

Falls Fellowship



Can you hear the bell?

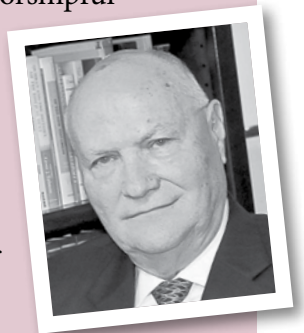
I had a lot of time off in December, and I ended up watching a LOT of Christmas movies. One I hadn't seen in a while was *The Polar Express* starring Tom Hanks. If you haven't seen this one, it's an animated movie about kids who have all but stopped believing in Santa Claus. One of the things which happens when you stop believing in Santa is you can no longer hear the bells which are on his sleigh. At one point, the main character can't hear the bell ring, even if he picks it up and shakes it, but by the end of the movie, he is able to hear the bell ring again. I won't give any more spoilers in case you haven't seen it!

Being able to hear the bell is like being able to follow the path God has laid out for us. A lot of people are able to travel the path God wants them to; it's like following the sound of a bell. At some point, though, a lot of people seem to no longer be able to hear God's bell, or at least they aren't paying attention to it. They wander aimlessly through life following their own path instead of the one God wants them to follow. The Bible tell us, this is not a good choice: "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide

See Hear the Bell on page 2

Random Thoughts and Remembering the Past

I am profoundly grateful to all the people who helped us celebrate the Advent Season at Falls. The church was beautifully decorated, the music was worshipful and inspiring, the Christmas Banquet was the best, the beauty and pageantry of the season came over



us all. From the tables in the fellowship hall to the nativity scene in the baptistry, all decorations pointed to "the reason for the season," the birth of the Savior. I have always delighted in flower arrangements appropriately placed in the sanctuary on the Lord's Supper. The flowers placed during Advent honoring people who are no longer with us, were appropriate and highlighted the celebration of the season. The

See Thoughts on page 4

Event Calendar

January 1 — New Year Day Covered Dish Luncheon Noon

January 8 — Deacons Meeting 7 PM

January 20 — Ladies' Coffee and Fellowship 9:30 AM

January 21 — Quarterly Church Conference Noon

February 5 — Deacons Meeting 7 PM

February 11 — Valentine's Banquet 6 PM
Sign up sheet in vestibule

Continued from page 1

Hear the Bell continued ...

and the way is easy which leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard which leads to life, and those who find it are few." (ESV, Matthew 7:13-14) From time to time, you might realize you are walking down that wide, easy path because you can no longer hear God's bell. How do you fix that? In *The Polar Express* the only thing you had to do to be able to hear the bell was to believe (in Santa Claus). To hear God's bell, all you have to do is believe in Him and ask Him to help you follow the path he's laid out for you. If you ask this often, you'll find yourself navigating the path to that narrow gate much easier than doing it on your own.

— Alan Watkins

Family Movies Available

Both of the movies we've seen for movie nights are available in the Church library in case you missed them or want to see them again!

Check them out when you have a chance and stay tuned for future movie nights announcement!

— Alan Watkins

Ladies Coffee

All ladies are invited and encouraged to attend the January Ladies Coffee and Fellowship on Saturday, January 20 at 9:30 AM in the fellowship hall.

We look forward to seeing you!

Please pick up 2024 Offering Envelopes

Members should pick up their offering envelope boxes in the vestibule if you have not already done so. Please see Kevin Barham if you have any questions.

Food Donations

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

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



TRI-AREA MINISTRY
FOOD PANTRY

January Birthdays

- 3 Courtney Mayerick
- 7 Matthew Looper
- 8 Jessica Jackson
- 10 Linwood Barham
- 13 Sara Powell
- 13 Sandra Brown
- 15 Joey Groves
- 20 Frank Powell



I Don't Need A New Year; I Need A New Me!

When we were much younger, we used to be really excited about the new year! Perhaps some of you still are! I mean, after all, it is a time when everybody is on the same page. We are all thinking about making a fresh start! We are all thinking about starting all over again! We are all thinking about setting goals and making this new year better than the last year! But wait a minute! Weren't we all doing the same thing this time last year? And the year before? And the year before that? Haven't we all be doing the same thing every year, for as long as we can remember? Perhaps the reason some of us are not as excited about the new year as we used to be is because we have lived long enough to experience the disappointments of countless new year's resolutions never kept! For no matter how excited we were and no matter how good our intentions were, no matter how determined we were, by the middle of January, and if not then, certainly by Valentine's Day, the thrill, the excitement, the determination, the resolve present on New Year's Eve and on New Year's Day was long gone! No! Some of us are not particularly excited about the New Year because we have discovered what is needed is not a new year, but rather a new person! No! I don't need a new year; I need a new me!

This is exactly the experience the Apostle Paul shares with us in the Roman text. Now we look at Paul's experience. I would like to suggest to you Paul is not relating a pre-conversion experience but rather, this was a post-conversion experience for Paul. Some think what Paul shares in Romans 7 is the struggle he experienced before he was saved, but a careful look at the text will prove otherwise. Let me prove my point: First of all, when we look at the grammatical structure of the text, we note Paul does not use the imperfect or the aorist tenses to describe this ordeal, but rather he consistently uses the present tense. Paul is not describing what he used to go through, he is talking about the struggles he is presently experiencing. Secondly, the person who is not saved has no real struggles with trying to do the right thing! It is not even on his mind to do right! Doing wrong is so natural, doing right

doesn't even cross his mind. Now there are some who would appeal to the fact of the conscience. But even the conscience of an unsaved person doesn't want to do right. The Bible says there is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. Paul says later on, in this same letter, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

So, Paul says, I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Now, the flesh Paul is referring to is not his physical body, but rather the unregenerate sin-nature present within him. You see, when we are saved, God does not eradicate or remove our sinful nature; instead He places His Holy Spirit within us, which is His very own nature. One of the purposes of God's Spirit within us is to empower us to bring our sinful nature under control. "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. "But, walk (live according to) by (the power of) the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." Paul said he died daily. Every day, the flesh (the sinful nature) had to be crucified. Crucifying the flesh is not something God does for us, we have to do it ourselves by the power of His Spirit dwelling within us.

— Harold Miller, Jr.
Sermons.com

Deacons

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

Thoughts cont' ...

Advent wreath always stirs me as we light a different candle each Sunday and how appropriately the candles are named: hope, peace, joy, love and the large candle in the center, the Christ Candle.

Our traditional New Year's lunch was well attended. We had good food and "solid gold" fellowship. What started thirty years ago as a gathering of Falls people with their holiday leftovers has grown into a celebration of its own. From ham, to turkey, to fried chicken, a bevy of vegetables, including Johnny's perfectly cooked cabbage, and the table laden with the desserts we think of at Christmas and New Years. We had visitors with us, and their presence enhanced the experience for us all.

Thoughts about the future

Are you among the millions of Americans who make New Year's resolutions? Resolutions range from losing a few pounds to making profound lifestyle changes. According to a poll conducted by CBS News/YouGov, sixty percent of Americans who made New Year's resolutions indicated they desire to increase their religious engagement. This resolution is right up there with losing weight and making other lifestyle changes.

For a minister who thinks a lot about reaching people for a local church, just like Falls, this suggests to me that people are looking for something they have not found and are beginning to wonder if there should be a spiritual component to their search for meaning and purpose in life. If so, it's about time! Those of us who try to follow the path Christ blazed for us have found all of life's meaning is focused through our relationship with Christ. We can't imagine living a life that does not have an active spiritual component. The active spiritual component is not impersonal for it is focused on a person — Jesus Christ. If the poll reflects reality, then all around us are candidates to join us on our spiritual journey at Falls BC. We are all pilgrims searching for something we haven't fully grasped, be it to lose a few pounds, mend broken family ties, or enter a deeper walk with our Lord, and apparently there are people around us who are searching for that, too. We are not a gym to help people lose weight, so people must go elsewhere for that kind of help. But we are a way station for people wanting to go deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ and their fellowship with others on the same journey.

Happy New Year and may God bless you on your journey.

— Tom Jenkins



9700 Fonville Road
Wake Forest, NC 27587
www.fallsbaptistchurch.org
Dr. Tom Jenkins, Pastor
(919) 812-6675



www.facebook.com/fallsbaptistchurch