

CHRISTMAS JOY

Dear Members of Avondale,

The children of the Adventure Choir sang their hearts out as they caroled in front of Blackhawk Hardware this week. A little girl danced on the sidewalk and parents paused, listened and applauded.

It's the uncommon festivity from children that we have come to expect at Christmas time. An innocent, spontaneous expression of joy that erupts from children. I am aware that the welfare of the world tomorrow will have much to do with how we treat our children today.

But it is this dominant focus upon children at Christmas which makes me rethink the true meaning of Christmas. John Bell, that eccentric, white-robed theologian living on the Island of Iona, Scotland, reminds me that the only reference to children in the Christmas story was the Christ-child and those who were slaughtered by Herod. His conclusion: "Excepting Jesus, I could find no children implicitly or explicitly involved." Bell's argument to faithfulness in the Christmas story is that Christmas is about *old people*.

That's why an illumination of "what ifs" came to me when a member of our congregation shared that her greatest joy of the season came when listening to the older adult choir in a nursing home. Yes, a nursing home choir singing the carols of the season. If Christmas Day begins with the birth of a Child, the message of the Day is given to adults to convey.

*God, we pray that the joy and hope of this week
will displace the fears and suspicions
which come with the shadows of winter.
Steady your faith in the attitude
of Christmas joy and thanksgiving.*

Perhaps the best interpretation of Christmas is found in all people and pieces which call for us to *rethink* the meaning of the season and the importance of extending the season into a lifetime of faithfulness.

Beyond our deserving, we embrace Christmas. We pray that this infusion of joy will endure into the coming year. A deeper meaning of the Incarnation will prepare our congregation for what is yet to come. As a faith community, you have given me many reasons to say, "Jesus Christ is born here." A few I share:

- *It's about giving.* One person gave her car to Avondale to be sold for the mission of Avondale. Another family offered a check saying, "You know where it is needed." A daughter and grand daughter presented a check from their beloved grandmother, now deceased, with the promise that it be used for the future of this faith community she loved.

- *It's about giving.* I thank God for the little giant, Ginny Mitchell, and her centering of purpose and ministry as she has served as Administrative Coordinator over these past five years. I thank God for faithfulness lived out by all members of our church staff.

- *It's about giving.* A member stood, prior to a Saturday basketball game, and shared his witness of Jesus Christ who is Lord of his life. So many within our faith community give of their time and money because they believe that Christmas holds another sense of values in which true worth lies.

- *It's about giving.* While I rarely say this to my church family, I rejoice and thank God for my immediate family; my wife and two children who are my primary, fleshly definition of an Incarnate God.

I wish you a Blessed and Extended Christmas Day.

Yours in Christ,




Personnel Ministry

Ginny Mitchell

Ginny Mitchell, Administrative Coordinator, will leave her position at year end to join her husband, Mike, in retirement. We are grateful for her five years of service to Avondale. She will continue to worship with us and be involved in ministry as a member of the church. On December 20, we had a celebration of Ginny at the meal following the UNITY Sunday service.

CHURCH OFFICE

New Hours

9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday - Friday

New Contacts

Caroline Starnes, Communications & Administrative Coordinator - caroline@avondalepresbychurch.org

Sande Darby, Clerical Receptionist - sande@avondalepresbychurch.org

Sandra "Sande" Darby Clerical Receptionist

Sande moved to Charlotte from Jacksonville, Florida over 16 years ago. While in Florida, she held numerous positions with the State. In Jacksonville, she performed administrative functions with the President's office at the University of North Florida. In Charlotte, Sande operated a specialty food retail store at Concord Mills Mall.

She also worked as an office assistant and sales associate for a major furniture retailer. Later, she worked as a supervisor at Sharon Towers.

Sande believes that her faith in Jesus Christ guides her and it is the central part of her daily life. She was immersed in water baptism at the age

of 10, after she accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Savior. Sande grew up in Jamaica, where she attended the Anglican Church because her Godmother was an elder. Today, Sande enjoys worshipping in contemporary worship services. She looks forward to being a part of the ARISE Services at Avondale. Sande enjoys running, reading, thought-provoking Bible study, spending time with her family and helping others.



Memorials:

In Memory of:

Eldon Earl Stout:

- * Robert Bruns
- * Louise Chambers
- * Tim and Betty Chambers
- * Claire Graham
- * Banks and Wanda Huntley
- * Victor and Ardith Karnes
- * Rogers and Olivia Magee
- * Chick and Mary Martin
- * Eleanor Ramey

Linda Willis:

- * Rogers and Olivia Magee
- * M. Stewart Farris
- * James Hurt

In Honor of:

Mason Todd and Kendel Todd Parks:

- * Sigrid Sacra

Ella and Lucy Carroll:

- * John and Teresa Hinkel

2015 Contributions:

To qualify as a 2015 contribution, payments must be received by December 30, or dropped off at the office on Thursday, December 31 by noon. Any questions, contact Renita Fowler at 704-333-6194 or renita@avondalepresbychurch.org.

Key Life Dates Shared



We would like to celebrate key dates in the lives of the membership each month. If your special day(s) is not shown on a list, please call or email the Church Office (704-333-6194 or caroline@avondalepresbychurch.org) with the information. If an incorrect date is shown, be sure to let the Office know the correct information too.

Happy Birthday to the following January Birthdays:

1	Lorin Bookout	15	Connie Love	26	John Thomas Earl
	Jennifer Matz		Betty Patterson		Bob Gaddy
2	P.K. Kalevas	16	Bill Caldwell	27	Jennifer Oglesby
3	Tony McKenzie		Evan Wood		Holly Thomson
	Marian Stout	18	Liam Platt	28	Bill Byrd
4	Palmer Horton		Garrett Whitesides		Linda Haigh
5	Jim Branden	19	Sue Haag		Steve Thomas
	Pam Braswell	20	Becky Chavaree		Roger White
7	Millie Patterson	23	David Phillips	29	David Lindsey
8	Croft Hamilton		Bill Thomas	30	Jay Wardlaw
10	Bill Loftin		Ted Todd	31	Julie McDonald
11	Thomas Lawson	24	Ginny Mitchell		Joshua Oswald
13	Karen Eakes	25	Tom Cavanaugh		Bill Thornberry
	Marcia Halsey		Bonnie Howard		Carolyn Wright
	Leslie Saleeby		Andrew Patterson		
14	Juddie Finison				

Special Thank You:

Dear Avondale Family,

We are very grateful for the outpouring of generosity you have shown us as you have, and continue to shower us with gifts for the upcoming arrival of our second child. Not only were your thoughts with us and our baby, but you even thought of Erin as she too anxiously awaits the birth of her baby sister. As we continue to prepare the new baby's room, we are reminded of the blessing of having such a supportive church family. Words cannot express how much your thoughtfulness means to us!

We are honored and blessed to have been called to serve and live out our faith at Avondale.

Love,
Chris, Brandy, and Erin

Deaths:

Mary "Polly" Ligon Hollingsworth peacefully passed away on Thursday, December 10, at Sharon Towers Health Care Center. Our sincere sympathy is extended to her family: Richard L. Caudle, David R. Caudle (Margaret), William Thomas Ligon (Karen), and R. Laine Ligon (Ann), several great-nephews and nieces, as well as a loving step-daughter, Julia Hollingsworth Rich (Michael) and six step-grandchildren.

Baptisms:

On December 20, the Sacrament of Baptism was given to John Maxwell Shanks, son of Eric and Amanda Shanks, and to Taylor Elizabeth Shanks, daughter of Corey and Jessica Shanks.

Notables:

Congratulations to Jodie Herrmann Lawson who made partner at McGuire Woods. Jodie and Thomas Lawson are also expecting a baby girl in April.

Congratulations to Mackenzie Earl, daughter of John and Nadja, on her graduation from Alabama State University with a Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy.

Camp Grier

Sixteen Avondalers returned on November 22 from a fruitful weekend of serving at Camp Grier, our Presbyterian summer camp. Walls were demolished, lights were hung, paneling was installed, dust was swallowed, and a good time was had by all.

With the support of the Mission Ministry Team, we were able to make improvements to the facility to ensure that our camp can continue to serve children well into the future.

As a result of our work, Avondale is now classified as a "Sustaining Congregation". That means each of our children/youth and their friends will receive a \$100 discount for camp this summer. Use **code 322016** when registering.

If you have any questions about camp, feel free to ask Zach, Shea, Ainsley or Gram Chambers.



YOUTH CHOIR & SANCTUARY CHOIR

Youth Choir will resume on 1/10/2016 and the Sanctuary Choir will resume on 1/7/2016.

Avondale Adventures



December:

Our Adventures Choir had a great time at Park Road Shopping Center singing carols to shoppers. Families stopped to listen, children danced, and smiles were had by all.

Starting in January:

"Adventure to Jerusalem"

A Ten Week Avondale Adventure concluding with an Easter Children's Presentation - For grades K – 5
Each Wednesday: 5:30 – 7:30 P.M.

Consisting of an evening meal, arts and crafts project, choir, and Bible Study. Cost: \$25.00 per child for 10 weeks
The Adventure Begins: January 13, 2016

Required Parent Registration Meeting: January 6, 2016





Uptown Meal Ministry

The Uptown Meal Ministry held their annual holiday celebration in Wayne's Grocery parking lot. Approximately 25 members served 140 meals to friends.

Debi Medlin brought students from Fletcher High School Beta Club to share in the activities. Carol singing, food, and great fellowship filled the evening.

Room In The Inn



The Room In The Inn program has begun. Every Tuesday night from December through March, we host our homeless neighbors on our campus for food, fellowship, and rest. We've been hosting and providing hospitality for Room In The Inn since 1999. We host 10-15 people each week.

Volunteers are needed. To sign-up for a shift, visit the website sign-up page or contact Jim and Sharon McCarthy at 704-541-5360 with questions. Our goal is to pair new volunteers with experienced volunteers.

FAITH & SEXUALITY WORKSHOP

SAVE THE DATE: Faith & Sexuality Workshop for 5th Graders

Fifth graders and their parents are invited to attend this one-day workshop on Saturday, Jan. 23, 2016. For more details, please contact Ginny Sloan.

A Nativity Journey



Photos by Becky Chavaree



Avondale Presbyterian Church
 2821 Park Road
 Charlotte, NC 28209

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Deadline for next newsletter is January 18 – publication date January 25.
 Phone: 704-333-6194 Text: 704-996-4970 E-mail: caroline@avondalepresbychurch.org

Joys and Concerns

Ministry of Caring to Members of Our Church:

Alice Balfe, Anne Hamilton, Dot Burke, Edna Hilton, Eleanor Ramey, Evan Wood, Frances Robertson, the Gunter family, Ida Parnell, Jim Neely, Joanne Sahlie, Libby Phillips, Mike Cathey, Molly Carver, Rachel Darling, Sharon McGinn, Susan Harrington, and the Vestal Family

Ministry of Caring to Friends of Our Church Family:

Barbara Aylor (friend of Heather Hogston)
 Bill Thornberry, Sr.
 (father of Bill Thornberry)
 Brenda Buie (friend of the McCloskey/McDonald families)
 Chuck Johnson (father of Marian Stout)
 Claire Refaey (parent in Children’s Center)
 David Boyd (brother-in-law of Louise Lawson)
 Fred Otten (father of Debi Medlin)

Ministry of Caring to Friends of Our Church Family (cont.):

Hunter Stubbs (friend of Branden family)
 Jeanne Deese (sister of Barbara Hill)
 Larry Hensinger
 (brother-in-law of Nadja Sefcik-Earl)
 LaVera Gathings (friend of Becky Chavaree)
 Mary Cerena (sister-in-law of Barbara Witzel)
 Mary Jo Alley (mother of Martha Branden)
 Michael Morales (nephew of Debi Medlin)
 Sean Nolan (son of Marilyn Nolan)
 Mike Page (friend of Becky Chavaree)
 Ron Schaffield (brother of Nancy Bohrer)
 Sandy Black (cousin of Linda Haigh)
 Scott Brawell (son of Pam Braswell)

**Coming Soon:
 Faith Journeys
 Volume 3**

