



The Visitor

DECEMBER 2017

Advent

by Wade Allen

As we once again find ourselves in the holiday season, our emotions are often mixed. On the one hand, we look forward to extended time with family and the beauty of the season. On the other hand, we dread the stress of the season. For those who have lost loved ones, this time of year can be especially difficult. Others shudder at the thought of all the gifts that will need to be purchased or the food that will need to be prepared. Yet with each sunrise and sunset the days move forward.

As we approach Advent this year, we will survey the words Isaiah. Long before Jesus was born, the prophet predicted His coming. The world anticipated redemption, provision, salvation. They longed for God to show up. I am looking forward to this Advent season. As we study God's Word together, we will be reminded of the wonderful work that Jesus came to accomplish. May we look forward to the season with an expectation that God will work and move in our midst as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.



Worship Schedule

- December 03 - Awesome God (Isaiah 64:1–9)
- December 10 - Good News (Isaiah 40:1–11)
- December 17 - A New Covenant (Isaiah 61:8–11)
- December 24 - Mary's Response (Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 9:2-7) (Combined Service at 10:45 AM)
- December 24 - Candlelight Communion (7:00 PM)
- December 31 - Fear (Combined Service at 10:45 AM) (Matthew 6:25–34)

The Dwindling Importance of the Church

By Molly Flodder, Moderator

We learned in our study of 1 Peter what challenged the early church. We also explored how the modern church is no longer the center of our communities' universe.

The recent celebration of life of Gene Warner, a long-time member whose wife, Patti, and granddaughter Melanie and her husband, Michael, are members, boasted a huge crowd of mourners who filled downstairs and half the balcony. Anyone who was here in the late 40s, 50s, 60s, and early 70s recalls that First Baptist Church had an attendance that large on a regular basis. Although we have grown significantly in the last decade, our attendance is going down. Some of the decline is due to the passing and declining health of older members. Another reason is the pace of life of younger families, several of whom have kids in sports and other activities that are sometimes scheduled for Sunday mornings. A big reason is that being part of a church is just not important to people who grew up in the church and call themselves Christians.



We're in a different world. What will happen to the Church, our church, in that new world? Our community of believers must band together and reach out to each other to find personal connections and spiritual compatibility. The life groups our church offers are one way of doing that. As a new schedule begins in February, having more and more couples and individuals plugging in could help provide the gel we need to keep our church strong.

Another thing we need to do as believers is to not make "being fed" our strongest motivation for coming to church. "Being fed" is usually a code phrase for some other frustration that lurks below the surface. Regardless of the reason, changing churches is one thing and leaving the church because of a busy life is another. The church and its ministries provide a strong foundation for fellowship with other Christians, character-building for children, and most of all, communion with God through worship.

Award-winning author and national speaker to Christian women Cindi McMenamin points out three ways of determining if your church is "worth it."

1. Is the Word of God still being taught, obeyed, and honored here?
2. Is my service, encouragement, and spiritual giftedness needed here?
3. Is there a way that I can most effectively help build up this body where God has placed me?

If we all can answer yes to those, our church is a place where God needs us and where we can thrive. Sunday morning cooking, cleaning, or relaxing at home are likely not going to give us the relationship with God that He so cherishes and that so greatly fills us with strength to thrive in the world.

The early church sacrificed everything to follow Jesus. What about today? A world without the Church? Is that what we as Christians really want?

It's Not Too Late

The Legacy Team reminds all that it is not too late to make a pledge to the Legacy Capital Campaign. Cards are available in the back of the sanctuary or the church office or may be obtained by speaking with MaryAnne Bayer, Ray Conley, Bill Eidson, Larry Fouch, James Martin, Molly Flodder, Dan Lemen, or Joe Songer. Even if the first "payment" has to be in 2018, we encourage you to get a card and turn it in now. Already 90% of the goal has been pledged. It would be nice, however, to have a more detailed picture of what gifts will come in between now and the late-2019 culmination.

“Our 88-year-old building is our gift to future generations and our community. We must be good stewards of keeping it in a state of restoration and good repair,” said MaryAnne Bayer, Legacy Team Chair.

“Secret Families” Helps Hundreds

Those who were in the November 19 service heard Al Holdren tell about the Secret Families ministry and the 2,500 volunteers needed to provide a complete Christmas—food, gifts, etc.—to hundreds of needy in our community.

While hundreds of people will shop at Meijer, wrap gifts at Toyota, and ready everything for delivery, more are needed to take the food and presents to people’s homes. Children would also benefit from being a part of this service. This link is a way to sign up:

<https://fbcmuncie.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/94806/session/new>

Another way to help is to give financially to this ministry, the largest Christmas distribution in Delaware County.

Wes Russell, Outreach Ministry Coordinator on CCT, can answer questions about the opportunity. His contact information is wesleyrussell12@gmail.com or by phone at 765-480-9500.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Plan ahead to ring bells at the Muncie Mall at Penneys SE entrance or Macy’s south store entrance on **December 12th and 14th from 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM**. Find a friend or bring a class.

Business Meeting Set for December 10

On **Sunday, December 10**, between services we will have a church business meeting. We will vote to approve the 2018 budget, which will be available in the church office beginning December 1. We will also be voting to renew the terms of two people on CCT: Molly Flodder, Moderator, and Bill Eidson, Early Service At-Large. The Constitution requires that these two be reapproved at this two-year point in their three-year terms of service. Other new members of CCT will be presented for election as well. To date, those candidates are Chris Wright, Property, and MaryAnne Bayer, Outreach Ministry.

YWCA

The YWCA and Sonya are so thankful for your kind donations of clothing and cosmetics. Thank you for cleaning out your closets and drawers. Your gifts make a big difference to someone in need.

Pillowcase Project

Thank you all for your assistance with the pillowcase project: the pillow purchasers, the sewers, the coaches, the notice writers, and the prayers. This year we will have about 60 pillowcases to deliver to the following charities: Christian Ministries Men's sleeping room, Kid's Peace (foster children), Longfellow Kindergarten, and YWCA blanket cupboard. Deliveries will be made in early December. We plan to continue this project in 2018. All are welcome to come to sew and iron. This year adults sewed on the last Thursday of the month from 2:00–4:00. Dana got donations of six boxes of fabric that have helped much with this project.

Suzy's Fun Trips

Beef & Boards Christmas show and dinner: **December 20th**, \$79.00/person. Coach will pick up at First Baptist Church at **4:15 PM**. Call 765-749-3484 for more info.

Visitor or Bulletin Information

If you would like an announcement in the January Visitor or the weekly bulletin, please email it to wade@fbcmuncie.org by **Sunday, December 17**.

Thank-You Notes

The Davis Family – Dear Church Family: Thanks for your thoughtful words and acts of love throughout the year! We really enjoyed the fruit basket as part of Pastor Appreciation Month. We are so thankful to partner with you on this part of the journey.

December Birthdays

We would like to say Happy Birthday to the following people in the month of December. Please let them know that you are thinking of them on their special day.

12/01 - Ann A. Heilman	12/21 - Danielle Heimlich
12/02 - Tyler Stinson	12/25 - Brian Green
12/04 - Shirley Johnson	12/26 - Grace Wright
12/06 - Eliana Heimlich	12/26 - Josh Barr
12/08 - Emma Wright	12/26 - Randolph W. O'Bryant
12/08 - John Mulcahy	12/27 - Winona Frey
12/09 - Julie Morency	12/30 - Jennifer Howard
12/11 - William Eidson	12/30 - Robert Kirklin
12/19 - Levi R. Allen	12/31 - Rodney Head
12/20 - Harold Gill	
12/20 - Willow Brown	