Pleasant News from the Grove

DECEMBER 2026



Pastor's Message

It does not seem that long ago when we were dealing with the sweltering heat and humidity, VBS, sending off our Belize Missions team and more, only to find ourselves now in the midst of the holiday season preparing for the yuletide, our church Christmas play, Christmas Candlelight communion and for another new year. Seems as if the prophesies of Daniel are coming to pass where he said in Daniel 12:4: "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; **many shall run to and from**, and knowledge shall increase." I highlighted "to and from" because the pace of society is really running fast. From one deadline to the next we run here, run there which now has finally landed us in December 2026.

Recently while walking through the sanctuary, I prayed, thanked God for His many blessings upon our church. I also asked Him to remind us that we never get so busy we totally forget about Him and His blessings upon us.

As we head into 2027, I challenge us all, in every department of our church, that we take time in every event we have, from Trunk or Treat, the Fair booth, the Spring Auction, all of our meetings here at church, be covered in prayer. This is our invitation to our Lord to walk among us in all these events. Letting Him know that our labor is not for ourselves, not for our church, but for He, Himself.

May 2027 be known as **"The Year of Gratefulness"** and may we have a grateful heart for all the things He has blessed us with here at PGC. May we pray that our hearts will all be in harmony one with another, that we fulfill Ephesians 4:31-32: "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

Merry Christmas!!!
Pastor Barry

Upcoming Events

(Every Week)
Sunday School – 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship - 11:00 AM
"Pleasant News" TV Program – 2:30 PM

"Pleasant News" TV Program – Mondays – 10:00 PM

Bible Study/Youth Meetings - Wednesdays 7:00 PM
December 3rd @ 7:00 PM-Women's Auxiliary Christmas Meeting
December 9th @ 7:00 PM-"The Christmas Story" presented by David and Kathy Sawyer (in the Fellowship Hall)
December 13th @ 6:00 PM – Youth Christmas Play
December 14th @ 6:00 PM – Caroling
December 20th @ 6:00 PM – Christmas Candlelight Service

Ministry Highlights

We have choir practice every Wednesday night at 7:45 PM immediately following our Bible Study or Community Groups. We generally practice until about 8:30 and anyone who loves to sing is welcome to participate in the choir. There are no tryouts, just show up for practice and you automatically become part of the choir. Come join us!



Prayer & Care

Our Pastor, Associate Pastor and families, Ray & Civil Glover Morris Carter, Chase Parsons and Gracie Horne, Margaret Newcomb, Joyce Baker, Shelby Skelton, Lisa Johnson, Sandy Facello, Grace Sarvis, Alvin Keener, Joyce Adams, Joyce Owens, Lida Fultz, Joyce Cole, Steve Meisenhelder, Geraldine Peele, Debbie Lewis, Tiffany McCormick, Jordan Corbett, The Nation of Israel, Vhonda Fultz, Deana Garrou, Lela Kennedy, Brooke Stone, Maddie Langston, Patsy Bryant, Jenny Allen, Evelyn Ezzell, Olivia Lancaster, Glenda Martini, Laura Bradshaw, Bonnie Webb, Pete & Wanda Hodges, Jim Kimbrough, Pamela Baltzegar, Regina Sasser, Derek Harts, Callie Pinckney, Whitney McFatter, Samantha Futrelle Lee, Anthony Kumor, Cliff & Connie Foreman, Patty Viault, Diane Hinnant, Lillian Vinson, Brenda Williamson

God's Servants this month:

Toddler Nursery(18 mos. – 3 years):

December 6th	Paige Renfrow & Trudi Rast
December 13th	Nicole Bridgers & Heather Casey
December 20th	Donna Phillips & Kyleigh Correll
December 26th	Ashley & Peyton Grantham

Children's Church (4-5 years):

December 6th	Wanda Smith
December 13th	Emily Coggins
December 20th	Jessica Cole
December 27th	Kaitlyn Lewis

K-2 Youth Church (K-2nd grade)

December 6th	Krysta and Grayson Rupert
December 13th	Thomas and Kathy Parnell
December 20th	Renee Person
December 27th	Youth Sunday

Youth Church (3rd-5th Grade)

December 6th	Ashlea Phillips
December 13th	Ashley Phillips
December 20th	Gordon McGinnis
December 27th	Youth Sunday

Acolytes:

December 6th	Walker Pittman
December 13th	Nora Grantham
December 20th	Annabelle Coggins
December 27th	Mackenzie Edwards

Counters:

December 6th	Morris and Charlene Pate
December 13th	Todd Wright and Tony Baker
December 20th	Fred Rouse and Dwight Phillips
December 27th	James Allen and Kathryne Parnell

Greeters:

December 6th	Geraldine Peele
December 13th	Wanda Jones
December 20th	Geraldine Peele
December 27th	Kathryne Parnell

Prayer Partners:

December 6th	Terry and Heidi Washam
December 13th	Tom and Deana Garrou
December 20th	Janie Wilson and Abby Fultz
December 27th	Phyllis Bass and Debbie Hare

Deacon of the Week

December 6th	Taylor Grantham: 919-750-2246
December 13th	Tony Baker: 919-580-8404
December 20th	Morris Pate: 919-920-4531
December 27th	Daniel Herring: 919-738-4210

This is such a touching service and a beautiful way to start the celebration of the birth of our Saviour!



Why We Light Candles at Christmas

When the lights dim and the first candle is lit, a familiar Christmas truth becomes something we can see. As the flame passes from one person to the next, the room grows brighter. It's a simple way to remember what we celebrate at Christmas: Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, was born among us.

Light has long been part of how Christians tell the Christmas story. At Christmas night worship, churches have read Isaiah's words, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:2). In Luke's Gospel, the glory of the Lord shines around the shepherds as an angel announces Jesus' birth. And John's Gospel gives us words that are especially fitting when we're holding a candle in a darkened sanctuary: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5).

One early example of giving candles to worshipers comes from the Moravian Church. At a children's Christmas service in Marienborn, Germany, in 1747, Johannes von Watteville gave the children small lighted candles tied with red ribbon. The flame represented Jesus as the Light of the World, and the ribbon pointed to the blood Christ shed for us. By 1752, Moravians in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, were sharing candles at their own children's Christmas Eve service. In time, adults received candles too.

That early custom helps explain why candlelight still feels so much a part of Christmas worship. A child can cup a hand around a tiny flame and see what generations of Christians have celebrated. And as we pass the light to the person beside us, we have a quiet reminder to share the hope Christ brings with the people around us.

From Saint Nicholas to Santa Claus

On Christmas Eve, children hang stockings, leave cookies by the fireplace, and wonder what they'll find in the morning. Those familiar traditions grew out of a much older story about a Christian bishop remembered for his generosity.

Saint Nicholas lived in the fourth century and served as bishop of Myra, in what is now Turkey. One of the best-known stories about him tells how he secretly gave money to a family in need. Over the centuries, people in parts of Europe honored his memory with gifts on or around his feast day, December 6. The Dutch called him *Sinterklaas*, a name that eventually became *Santa Claus* in English.

In America, poems and pictures helped make Santa a Christmas Eve visitor. The poem *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, first published in 1823 and better known as *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, pictured him arriving in a sleigh pulled by reindeer and filling stockings while the household slept. Later in the nineteenth century, illustrator Thomas Nast's drawings helped shape the jolly, bearded Santa we recognize today.

Today, families enjoy Santa in all sorts of ways. Children write him letters, wave to him in Christmas parades, or set out cookies and milk before bed. A Secret Santa exchange carries a little of the old story into the present. Someone gets to enjoy a gift, and the giver has the pleasure of doing something kind in secret.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the story of Saint Nicholas offers a simple way to put our faith into practice. We can leave a meal on a neighbor's doorstep, choose a gift for a child we may never meet, or quietly help a family through a difficult season. The joy Nicholas found in giving is a Christmas tradition we can all share.

The Christmas Goat Story

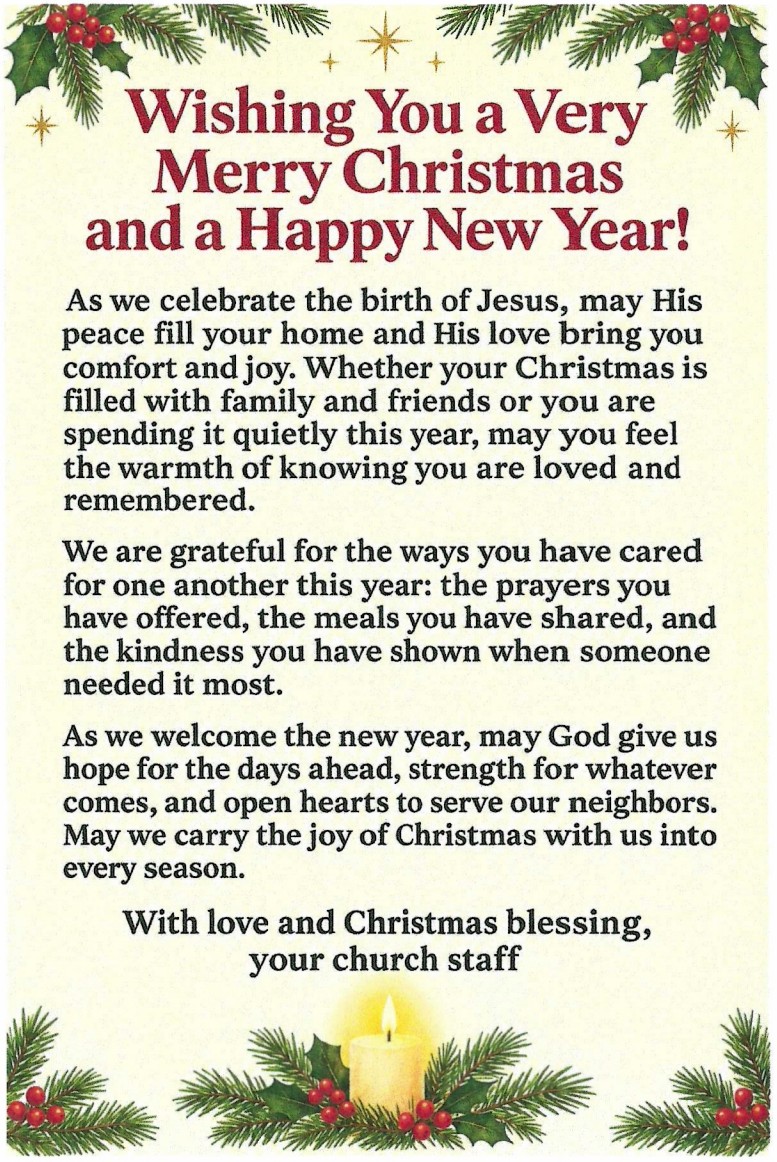
I was having breakfast with Dad at K&W Cafeteria this past Saturday morning. In the conversation, I asked him what he and his brother and sisters used to get for Christmas. He said they got fruit and candy and that was a big thing. I asked him if they got any toys and he said no, but went on to say that one Christmas he and Ralph got a goat. I asked if the goat was actually a farm related animal. He said, no, it was just a pet. He added that he and Ralph built a cart for the goat to pull them around.

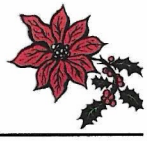
Fast forward to the next spring and one particular day all the family was out in the field setting out tobacco. For you city people, I need to stop and explain first, that back in the day, on the farm, tobacco ranked just under God and Family in importance, as it produced a lot of income per acre and was the main cash crop that got them from one year to the next. Also, in setting out tobacco, they had pulled the small tobacco plants out of the plant bed and were transplanting them to the rows in the field, to grow for market.....Now, back to the story.

They were placing each plant in the row, packing the dirt around them and moving on down the row to set out the next plant, and so on. All of a sudden, Dad's Mother came across the field and asked them what kind of tobacco crop they expected to have that year. All of their responses were that they were all pretty hopeful it would be a good crop year. She then said, "well you are not going to have much of a crop the way you are going, because the goat is coming along behind you and pulling up the plants and eating them."

Well, you know that Dad doesn't talk real fast and so I quickly asked "what happened?" He said "that night for supper we had GOAT."

(This was written by Bobby S McKoy, CRB, GRI. I grew up with Bobby, we graduated from High School together and went to church together at Sunset Park Baptist Church in Wilmington, NC. He still lives in Wilmington and is a real estate broker. He sent this to Pett and Jay Hare 13 years ago who in turn gave it to me and I try to run this very funny story every once in a while in our December newsletter. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.)





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 1st	Tony Coggins
December 6th	Mindy Zietlow
December 7th	Ronnie Spivey
December 10th	Kyleigh Correll
December 13th	Jayden Keasling
December 14th	Joyce Adams
December 18th	Patsy Bryant
December 19th	Tracy Pittman
	Wanda Hodges
December 24th	Pett Hare
	Kathryne Parnell
December 26th	Dee Sasser
December 27th	Daniel Herring
	Austin McGinnis
December 28th	Jerry Kirby
	Michelle Hamm
December 30th	Kristen Sauls Renfrow
	James Fleming



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

December 10th	Shelton and Grace Sarvis
December 14th	Willie and Renee Person
December 17th	Woody and Sandra Pliescott
December 19th	Seth and Kesley Fleming Mitchell

DECEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 **7:00 PM Bible Study** **Youth Meetings/Play Practice** **7:45 PM-Choir Practice**	3 **7:00 PM-Woman's Auxiliary Meeting**	4	5
6 **10:00 AM**-Sun. School **11:00 AM**-Morn. Serv. **2:30 PM-**"Pleasant News TV Program	7 **10:00 PM**-"Pleasant News" TV Program	8 **7:00 PM – Deacons Mtg.**	9 **7:00 PM "The Christmas Story" w/ David & Kathy Sawyer** **Youth Meetings/Play Practice** **7:45 PM-Choir Practice**	10	11	12
13 **10:00 AM**-Sun. School **11:00 AM**-Morn.Serv. **2:30 PM-**"Pleasant News TV Program **6:00 PM-Youth Christmas Program**	14 **6:00 – Caroling** **10:00 PM**-"Pleasant News" TV Program	15	16 **7:00 PM-Bible Study** **Youth Meetings** **7:45 PM-Choir Practice**	17	18	19
20 **10:00 AM**-Sun. School **11:00 AM**-Morn. Serv **2:30 PM-**"Pleasant News TV Program **6:00 PM-Christmas Candlelight Service**	21 **10:00 PM-"Pleasant News" TV Program**	22	23 **7:00 PM-Bible Study** **Youth Meetings** **7:45 PM-Choir Practice**	24 	25  **CHRISTMAS DAY**	26
27 **10:00 AM**-Sun. School **11:00 AM**-Morn. Serv. **2:30 PM-**"Pleasant News TV Program **5:30: Youth Services**	28 **10:00 PM-"Pleasant News" TV Program**	29	30	31		