



The Clen-Moore Messenger



DECEMBER 2024

Dear church family,

In the middle of our main living space of our home, which includes our dining room, living room, and kitchen is a beautiful clock that randomly plays from three selectable playlists at the top of each hour. There are multiple moving pieces within the clock, which makes it a joy to watch, as various numbers and symbols twirl and move to the music. It is akin to a modern version of a cuckoo clock. One of the three playlists includes several Christmas songs to help celebrate the holidays.

This year, someone in our household switched it to the Christmas song playlist WEEKS before Thanksgiving. Now, I won't point any fingers, but I don't think I'm alone in feeling like we rush more and more to arrive at Christmas or just about any holiday occasion. Halloween candy is sold during Labor Day weekend; Christmas decorations are available in the store before Halloween. It feels like we get so ahead of ourselves that we barely take time to enjoy the holiday by the time it comes around!

Sometimes I may be a bit of a grinch for wanting to keep the order of holidays in their proper places, but it reveals how impatient we are as a society. I am no better. This year I found a Christmas gift for my family that I'm particularly excited to give, and I don't want to wait until Christmas to give it. We often 'work for the weekend', or the next vacation, or when we can finally retire. Technology has increased our impatience, but I suspect it has always been a challenge. Advent confronts our impatience and forces us to notice where we are, right here and now.

I recently read this quote from former pastor and ministry leader Dan White Jr.: "Don't sanitize Advent. There were 400 years of longing and lament after Malachi prophesied about forthcoming justice in the arrival of the Messiah. There are no easy answers as to why God makes us wait." In the church age, the time between the coming of Christ and before his return, we do not have to 'wait' in the same way that the ancient Israelites did. It is hard to imagine waiting 400 days for something to come to pass, let alone 400 years!

The name Malachi may never have been the name of an individual prophet, as it means "my messenger" in Hebrew. We are quite familiar with the angelic messengers who proclaim the birth of Jesus. Malachi 3:1, 6-7 makes these future declarations: "See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts...For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished. Ever since the days of your ancestors you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts."

Malachi, among other prophets, foretold the coming of the Lord through our Messiah Jesus Christ long before it became reality. Knowing that God would be headed our way is helpful, but it can still leave us feeling lost. Knowing these facts but not feeling them in our hearts can make faith feel hollow. But notice the end of the passage -- is when we return to the Lord that he will return to us. We can hope and pray for God to act, but we often bring the problem to a relationship, not God!

This Advent and Christmas season, I encourage you to return your heart to seek Jesus our Messiah. In doing so, remember that it will require us to turn away from distractions that have led us astray. The Lord is near, and He's waiting patiently for us. Waiting passively will lengthen the feeling of absence—seek and return to the Lord, and He will find us!

Merry Christmas!
-Michael



UPCOMING Events



Sunday, December 1	Prayer Team in Library 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Worship with Dave Goff preaching 10:30am Christmas Show rehearsal during Children in Worship Women's Bible Study 6:00pm	Saturday, December 14	PEO-A mtg. 10:00am Christmas Show dress rehearsal 10:30am-1:30pm Lunch will be provided
Tuesday, December 3	Bible Study 9:30am	Sunday, December 15	Prayer Team in Library 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:30am Christmas Show— Reception in Parlor following worship Women's Bible Study 6:00pm
Sunday, December 8	Prayer Team in Library 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:30am Christmas Show rehearsal during Children in Worship Women's Bible Study 6:00pm	Tuesday, December 17	Bible Study 9:30am
Monday, December 9	PEO-Y mtg. 11:00am	Sunday, December 22	Prayer Team in Library 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Worship with communion 10:30am
Tuesday, December 10	Bible Study 9:30am	Tuesday, December 24	Christmas Eve Service 6:00pm
Thursday, December 12	Staff mtg. 11:00am	Wednesday, December 25	Merry Christmas
		Sunday, December 29	Prayer Team in Library 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:30am



Deadline for January is December 22nd



December 2024
Health Tip from the
Health Ministry Deacons



"As you head into the holidays, think about the life you want for yourself. What steps do you want to take? Jesus helps us determine those steps. Whether you want to grow in spirituality or character or begin a new healthy habit, He can equip you to be the hero/heroine of your own story."

(From Woman's Day, December, 2024)

"God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

(1 John 5:11, NIV)



Merry Christmas
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



**Food Pantry/Blessing Box
Collection
(Month 8) - December**



- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Body Wash | Toilet Paper |
| Shampoo | Hair Conditioner |
| Feminine Products | Toothpaste |
| Facial Tissues | Men's Deodorant |
| Women's Deodorant | |



Communion will be served on:

Sunday, December 22nd



**Mission Spotlight
DECEMBER—Pacella's**



Sal (Josh) and Terrilyn Pacella returned to the States in June 2024 after completing their two year commitment to the Bolivian Life Center (BLC) in Sipe Sipe, Bolivia. The BLC is a residential school which houses up to 40 boys ages 4 through 18 years.

Josh and Terrilyn faced many challenges while serving at the BLS but are encouraged knowing that God's love and grace were planted and sown in the lives of the boys who reside there. Their goal was always to provide spiritual, educational, and emotional supports to the boys.

The Pacella's often reflect on the many joys they experienced while in Bolivia. One particular highlight involved being able to send all of the 24 teenagers from the BLC to a church camp about 6 hours away. It was the first time many had left the town! This church camp in Santa Cruz, Bolivia is run by LATCOM from New Castle!

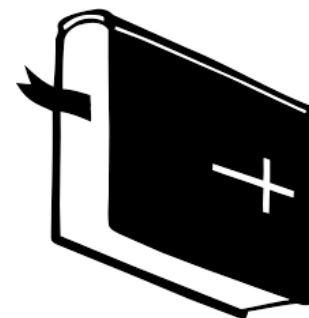
Since returning to New Castle, they have been busy finding a place to live, enrolling their daughter in the Christian Academy, and homeschooling their three boys.

Josh and Terrilyn feel at peace while waiting for God to point them in a new direction. The financial support they continue to receive is being put into a holding account and will be used whenever God calls them back into full time ministry.



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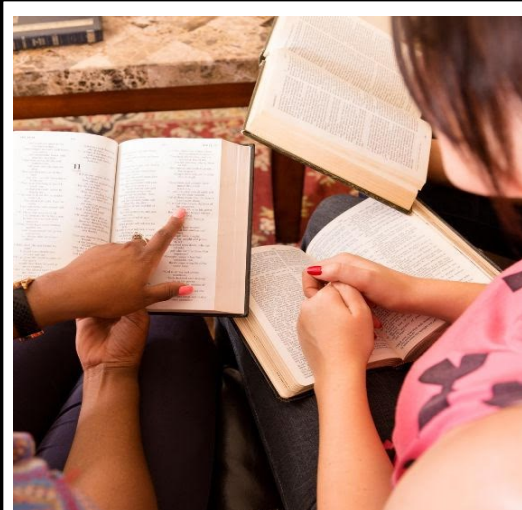


Keep Christ in
Christmas!
Have a
blessed holiday!



Everyone is invited to help take down Christmas decorations. Many hands make light work so please stay after worship on **Sunday, January 5th** to help take down decorations from the Sanctuary and other main areas of the church. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided. Just stick around and wait for instructions.

Thank You!



Let's talk about...
prayer

**WOMEN'S
BIBLE STUDY**

Beginning October 20
Sunday Evenings
6 - 7:30 PM
In the Welcome Center

Text or call 717-576-3619 with questions!