



Celebrate the Savior this season by taking time to reflect on His breaking through into our earthly lives. Maybe you love to steep yourself in rich Christmas traditions or perhaps you need to hear the story of the Incarnation in a fresh way. We have a wealth of Advent literature for adult meditations and devotional ideas for families as well as favorite Christmas storybooks. Our prayer is that each book will help you and your family experience the miracle of God with us this Christmas.

A sampling of Advent and Christmas reading:

Preparing for Jesus by Walter Wangerin, Jr.

A captivating re-creation of the stories of Zechariah, Mary, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Simeon and Anna, two magi, and Jesus himself.

The Wonder of Christmas: A Family Advent Journey by Melody Carlson

A children's devotional, 25 stories accompanied by scripture, discussion questions, and a family activity.

Just 25 Days 'Til Christmas:

An Advent Celebration for the Entire Family by Rebecca Bauer

This interactive book offers daily devotionals, practical ideas for incorporating children into your planning, fun activities, and a Christmas checklist for holiday preparations.

Christ in Christmas: A Family Advent Celebration.

Devotions from authors including Sproul, Swindoll and Dobson, plus hymns, questions to ponder, and things to make that will build family traditions and help you celebrate Jesus' coming.

Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas.

From Madeline L'Engle to Karl Barth to St. Thomas Aquinas, this anthology offers spiritual nourishment from a wide spectrum of classic and contemporary sources to give new meaning to "holiday preparations."

Waiting for Christmas by Kathleen Bostrom.

This book tells children about the history of observing Advent and the first Advent calendar and how it helps us prepare our hearts for the coming Christ child.

What Happened to Merry Christmas? by Robert Baker.

This book shows children that what we see at Christmas — the Advent wreath, the star on the tree, the nativity set, and even the gifts under the tree — reminds us of our anticipation, preparation, and celebration of Jesus.

Blacknall Church Calendar

Sunday, 12/7
8:30 & 11:00 Lessons and Carols
Thursday, 12/11
9:15 AM WBS Brunch

Sunday, 12/14
6:30 PM Carols and Cocoa

Sunday, 12/21
6:30 PM Worship on the Longest Night

Wednesday, 12/24
5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service
7:30 PM Christmas Eve Service
Thursday, 12/25
Friday, 12/26
Holidays-Church Office Closed

Sunday, 12/28
8:30 & 11:00 AM Worship Services
9:45 AM Christmastide Reception
NO Sunday School

Church Staff

Allan Poole-Pastor
David Dunderdale-Pastor
Dave Stuntz-Music Min.
Beth Solie-
Children's Min.-Preschool
Amy Rowell-Children's Min. Elem.
Caroline Inazu-MS Youth Min.
Margaret Frothingham-
Congregational Care
Diane Beacham-Admin. Manager
Jan Smart-Assoc. Office Admin.
Dare Nicholson-Assoc. Office Admin
Terry Simpson-Facilities Manager
Andrea Bridges-Duke Div. Intern
Gannon Sims-Duke Div. Intern

Email: churchoffice@blacknallpres.org
Web Site: www.blacknall.org

Monthly Schedule

Sunday
8:30 AM Worship
9:30-11:15 Library Open
9:45 AM Sunday School
11:00 AM Worship
International Missions (2nd Sun)
5:00 PM Adult Education (2nd Sun.)
6:00 PM BYG Time (Youth Groups)
6:30 PM Communion & Prayers (3rd Sun)
6:30 PM Prayers for Missionaries (2nd Sun)

Monday
7:00 AM Outreach Comm. (2nd Mon.)
7:00 PM Community Outreach Comm. (2nd Mon.)
5:00 PM Finance Comm. (3rd Mon.)
7:30 PM Diaconate (1st & 3rd Mon.)
7:30 PM Session (2nd & 4th Mon.)
7:30 PM Family Life Comm. (1st Mon.)
8:00 PM Building & Property (1st Mon.)
8:00 PM Congregational Care (1st Mon.)
Hospitality Comm. (1st Mon)

Tuesday
7:30 PM Worship Comm. (1st Tues.)
7:30 PM Personnel Comm. (3rd Tues.)

Wednesday
6:45 AM Men's Bible Study
10:30 AM LCs (Seniors Ministry)
5:30 PM TableTalk

Thursday
9:15 AM Women's Bible Study
7:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous

Saturday
8:00 AM Prayers for Renewal
7:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous

Committee chair will notify members of changes to meeting time.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1902 PERRY STREET
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December
2008

Blacknall

Memorial Presbyterian Church



Dear Blacknall family,

In this Advent season as we are preparing for the celebration of the coming of Christ, let me invite you to join me in a brief theological exercise.

Almost one thousand years ago a famous theologian named Peter Abelard declared, "I think that the purpose and cause of the Incarnation was that God might illuminate the world by his wisdom and excite it to the love of himself."

What do you think of Peter's statement? Was he right? Read carefully. Shall we agree that the purpose of Christ's coming was to stimulate and inspire us to acts of love and adoration?

Five hundred years later the poet Henry Vaughan, meditating in the same Event, reflected, "I would I had in my best part fit rooms for thee! Or that my heart were so clean as thy manger was!" Vaughan is more skeptical than Abelard about our native ability, if left to our own, to stir ourselves to adoration. His self-inventory leaves him bereft of any hope that his own heart might prove a suitable habitation for One so marvelous. He concludes, "I am all filth, and obscene...."

Which is it? Who is the better doctor of the soul? Do we need an inspired example of love, as in Abelard? Or something more, as in Vaughan? The difference is not inconsequential; the physician prescribes according to his diagnosis, and the patient pays with his life. Which shall it be? The doctor as cheerleader? Or as surgeon of the heart? The one who exhorts? Or the one who gets his own hands dirty in dealing with this deadly infection?

We might give our ancient brother Peter partial credit, but surely we cannot be fully satisfied with his answer. And were we not in a charitable mood, we might even say that Abelard's reflection is dangerously misleading. A quick survey of the worshipping world around us reveals no lack of effort to inspire us to emotional heights of love and adoration. But once the rally ends, and we are back in the familiar surroundings of our own minds, are we not left once more to ourselves?

What we need, what we are desperate for, is one who addresses our deepest need, one who cures by inhabiting this fallen flesh. Vaughan looks to Christ for the remedy, "Yet, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make clean." And he concludes, "Let no more this leper haunt, and soil thy door; Cure him, ease him or release him! And let once more by mystic birth the Lord of Life be born in Earth."

We need more than inspiration. And thanks be to God, He knows that! "He who knew no sin became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God." The doctor becomes the patient, so to heal and restore to full life. That is what we celebrate as we welcome anew this Jesus. An inspiration? Surely. But so much more.

Merry Christmas.

Allan

Blacknall Family Announcements

Christmas Season Schedule

Daily Advent Devotional

Once again, a booklet for Advent devotions is available -- but this year, it's quite different. For each day of Advent (November 30 until Christmas) you will find a Scripture reading and a short essay, written by Blacknall members and friends. This collection can be used for personal and family devotions, as well as with small groups.

The booklet is available to be picked up at the church, or you can find it posted on the church website. May Christ be honored as we prepare to celebrate His birth!

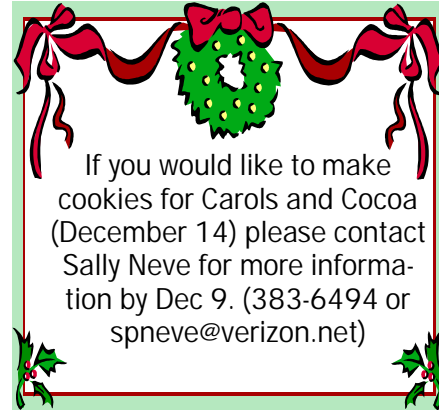
Dec. 7 – Service of Lessons and Carols at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. during the morning worship services, on the second Sunday of Advent. The service is built around a series of Scripture readings.

Beginning with the account of the sin of Adam and Eve, the readings move through God's promise of a Savior, prophecies about that Messiah, and then several from the account of Jesus' birth. The culmination of the readings is the magnificent first chapter of John. "In the beginning was the Word" takes us back to the start, and "we have seen Him" points us to the Lord's Table, God's offer of redemption and reconciliation.

After each Scripture reading, there will be a musical selection presented by the choir, followed by a Christmas carol for the congregation (accompanied by chamber orchestra, including harp). Bring a friend to worship during the Advent season.

Children's Worship and Junior Worship will be held during each service, as well as regular Sunday school classes that day.

Dec. 14 – Carols and Cocoa at 6:30 pm, a Christmas songfest with cocoa and cookies to follow. Here's your chance to sing every carol and seasonal favorite you can think of. NO childcare as this is an event for the entire family.



Dec. 21 – Worship on the Longest Night 6:30 pm – Perhaps this has been a difficult year for you or you are having a hard time getting into the 'spirit' of the season. We will gather for Communion and prayerful worship of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, who is with us even on this the (symbolically) longest and darkest night of the year.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Services 5:30 and 7:30 pm – with candlelight and Communion. Childcare available for infants through age 4.

Would your children like to be included to play/sing? Contact Dave.

Dec. 28 – Regular Worship Services – NO Sunday School for adults or children and NO nursery during the Sunday School hour. Come to the Christmastide reception for all in the Fellowship Hall from 9:45 until 10:45 am.

Jan. 4 Regular Worship Services NO Sunday school for adults or children and NO nursery during the Sunday School hour.

Annunciation

To the impossible: Yes

Enter and penetrate

O Spirit. Come and bless

This hour: the star is late.

Only the absurdity of love

Can break the bonds of hate.

Madeleine L'Engle

Blacknall Family Announcements

New Members

Our newest members are: Rachel and Sean Baker, Chris Blumhofer and Stephanie Wheatley, Matt and Andrea Bridges, Craig Burkhardt, Kim Dunderdale, Sam Dunderdale, Rob and Erin Moncure, Christy Mullen, Derek and Janise Smith, Jonathan Thornhill and Bethany Jillson-Thornhill.

These folks, whose pictures will be posted on the bulletin board in the Commons, bring a rich variety of gifts and experiences to us, as we seek to be faithful as a church to the call of Christ to be his outpost of the Kingdom here at the corner of Perry and Iredell Please be sure to welcome them!

GriefShare Support Group continues Tuesday, December 2

If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, you are invited to join a GriefShare group. GriefShare is a small group video and discussion series which addresses the grief journey from practical, spiritual, and biblical perspectives.

Whether your loss is recent or in the distant past, you are welcome to participate. We meet on Tuesday evenings, 7-9 p.m. in the home of JoAnne Hodgson (in Woodcroft). The group began in November, bridges the holidays, and ends in February.

Leaders are Joanne Hodgson and Margaret Frothingham, Blacknall members. For more information, please contact Margaret at 286-5586 or mfrothingham@blacknall.org.

To view the GriefShare website for other group locations and times, go to: www.griefshare.org.

Middle School News

Thank you to everyone who contributed shoeboxes and materials for Operation Christmas Child. Blacknall donated over 135 boxes that will be sent across the world in the next month.

The middle school youth group has continued studying lesser known stories in the Old Testament these past few weeks. We have seen how God will go to surprising lengths to grab our attention, that He wants to know us and be known by us.

Blacknall Missions

Pilgrimage of Pain and Hope Informational Meeting

Blacknall is planning another Pilgrimage this Spring. This is an opportunity for us to discover and explore the community of Durham in its pain and hope. This Pilgrimage will meet for 12 weeks on Sunday mornings during the Sunday School hour beginning at the end of January and concluding on Easter Sunday. It will include an intensive weekend immersion into Durham.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Pilgrimage then you are encouraged to attend a brief informational meeting after the second service on Sunday, December 14, in the Community Room. If you have questions please contact Chris Rice, Amanda Diekman, or David Dunderdale.

Local Outreach Committee

Let's remember to be a blessing of generosity and love for our neighbors in Durham! Visit the Angel Tree in the lower atrium and sign up to minister to families in the Walltown area through our friends at St. John's Missionary Baptist Church. Contact Brian or Amanda Diekman for more information at 919-358-4314 or ale3@duke.edu.

The gifts of God from the people of God



| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Year-to-date budget through Nov..25 | \$1,022,747 |
| Year-to-date income through Nov. 25 | \$841,658 |
| Year to-date expenses through Nov. 25 | \$969,740 |
| | |
| Covenant Campaign Total Borrowed | \$1,100,000 |
| Covenant Campaign Loan Balance 11/25 | \$329,929 |

Year-End Giving – As you are considering year-end financial gifts, please take these Blacknall deadlines into consideration:

In order to be counted as a contribution in the year 2008, checks mailed to Blacknall must be postmarked by **December 31** in order to comply with IRS regulations. Any gifts brought to the church office must be received by noon **Wednesday, December 31**. Checks brought to the office in January 2009 that are dated December 2008 will be considered a 2009 gift to the church.

The church is equipped to receive gifts of stock. Information on how to transfer stock to Blacknall is available from Rick Every, Treasurer (489-9733). It is very important that you notify Rick no later than **Monday, December 22, in order to allow sufficient time for the transfer and sale of the donated stocks.**

Requests for reimbursements from Blacknall for 2008 expenses need to be turned in to the church office no later than **Monday, December 22**. It is most

Blacknall Substantiation Letters for 2008 Offering Gifts and Covenant Campaign Pledges and Gifts

Blacknall is required by the IRS to keep a record of any single gift of \$250 or more. We will mail out letters of substantiation for 2008 contributions before mid-February.

If you contributed to the Covenant Campaign, you will receive two letters: one for the operating budget and one for the Covenant Campaign. These letters are only for your records; they do not need to be sent to the IRS as an attachment to your tax papers. For gifts less than \$250, your cancelled checks are sufficient documentation.

Please notify Diane Beacham as soon as possible if one of your letters is incorrect, by calling the church office at 286-5586.

