



# The Lamplighter

First Baptist Church of LaPlata

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Taken from: *Salvation has Come: 25 Christmas Devotions in Luke* by Gregg Matte.

Early in the season years ago, we brought all the Christmas decorations down from the attic—that annual tradition and necessary chore—to get ready for the blessed celebration of Christmas. Each box was full, but one of the most special to us was the one that contained our nativity scene, gifted to us by family many years ago.

I opened the box and carefully unpacked each character, placing them in their positions, but I couldn't find the baby Jesus. It's not much of a nativity with only Mary and Joseph and a few farm animals but no Savior of the world. The symbolism of the empty cradle struck me: without Jesus nothing else makes sense—both in the Christmas season and in life. He's the centerpiece of the nativity and the center point of our faith. You and I know this, but the innkeeper of Luke 2 was completely unaware of who he was turning away.

*Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

Luke 2:7

We don't read that the innkeeper was a terrible guy; we just read that his rooms were filled. He wasn't recorded for all eternity as slamming the door in Mary's face or telling Joseph to scram. He was just out of room and probably too busy to mess with a young couple while tending to a full inn.

The Feast of Tabernacles was happening so it was the inn's "busy season." In the midst of his equivalent to our presents to wrap, errands to run, and food in the oven, I imagine the innkeeper just motioning to the stable around back. Inns of this time period typically had a section for people and another for livestock. Since the human section was filled, the innkeeper resorted to saying, "You can be on the property just not in the heart of my home." (Continued on p.4)



# FOR UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN

Match each Messianic prophecy to the Old Testament Scripture where it was foretold



- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| ___ 1. The Messiah would be born of a virgin.                | a. Isaiah 9:7    |
| ___ 2. He'd be a direct descendant of David.                 | b. Hosea 11:1    |
| ___ 3. The Christ would be born in Bethlehem.                | c. Isaiah 7:14   |
| ___ 4. He would spend time in Egypt.                         | d. Micah 5:2     |
| ___ 5. He'd give hearing to the deaf and sight to the blind. | e. Psalm 34:20   |
| ___ 6. He would ride on the back of a donkey.                | f. Isaiah 53:3   |
| ___ 7. The Messiah would be despised and rejected.           | g. Zechariah 9:9 |
| ___ 8. He would be numbered with criminals.                  | h. Isaiah 29:18  |
| ___ 9. He would sacrifice Himself for our sin.               | i. 2 Samuel 7:12 |
| ___ 10. None of His bones would be broken.                   | j. Isaiah 53:5-7 |
| ___ 11. He wouldn't undergo decay but be resurrected.        | k. Psalm 16:10   |
| ___ 12. Christ would rule over the house of David forever.   | l. Isaiah 53:12  |

**\*Answers on p. 7**

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**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO  
DONATE TOWARD  
CHRISTMAS FOOD  
BASKETS FOR THE NEEDY  
IN OUR CHURCH AND  
COMMUNITY, WE WILL BE  
RECEIVING DONATIONS  
DECEMBER 1-8. PLEASE  
MARK A FEW ENVELOPE  
"CHRISTMAS BASKETS"  
FOR YOUR GIFTS.**



Women on Mission  
will meet Dec. 5th.  
Sandy Janke will  
give the mission  
presentation. We  
will also make  
stockings for  
Children's Aid.



**W**elcome to one of our new *Lamplighter* features! Have you ever wondered who the chairperson is on a certain committee? Well, welcome to one of our new features! First up, the Chair for Adult Social Committee is Jennifer Miller. Do you have an idea for an adult event? Would you like to help during one? Do you have questions regarding planned events? Jennifer is your gal!



... and you shall call his name  
**Jesus** for he will save his people from their sins.  
Matthew 1:21, ESV



If you would like to sing in the choir for Christmas, please join us on Wednesdays at 7:30pm. A schedule of extra rehearsals will be published soon.

JOIN the  
*Christmas*  
CHOIR

(Cont. from p. 1) This is often where we end up in the season of Christmas—with fast-paced, busy calendars filled with endless to-do lists and too many credit card swipes to count. Jesus is on the property, somewhere, but not in the *center* of our Christmas.

The nativity is considered and likely on display, but a focus on the central member is missing. He's not central because we are already filled up. We've eaten too many chips before the enchiladas arrived. We've Cyber Monday-ed or Black Friday-ed so much the core of Christmas is misplaced, behind the house with the animals rather than in the center of it all.

There is no room in the inn of our hearts, even though much of what fills our time is *good*, like kids' activities, church presentations, parties to attend, travel plans to secure, and presents to buy. And that's true of me as a pastor, ironically, with Christmas messages to prepare. This flurry from Thanksgiving to Christmas leaves us filled to the brim but empty to the bone. There's just not enough room left in our hearts to ponder and praise. (Cont. p. 6)



... there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7, KJV



## Sunday Morning Security Team:

	8:30 AM	11 AM
1	Norma Stump, Vacant	Robert Hicks, Paul Miller
8	Kevin Guiffre, Vacant	Al Law, Jennifer Miller
15	Marion Simpson, Vacant	Jerry Pruitt, Jim Miller
22	Courtney Harbin, Vacant	Brian Miller, Melvin King
29	Norma Stump, Vacant	Patrick Hancock, Robert Hicks

## Greeter Schedule:

	8:30 AM	11:00 AM
Dec 1	Kevin Guiffre	Scott Nupson
Dec 8	Darrell Linville	Dave Bode
Dec 15	Glenn Miller	Ken Doyle
Dec 22	Marion Simpson	Patrick Hancock
Dec 29	Gary Boston	Scott Nupson

## Sunday Morning Nursery (Infant & toddler):

**Dec 1** Norma Stump, Donna Fleming, Jill Hancock, Ruth Dillon

**Dec 8** Norma Stump, Karla Miller, Abby Pankhurst, Katie Lusk, Kristen Gibson, Erin Hancock

**Dec 15** Norma Stump, Ruth Dillon, Carlesh Nchinda, Stephanie Walton, Ruth Dillon, Adrielle Law

**Dec 22** Norma Stump, Cecelia Stauffer, Amanda Nicklis, Fran Wright, Gracelyn Nicklis

**Dec 29** Norma Stump, Donna Fleming, Ruth Dillon, Vacant

## Children's Worship:

**Dec 1** Stephanie Walton, Jonathan Miller

**Dec 8** Jennifer Cooke, Chloe Cooke

**Dec 15** Amanda Nicklis, Ashley Miller

**Dec 22** Katie Lusk, Kristen Gibson, Abby Pankhurst

**Dec 29** Debbie Schneider, Jennifer Miller

## December Tellers:

Sheri Bresnahan, Cecelia Stauffer, Judy Moore

**D**ecember 1st kicks off our mitten collection. Please bring new hats, scarves, mittens and/or gloves to the church and hang them on the mitten tree that will be outside of the sanctuary.

Have you considered going on the short missions trip to Virginia Beach in March 2025? Info is on the Welcome Center. Sign up no later than 1/5/25.

The Hanging of the Greens service will be Sunday, December 1st at 6:45 PM. There will be a Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, December 24th at 7 PM.



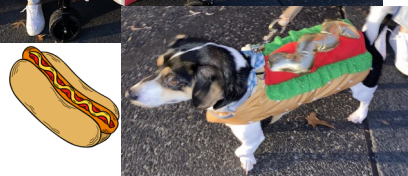




# Trunk-or-Treat 2024



A big thanks to everyone that donated candy, food, time, effort, creativity and/or the use of your vehicles to make this year's Trunk or Treat a success! Bags filled with Christian stickers, Bible verse bookmarks, Jesus Loves Me bracelets, and FBCLP brochures were given out to each car. Chili and other treats were offered in the white house and a bonfire was held outside as well.









*Can You Help?!* We're looking for 4 hosts for our youth progressive dinner in December. What is a progressive dinner? It's a dinner party where each course is served at a different home, and the guests move from house to house throughout the evening. It will be the weekend of 12/13 (either Friday or Saturday) and there would be b/w 15-20 youth attending. We would love to have the youth spend time with different families of the church (besides their own parents or parents of their friends)! Contact Karen Law to sign up or for more information: 301-908-7008



## GloryWay Quartet

Wednesday, 12/11, 6:30PM

## Library News

Thank you for your generosity in donating books to our library! During our reorganization phase, we will no longer be accepting any new materials. We will let you know when we are ready for donations. Thanks again!



If your picture wasn't in the photo directory and you would like to submit one, you may still do so. \*You don't have to be a member\*  
Also, if you have an updated photo, you may submit that as well.  
Send to Amanda: [secretary@fbclaplata.org](mailto:secretary@fbclaplata.org), 240-309-5715

### Contact Us

9070 Hawthorne Rd, La Plata, MD 20646 (301) 934-9040  
[pastorgary@fbclaplata.org](mailto:pastorgary@fbclaplata.org) [secretary@fbclaplata.org](mailto:secretary@fbclaplata.org)

## Narcan Training

The Safety & Security Committee is hosting a Narcan Training session with Ch. Co. Health Department's Overdose Response Program.

**What:** Narcan (Naloxone) Training

**Date:** Saturday, December 7th

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. (plan to arrive no later than 9:50 a.m.)

**Where:** FBCLP Fellowship Hall

**Cost:** FREE

Anyone age 16 or over is invited to attend

**Sign-Up is required** to ensure enough kits are available.

Sign-up sheets are located at the Welcome Desk.

**RSVP no later than 12/5/24**

\*\*\*Attendees will receive a Narcan kit\*\*\*

Light refreshments will be provided.

Text Logan (240) 577-9819 or Jeni (240) 682-5396

Below are the answers  
to the game on page 2.

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 7. F  |
| 2. I | 8. L  |
| 3. D | 9. J  |
| 4. B | 10. E |
| 5. H | 11. K |
| 6. G | 12. A |



(Cont. from p. 4) Psalms 10:4 haunts: "There's no accountability, since there's no God" (CSB).

But be encouraged! You can set out to have a Christmas season that looks different from years past. You can slow down, savoring the truth of what God has done through Jesus. You can prepare room for Him in your heart and life. It's fine to keep a busy schedule, but don't let the busy schedule keep you from the Hero of the nativity. A smile on our face and a word of praise on our lips creates room for the Savior in this season and any other.

Thankfully, with more searching in the box from the attic that stored our nativity, I found baby Jesus, and the manger was complete. He took His rightful place in the middle of the scene, the center of attention. May we rightly order our lives in the same way.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come

Let Earth receive her King

Let every heart prepare Him room.





# December

## UPCOMING | EVENTS

**1**

**Hanging of the Greens**

**7**

**Security Training  
with Narcan**

**8**

**Church Holiday  
Dinner**

**14**

**White Elephant  
Gift Exchange**

**19**

**Church Council  
Meeting**

**24**

**Christmas Eve Service**



GOOD NEWS. GREAT JOY.

# Operation Christmas Child

FBC's collection week has ended but you can still build a shoebox entirely online...

<https://sampur.se/4awjK6j>



...AND order items off of our Amazon wish list for next year:

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/5K4S2KKYJBM6?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/5K4S2KKYJBM6?ref_=wl_share)



## *Azima and A Handwritten Note*

These words have been life-changing to me: “I might not know you, but always know that Jesus loves you and so do I.”

A 12-year-old girl from America wrote that sentence on a note inside the shoebox gift I received at age 14 in Cameroon, a country where West Africa and Central Africa intersect.

I prayed to God that night—it was one of my first times talking to God—to thank Him for my gift. That night, I also asked Jesus into my heart, based on the note and what I had heard during the shoebox distribution.

The words the girl had written helped me to believe that Jesus loves me and nothing can change that. The only verse I knew at the time, John 3:16, came alive to me: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

In times of sorrow and grief when I needed to be reminded of God’s love, I would clutch my shoebox close to my heart and pray.

*In times of sorrow and grief when I needed to be reminded of God's love, I would clutch my shoebox close to my heart and pray.*

The same month I received my shoebox, one of my closest friends died of malaria. That night, I went through my shoebox over and over again, looking at the items and seeking comfort. Eventually, I fell asleep with the shoebox in my arms. That happened a lot.

My siblings and I did not have an opportunity to go to church because my father was against that. In Cameroon, religious superstitions heavily influence people’s lives. My father was concerned that bad things would happen to our family if we went against the local traditional beliefs.

My aunt, a Christian, moved in with us when I was 9, five years before I received my shoebox. She would always tell us stories about Jesus. When I was 14, she snuck me and my three sisters out of the house and took us to church.

After that, my sisters and I routinely snuck out of the house to attend church services. It was at that church that I received my shoebox gift. I hid the gift from my father, fearing that I would be punished for having it because I had gotten it at church.

Two years after receiving my shoebox, I dedicated myself to teaching the children in my church how much Jesus loves them. That year I also saw my father come to know the Lord. It started when he caught my sisters and me secretly praying for his salvation.