

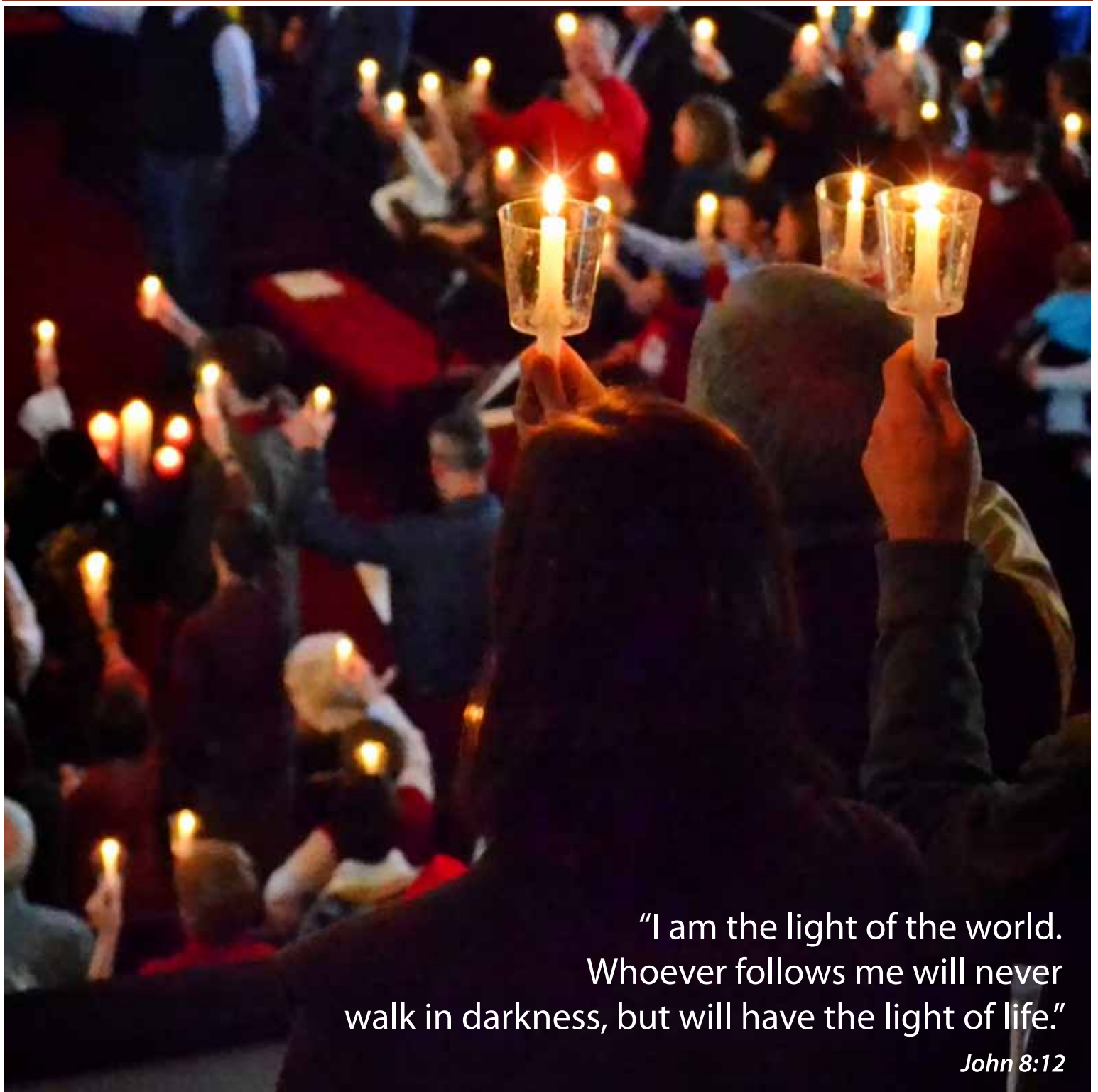
December 1, 2017



PROVIDENCE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Start Here



"I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never
walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

The Answer We're Waiting For



Lee Canipe

We will, no doubt, be hearing a great deal over the coming weeks about the need to keep Christ in Christmas, and so there's no need for me to belabor that point

here. More pressing, perhaps - and certainly easier to lose sight of in this season of tinsel and glitter - is the need to keep Easter in Christmas. Without the former, the latter might have ended up as just another failed experiment. But it didn't. The cross and empty tomb together broke the power that sin and death held over us, thus fulfilling the promise that Mary wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

Easter reveals how God chose to save us. Christmas, meanwhile, reveals who God chose to save us - and, in doing so, exposes the false claims of everything that cannot save us yet pretends to exercise that power. Simply put, in a world filled with false gods that are desperately trying to attract our attention, Christmas shows us what God truly looks like.

One of the voices I've increasingly come to count on in recent years for thoughtful analysis and insightful opinion belongs to David Brooks, who writes for the New York Times. A few weeks ago, he wrote a column about, ostensibly, the destructive power of partisan attachments. Brooks' real subject, though, was the seductive power that false gods - or, to use the biblical term, idols - exercise over our lives. The danger, he wrote, is that "people on the left and on the right who try and use politics to find their ultimate meaning are turning politics into an idol.

Idolatry is what happens when people give ultimate allegiance to something that should be serving only an intermediate purpose, whether it's money, technology, alcohol, success, or politics."

There's a reason why the first two commandments that God gave to His people directly address issues of idolatry: We are suckers for answers that seem simple and demand nothing from us - and that's exactly what idols seem to offer in abundance. Andy Crouch, executive editor of the journal, Christianity Today, puts it like this: "All idols begin by offering great things for a very small price. All idols then fail, more and more consistently, to deliver on their original promises, while racheting up their demands... until they demand everything and give nothing." It's a pretty grim, if accurate, assessment. Indeed, the apostle Paul begins his letter to the Romans by identifying the toxic combination of pride and idolatry as the defining characteristic of fallen human nature. He then, in chapter 7, asks the essential question that Christmas answers: "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24) In the very next verse, he provides the answer: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Christmas, in other words, is God's best, final response to our age-old habit of idolatry. When God decided that the time had come to reveal His way, He didn't announce a partisan political agenda or some half-baked radical manifesto: He sent us Jesus. When God decided that the time had come to reveal His truth, He didn't unveil a new philosophical movement or ideology: He sent us Jesus. When God decided that the time had come to reveal His life, He didn't offer gadgets to dazzle us, diets and exercise plans to flatter us, addictive substances

to help us escape, or anything else designed to distract us from the reality of our lives: He sent us Jesus.

God's way, truth, and life turned out to be a who instead of a what - and that's important, because I'm pretty confident that, given our track record, we would've found some way to twist what God might've given us into some sort of idol. But God instead gave us a baby, fully human and, at the same time, fully divine. We call this the mystery of the Incarnation, in which God somehow was made flesh and came to dwell among us, as a person we could see and touch and listen to and learn from. Because of Christmas, we no longer have to use our imaginations to wonder what God is like. We no longer have to search around for the next best thing to fill the holes in our hearts and give meaning and direction to our lives.

Instead, because of Christmas, we look to Jesus for all that - and, after all these years, his open invitation to us still stands: "Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Idols don't give those kinds of invitations. Idols don't make those kinds of offers. Saviors do - which is why, once again, just in time, Christmas comes to bring good tidings of comfort and joy to people like us who are more than ready for abundant, heaping, gracious measures of both. We will, eventually, get to Easter. For now, let's be grateful for what awaits us in Bethlehem.

May the peace of Christ be with you!

SHARE IN the Journey

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7



Beyond Commitment Sunday

To date, we have received 249 cards totalling \$1,545,559.32
Of these 247 cards, 45 are new pledges, which total over \$100,000.

We need your help in reaching our 2018 financial plan for missions and ministry. Please return your commitment card to the church office or email rlanders@providencebc.org today!

End of Year Giving

The church office closes at 3:00pm on Friday, December 29.

In compliance with the IRS, there are several ways to contribute for 2017 tax purposes:

- All contributions received during Sunday services on December 31.
- All contributions hand-delivered to the church office by midnight on December 31, 2017.
- All contributions received with a December 31, 2017 USPS post mark.
- All contributions received into our brokerage account by December 31, 2017.
- All contributions received electronically to our church bank account by December 31, 2017.



Any contribution received after December 31, 2017 will be treated as a 2018 gift.

Deacon on Call

Deacon on call phone number: 704.366.4030x147

- Nov 29 - Dec 5: Jane McCoy
- December 6 - 12: Matt Blackwell
- December 13 - 19: Bill Brown
- December 20 - 26: Vivian Carroll
- Dec 27 - Jan 2: Janie Creech



Minister on Call

- December 1 - 3: David Jordan (704.724.2766)
- December 8 - 10: Lee Canipe (704.975.0340)
- December 15 - 17: Richard Landers (704.608.3371)
- December 22 - 24: Randy Ballard (704.650.9449)
- December 29 - 31: David Jordan (704.724.2766)

November 26, 2017

Christian Stewardship

Revised Average Weekly Requirement \$43,976
The average weekly requirement is the annual budget of \$2,286,776 divided by 52 weeks.

Revised Revenue and Expenses

Projected 2017 \$ 2,286,776

Revenue

Through Sunday, 11/26 \$ 1,912,151

Expenses

Through Sunday, 11/26 \$ 1,902,667

Net Revenue to Expenses

Through Sunday, 11/26 \$ 9,484

Christmas Begins with Hope



David Jordan

Hope. Emily Dickinson beautifully captures the depth and breadth of this fascinating emotion. In her assessment, hope is hard and steady, as she says: “sweetest in the gale...” Storms are not the place for mere optimism or positive attitudes. This is a place for hope.

The challenges of hard times call us beyond positive thinking. Biblical hope moves with a depth of emotion that appraises the world with stark realism and in the face of difficult circumstances knows that the last word is not yet spoken. In the face of hostile empires, against the prevailing winds and as counterpoints to conventional wisdom, biblical hope can be as gentle as a lamb on Christmas Eve. It can also be as harsh as a pointed finger at an unjust king. One does not speak out against injustice if there is no hope.

So it is not a passive stance that simply wishes current circumstances would improve. Biblical hope rises with initiative and moves to offer alternatives to the present and new perspectives on current problems. It takes an active voice and positive role in shaping new realities, so that justice need not be a dream, nor that peace feel distant and unknowable.

The prophets saw in Israel a hope for humanity, God’s dream offered with fresh possibilities of unshackled blessings and widened community. Incarnated in Jesus, that hope of old breathed new life into a disillusioned past just as it now can embolden hearts in our confusing present.

*Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul,
And sings the tune--without the words, and never stops at all,*

*And sweetest in the gale is heard; and sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird that kept so many warm.*

*I’ve heard it in the chilliest land, and on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity, it asked a crumb of me.*

Emily Dickinson

Biblical hope, this grand word we claim in Advent’s first week, necessitates a response. Like its other three partners in the Advent progression, hope calls out from us not only what can be, but what should be. It summons love into the equation of sacred interaction; it invokes peace as the partner confronting all that is and all that might be; it stands with justice, entices joy, enhances vision, strengthens commitment, enlivens passion, broadens fortitude, and deepens courage.

That’s why Christmas begins with hope. It offers change to circumstances otherwise mired in complexity, derailed by ignorance, or stymied by anger. This biblical hope, this hope that Jesus brings through word, deed and transformation, allows the insufficiencies of my life and your life to be joined in a broadened force of glad assurance: we are not alone; we are not without. For there is hope. And with Dickinson, we can say that hope:

*perches in the soul,
And sings the tune--without the words,
And never stops at all ...*

May it be so for you, a Christmas season beginning and especially filled with hope. Gratefully,

Prayer for the Month:

Surprise me with hope this month, O God.

Help me to see beyond whatever circumstances confront me.

Encourage me with a renewed sense of possibility.

Regardless of the data and in spite of the obstacles, let my hope be resilient and strong. Amen.

Oh Come, All Ye Faithful

Behold the Lamb of God

On December 10, during the 8:30 service, the band and vocalists will present “Behold the Lamb of God,” an epic journey from Old Testament segments through to the coming of the Messiah. Unlike most retellings of the Christmas story, this one does not



begin with Mary and Joseph but with an unfolding of God’s story throughout the Bible. The songs proclaim the powerful story of His birth, death, and resurrection, reminding us of the true meaning of the season.



Timothy Hill

“Behold the Lamb of God” is an entertaining, charming and uplifting telling of a true tale which is as relevant today as it was then. This unique musical leaves listeners pondering the theological implications of the birth of Christ and the events and things in the Old Testament that foreshadowed it. It makes listeners think about Christmas in a way that few do, as more than just the birth of Christ, but also the fulfillment of years of promises.

Lessons and Carols

On December 17, during the 11:00am service, the Sanctuary Choir will present a traditional service of Lessons and Carols. The service traces its roots to a wooden shed serving as the cathedral in Truro, England in 1880. The story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus is told in nine short Bible readings from Genesis, the prophetic books and the Gospels, interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns and choral music. The main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God, seen through the windows and the words of the Bible. Oh come all ye faithful, and let us “go in heart and mind” to follow where the story leads.



Advent Planning

Hangings of the Green Service

Sunday, December 3 at 6:00pm
Sanctuary



“Behold the Lamb of God”

Sunday, December 10 at 8:30am
Sanctuary

Preschool Angel Breakfast

Sunday, December 10 at 9:30am
Crouch Fellowship Hall



Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 17 at 11:00am
Sanctuary

Carols on the Lawn

Sunday, December 17 at 5:00pm



Holiday Worship

Worship

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24
(No Sunday School)



10:00am Children, Candles and Carols

5:00pm Candlelight, Communion and Carols

11:30pm Candlelight and Communion

Worship

New Year’s Eve

Sunday, December 31
(No Breakfast or
Sunday School)

10:00am Combined Worship



For more information regarding the Music Ministry contact Caitie Jackson at 704.366.4030x121 or cjackson@providencebc.org.

Baby's First Christmas

Sunday, December 3

9:45 am

Activity Center Parlor

Christmas is always special, but even more so for families with new little ones.



Celebrate together with other Providence families!

Preschool Angel Breakfast

Sunday, December 10

9:30am

Crouch Fellowship Hall

This is one of our favorite events! Join us as our preschool choirs show their stuff! Enjoy a fantastic family breakfast and hear the Christmas story from a very special guest!



Children's Christmas Parties

Christmas is SNOW much fun!

Wednesday, December 13

6:00pm - 7:15pm

Children's Hallways

This is our time to have some fun! Our graded parties will feature food, fun and fellowship.

Make sure to join us!



Christmas Eve Family Worship

Children, Candles and Carols

Sunday, December 24

10:00 am

Sanctuary



Weekday Education Ministry Program

Last year it was "Christmas in our Jammies!"
What will they come up with this year?

Come enjoy our fours and TK children singing their hearts out!

Tuesday, December 12

11:30am

Sanctuary

All are warmly invited!



For more information about the Children's Ministry, contact Kristen Hendrix at 704.366.4030x125 or khendrix@providencebc.org.

Break into Song

“Break into song together, you ruins of Jerusalem! The Lord has comforted his people and has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm in view of all the nations; all the ends of the earth have seen our God’s victory.” Isaiah 52:9-10

One of my favorite Christmas movies is “Elf” with Will Ferrell. One of my favorite scenes from that movie is when Buddy (the elf) breaks into song in the middle of the department store to prove to Jovy that there’s no difference between singing alone and singing in public. It’s hilarious! If you’re anything like me, breaking into song isn’t totally out of the norm. When I’m happy, I sing! Not all of you share this trait with me (or Buddy the Elf) but the prophet Isaiah is telling the people of Jerusalem to do just this — “Break into song together ...”! This prophet was predicting the goodness of God for the people of Jerusalem and encouraging them to celebrate through song. During Advent and at Christmas, we celebrate the way God “comforted and redeemed” us through Jesus, and we have songs and hymns that we sing this time of year to celebrate. Take time this Christmas season to “break into song together” and celebrate who God was, is, and will be!



Dane Jackson

3Devotional Advent Boxes

Have you picked up your 3Devotional Advent box yet? What is it, you ask? It is a new way to journey through the season of Advent in preparation for the birth



of Jesus. Included in each box are hands-on devotions, which help you reflect on the hope, peace, love, and joy of the Season. Each day you will be invited to do some type of artistic prayer, spending

time opening your heart to God, reflecting on the daily scripture, and listening for God’s voice in your life. You will be invited to read, think, pray, act, and reflect, individually or as a family.

Christmas Gift-Making Party

Wednesday, December 20th

5:30pm - 8:00pm

Chapman Youth Room

\$10/student



(includes dinner and 1 gift, each additional gift is \$5)

Join us for a night of gift making, snacks, and Christmas movies! Join us if you need a last minute gift for a parent, grandparent, sibling, or friend, (or just want to make something homemade and original!)

Sign up in the Youth Chapman Room or on the website!

Deadline to sign up is December 17th.

Christmas Parties

Look for important “instructions” on the student web page!

MS - Hanson Home

Wednesday, December 6

5:30pm - 7:30pm

HS - Mulley Home

Sunday, December 10

5:30pm - 7:30pm



Movie Day

Thursday, December 21st

11:30am



Regal Cinemas Phillips Place

“Star Wars: The Last Jedi”

Tickets are BYO so get them in advance and meet us at the theatre!

Summer Camp

Summer 2018

June 24 - 29

SAVE THE DATE!

Don’t be fooled! It’s really NOT that far away.

For students
6th - 12th grades.

PASSPORTmissions.

For more information about the Student Ministry, contact George Mulley at 704.366.4030x116 or gmulley@providencebc.org.

Sundays in December

Enjoy a hot Sunday breakfast!

\$5 per person
7:30am - 9:30am

December 3

8:30am and 11:00am
Lee Canipe
1 Corinthians 1:3-9



6:00pm
Hanging of the Green

December 10

8:30am "Behold the Lamb of God"
11:00am Lee Canipe
Mark 1:1-8

December 17

8:30am Lee Canipe
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
11:00am Lessons and Carols

5:00pm
Carols on the Lawn



Christmas Eve

December 24

(No breakfast or Sunday School)
10:00am Children, Candles and Carols
5:00pm Candlelight, Communion and Carols
11:30pm Candlelight and Communion



New Year's Eve

December 31

(No breakfast or Sunday School)
10:00am Combined Worship
Kate Perry Preaching
Galatians 4:4-7

Wednesday Night Meals

Enjoy this family-friendly buffet every
Wednesday from 5:00pm - 6:00pm
in the Crouch Fellowship Hall.

December 6

Beef Lasagna
Vegetable Lasagna
Grilled Veggies
Garlic Bread
Antipasto Salad
Peanut Butter Pie

December 13

Baked Ham
Sweet Potatoes
Green Beans
Yeast Rolls
Red Velvet Cake

(Salad and Pizza Bar also available.)

No Fellowship Meal December 20 or 27.

**PRICES: Adults and Teens \$8.00,
Seniors \$7.00, Children \$5.00,
Max Family \$25.00**

Wednesday Night Studies

December 6

Join us in the Sanctuary for a time
of Advent reflection.

December 13

A Gospel Soul-Filled Christmas

Prepare for Christmas with this energetic and
exciting musical presentation.

December 20 and 27

No Wednesday Night Activities

Young Professionals

It's ON! Join us for Pub Theology

Monday, December 11

at 6:45pm

@ LeRoy Fox



Do not miss this time of debate and fellowship. A dynamic discussion always develops.

Speakers may vary. The friends do not!

Text Randy Ballard for more info at 704.650.9449.

PrimeTimers

Mark your calendar for...

Thursday, December 7

12:00pm

\$7.00 per person

Mr. Jeff Perks provides our entertainment this month. You won't want to miss his special touch on the piano!



RSVP Deadline:

Sunday, December 3.

Call 704.366.4030x211 to make your reservation.

A Yo-Yo Christmas

Calling all mid-20-somethings:

First,

Join us for Sunday School
Randolph Hall Room 2215

Second,

We've got fun things planned.

Watch for Christmas social event info!

Text Randy Ballard for more info at 704.650.9449.

College Students

It's time to serve and play!

Monday, December 18

We're working up a plan for some good ol' fashioned mission work and fellowship.

Are you up for it?

Then join us for the College Christmas party.

Text Randy Ballard for more info at 704.650.9449.



WMU Meeting

Tuesday, December 5

10:30am

at the home of Billie Jean Simpson
8324 County Downs Lane

Hear a report from the recent adult mission trip to
Metro Baptist, NYC.

Lunch will be provided.

For more information
contact Anne Tunstall at
704.567.9593.



Mission Collection

Brighten up
Christmas
morning
for a needy child
by simply buying a
new toy!



The WMU is collecting "Toys for Tots" for
local children in our community.

This is our December
mission collection project.

Bring your items to the hallway leading to the
Crouch Fellowship Hall by December 17.
Thank you for being a blessing to our children!



The December
missions
emphasis is
Global Missions.

Adult Mission Trip

March 10 - 16, 2018

Quebec, Canada

Led by Lee Canipe
Room for 8 travelers.

Informational meeting
in January.

Contact Lee Canipe.
lcanipe@providencebc.org



College Mission Trip

May 16 - 20, 2018

Metro Baptist Church
New York City

Open to all college students.
Plug in with your church family!

\$200pp (plus airfare)

More info soon.
Contact Randy Ballard.
rballard@providencebc.org



David and Mills Smith joined Providence on November 19. They are joining by statement of Christian faith and previous baptism. Their children are Ashley (7) and Parker (7).



Andrew and Emma Sueling joined Providence on November 19. They are transferring their memberships from other churches. Their daughter, Annalyn Rae, is one year old.



Matt and Erin Young joined Providence on November 19. They are transferring their memberships from Bayshore Baptist in Tampa, Fl. Their children are Wyatt (5) and Ryleigh (2).



Bryant and Susan Waldkirch joined Providence on October 29. They are transferring their membership from Carmel Baptist Church.

Welcome to Our Newest

- Kayleigh Mary Nussman was born on November 15. She is the daughter of Chad and Ashleigh Nussman and the granddaughter of Tommy and Kay Nussman.

In Sympathy

- Leslie Pitts in the death of her grandfather, Woodrow Thomas Pitts, Sr. on November 1. He was also the great grandfather of Ava, Coleman, Audrey and Claire Hunt.
- Henry Helms in the death of his wife, Isabelle J. Helms on November 8.
- Martha Iley in the death of her sister, Joy Barbee on November 16.
- Louise Warren in the death of her grandson, Reynolds Myrick on November 18.

Upcoming Church Closings

Christmas

Monday, December 25
Tuesday, December 26

New Years

Monday, January 1
Tuesday, January 2



Prayer Vigil

Saturday, December 2

8:00am - 12:00pm

Gordon Weekley Chapel

Spend some quiet moments with God.
The deacons will offer a meditation guide.

Or just sit quietly
and pray.





Postmaster, Send
Address Corrections to:
CONNECTIONS
4921 Randolph Road
Charlotte, NC 28211-4002

•
CONNECTIONS
USPS 979-940
Published monthly
plus two special editions
in April and October.

•
Providence Baptist
Church
4921 Randolph Road
Charlotte, NC 28211-4002
www.providencebc.org
704.366.2784

Periodicals
Postage
PAID
Charlotte, NC
USPS 979-940



Hanging of the Green

*Sunday, December 3 at 6:00pm
Sanctuary*



Angel Breakfast

*Sunday, December 10 at 9:30am
Crouch Fellowship Hall*



Lessons and Carols

*Sunday, December 17 at 11:00am
Sanctuary*



Christmas Eve Worship

*10:00am Children, Candles and Carols
5:00pm Candlelight, Communion and Carols
11:30pm Candlelight and Communion*

Next Connections is January 1, 2018.

Deadline for submitting articles,
photos, or announcements is
Noon, Friday, December 15th.
Articles should be 350 words or less.
Email your submissions to:
ssneed@providencebc.org.

Thank you!



"LIKE US" on FACEBOOK!
Providence Baptist Church -
Charlotte, NC



"FOLLOW US" ON TWITTER
[@pbccommunity](https://twitter.com/pbcccommunity)



Check Out Our Website!
www.providencebc.org

Mailing Address:
4921 Randolph Road
Charlotte, NC 28211-4002

Telephone contact: Media Ministry 704.366.4030 x127
Email contact: Connections@providencebc.org