



The Peace Jesus Brings

Matthew 10:34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."

Christmas is a time to celebrate the coming of Jesus. God the Son took on flesh and dwelt among us. What an amazing thing it is to know that God humbled himself and came as a baby in a manger! God did not leave it for people to guess what had happened. He sent angels to proclaim this great news to Mary, Joseph, and even to humble shepherds.

The child was "Christ the Lord" and the angels praised God saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2 ESV)

We know *that* Jesus came, but do we remember *why* Jesus came?

This Advent, I will be preaching a sermon series about *why* Jesus said he came. Just as God did not leave us to guess if he had come, He did not leave the reason for his coming up for guesswork either. Jesus tells us *why* he came! One of those reasons with you now. Jesus says "I have not come to bring peace, but the sword." (Matt. 10:34)

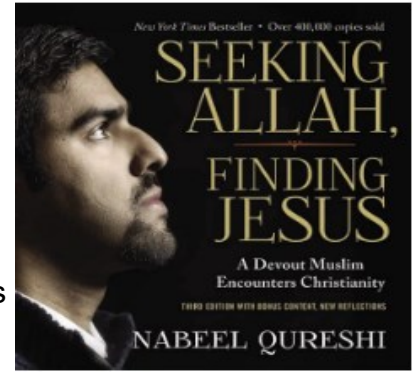
You may think, "Wait, I thought Jesus came to bring peace! Isn't that what the angels sang in Luke chapter 2?" Well, you are right. Jesus did bring peace. Through his death on the cross for our sins. By faith, we, who are enemies of God, can have peace with God. Our relationship with God is reconciled! In this way, Jesus brings peace. But the sad truth is that peace with God has brought division as well.

The first week of October, a few members of our mission team went with me to visit a missionary couple who minister to the Afghan immigrant population in Detroit. These immigrants are almost exclusively Muslims and ministry can be difficult. One resource these missionaries shared with us is the book *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* by Nabeel Quresh. This month, I found the time to read it.

Nabeel grew up as a Muslim but put his faith in Jesus after being confronted with the truth of Christianity and the love of a Christian friend. Nabeel experienced both the peace and the sword of Jesus. Nabeel writes in his chapter *The Cost of Embracing the Cross*, "The cost for a Muslim to accept the gospel can be tremendous. Of course, following Jesus meant that I would immediately be ostracized from my community. For all devout Muslims, it means sacrificing the friendships and social connections that they have built from childhood. It could mean being rejected by one's parents, siblings, spouse, and children." (p.251)

Islam is divided into factions, Sunnis and Shias, but all four major schools of Sunni thought and all three major schools of Shia thought teach that people who leave Islam must be killed for their apostasy, disagreeing only on the details of qualifying circumstances and implementation. (p.61)

Nabeel is describing the "sword" that Jesus brings. Receiving Jesus, for many in the world, can mean rejection from those they love. I am thankful that I did not have to make that sacrifice when I became a Christian. I can't say what I would have done if I were in Nabeel's place. Muslims, Hindus, Mormons, and many others understand the dangerous truth of Jesus' coming. Truth divides and we should be sympathetic to those who struggle with the cost of following Jesus. And may we count the cost and follow Jesus. (Luke 14:28)



DECEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Drug Court	2 8 AM Men's Breakfast Past Time
3 10:30-Worship Service COMMUNION	4	5 9AM Deacons Fellowship Hall Noon-LDL Holly's	6 7PM Choir	7 6PM Ecumenical Dinner 1st Christian NA meets 7:30	8	9
10 10:30-Worship Service Christmas Play	11	12	13 10-4 Wrap gifts for Angels 7PM Choir	14 NA meets 7:30	15 Drug Court	16
17 10:30-Worship Service Play in Van Wert	18	19 10AM-Caregiver Support Group-Senior Center	20 7PM Choir	21 NA meets 7:30	22	23
24 10:30-Worship Service 11PM-Christmas Eve Service	25 	26	27 7PM Choir	28 NA meets 7:00PM	29	30
31 10:30-Worship Service						



PLEASE JOIN THE CONGREGATION DURING
THE REGULAR SUNDAY SERVICE ON
DECEMBER 10TH TO WATCH THE CHILDREN
OF OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY PERFORM
A CHRISTMAS STORY ENTITLED NEW STAR.
SEE YOU AT 10:15 ON DECEMBER 10TH !
COME SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF OUR
CHURCH.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

4-Matt Reineck
5-Carter Crossland
7-Julia Fife
13-Cara Lou Strahley
14-Todd Searing
17-Cindy Koenig
18-Alissa Ferguson
20-Matt Stoller
21-Christine Fife
23-Alex Wiebe
24-Paul Searing
25-Jesus

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

13-Jeremy & Christine Fife
28-Barb & Stan Searing



	A	B	C
1	FINANCIAL TIDBITS FROM OCTOBER		
2	Designated Gifts:		
3	Amount	Purpose	
4	\$100.00	In memory of Laresa Johnson	
5	\$200.00	Missions	
6	\$995.00	Womens Retreat registration	
7	\$72.00	Per member asking	
8	\$200.11	Nicelley investment dividend	
9	Notable Expenditures:		
10	Amount	Payee	Purpose
11	\$150.00	CCLI	Copyright renewal
12	\$62.01	Sweetwater	Choir music
13	\$300.00	Phoebe Banjeree-Sam	Speaker fee for Womens Retreat
14	\$50.00	Paulding Police Department	Security for 5th quarter event
15	\$330.00	Solid Rock Computers	Pastor computer repairs
16	\$430.00	Buckeye Exterminating	Termite bait station renewal
17	Budget vs Actual Income:		
18	\$133,962.39	Budgeted Income	
19	\$125,966.57	Actual Income	
20	(\$7,995.82)	Difference	



From
Treasurer
Carol Razo

HAPPENINGS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

*Men's Breakfast on Saturday, December 2nd, at 8AM at the Past Time Café.

*Deacons will meet on Tuesday, December 5th at 9AM in the Fellowship Hall. (Don't forget your cookies).

*Ladies Do Lunch are gathering at Holly's Tuesday, December 5th at noon.

*This years Ecumenical Dinner will be help at the First Christian Church on Thursday, December 7th. Dinner will be at 6PM, with the program commencing at 7.

*The First Presbyterian Church Children's Christmas play will be performed on December 10th during the Sunday morning Worship Service. Make plans to attend and encourage the youth of our church and community.

*Angel tree gifts are due on Sunday, December 10th. Wrapping will be on Wednesday, the 13th. Distribution of gifts will be Friday, the 15th at Drug Court.

*Drug Court will meet this month on December 1st and 15th.

*Caregiver Support Group will meet Tuesday, December 19th at 10 AM at the Senior Center- 406 E. Jackson.

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be at 11:00pm.

*There are N.A. open meetings on Tuesdays at 6 PM at the Antwerp Community Church, as well as in our Presbyterian Church basement every Thursday evening at 7:30 PM.

*The designated Deacon for December is Brent Fishbaugh. However, any Deacon may be approached for questions or concerns.

NOVEMBER SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Session met on Tuesday, November 28th in the Fellowship Hall at 7:00PM.

Up for Discussion

- Additional Handicap space in parking lot.
- Fifth quarter party will be December 1 and December 15.
- Leadership in Action was approved to use the Fellowship Hall all day on January 10.
- The Children's Christmas play will take place during Sunday Worship Service on December 10.
- A Women's Bible Study is under discussion.
- Communion will be the first Sunday in December, December 3rd.
- 2024 Budget
- The Mission team visited the Mindlings, a missionary couple, in Detroit.

Noteworthy

- There will be a very brief meeting after the service on December 17 to vote on officers.
- The Congregational meeting will be after Sunday Service on January 21st.
- There will not be a Session meeting in December.



Left-Herb Monroe's granddaughter, Elizabeth, poses with Jane Nice, author of *Mille and Me* during a book review at the Library in November. **Right**-Pastor Ian with the Gideon speaker, Dick Wahl, who shared how to spread the Good Word with the Sunday School class.





Our new historical wall –

This newly decorated wall is on the west side of the annex by the pastor's office. In the past year during closet cleaning and painting of the sanctuary and annex, these pictures were RE-discovered. The one on the left is from the year 1900 at the turn of the century in which all present on this first Sunday of that year placed their signature on paper which then hung in the church. With a desire to duplicate this event in 2000, a photo was taken along with signatures of all those present on the first Sunday of this current century, hanging on the right.

The middle document is of the Articles of Incorporation signed in 1891. Both this document and the older signature page were very faded and in need of some work.

They were all three taken to be framed and placed in museum quality glass in order to better preserve them. Next was naming the wall with banner and title "Two Centuries of Praising and Serving our Lord".

We should all be so proud of this historical showing of our many years of being so blessed!

Accept what is...Let go of what was...Have faith in what will be.



November 28th found Jill Straley, Rick and Becky Craft, Barb Searing and Jane Nice pulling out boxes, climbing ladders and decorating trees and window sills to make the Presbyterian Church look spectacular for the Christmas season. Come join us on Sunday and witness the sanctuary in all it's beauty.





Ladies do Lunch met at the Fiesta Habaneros in November.

Left to right– Jane Nice, Patty Radel, Barb Searing, Martha Punches, Sue Paulus, Sue Crossland and Phyllis Crossland.



Part of our church's ministry with Paulding County Drug Court is to provide gifts for the children of drug court participants each Christmas. This helps alleviate some of their financial stress, and it aids them in building bridges with their children and their families. It is truly a way to show them love from our church and they are so grateful.

Please see Jane Nice to get an angel if you would like to shop for a child this Christmas.

***Sunday, December 10**– deadline to return gifts to the church. Put all gifts for each child in a bag with the angel attached. Do not wrap gifts.

***Wednesday, December 13**- wrapping at the church starting at 10 am and ending at 4 pm. Everyone is welcome to help wrap, even if it is just for an hour. No need to bring anything.

***Friday, December 15**- Drug Court in Judge Beckman's courtroom at the courthouse at 9:30am. We give the participants their gifts at this session. If you have ever been curious about Drug Court, this is a great one to attend.





The ladies are gathering to see the play *Away in a Basement: The Church Basement Ladies*. There are tickets still available for the presentation on Sunday, December 17th, starting at 2PM at the Niswonger Performing Arts Center in Van Wert. The tickets are \$30 apiece and are on a first come-first served basis. Come join us !

Sign the sheet at the top of the stairs to the sanctuary, call the church office or contact Barb Searing.

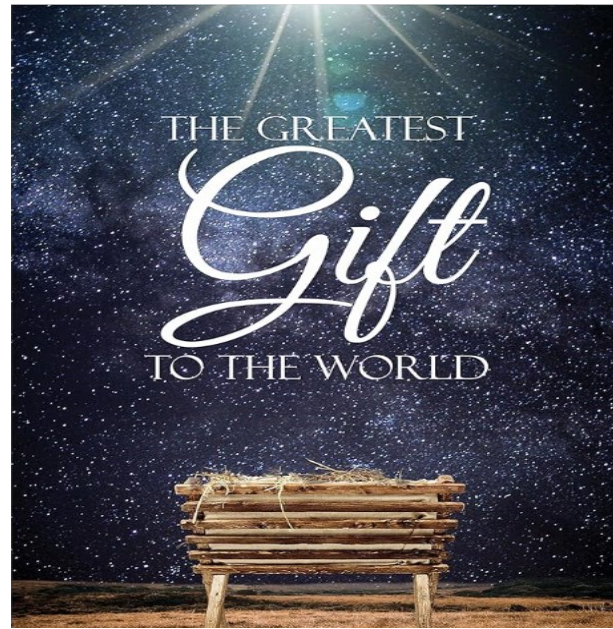
GATHER WITH US FOR OUR CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH AT 11:00 PM.

COME DELIGHT IN THE SANCTUARY IN ALL IT'S GLORY WHEN LIT BY CANDLELIGHT. ENJOY SCRIPTURE, BEAUTIFUL MUSIC AND REVEL IN THE GLORY OF THE BIRTH OF OUR KING.

Sunday School at 9:00

Worship Service 10:30

**First Presbyterian Church
Corner of Caroline & Cherry
Paulding, OH 45879**



firstpresbyterianpaulding.com

**In Essentials, Unity,
In Non-Essentials, Liberty,
In All Things, Charity.**

**Phone: 419-399-2438
Church website:
Secretary's e-mail: fpcpaulding@gmail.com
www.firstpresbyterianpaulding.com**

**PO Box 366
Corner of Caroline and Cherry Street
Paulding OH 45879**

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