



May I be one of the first to wish you all a very Merry Christmas! Now I know what some of you are thinking ... already! In fact, as I write this (it happens to be November 17), I have already heard and seen signs of the season! It seems people are getting more excited and more expectant all the time. Maybe that is because we crave what Christmas brings. For some, it is the classic carols or holiday tunes on the radio. For others they have already busted open the boxes stuffed with decorations. Yes, it might be the sights and sounds we long for again.

But to quote Dr. Seuss at the end of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*: “Maybe, just maybe, Christmas means a little bit more.” It certainly does. It means a whole lot more! There is a reason why the melodies move the soul and the lights make things brighter not just on the outside. There is a deeper meaning – a greater marvel to be captivated by. We are eager because we are awaiting ... We are awaiting the One. He has been called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace! He is Emmanuel (God with us)! He is our Messiah, our Monarch. His name is *Jesus!*

In this season of Advent (“Coming”), we remember and rejoice over the glorious arrival of the newborn King – God who took on flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace, truth and love. The marvel, the miracle, the majesty ... of the Messiah laid in a manger. He emptied Himself and made Himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant, and became obedient to death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2). He was born to die. The suffering servant. This is a season to remember Who came, and *why* He came – what He accomplished for our sakes!

But this season is not only for looking back, but for looking forward ... forward to the day of our Lord’s second advent. For He *is* coming! And He is coming in glory! He is coming as our Champion – as our conquering King! He has already redeemed us. And soon, He will resurrect us! The Lamb of God! The Lion of Judah. Our King has come to us. And He is coming again! Are you eager! As we enter Advent – as we approach Christmas – let us keep coming back to what this time is truly about. Jesus.

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Chris



Music Department News

DECEMBER 201

The Christmas season is here and with that comes special music from the music department. This year the choir will be presenting the cantata, *Light Looked Down* by Marty Parks, on Sunday morning, December 18th. Besides the adult choir we will have several of our Wednesday Night children join us on two songs. The cantata will be accompanied by pianist, Mary Beth Norman, as well as a 10 piece instrumental ensemble.

The cantata was premiered this summer at the Choral Music Conference in Canton, OH and several of us were able to experience this event. Composer Marty Parks was present which made it a very special occasion. In the production notes of the cantata Marty says that the authoritative sovereignty of Jesus is the reason for our message of hope. He is the compelling drive behind our proclamation of peace and the reason we continue to recall this indescribable love. Our world today is much like the world into which Jesus entered – full of darkness, war and hatred. We know, however, that there’s only One who could remedy our human condition and only One did. Light came to shine in our darkness. Peace came to give rest to our warring. Love came to give life. Praise God for His son, our Savior, Jesus!

I hope you will be able to join us for this special morning of sharing the message of Christmas through our music presentation. May you be blessed throughout the holiday season and celebrate the Prince of Peace.

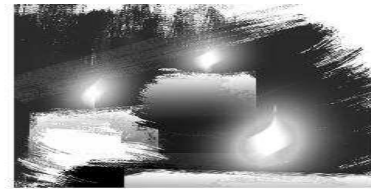
Christmas Joy to All!

Pam

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” John 1:14



The Christmas Cantata will be performed December 18th, with selections at the 8:45am service, and in its entirety at the 11:00am service.



Candlelight Service

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be 7:00pm with prelude selections beginning at 6:45pm.



The deadline for the January newsletter will be at 9:00 am Wednesday Dec. 21st



Kitchen Crew for December Wednesday Nights:

- Dec. 7th Pam Johnson & Hannah Bowman
- Dec. 14th Joyce Ryan & Bob Wilson

Thank You




To everyone who participated in the Fall Work Party your hard work was greatly appreciated.

To everyone for their help in making our Thanksgiving dinner and program so enjoyable. We are certainly blessed!



To everyone who came out and helped with the Advent decorating of the Church.

We will be sponsoring approximately 25 plus families this year. Check your bulletin insert for sign-up sheets if you would like to sponsor a needy family this Christmas.



A container has been placed in the Narthex for donations. We are asking for toothpaste/toothbrushes, paper towels, bathroom tissue, shampoo, and bar soap for the Christmas baskets. Also, monetary donations are welcome.

Christmas Basket Assembly – Friday, December 16th. Please meet in the gym at **6:30pm** to help assemble the boxes.


Christmas Basket Pick-Up-Saturday, December 17th, from **9:00am-Noon**.

If you would like to help with this project, fill out the Christmas Basket insert in the bulletins.

Betty & Bob Wilson have headed the Christmas Basket ministry for many years, and we are thankful for their faithful service. This year Betty & Bob are taking a well deserved break and Steve & Linda Wilson will be heading the committee.

WOMEN'S NEWS

Circle II will be meeting Dec. 13th, 12:30pm at

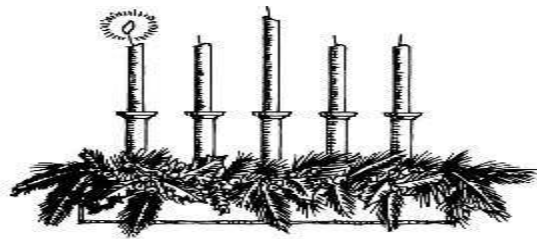


Circle III will not be meeting In Dec. Watch your bulletins in case there is a change.



Dates to Remember

Dec. 4th	6:00pm	Session
Dec. 11th	4:00pm	Pre School Christmas Program
Dec. 14th	5:30pm	Christmas Dinner
	6:00pm	Crafts & Games
Dec. 16th	6:30pm	Christmas Basket Assembly
Dec. 17th	9:00am-Noon	Christmas Basket Pick Up
Dec. 18th	11:00am	Cantata
Dec. 21st	9:00am	Newsletter Deadline
Dec. 24th	6:45pm	Prelude for Christmas Eve Service
	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Service
Dec. 25th	10:00am	Combined Worship Service
Dec. 26th		Office Will Be Closed
Jan. 2nd		Office Will Be Closed



First Sunday OF ADVENT

ADVENT BEGAN SUNDAY, NOV. 28TH!

Advent is that special season during the year when we look forward to celebrating the birthday of Jesus Christ. The word, ADVENT, means "coming". The Christian season of Advent is celebrated the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. During this period, it is important to remember the true meaning of Christmas. Advent is a time for remembering the prophecy and promise that a savior would be sent from God. Light is often the word used to describe Jesus' coming—He is the light of the world. Each of the four Sundays is marked by the lighting of candles. The fifth candle, a white "Christ candle", is placed in the center to be lit on Christmas Eve.



Riverlawn's New Website

We have been in the process of revamping our website and are happy to announce that it is up and running. The address is the same (www.riverlawnchurch.org) but some changes and additions have been made. There are several new features and more will be added during the next couple of months. Plans are for a 'members' only page which will contain information specifically related to the life of our church family. Hope you'll take the time to check out the new site. If you have ideas or questions please contact Pam Johnson (722-2772) or Pastor Chris (727-8872).



**A Wonderful life is yours when you know the
Christ of Christmas**



*CHRISTMAS CARDS
FOR THOSE WHO
SERVE*

Send a Christmas card to a soldier!

(You may specify branch of service)
**WTB 6900 GEORGIA AVENUE
WASHINGTON, DC 20307**

Put a stamp on the envelope and mail. If needed, a stamp will be provided for your card.

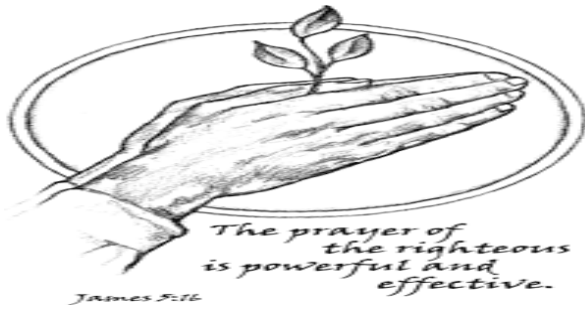


GIFTS FOR CROSSROADS SHELTER

For several years we have provided Christmas gifts for the men at Crossroads Shelter of Union Mission. If you are willing to provide gifts for a needy man at the shelter please contact Ernie Powell at 727-6855. He will give you sizes and the name of a man as we get closer to Christmas.

Thanks to Ernie Powell for heading this project up.

Church Office: (304) 727-8872
RIVERLAWN'S E-MAIL ADDRESSES:
rpc.pastor@suddenlink.net
4 rpc.office@suddenlink.net
RIVERLAWN'S WEBSITE PAGE:
www.riverlawnchurch.org



Leota Wiblin; Bill & Janet Young; Jane McKinley; Jane Lothes' aunt Edye & her sister Kathy Barnes; Jan Owens; Sally Murray; Doc Ranson; also remember those serving in the military.

“Christmas is not just a season,
 Christmas is not just a day,
 Christmas is more than a reason
 For Parties, presents, and play.
 Christmas is truly the essence
 Of Joy that the Savior brings;
 Christmas is surely the presence
 Of Jesus, the King of Kings!”



Don't Forget Jesus

A Christmas Prayer

Christmas is a special time
 To reflect on Jesus Christ
 The wonder of His lowly birth
 Brings meaning to our lives

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

There really is no other reason
 We celebrate this day
 The birth of God's precious son
 And the life He willingly gave

Close the door of hate and open the door of love. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

But so much seems to distract us
 In the busy-ness of our lives
 We lose our focus in all the happenings
 Not knowing, we leave out Christ

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven for Jesus sake. Amen.

We lose sight of the true meaning
 As we endlessly rush about
 Trying to find that perfect gift
 Seems to cloud our Saviour out



We need to stop and reflect awhile
 Remembering our precious Lord
 His birth, His life and sacrifice
 And all that He stands for

For though the world may celebrate
 It seems though for other reasons
 Let's keep in mind that Jesus Christ
 Is the true meaning of the season

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



2nd Ruth Watts
 4th Pam Smith
 8th Pete Lukowski
 11th David Johnson
 14th Linda Stephens
 15th Caroline Dodrill
 17th Chris Kilbert
 Rachel Cottrill
 22nd Fred Giersch
 26th Debbie Roberts
 28th Sherry Claar
 Kevin Sims
 29th Linda Means



TODDLER NURSERY

Dec. 4th Vickie Barrie
 Dec. 11th Gayle Michael
 Dec. 18th Sherry Claar
 Dec. 25th Becky Sutphin



JUNIOR CHURCH

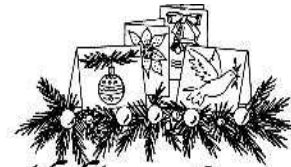
Dec. 4th Beckie Croghan
 Dec. 11th Debbie Roberts
 Dec. 18th Nikole Kilbert
 Dec. 25th Susan Bryan



Dec. 4th Randy Dodrill
 Dec. 11th Pat Croghan
 Dec. 18th Barb Recknagel
 Dec. 25th Steve Wilson



Dec. 4th Emma Rose Cavender 727-4577
 Randy Dodrill 722-3134
 Dec. 11th Nancy Young 722-2463
 Pat Croghan 552-8302
 Dec. 18th Betty McAdam 727-8362
 Barb Recknagel 727-0418
 Dec. 25th Caroline Dodrill 727-3134
 Steve Wilson 722-4475



Building Security

Dec. 4th Tom Suchy
 Dec. 11th Ron Spradling
 Dec. 18th Bob Sutphin
 Dec. 25th Howard Paxton



December Mary Reppert
 January Nancy Young