



December 2021

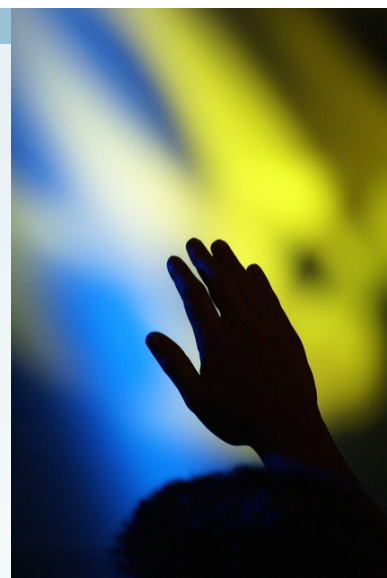
Fox River Life



*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
-1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

The proceeding is an article written by Dr. Sinclair Ferguson who is a favorite modern theologian of mine. It is not due primarily to the fact that he sounds like Sean Connery, although that does help, it is because he is a gifted communicator of truth. He has written extensively on the Advent and has two wonderful devotional books on the subject as well. I decided to let him speak to us at this time as we draw near to the celebration of Christ's advent. The title of the article that is presented below is, "The Dawning Light of Christmas: A Reflection for Advent."

We lived at one time on Unst (find it on a map, if you can—a clue to its whereabouts is that in the dead of winter there are only five hours of daylight). One overcast night, I placed my hand in front of my eyes—and I could see nothing. I realized then that, as a former city-dweller, I had never until then experienced real darkness. The memory of that night returns whenever Matthew's words are read in Christmas services:



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The Birth of Jesus Christ

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2) This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3) And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5) to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6) And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7) And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:1-7

From the Pastor's Desk (cont.)

The people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region
and shadow of death
[the same Hebrew word as Psalm 23:4],
on them a light has dawned.
(Matthew 4:16, quoting Isaiah 9:1-2)

For Matthew, the coming of Jesus was the dawning of redeeming grace, breaking into deep spiritual darkness. Our world is still engulfed by it. Even the best people—like the theologian Nicodemus—can listen to Jesus with minds so spiritually darkened that they respond (as he did), “I cannot see this. How can it be?” (See John 3:1-14). To such people Jesus came—and comes—as the Light of the world (John 8:12). He opens our spiritual eyes and brings us out of our darkness to sing with John Newton and the blind man whose words he echoed (John 9:25):

I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
As Matthew put it: “a light has dawned.”

A Light in the Secular Darkness

Christmas is a time of light. This year, as every year, trees inside and whole houses outside will be covered in lights. In our post-Christian world, Christmas is an annual reminder that deep within the human heart is the need for light—spiritual as well as physical—in order to have life. So, thankfully, Christmas continues to be celebrated. And the ongoing celebration of the festival is like a parable reminding us that unbelievers borrow, however inconsistently, from a Christian worldview in order to lighten the darkness of the implication of a secular humanism: namely that, ultimately, life has neither inherent nor transcendent meaning, purpose, or goal. Why? Because it is impossible to live consistently with that intolerable perspective.

I remember, at the end of my first term at university, standing in the bookshop at the end of my first term and overhearing the voice of one of my lecturers enquiring, “Do you sell Christmas cards here?” A perfectly normal question in December, you might think. But the voice belonged to the vice-president of the British Humanist Association! It is, apparently, not easy to live consistently with secular humanism. People still want and need what Christmas offers. My professor certainly did not want to live in a Narnia-like

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*"Glory to God in the highest
heaven, and on earth peace to
those on whom his favor rests."
Luke 2:14*

The Women's Ministry Committee met on Thursday, November, 18th. Our plans to bless the residents at Brewster Village with a Christmas Stocking full of goodies and a gospel tract are coming along nicely and with all the donations of goods and financial support, we will be able to provide a very nice gift for each of the residents. Thank you so much for giving so generously! Your gifts are very much appreciated.

The Single Women's Supper continues to be a blessing to the women that attend. They will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of the month. The next gathering will be held on January 7th at Jan Jourdan's home.

We have begun a new program for the ladies of the church to participate in. Secret Sisters will be blessing another sister in the church throughout the next year and will reveal themselves to each other in the fall of 2022! If you find out who has who...don't spoil the secret! We will run this program on a yearly basis, so if you missed it this fall, you can join next fall!

Mark your calendars for the next Ladies' Craft and lunch be held on Sunday, January 16th after Sunday School.



Rejoice in the Lord Always

Rejoice in the Lord always; again

I will say, Rejoice. 5) Let your

reasonableness be known to

everyone. The Lord is at hand;

6) do not be anxious about

anything, but in everything by

prayer and supplication with

thanksgiving let your requests be

made known to God. 7) And the

peace of God, which surpasses all

understanding, will guard your

hearts and your minds in Christ

Jesus. 8) Finally, brothers,

whatever is true, whatever is hon-

orable, whatever is just, whatever

is pure, whatever is lovely,

whatever is commendable, if

there is any excellence, if there is

anything worthy of praise, think

about these things. 9) What you

have learned and received and

heard and seen in me--practice

these things, and the God of

peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:4-9

Deaconess Ministry UPDATE



Deaconess of the Month—Laura Bressler

Mark your calendar and
plan to attend this fun
family event!





From the Pastor's Desk (cont.)

world where it is “always winter but never Christmas.”

Pull on the Threads

This Christmastime you too may encounter people who reveal similar “loose threads” in their thinking, speaking, and living. Our task as Christians is—usually gently! —to pull on those threads until the truth unravels, and our friends realize their deep needs. For we know something about non-Christians that they characteristically deny about themselves: they cannot escape the knowledge of God and therefore must find ways of suppressing and repressing it (Romans 1:18-22). But they cannot either destroy or fill “the God-shaped gap” every divine image-bearer experiences. For our existence depends on him. We are created, after all, “in his image” (Genesis 1:26-28).

So, if you see these loose threads appear this Christmas, pull on them, knowing that you have good news to share. For Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). God loves to bring light into dark places. He did so at the original creation when he said, “Let there be light.” It was in the darkness of Mary’s womb that the Light of the world was conceived who later, in the darkness of Calvary, died for our sins, and who then, in the darkness of the garden tomb, rose again. God continues to shine into human hearts to enable us to see his glory “in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

So today, Jesus, the Light of the World, tells us, “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Christians are miniature reflecting lights, illuminating the path that leads to Christ. He becomes visible in the speech, demeanor, relationships, and family lives that reflect him. By these simple means he draws others—often unwittingly and at first unwillingly—to himself.

Christmas, then, is a time to celebrate that Jesus is still the Light of the World. And it is a time to pray that the way we celebrate him will reflect his love to others and that some who approach this Christmas in spiritual darkness will experience for themselves the great joy of the dawn of redeeming grace.

With Sincere Wishes for a Blessed Advent and Joyful New Year,

Pastor Tim & Becky Godfrey



The Shepherd and the Angels

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9)And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. 10)And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11)For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12)And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13)And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14)"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" 15)When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the

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Intentional Discipleship Update

All of our Bible Studies and Sunday School classes are going strong and we are thankful for that and for those who teach, lead, and facilitate them. The Elders have decided that we will take the last weekend of December and the first weekend of the New Year off for our weekend Bible Studies and Sunday School to give our teachers a break. We will of course still be having services on December 26th and January 2nd. As my father put it so well, when he told me that in regards to the teaching of this church we are spoiled.



By Linda Hoffman
or Angela Groff
Church Librarians

Christmas is a wonderful time of year. A time for family and personal reflection. A time for reading while it's snowing and you're sitting at home with your hot chocolate.

Our library has several books for the season. One book, "A Quiet Knowing Christmas", by Ruth Bell Graham is a cute seasonal book with short stories, poems, recipes and crafts. For a unique perspective on the special role of Mary, I suggest reading Francine Rivers book, "A Lineage of Grace". It's an historical fiction that tells the story of five women from the lineage of Jesus, including Mary's life as an obedient servant.

For children and grandchildren, we have two brilliantly written and illustrated books. "The Legend of the Candy Cane" by Lori Walburg and "The Very First Christmas" by Paul L. Maier. Both books point to our Savior and the reason for His birth. We also have a Christmas DVD by Max Lucado about Herme, a cute caterpillar that learns the truth about Christmas by the way of his grandmother's fruitcake.

All of these books will be available on the table outside the library door. May the wonders of that first Christmas, the joy of God's abundant blessings, and the peace of Jesus presence be with you this Holiday Season and always.



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Lord has made known to us." 16)And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17)And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18)And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

19)But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20)And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. 21)And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Luke 2:8-21



Sunday Evening Services Schedule

December 5—Ask PT

December 12—Prayer at 5 pm

December 19—No Evening Service

December 26—No Evening Service

SUNDAY



Men's & Women's
Bible Study
Saturdays at 8am

Women's Bible Study
Thursdays at 1:15pm

Women's Prayer
Wednesdays at 9:30am



Financial Update—November 7-28, 2021

Budget needed weekly: \$ 2,606.00

Received: \$ 1,898.00

Contact Rob Mlodzik with questions.



December 5

Bob Abitz

December 12

Jay Hoffman

December 19

Ray Rudzinski

December 26

Jeffrey Smith

St Joseph's Food Pantry

Each month we will collect
non-perishable food items.

Place your food items on the table
provided in the foyer.



Connect
WITH OUR
CHURCH FAMILY

Here at FRBC, we have a prayer chain meant for the sharing of prayer request needs and for sharing praise for the awesome & mighty work God does in our lives. Please feel free to share any praise or request at our new prayer request email address:

prayer@foxriverbaptist.com

Care to be part of the prayer chain? Email or call Becky Godfrey at
becl.godfrey@gmail.com — (920)277-1526

Missions

“Go Ye into all the World, and preach
the Gospel to every creature.”
Mark 16:15

Missions Update

This fall has been very busy in regards to Missions and especially the month of November. I hope that our efforts to always keep our missionaries before your eyes will help you to think of them not as just Missionaries, but rather as extended members of our congregation. One of the main reasons that we reduced the number of Missionaries in 2021 is so that we could begin to increase our giving to those we still support and to have better relationships with each of them. We hope that this fall you have come to be more familiar with the missionaries and have grown in your affection for them.

Joy to the World

*“Now may the God of hope
fill you with all joy and
peace in believing, that you
may abound in hope by the
power of the Holy Spirit”*

Romans 15:13

For God so loved the
world that He gave
His one and only
Son, that whoever
believes in Him
shall not perish but
have eternal life.

John 3:16



FRBC Vision Statement

We desire that everyone who enters Fox River Baptist Church grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and grow in authentic, loving, familial relationships to make the name of Christ known in our community and world, all for the glory of God and joy of all.



19—Delaney Hoffman

25—Carol Smith

26—Ellen Rudzinski

30—Katie Mlodzik



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