

MIDWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Founded 1850

# MESSENGER

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Rev. David Hall, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Marc Harrington, Assistant Pastor  
Rev. Joel Smit, Assistant Pastor  
Rev. Todd Allen, Pastor Emeritus

December 2011

Vol. 33 No. 12

## FROM OUR SENIOR PASTOR

### Thanksgiving 2011: Preparing for Advent

Would you think that giving thanks is always good? Let me ask: is there any place in the Bible where giving thanks is mentioned that it is not good? You're tempted to say, 'always thanksgiving is good.' But there is one place that it is not.

Sometime, go back and read Luke 18:9-14. The picture in that parable is almost comical. You say, "surely this never happened." But it might not have been a fictional story.

One man gives thanks—but it is hardly commended.

The other man cannot even look up to heaven, so aware of his sin is he.

The Pharisee thanks God, but is mainly praising himself.

He thanks God that he is not like others. He is special, above the rest.

He has not committed notorious sins; nor is he a tax collector (the worst)!

And he does outward acts: fasting twice a week and tithing.

This is a thanksgiving unworthy to give to God. At the outset of this passage, Jesus already gives us a clue about the inner problem: this man was confident of his own righteousness and looked down on everybody else. He thought his strengths, his virtues were because he was so good. And he did not think he could possibly sin too greatly. But this self-righteous thankfulness is what is condemned in this parable.

In contrast, the tax collector had a deep sense of his own unworthiness. He knew he was a sinner; he knew he needed God's mercy. He did not even presume to look up to heaven.

And Jesus' conclusion is that the self-righteous person was not justified. When we exalt ourselves we will be humbled. But he who humbles himself will be exalted. That is the central meaning for both Thanksgiving and Advent.

The thanksgiving that God does not desire is the one from a person who thinks he is better than others. All that we have is from God, and this year, let's spend more time recognizing that we deserve none of this. That's why I refer to the quote from Cicero below.

The Roman orator, politician, and man of letters, Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote [*De Nat. Deorum*, iii, 36]: 'For gold, land, and all the blessings of life we have to return thanks to God; but no one ever returned thanks to God for virtue.'

We have no virtue of our own, no goodness of our own. We are, and will ever be, debtors to mercy. We cannot return thanks to God for our virtue. Instead, all the blessings of life—for our homes, our families, our church, our jobs, our nation—we recognize that these are unwarranted gifts from God. That is the kind of thanksgiving and Advent celebration that God wishes.

At this Thanksgiving and Advent, I am very thankful for Church members who . . .

- Are grateful for a church where worship and the Word are prominent; an oasis in our time.
- Take the time to encourage others and who look for the suffering or the outcast.
- Spend time with our young people, seeking to encourage.
- Who especially seek out the afflicted, the new, or the discouraged to try to show kindness and point to Christ.
- Give sacrificially and generously to allow all of us, and future generations, to enjoy a great church.
- Support many ministries and do not attend selectively or only when convenient.
- Pray: and the growth among our leaders in prayer. In a quiet, gentle way, our church is at its best in prayer and we are thankful for that.

## ***Pastor Cont.***

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- Members who invite newcomers and young members into their homes for meal and fellowship.
- The new babies the Lord is giving to our families, with all the joy they bring.
- The senior member who exemplifies gentleness, godliness, and joy.
- Growth in love for and effectiveness in missions.

And I am particularly grateful **for our staff:**

- Judy Dodd remains wonderful, solid, energetic. What a joy to serve with her and I am so thankful for a quality musician with such grounded theology. We are grateful for our new organist Seung Min Oh, who with prayers should become Dr. Oh soon.
- Marc and Kate Harrington: and the great news about their child and they will close on a home off of Casteel Road soon. Thanks for great Wed. Night studies this fall.
- Joel and Stefanie Smit—his active leadership in outreach and mature example to our youth. And what great children and hospitality.
- Jennifer Nichols—what a beautiful job she does in every area, at all times. We are so blessed by her.
- Sherry Cowan and Jean Beck and Henry Moore—to keep our facilities running and clean and to keep our offices running. We are very blessed!
- NEW staff member Brad Winsted\*\* and his family. How nice it is to have such excellence in our Children's Ministry. Years of experience and love for families and the local church is deeply appreciated.
- David Barry, our new Youth Assistant, will be here in late December to begin working with middle and high schoolers.

\*\* Brad Winsted's Children's Ministry International has a fine Advent devotional, available from him or the church office.

What a gifted group of servants! We are so thankful. And I am particularly grateful for each one!!

And may I say a *special word of thanks for Todd Allen*. No one has been kinder or more encouraging to me and my family than this wonderful man. What a blessing. And he continues to serve so very effectively. Todd and Judy, thank you, from our whole church!

What blessings I must count!!

So, what a blessing to celebrate Thanksgiving and Advent. I am thankful to live in a country, whose grandparents saw the need to have a Sabbath break for Thanksgiving. Even though not an officially-Christian

nation, isn't it great to live in a country that takes an annual time-out to be thankful!?

Cicero was right: "no one ever returned thanks to God for virtue." We do not deserve all these blessings; we cannot repay such bounty from the Lord. But we can, at the very least, give him praise, lift our hearts to him, and devote more of our words to exaltation than to dissatisfaction. Let us thank the Lord for all our days, even those that have affliction, "for as many years as we have seen trouble" (Ps. 90:15), and we'll continue to pray that God will "satisfy us in the morning with [his] unending love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." (90:14)

That note of gratitude begins our Advent season. Be sure to attend and invite friends to our special music events, our worship services, and our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion service. May this Advent be blessed with the continuation of Thanksgiving. "Let every heart prepare Him room."

### **Special Advent Events**

*Be sure to enjoy the following special Advent services or events:*

- Dec. 4 at 6:00 PM Children's Choir and Worship
- Dec. 6 at 7:00 PM Women's Ministry Christmas Event
- Dec. 11 at 6:00 PM Adult Choir's Lessons and Carols
- Dec. 21 at 6:30 PM Christmas Caroling and Hot Chocolate
- Dec. 24 at 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

"Come, adore, on bended knee."

### **New Communion Schedule: When and Why**

Beginning January 8, 2012, we will have Communion monthly on the second Sunday of each month, either in the morning or the evening service. Our elders have discussed this and recently approved a new schedule with more frequent communion. We pray that this will be a blessing to you and your families. In even numbered months (e.g., January, March, May, etc), we will have Communion at the morning service on the second Sunday of the month. In odd numbered months (e.g., February, April, June, etc), we will have Communion at the evening service on the second Sunday of the month. Please make note of these times for worship and prepare your hearts in advance.

# *Christmas Music at Midway*

## **December 4**

### ***A Children's & Handbell Choirs Christmas Program***

*The Cherub Choir  
Midway Singers  
One Accord  
Midway Ringers  
6:00 p.m.*

## **December 11**

### ***A Service of Lessons & Carols***

*6:00 p.m.*

## **December 21**

### **Christmas Caroling Event**

*Midway Congregation  
6:30 p.m.*

## **December 24**

### **A Christmas Prelude Recital**

*Midway Young Musicians  
4:45 p.m.*

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#### ***DECEMBER SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR MIDWAY'S CHOIRS***

- Nov. 30 Dress Rehearsal for Cherubs, Midway Singers & One Accord, 5:30-7:00 pm in the Sanctuary. This is the final rehearsal for children's choirs for 2011. Adult Choir rehearsal, 7:00-8:45*
- Dec. 1 Midway Ringers will rehearse in the Sanctuary, 7:00-8:00. This is the final handbell rehearsal for 2011.*
- Dec. 4 Cherubs, Midway Singers, One Accord & Midway Ringers Christmas Program, 6:00 p.m. Ringers, please arrive by 4:30 p.m. Singers please arrive by 5:00 p.m.*
- Dec. 7 Dress rehearsal for adult choirs, Sanctuary 7:00-9:30 p.m. NO rehearsals for children's choirs.*
- Dec. 11 A Service of Lessons & Carols, 6:00 p.m. Choir, please arrive by 5:00 p.m.*
- Dec. 14 NO choir rehearsals, children or adults*
- Dec. 21 Church-wide Christmas Caroling. Meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. NO choir rehearsals, children or adults*
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Prelude Recital participants please arrive at 4:00 for dress rehearsal. The Prelude Recital will begin at 4:45.*
- Dec. 28 NO choir rehearsals, children or adults. Rehearsals will resume Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> for children's & adult choirs. Rehearsals will resume Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> for handbell choir.*

# ***Children's Ministry / WIC / Youth***

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

An Advent/Jesse Tree devotional guide is available from Children's Ministry International. Please contact Brad Winsted ([childrensministry1@earthlink.net](mailto:childrensministry1@earthlink.net)) if interested. Also there is a Jesse Tree/Jesus Family Tree in the Kid's Assembly area; the smaller version is in the hall, but see the larger one in the assembly area, to the right as you enter.

## **COVENANT CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT**

The Midway Women's Ministry will be making Christmas ornaments. Information and sign up can be found on the women's ministry table. To place your order complete the information, leave an envelope with \$3 and a photo no larger than 2"x3". Deadline has been extended until Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>. Call Faye Hood at 770-428-8523 with questions.

## **WOMEN'S MINISTRY CHRISTMAS EVENT**

"In him was life, and that life was the light of men."  
John 4:1

**Tuesday, December 6  
7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall**

All women and young ladies are invited to attend this special Christmas celebration. Come enjoy fellowship with other Midway women and a catered dinner from Mother's Finest. Cost is \$5, sign up in Sunday School or on the Women's Ministry Table.

## **CHRISTMAS BASKETS**

The Women's Ministry will be assembling and delivering baskets of goodies to Senior Saints in our covenant family. We need donations of fruit, baked goods, candy, etc. for these baskets. Sign up sheets will be sent around in Sunday School and on the Women's Ministry Table. We will assemble the baskets December 13 at 10 a.m. All are invited to help assemble and deliver. This is a great outreach to these members of our Church.

## **ANGEL TREE AND LITTLE LAMBS PROJECTS**

Each year at Christmas we have the opportunity to provide gifts for the children at Cobb Street Ministries (Little Lambs) and children of prisoners (Angel Tree – sponsored by Prison Fellowship Ministries). The "Lambs" and "Angels" will be in our portico lobby for you to pick up. There will be instructions and a sign-up sheet. The deadline is Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. Drivers are needed to deliver the gifts the following week. Call Alicia Bartlett for Angel Tree 770-428-4953 or Faye Hood for Little Lambs 770-428-8523.

## **Our NEW Youth Assistant**

**David Barry**



In June of this year the Midway Session approved for two search committees to look for a part-time children's director, and a full-time youth assistant. Brad Winsted was hired to fulfill the Children's Director spot and he has been working in that position since

September. The search committee for the youth assistant position posted the job opening through several different venues, and received many qualified applicants. They decided upon David Barry and presented him to the session at the November Session meeting, where he was approved unanimously.

David is a native of Greenville, SC and a graduate of Clemson University. He started attending Reformed Theological Seminary (Jackson, MS) in 2009 to pursue a MDiv Degree. He comes to us with several years of youth experience, as well as mission experience with a Presbyterian work in Peru. He will continue his seminary work at the Atlanta campus of RTS this Spring, while working here at the church full-time assisting Pastor Smit with our youth ministry. He will begin his work at Midway in January.

We are thrilled to have a qualified man to assist us here and help shape and disciple our young people into mature followers of Jesus Christ. Please welcome David Barry as he makes his residence here and ministers with us.

## **DECEMBER YOUTH CALENDAR:**

<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	7:00 PM	Middle School Grandslam
<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	4:45 PM	Youth Bible Study
<b>17<sup>th</sup></b>	5:00 PM	High School Christmas Progressive Dinner
<b>18<sup>th</sup></b>	4:45 PM	Youth Bible Study
<b>18<sup>th</sup></b>	7:00 PM	Middle School Christmas Party

# Missions / Report from the Diaconate

## MIDWAY-SUPPORTED MISSIONARIES

Stanley and Donna Armes - MTW, South Africa  
 Peter and Diane Bakelaar - MTW, Japan  
 David and Stacy Bergmark MTW National Associate – Sweden  
 Chris and Jen Bowen – RUF Kennesaw State University  
 Roy and Kristy – Restricted, Asia  
 David and Sue Cunningham - MTW, Australia  
 Dan and Rebecca Gregoire – MTW, Slovakia  
 Sebastian and Isabel Heck – R2G, Germany  
 Tim and Lois Hunter - WBT Orlando/Nigeria  
 Scott and Tracy Ketrow - CCC, Italy  
 Dale and Nancy Knudson - MTW, Cambodia  
 Albert & Jennifer Kona – MTA, Albania  
 Endi and Kati Kovacs - CRM, Hungary  
 John and Kathy Lesondak - MTW, Slovakia  
 Steve and Ann Lutz – SIM, USA  
 Tim and Nicole - Restricted, Europe  
 David and Jill Martin - MTW, Ukraine  
 Demetrios Marmaras - PEF, Greece  
 Mike and Robin McMahan - MTW, Ecuador  
 Bob and Patty Meredith - NAV, Kenya  
 Harry and Julie Miller - PEF, Atlanta/Bulgaria  
 Wayne and Amy Newsome - MTW, Japan  
 Young and Soon Park - MTW, South Korea  
 Jean Paul – RHI, Haiti  
 Andy and Sue Peck - WBT, Orlando  
 Chuck and Wyema - Restricted, Europe  
 Clay and Darlene Quarterman - MTW, Ukraine  
 Nathan and Clare Richardson – HCCF, Panama  
 Palmer and Joanna Robertson - ABU, Uganda  
 Guillermo and Jeannie Salinas - PEF, Mexico  
 Roger and Dianne Smalling - MTW, Latin America  
 John and Liz - Restricted, West Africa  
 Jan – Restricted, Europe  
 Linda Summer - PEF, The Agape Puppets  
 Jim and Catalina Tate - MTW, Ecuador  
 Johan and Stephanie van der Westhuizen, MTW, Chile  
 Bruce and Barbara Wannemacher - MTW, South Africa  
 Becky White - MTW, Taiwan  
 Linda Wixon - MTW, Japan  
 Steve and Kathy Womack – WBT, Waxhaw / Africa  
 Pat Wood - PEF, Freedom Ministries

## Report from the Diaconate

	October-11	Year to Date Feb 11 - Jan 12
Undesignated Receipts	\$137,560.30	\$1,159,733.96
Over / (Under) Budget	(\$1,839.70)	(\$94,866.04)
Missions over and above	\$945.00	\$12,663.00
Ministries & Misc.	\$0.00	(\$980.90)
Expenses	\$93,622.50	\$1,428,286.35
(Over) / Under Budget	\$45,819.17	(\$173,311.35)
		Includes \$200,000 into a contingency fund
Cash on Hand (less restricted funds)	\$175,011.71	
Building Fund	\$4,989.00	\$70,644.00
Building Fund Since Inception		\$8,154,773.00
Daughter Church	\$49.00	\$195.00
Daughter Church (Since April 2003)		\$13,524.59

### Mission Organizations supported by Midway

ABU -- African Bible University  
 CCC -- Campus Crusade for Christ  
 CRM-- Church Resource Ministries  
 MTA -- Missions to Albania  
 MTW -- Mission to the World  
 NAV - The Navigators  
 PEF - Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship  
 Restricted – due to sensitive ministry  
 RHI -- Reformation Hope, Inc.  
 R2G - Reformation 2 Germany  
 RUF - Reformed University Fellowship  
 SIM - Serving in Mission  
 WBT -- Wycliffe Bible Translators

**UPDATED ADDRESSES** for our Midway supported missionaries are available on the table by the missions display.

# ***Midway Presbyterian Church***

4635 Dallas Hwy

Powder Springs, GA 30127