

Hebron Community Church

December 2023 Newsletter

The Same Old Story?

This month we celebrate what is probably the most widely celebrated holiday in the world. Children will try to be on their best behavior in hopes of finding many wonderful presents under the tree on Christmas morning, instead of having a lump of coal in their stockings; Christmas carols are already being played in stores and restaurants; plastic manger scenes and elaborate light displays are already popping up everywhere; people everywhere seem to be full of good cheer. It is a very busy and exciting time of year.

Something about it almost seems magical. Until we get flustered trying to get everything done in a short amount of time, or someone else who is also trying to get stuff done cuts us off, or jumps ahead of us in the checkout line, or somebody grabs that last must-have toy that we were about to grab. With all that is going on this time of year, it's so easy to get caught up in the busy-ness and forget what this time of year is all about, and we reach the point where we are merely trying to get stuff done. We try to make it to all the parties and various celebrations, between church and friends and family; we try to make Christmas magical for our kids, but we begin to lose the magic ourselves, because we're already looking to the next thing and making the list in our head of what still needs to be done.

Or we may think that because we've heard the same story year after year that there is nothing new to learn. I once heard someone say, jokingly, "Can't we hear a new story this year? I've heard the same one for over 50 years now." We think we know all there is to know. The Christmas story is another one that is "deceptively familiar." We look at the Christmas stories found in Matthew and Luke and think we know it all, so we just go through the motions and don't really listen. Why do we need to, when the story never changes.

For whatever reason, many people just kind of coast through the season until the day after Christmas, when they can finally relax from everything and take it easy, but when we do that, there is so much we miss. There are so many things in the church that have become traditions, but over time, they have lost their meaning. The rituals of the church become just that, ritual, without meaning. Scripture itself loses its power. This is easy to see when we look at parts of scripture, like the parables of Jesus. We've heard them so long, they become little more than fairy tales—good stories with a moral message, but the true meaning is so much more powerful.

I like what J. Ellsworth Kalas has to say in the introduction to his book *Christmas from the Back Side*, as he calls us to look anew at the Christmas story:

"Of course, all of us know the Christmas story. Or do we?

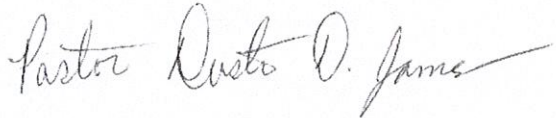
"We hear so many conversations during the Advent and Christmas seasons that should make us wonder what Christmas means to the average person in the shopping mall or at the neighborhood Christmas party, 'Getting together with friends,' one person says. 'That's what Christmas is all about.' Another says, 'Seeing the whole family again. That's what Christmas is all about.' Or someone with altruistic vision ventures, 'Peace on earth. That's what Christmas is all about.' Or someone with altruistic vision ventures, 'Peace on earth. That's what Christmas is all about.'

"Mind you, these are all nice ideas, and I applaud them. But, they're hardly 'what Christmas is all about.' There's much more to the Christmas story. *Infinitely* more... I'd like for us to visit Christmas from the back side—sometimes by way of a new look at some of the familiar stories, and sometimes by reminding ourselves that the roots of the Christian story are much deeper than we often realize."

You'll be hearing more of what he has to say, as I'll be following his book for my series of sermons for Advent and Christmas. I'd like to extend you the same invitation that Kalas extends to his readers—let's look at Christmas anew this year. Hear again the wonderful story in all of its fullness. Let it speak to you afresh and bring you into ever deepening understanding of the God who loves you and would go to any lengths to bring you back into relationship with Him. That's what Christmas is all about—it's a love story from the God who created us and ever since the fall has sought to re-create in us His image. Remember that it's not about the presents, or the parties, or the decorations. All those are great and can help us enjoy the season, if we keep the main thing the main thing. It's all about Jesus. We were lost in Sin and without hope, but God! God sent His Son to be the sacrifice once and for all, because He loves you and me, and the world.

So, when you are trying to find all the right presents for those on your shopping list, when you're preparing the food for the various parties you're hosting or to which you've been invited, take time to remember the reason we celebrate. When you pass a manger scene or hear "Away in a Manger" being sung, listen anew to the message that is powerful enough to set the world in frenzy—the message that has the power to change lives. Don't be afraid to turn the Christmas music up loud enough for the neighbors to hear, while you go about the preparations or the cooking. Watch the light in the children's eyes over the simple magic of the season, and let them help relive the magic yourself. Let the message of despair and this

renewed hope fill your heart this year, as we celebrate together the gift of love born in a lowly stable, and laid in a feeding trough. God is with us, our Emmanuel! God bless you during season and always!



Your Servant brother in Christ Jesus,

Pastor Dustin D. James

HEBRON METHODIST MEN RECYCLING PROJECT (“Don’t Trash Your Mother”)

In an effort to reduce Hebron’s environmental footprint, save our church money, help others, and with the blessing of our Pastor Dustin James, we have initiated a recycling effort to be noticed by a blue bin in the Fellowship Hall/The Hut just before entering the kitchen.

Purpose:

To be kinder to our Mother Earth

Reduce trash pickup costs

Earn money for our church

Provide children’s donations

Many congregants have expressed a desire for this initiative and already offered thanks for starting it.

Recyclable Items:

Any metal cans (aluminum & steel)


Any hard plastic (water bottles, utensils, soft drink/coffee cup tops, straws, etc.)


Soft plastic (wraps, table top coverings)

Clean paper (lightly used plates & cups, napkins, wraps)

Goal:

To eliminate/reduce the need for trash pickup of \$130/month

Recycle aluminum cans for cash 

Donate aluminum can pull tabs to Ronald McDonald House for their reimbursement from the canning company 

Other Considerations:

Reduce consumer demand and plastic/styrofoam pollution and toxic human ingestion by purchasing products in biodegradable packaging.

On Thursday December 28th, the manager of the Saxapahaw recycling center will be giving a presentation in The Hut at 7:00 PM after the Men’s Meeting. All congregates are invited to attend and have any concerns or questions addressed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and participation,

Bob Swanson

(305) 992-6926

Beginning on pages 6 and 7 are the brochure explaining what **Life Line Screening** does for you. They will be here at Hebron on Friday, December 1st. Prices are listed. If anyone is interested in signing up for the testing, please reach out to the church office, we have some coupons for the testing available.

Advent begins Sunday, December 3rd. On Saturday, Dec. 2nd, the church will be decorated. This is such a special time, and all members are invited to help with decorating the tree and placing the items throughout the church. We will begin at 9:00 am. In addition to this, the decorations will be taken down Saturday, January 6th. Please help with this process also as these special items are stored for the following Christmas.

The **Helping Hands Ministry's** updated brochure is now available in the church vestibule. This ministry, operating on a church member volunteer basis is a two-fold ministry. It fulfills church members' needs for meals during a time of crisis such as surgery or major illness and light refreshments after a deceased church member's funeral service. Brochures are available via an email message request to the church office.

To be able to respond to these needs in a more efficient manner, the team is seeking folks who are willing to make a commitment to be on a standby list to help when a request for assistance is received. A signup sheet is available in the vestibule for anyone willing to do so, or persons interested in being included in this list can notify Linda Williams, Team Leader at 919-563-4514 or at liwill49yr@yahoo.com.

We are planning to have a special **Christmas story** reading on **Sunday, December 10th** beginning at 4 pm in the church sanctuary. Christmas carols will be included in the program. A traditional Christmas dinner will be in the fellowship hall following the program. Everyone is invited! There is a sign up sheet in the vestibule so we know how many to expect so there will be enough food for everyone.

Friendship Circle

Friendship Circle will be preparing gifts for Springview Homes in Elon and for our Abundant Life friends. Ladies, please look for further information regarding the gifts, as we are preparing for this season of giving. We will meet in the Hut, following the worship service on Dec. 17, to prepare the gift bags, then travel to Huey's for lunch together. This will replace our usual Dec. meeting. All ladies of the church are invited!

On Sat., Dec. 2, the church will be decorated for the Advent and Christmas season. We look forward to as many of our church family as are able to help with this special project. Beautifying the church is a special time. Also, on Sat., Jan. 13, we will gather to take the decorations down and pack them away for next year. We will need helping hands for this day also.

The Methodist Men will have their next stew sale on Sat., Jan. 6. Friendship Circle will have another bake sale that day. It is a busy but fun time as we all work together. The profits are distributed to various organizations and individuals to help in our community. Hopefully you will be recovered from holiday baking and will prepare items for that day.

Ladies, please attend meetings, as you are able. We have projects to plan for in 2024. All ideas and suggestions are appreciated and needed to make these projects successful.

Updated Rules and Guidelines for use of Church Facilities

Hebron's rules and guidelines for use of church facilities were revised and updated as a part of the disaffiliation transition process and were approved by the church council in its September 2023 meeting. *Please note that the updated rules are now posted in the fellowship hall (hut) and the kitchen* to ensure that the fellowship hall, including the kitchen, can be shared with confidence that the facility will always be found in good condition. Guidelines for reserving church facilities are *not posted* but copies containing both rules and guidelines are available in the vestibule or can be requested from the church office. Everyone is encouraged to read the rules and guidelines so that we are all under the same understanding about what is expected of us to be good stewards of our church facilities.

Margaret Lankford

Outreach and Missions Committee

Luke 6: 38 NIV "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Our Hebron Community Church family has had several outreach and mission opportunities during the month of November. Opportunities to extend our love for God by providing Christmas gifts for children around the world and providing much needed food for the hungry people in our community.

Samaritan Purse's Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes were filled to the brim with gifts for under-privileged children around the world. Thanks to your generosity and love, 45 Shoe Boxes were delivered by Betty Boney and me to Grace Reformed Church in Mebane on Monday, November 20th. The Shoe Boxes will be delivered to Samaritan Purse's distribution center in either Charlotte or Boone where they will be inspected and then distributed to children around the world. Children who would otherwise not receive anything for Christmas. There will be 45 smiling and happy children on Christmas all because of your faithfulness to our Missions program.

The Food Drive is turning out to be a huge success! The grocery box and many bags on the floor in the sanctuary are full of canned goods and non-perishable items for S.A.F.E. (Southern Alamance Family Empowerment's Food Ministry). Once again, your love and generosity have literally spilled over here at Hebron to help feed many hungry people in Alamance County. Brenda Moss will deliver the food at the end of November. Many thanks to Brenda for offering. She may need a truck!

For December, our White Christmas Outreach involves providing a large family of boys with gifts for Christmas. The social worker at Garrett Elementary School in conjunction with Christmas Cheer of Alamance County provided us with a list of 7 boys in one household, ranging in ages from 4 to 16. The wish list gift tags will be placed on the Angel Tree in the Vestibule beginning Sunday, November 26. There will be a total of 31 gift items on the Christmas Tree. Some of the gifts may be a little expensive, so feel free to pair up with another person to purchase a gift. Complete instructions will be placed on the table beside the Christmas Tree. **All gifts must be wrapped or placed in gift bags with the gift tags attached and placed under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary by Sunday, December 17th.**

Blessing and Hebron Love,

Pat Snipes

Take a step toward staying

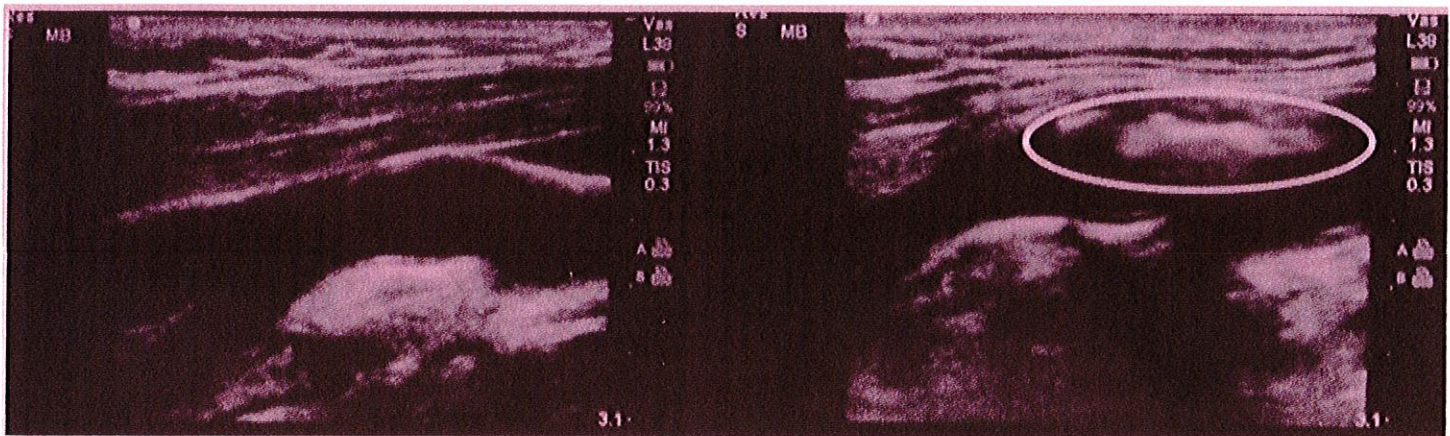
Healthy & Active

Life Line Screening goes beyond regular checkups to provide a more thorough look at your health.

Be Smart: Do More For Your Cardiovascular Health

No Plaque Buildup

Plaque Buildup



Advanced ultrasound technology looks inside your arteries for signs of plaque buildup.

That's why **9 out of 10 cardiovascular doctors** support preventive screenings for those with key risk factors.¹

Adults age 50+ and those 40 and older with one or more risk factors for cardiovascular disease should be screened.

¹Key Risk Factors include: *High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, smoking, family history.

We are coming to your neighborhood.

Where: Mebane - Hebron Community Church

When: Friday, December 1, 2023

To register for your appointment and to receive the special discount,
please call **1-800-640-6307** or visit **LLSA.SOCIAL/HC**

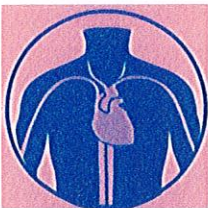
Trusted by Hospitals Nationwide.

Life Line Screening has partnered with over **100 hospitals** across the country and has conducted over **10 million screenings** since 1993.



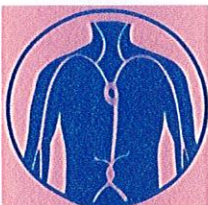
Carotid Artery Disease

an ultrasound is performed to screen the carotid arteries (a pair of blood vessels in the neck that deliver blood to your brain) for buildup of fatty plaque. This buildup, called atherosclerosis, is one of the leading causes of stroke.



Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)

a 6-lead electrocardiogram (EKG) is performed by placing sensors on the arms and legs to screen for Atrial Fibrillation. AFib can lead to blood clots, stroke, and heart failure, and other heart-related complications.²



Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

an ultrasound is performed to screen the abdominal aorta for the presence of an enlargement or aneurysm. AAA can lead to a ruptured aortic artery, which is a life-threatening medical emergency.



Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)

an Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) test is performed using blood pressure cuffs on the arms and legs. It is important to screen for PAD because it increases the risk of coronary artery disease, heart attack, or stroke.³

4 Screenings for Only \$149
Special Package Pricing

² <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/atrial-fibrillation>

³ <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/peripheral-artery-disease/about-peripheral-artery-disease-pad>

No single screening can detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease.

Screening results are provided to you in about 14 days. We direct all participants with abnormal results to take the report to their physician. Appropriate modification of risk factors (including high blood pressure, smoking, heart disease, diabetes and poor diet) is also necessary for cardiovascular disease prevention. Our screenings cannot detect all forms of stroke risk or cardiovascular disease. All tests are for screening purposes only. You should consult with your personal physician regarding your screening results. Price does not include any applicable review fees. Insurance Note: Life Line Screening does not participate in the Medicare program and the cost of our screening services is not covered or reimbursable by Medicare. Life Line Screening does not file insurance claims nor provide referrals to any physician's group or hospital. If you are unable to attend the screening for any reason whatsoever, we will issue a gift card for the full amount to be used by you, or anyone you choose, for future screening services.

December 2023 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	27 9 am ALM 6:30 Scouts	28 9 am ALM	29 9 am ALM	30 9 am ALM 6:00 Methodist Men	1 Life Line Screening	2 9 am Decorating for Advent & Christmas
3 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 4 pm Reading of Christmas Story/Dinner	4 9 am ALM 6:30 pm Scouts	5 9 am ALM	6 9 am ALM	7 9 am ALM	8 Re-grouting front porch	9 Re-grouting front porch
10 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 4:00 Christmas Story/Dinner	11 9 am ALM	12 9 am ALM	13 9 am ALM	14 9 am ALM	15	16 Hut Reserved 1:30 to 4:30
17 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Friendship Circle 3:00 Church Council	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 7:00 Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30
31 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	1	2	3	4	5 Stew Prep	6 Stew Sale

Nursery Schedule

December 3rd Markie Roberts & Sammy Lankford
 December 10th Joannie Wilson & Brenda Moss
 December 17th Betty Albright & Pat Snipes
 December 24th Joannie Wilson & Marti Graham
 December 31st Betty Boney & Jay Wilson

Greeters

Sandy & Dale Dixon
 Bob Swanson
 Buster & Lyn Albright
 Robin & Junior Sykes
 Sammy Lankford & Brenda Moss