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Inside this issue:

Life Of Worship	2
Life On Mission	2
Student Ministry	3
Passion 2019	3
Bus Ministry	3
Live Nativity	3
Poinsettias	3
Altar Flowers	4
2018 Contributions	4
December Calendar	4
Lottie Moon	4
Christmas at Coats	4

Greetings church family,

As 2018 comes to a close, I want to thank you for praying for Southern Baptists through a year of difficulty, transition and uncertainty. As of last month, the Southern Baptist Convention had five entities without presidential leadership, 1) The International Mission Board (former president, David Platt); 2) LifeWay Christian Resources (former president, Thom Rainer); 3) New Orleans Seminary (former president, Chuck Kelley); 4) Southern Baptist Executive Committee (former president, Frank Page); and 5) Southwestern Seminary (Paige Patterson). Thank you for praying God's favor upon these ministries.

I am pleased to announce the Lord has indeed blessed by providing the International Mission Board (IMB) with a new leader. On November 15th the IMB trustees elected Dr. Paul Chitwood as the entity's 13th president. Dr. Chitwood is the former Executive Director-Treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and past member of the IMB board of trustees. You can read more on Dr. Chitwood's appointment at bpnews.net. Thank you again church for your continued prayer support for our Southern Baptist Convention entities.

During each Christmas season, the IMB holds its annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in honor of 19th century SBC missionary to China, Lottie Moon. Across our nations, SBC churches will collect offerings where 100% of funds go directly to support international missionaries. The total goal for the IMB is a staggering \$160 Million.

Such a number reflects on the great need that exists across our globe. The world's population currently sits at 7.65 Billion. It is estimated that 3.13 Billion people (41.2% or 9 times the US population) have little to no access to the gospel (that means if you were to ask them, "Who is Jesus Christ?" they would say, "I do not know."). Church family, the need is absolutely staggering. I cannot overstress that point. That is why we GO and that is why we GIVE. (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 19:10; Acts 1:8; Rev. 7:9-17)

This Christmas season you'll have the opportunity to give towards the LMCO on **Sunday, December 16**. Our church has set a goal for **\$37,000**. Again, every dollar goes overseas to directly support international missionaries. Let me challenge you to seek the Lord as to how you might give this year. I want to encourage you to make your most expensive Christmas gift be the one you give to international missions. As you give to the LMCO, do so with a cheerful attitude, a sacrificial spirit, and a generous gift.

For more information on the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the work of the International Mission Board, visit imb.org. For more information on global statistics of unreached people groups, visit joshuaproject.net.

Blessings to you church. Have a very, Merry Christmas!

Serving together,

Pastor Neal

LIFE OF WORSHIP | Pastor Jonathan [Psalm 34:3]

We are entering into the Advent season. Each Sunday in December leading up to Christmas a new candle is lit in the Advent wreath. A passage of scripture is read by a family. Then we sing a carol together. But why do we do this? Many of you may have grown up observing this tradition. For others, Advent may be a foreign concept.

Advent means "arrival, appearing, coming" and, for us, anticipates the coming of Christ. God had been silent for centuries and His people had been earnestly anticipating the coming Messiah. Praise God that He came and in the way that He did!

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:2)

Two thousand years later, we know the end of the Christmas story, which is definitively linked to the Easter narrative. Jesus came as a baby, lived a sinless life, died the death we deserve, rose victorious over death, and is coming again as King of kings and Lord of lords! Yet we often need to be reminded of these truths. During the season of Advent, we remember and reflect on His first coming. In the midst of a busy season of preparing for Christmas gatherings and events, Advent offers a time of spiritual preparation. We can reflect on the true hope, peace, love, and joy that the coming of Christ made possible for us all.

So as you come to worship together each Sunday this month, eagerly anticipate celebrating Advent with your family and church family. Cling to the promises of the Word who was made flesh. Long for Christmas because of Christ and look forward to His second coming when He makes all things new!

*O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

CHRISTMAS MUSIC CORNER

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Meredith Andrews

The Prayer

Natalie Grant + Danny Gokey

We Are The Reason

David Phelps

LIFE ON MISSION: DISCIPLESHIP | Pastor Jimmy [Phil 3:10]

Do you know the difference between a wish and a goal? A plan. If you don't plan to make something happen, you're simply wishing. This principle certainly applies to bible study and prayer. Spurgeon reminds us that we need a daily intake of scripture with a goal of understanding it yet accepting it in childlike faith. We should read intending to obey and apply, always keeping Christ in view.

Regarding the practice of bible study, I encourage you to:

Have a plan - have at least a six month, preferably an annual, plan for your study. This is not saying that you should necessarily read the bible in a year; just that you should have a plan for that time. Hold yourself accountable to somebody, from following the plan itself to daily reading. By the way, reading a little more than three chapters a day will take you through the whole bible in a year.

Read enough to move forward, but not so much that your study becomes shallow. Consider this formula: Consistency plus Quality plus Accountability is greater than Quantity.

Summarize your reading in a brief sentence. Keep a journal, or log, of your observations.

Determine and state at least one application step from your reading. Is there sin you need to confess, truth you need to profess, priorities or behaviors you need to change?

Next month, we'll talk about specific methods of bible study, but whether you're making New Year's Resolutions or are simply a goal-oriented person, have a plan and stop wishing.

Coats Baptist Church
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SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE
 8:30 & 11:00 am Worship Services
 9:45 am Sunday School
 Children's Church 8:30 & 11:00 am
 6:00 pm Evening Worship Service

DECEMBER PRAYER CARDS
 This month, remember to pray for
THE COMMUNITY OF COATS

DECEMBER

12/2 Senior Singles Lunch (11:00 am)
 Angels Say What!?! Children's Musical (6 pm)
 12/8 Middle School Christmas Party (12:00-3:00 pm)
 12/9 Lord of All Handbell Concert (6 pm)
 Deacons Meeting (7 pm)
 12/12 Grocery Assist (5:30)
 12/16 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (8:30 & 11 am)
 Christmas at Coats (6 pm)
 12/21 Live Nativity (7-9 pm)
 12/22 Live Nativity (7-9 pm)
 12/23 Live Nativity (7-9 pm)
 Christmas Caroling (6 pm)
 12/24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (5:00 pm)
 12/26 No Evening Activities or Bible Studies
 12/30 Together Sunday (no 8:30 or 6:00 service)
 9:45 Sunday School
 11:00 Worship Service
 12/31 New Year's Eve Bash (6-9 pm)
The Church Office will be closed December 24-26.

imb | LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING®

Our goal is to sacrificially give **\$37,000** towards the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. There will be a special time to give during the Sunday morning services on December 16, but you can begin to give anytime in the coming weeks! Pray and give!

It's a cantata... it's a musical...

IT'S CHRISTMAS AT COATS!
 December 16
 6:00 PM



Christmas at Coats is the name for the annual Christmas event presented by our collective Worship Ministry team each December. This year, the theme is "This Is Jesus" as we tell who Jesus is through song. Join us for this special evening worship through song and narration. Invite your friends and family!

A reception will follow Christmas at Coats.

STUDENT MINISTRY | Anthony [Psalm 51:10-13]

Imagine this, A young man is celebrating his 18th birthday. He comes home to find his parents have put out baby pictures everywhere. The day of his birth is discussed, praised, and held high. But no other accomplishment in his life is mentioned. No concern for his future plans. No celebration of the 18th anniversary of his birth, just the day he was born. How do you think he would feel? Is this how we treat Jesus at Christmas?

Please don't get me wrong, I love Christmas. Jesus humbling himself to be born of a human woman, in a stable, and to be raised by a blue collar working man is a miracle in a class by itself. The day Jesus Christ was born changed everything. All I am saying is let us remember the man the child became, and the God that He is as much as we celebrate a baby in a manger.

In Revelation 1:14-16, Jesus is described like this:
 "His head and hair were white like wool—white as snow—and His eyes like a fiery flame. His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and His voice like the sound of cascading waters. He had seven stars in His right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth, and His face was shining like the sun at midday."

This is a far cry from a helpless baby. Not only did Jesus grow up, live a sinless life, and die for our sins, but He is God. He holds stars in His hand. He can hold us through any trial we face.

We do not serve a helpless Savior. We do not bow before a powerless infant. It may have all started with a baby's cry, but Jesus is not a baby anymore. He grew up, He sits at the right hand of the Father and He stands in the gap for you and for me.

PASSION 2019

Passion is a three-day worship experience for 18-25 year olds. We will be attending Passion on January 2-4, 2019 in Washington, DC. The entire cost of the trip for you is only \$125. This includes your ticket, hotel stay, and transportation. Spots are first come, first serve and they are limited!

Contact: Pastor Jonathan | (910) 398-3916

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Bus Ministry | Drivers and chaperones are needed to serve once a month. For more information on this opportunity to serve our community, email serve@coatsbaptist.com.

Contact: Pastor Jimmy | (910) 797-7533

Live Nativity | This event will be held Friday-Sunday, December 21-23 from 7-9 pm nightly. Volunteers are need to play the roles of nativity characters, for set-up, and to provide snacks. Pray about how you can be a part of this unique Christmas gift to our community. There are sign-up sheets near the worship center entrance.

Contact: Mark Langdon (919) 820-5576

OTHER NEWS

Poinsettias | You can purchase a poinsettia in memory or honor of someone this Christmas. The envelopes are located by the main entrance of the worship center. The price of each poinsettia is \$12 and the deadline for purchasing a poinsettia is Sunday, December 16.

Altar Flowers | Beginning in 2019, please contact the church office at (910) 897-5173 if you desire to have flowers placed on the altar on any given Sunday.

2018 Contributions | The deadline for receiving credit for 2018 contributions is Monday, December 31, at noon.