we can return to the place which is a symbol of our eternal home, the place where we worship, our church. There we can sing the joyful songs of Jesus' birth with the members of our church family. There we can listen again to the old, old story of God's loving us and sending a little baby 2000 years ago to save us from the death of sin and birth us into life everlasting. Perhaps it's been a while since you joined your family at Falls. Life's choices have taken you to other places; unavoidable circumstances have encumbered your attendance. You are out of the habit. Put all of that aside and "Come Home for Christmas."

— Tom Jenkins

*(Some of this material appeared in an article I wrote in 2017).*



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