Sandston Baptist Church

His Last Command,
Our First Concern
Matthew 28:18-20

Volume 47, Issue 12
December 2019

This is not your typical Christmas story: in the Book of Daniel who read the familiar story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They were the three Hebrew young men that refused to worship the idol constructed by King Nebuchadnezzar. It is somewhat foreign to us but emperor worship was common in their world. Their proclamation was that they would only worship the true God of heaven which put them on the wrong side of royal law and resulted in an order of execution by way of "the fiery furnace".

This was the ultimate "culture clash" and the three refused to bend or break. The king viewed their defiance as an act of stubbornness, but from their perspective, it was an act of faithfulness.

Although they worshipped an invisible God, they knew He had the power to save. They knew the stories of Noah and Moses and Samson and David and God had saved Israel again and again.

Understand, God had never promised to save them yet they determined that death by fire was better than worship through idols. Their hope was not in physical salvation but in the very nature of God witnessed in their last words "even if He does not". As they were hurled into the furnace their hearts looked heavenward, longing for God to save.

God not only saved Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the fire but showed that if His saving arm could stretch into a Babylonian fire, it could reach around the world!

Here is the Christmas story: when God comes to save His people from the fiery punishment they deserve, He will not simply blow the flame out; He will not merely stop the king's evil plan BUT WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE BY SHOWING UP HIMSELF! God did more than save them; He entered the fire with them. The invisible became visible.

The lesson is clear: when God wants to save His people, He will do so Himself. And when He does so Himself, He will come in a visible and meaningful way.

500 years later, the same God who came to rescue His worshippers before would do it again. The details changed, His glory was exposed more clearly but the mission was the same: to save humankind from the fires of judgment.

We celebrate Christmas because it was and is a rescue mission carried out by a God who would do it Himself. As you celebrate this season remember that Christmas is about a rescue mission; He is the only one that can save us and He does so by coming to earth, physically and visibly as the Babe born in a manger.

Merry Christmas!
See you on Sunday, Karl

Notes From Mark

Advent begins on December 1 this year. The season of Advent (a Latin word meaning "coming" or "arrival") is the four-week period leading up to Christmas. It is a time to anticipate the arrival of Jesus as a babe in Bethlehem as well as to anticipate His second coming in glory. Advent calls us to pause and reflect on how Jesus' birth brought hope to our world and how His return will bring true and permanent peace and justice.

Hope. As I see it, our world is desperately seeking hope. Hope seems to be in short supply. People all over the world feel hopeless; they are hopeless – without hope. There is so much that is happening that they cannot control. Every day seems to bring yet another hopeless situation. We may, at times, feel the same way, too.

But the truth is that Jesus's birth brought real hope to the world. The word "hope," as used in the Bible, is a word that means "putting confidence in" or "taking refuge in." It is based on God's promises. In Hebrews 6:17-19 we read that "This hope [in God's promises] we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast." A hope both sure and steadfast. The hope Jesus brings is a sure thing; something we can put our confidence in; something that is real, true, reliable.

Advent is the time of expectancy as we once again await the coming of the "Hope of the world" -- Emmanuel (God with us). It is a time to prepare ourselves to receive God's best gift, Himself. And it's a time to commit to share that hope with those who long for it. Jesus told us He is coming again. Are we ready? Are we sharing that with others? Are we sharing real hope, true hope, sure hope, steadfast hope with a world that is searching for that kind of hope?

May we embrace Advent with thoughtful reflection, hope-filled anticipation and child-like faith so that Christmas itself will be Christ-honoring. Come, Thou long-expected Jesus.

May your Advent be blessed and your Christmas be merry.

Under His Direction, Mark

Consider using our electronic giving link located on our website. Electronic gifts are easy to make, and they are secure. Some of the advantages of electronic giving are that you may:

- Give any time, anywhere -- from home, Sunday School classroom, friend's house, gym
- Schedule and manage recurring tithes and offerings
- Make one-time gifts to special appeals (love offerings, emergencies)
- Pay for materials for classes and the like (for example, books & workbooks)
- Pay for events, programs and other activities the church sponsors (like Blessing Warriors meals, Wednesday night dinners, etc.)

In addition, record-keeping for both you and the church is simplified, and the possibility of accounting errors occurring are reduced.

If you would like to give electronically, visit our website for details. You may contact the office if you have questions.

Join us for worship on Christmas Eve at 5:00 p.m.

December 15

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Our children and the adult choir will present a special Christmas program on Sunday, December 15 beginning at 5:00 pm in the sanctuary.

Quilters and Crafters

We would like to thank all of the quilters and crafters for all their hard work this year in making this ministry a fun and productive group to be a part of. We wish everyone a wonderful Christ-filled season with family and friends."

Denise Harcum and Sue Rainey

P.S. Reminder - no meeting in December

FRIENDLY CLUB NEWS

The Friendly Club will be on the 2nd Thursday of December - please note this is a change in the usual meeting time. Meeting starts at 10:30 a.m. in the Bosher-Gray building. Patsy Butler and Belle Philyaw will be sharing a program of Christmas music. Following the meeting will be a covered dish luncheon.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Manger Tales Christmas Program

JOIN US Sunday, December 15th at 5:00pm! The children have been working very hard and would love a full sanctuary as they perform "Manger Tales".

Operation Christmas Child - Thank you to everyone for their generous donations and support of the shoebox ministry! Through your donations, the children were able to pack at least 12 shoe boxes this year!

F.U.N. Night - We will have our December F.U.N. Night on Saturday, December 21 at 6:30. We will be playing bingo with a Christmas Twist. More information will be forthcoming!

Jodi

Operation Christmas Child

We were happy to recognize Bob Rainey during the 10:30 worship service on November 10. Bob has faithfully served O.C.C. behind the scenes for 16 years. As "Driver Bob," he carried many to Charlotte to work in the Processing Center for several years. This season, he made the beautiful white cross for our sanctuary and the wooden Christmas tree for our display table in the hallway behind the sanctuary. His woodworking skills have also provided many wooden cars and baby carriages that have been added to shoeboxes. He shared his cars with the youth during VBS 2019 as their craft project for the week. He showed them how to sand their cars before painting them. Since SBC became a drop-off center for shoeboxes in 2012, Bob has made so many trips to pick up supplies used during National Collection Week and delivered filled cartons to New Bethesda for transport to Charlotte. To honor Bob for his contribution to the O.C.C. ministry, 16 shoeboxes have been filled and funded! We know that Bob would also appreciate a shout out to the men of the Brotherhood who have also assisted him in this ministry. Thanks to you all!

As of this writing, the number of shoeboxes that have been given is not known. We want our take away from Shoebox Season 2019 not to be about "how many" shoeboxes we gathered, but rather that it be about the ***JOY*** we have shared in our participation this year. Sure, the numbers are important because each shoebox is a Gospel Opportunity to reach a child for Christ. What we have seen in our fellowship has warmed our hearts. You have clearly made the connection with "your child" through the careful selection of items to pack, by including a picture and/or note to "your child," and by the love and prayer that has been poured into each gift. For God so loved, so have we. Remember, this season is not over until every shoebox has been delivered, so please continue to pray for the ministry and for children and volunteers around the world who will connect with our gifts. Pray that our gifts will be the instrument that will bring children to know Christ, that they will grow through discipleship, and multiply their newfound faith and relationship with Christ with their families and their communities.

Good News, Great Joy!!!

Brenda Crain, Denise Harcum, Jean Jones

WMU NEWS

Please be in prayer for our missionaries all year, but especially during the week of December 1-8 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Lottie is remembered as a "Heroine of Faith" as she sacrificed her personal health in service to Christ as a missionary in China. Thank you for your faithful giving all year to international, state and local missions through our Unified Missions Giving offerings. There are envelopes available in the front and back hallways if you would like to give an offering specifically for Lottie Moon during this year's national WMU missions emphasis honoring her memory. The "Unified Missions Post Office" will be available again this year in the hallway behind the sanctuary. For many years, this has been a popular way for our church family to send cards to each other. A donation box will be available for you to leave cash or a check that would represent what you might have spent on postage if mailing your cards. If donating by check, please note "Unified Missions" in the memo portion of your check. Thank you for your heart to pray for our missionaries and for your generous giving to support them in their ministries.

Blessed to Serve, Jean Jones, WMU Director

FINANCIAL REPORT

Offerings	11/03/19	$ 20,426.12
	11/10/19	$ 10,561.82
	11/17/19	$ 8,620.65
	11/24/19	$ 8,308.22
Offerings (Nov)		$ 47,916.81
Offerings to Date		$575,487.31
Weekly Needs		$ 13,170.63
Needs To Date		$619,019.83

UNIFIED MISSION UPDATE

Unified Missions (to date)	$ 27,529.00
Unified Missions Goal	$ 35,000.00
UM Weekly Needs	$ 673.08
Needs To Date	$ 31,634.76

How appropriate the November 3-6 Revival was/is as we head into the season of celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior... CHRISTmas! Although traditional "Black Friday" (Friday after Thanksgiving) sales began in early November and online sources are pushing us to Christmas shop earlier, we can preserve and celebrate the true reason for the season for followers of Jesus.

December Brotherhood Events and Opportunities

Veteran's Appreciation at the Veterans Administration Sitter & Barfoot nursing home comes early - December 3rd. Hopefully the Brotherhood (all men attending or members of SBC) noticed the date was changed on sign-up sheet in corridor behind the sanctuary, but the December Newsletter gives you the opportunity to join in for this quarterly doughnuts and coffee recognition of men and women who have served our nation in the military branches.

Please consider the December 3rd Sitter & Barfoot visitation as an opportunity. Meet in the Pickett Avenue parking lot before the 9:15 a.m. departure. Questions? Ask Dennis Hawes, Dennis Lucas, Sandy Lambert, Eddie Marsh, Donald Clark, Jay Royal, or Greg Martin who currently are signed up. (By the way guys, note the change of the date in case you cannot attend December 3rd.)

At the November Brotherhood meeting it was agreed there will not be a regular meeting in December. The next regular second Thursday meeting will be on January 8th . Eddie Marsh will provide a devotional. Ron Ruby will take the lead in preparing the meal.

Quarterly November Oregon Hill Homeless Breakfast fed 86 persons a hot breakfast of scrambled eggs, sausage, biscuits and sausage gravy. Questions? Ask Greg Martin, Donald Clark, Jay Royal, Dennis Lucas, Ron Molnar, Bob Rainey, Bob Tanner, Ron Ruby, Bob Rainey or Sandy Lambert who enjoyed this seamless just-do-what-is-needed ministry. (Could have sworn there was a complete list of those participating... but may have omitted someone.) There is always other opportunities to serve in this more than a breakfast ministry of the River City Faith Network.

Other ministry opportunities include:

- Tool Box ministry including providing handicapped ramps as opportunities arise for church member or community needs. Questions: ask Team leader Bob Rainey or Ron Molnar.

- Delivery of Stop Hunger On the Weekends (SHOW) packages of food. Questions: ask Wayne Smith or a good number of Brotherhood volunteers who share in this ministry in its fifth year.

- Delivery of SBC contributions to FISH. At least monthly or as needed. Questions: ask Wayne Smith or a good number of Brotherhood volunteers who share in this ministry.

- Support of church-wide ministries as they occur seasonally.

- Bring your possible ministry ideas where other men can work along side you... ideas in the making include assistance to the hands up ministries of The Way, periodic Saturday breakfasts for church members and interested newcomers, a quarterly men's community breakfast, Operation Andrew (following Pastor Karl's lead), and more where more men can spread the load of reaching others for Christ... "His last command... Our first concern".

Prayer Request
E-mail Notifications

To alert our church family via email of your prayer requests, please send your information to *prayer@sandstonbaptist.org*.

Is the church open? If we experience inclement weather on a Sunday, you may:

- call the church to hear a recording about the status of worship services and Bible study.
- watch channels 6, 8, or 12 for updates.
- go to the TV station websites for information.

If Henrico schools are closed on a Wednesday because of bad weather, we will NOT have any Wednesday night activities.

ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	saturday
1 5:30 Prison Ministry	2 2:00 Lowder Group 6:30 Men's Basketball	3 10:00 Lutie Suddith Group 2:00 VanLear Group	4 5:30 Dinner 6:30 Activities for Preschool, Children, Youth and Adults 7:30 Adult Choir	5 6:30 Singles Group 6:30 HIS Group Bible Study	6	7
8 10:15 RA and GA Meetings 11:30 Kids Christmas Rehearsal 6:30 Compassionate Friends	9 6:30 Men's Basketball	10 6:30 Williamson Group	11 5:30 Dinner 6:30 Activities for Preschool, Children, Youth and Adults 7:30 Adult Choir	12 10:30 Friendly Club Meeting 6:30 HIS Group Bible Study	13 6:30 Children's Christmas Dress Rehearsal	14
15 5:00 Children's Christmas Program	16 6:30 Men's Basketball	17	18 5:30 Dinner 6:30 Activities for Preschool, Children, Youth and Adults 7:30 Adult Choir	19 6:30 HIS Group Bible Study	20	21 6:30 Children's F.U.N. Night
22	23 6:30 Men's Basketball	24 5:00 Christmas Eve Worship Office Closed	25 Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27	28
29	30 6:30 Men's Basketball	31				

News From The Kitchen Crew

MENUS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

December 4 - Chili
December 11 - Ham
December 18 - Roast Beef

Birthday Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	saturday
1 Donna Drummond John Kelly Zachary Kirby Hudson Loving	2 Nancy Davies Faith Hamp Michael Ramey Adam Rhodes Jennifer Witherspoon	3 Joshua Carter Conner Hazelgrove Phillip Hunt	4 Allison Boyer Terri Broyhill	5 Jim Eberly DeeAnne Gorman	6 Loma Lambert Carl Walker	7 Jackie Bandy Judy Bruce Angela Hardiman Kathy Thomas Mitchel Thomas Ken Weaver
8 Meredith Mothershead Arden Neighbors BJ O'Bier	9 Sherman McLaughlin Sr.	10 Pat Culbertson Karen Graham Kurt Ludwig Buddy Throckmorton Lynn Tomlin	11 Zachary Davies Kim Mitchell Helen Payne Tanner Staub	12 Jeff Krueger	13	14 Kip Mitchell
15 Nina Carroll Michael Gooch Michael Heilman	16 Bryan Bivins Cindy Edwards Charles Hankins Sara Richmond	17 Hanson Butler	18 Sydney DeProfio Linda Poarch Pauline Pollard Madison Watson	19 Shelly Beale	20 Olivia Bowling Joel Mooney Jillian Schmid	21 Michael Brown David Clements Jo Duzan Diane Jenkins R.L. Rowsey
22 Tommy Ashworth Frances Brown Wanda Chinault	23 A.B. Doughty Pat Stainker	24 Kristina Blake	25 Margaret Bryant Dena Crider Michael Nolte Evelyn Stephenson	26 Kellie Adams Kenneth Blunt	27 Stephanie Bell Ray Crostic Mike Edwards Autry Hailey	28 Jason Blount Kloey Cole S.W. Mitchell
29 Brandon Stafford Nikole Wachsmuth Wayne Zarensky	30 Brenda Crostic Jeff Schmid	31 Rachael Bowling Brett Burton George Farmer Vicki Hardiman Phillip Harper				

Happy December parents and youth! What a great month November was for our youth group and some of our youth - leading worship one night at revival, enjoying our time at our Fall Retreat at Camp Willow Run, and having 3 youth make a public statement of faith! These are some great youth, keep praying for them as a church and supporting them! Thank you to all of our adult leaders that help with Sunday School and helped to serve as leaders for our Fall Retreat! I really appreciate all that you do!

We will continue our Wednesday night youth time with a few Christmas themed activities as well as have our annual Youth Christmas Party (date TBD). Pay attention to our youth Facebook page, Instagram, and/ or our email for updates on our December activities. Please make sure you are part of our youth group mailing list sbcyouth.info@gmail.com or part of our youth Facebook page (SBCYouth-Fusion) to get updates on youth events throughout the winter. You can also follow SBC Youth on Twitter and Instagram for updates @sbcfusion.

Justin

FISH

During December, we will collect laundry and dish detergent for Eastern Henrico County FISH.

Thank You

Dear Karl and Sandston Baptist Church,

How can we thank you enough for the love offering of over $7,100 given in support of our ministry during the revival? I have preached 729 revivals in the last 27 years. This is by far the largest love offering we have ever received! You will never know how grateful we are for what you have done. I rejoice with you over the 3 young people who were saved. God bless you for being such a giving church.

With Our Love, Ester and Roger Roller