

Mendon Church  
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# The Gleam

Mendon Church

December 2017

## The Nativity as the New Year:

### A Note from Pastor Hwang

*Inside this issue:*

Worship Corner 2

Upcoming Events 2

Christmas Eve Services 2

Prayer Requests 3

Birthdays & Anniversaries 3

Every December (or even late November depending on the lectionary schedule of the year), I greet people in church by saying, “Happy New Year!” just like people usually do in January. It may not be a big deal for many people whether Christmas day belongs to a liturgical new year or the end of a calendar year, but it matters a lot for the Christian faith. When it is celebrated as a part of wrap-up of the year, Christmas time would be more about relaxation, celebration with family and friends, and exchanging presents with each other. Even though many Christians agree that modern day commercialism has distorted the meaning of Christmas entirely, they have embraced the distortion rather comfortably because Santa, snow, and big Christmas sales add splendor and richness to the festivity. Because the day falls at “year-end”, people expect comfort, affability, and forgiveness from the birth of Christ.

However, when we consider the day as a part of a new year, we may understand Christmas quite differently. In the beginning of a new year – even though we may value our family, work, and daily routine of life – we try to spend time for silence and solitude, hoping to make changes that allow us to manage this new 365-page book more meaningfully. People resolve to change their behaviors or traits to improve their life and to accomplish personal goals. Likewise, seeing the birth of Jesus as the beginning of a new liturgical year gives us new hope and life plans every year because Christmas is a time of a separation from the undesired lust of the flesh and total dependence on the guidance of the Spirit. It is the time to distinguish between the trivial many and the vital few in life.



Everybody seems to have his or her own story of failing New Year’s resolutions and I am no exception. My resolution to eat healthy tends to be broken as soon as I take my first trip to a Chinese buffet and my desire to exercise more is typically defeated by my procrastination.

*(continued on page 2)*

**Weekly worship  
and Christian  
Education  
Sundays @10 am**

## *Upcoming Events*

**Dec. 2 @ 5pm**  
Church Christmas  
Decorating

**Dec. 3 @ 4pm**  
Ladies Craft Night

**Dec. 7 @ 6pm**  
Ladies Christmas Dinner

**Dec. 17 @ 2pm**  
Christmas Caroling

## *Christmas Eve Services*

**10am**  
Regular worship service

**10pm**  
Candlelight Service

## Worship Corner

### Worship Space Upgrades

The upgrades to our worship space are proceeding nicely. Special thanks to many people, but especially Leanne Martin who creatively worked on the overall design of the space, as well as constructing the new draperies in the front and the window treatments along the back wall. Many, many hours of work have gone into the planning and implementation. Others who have helped in significant ways: Gordy Benoit, Jim Shoots, Laima Beck and Cindy Westfall.

### New Blue Hymnals

Our hymnals are over 40 years old, and there has been discussion about buying more contemporary hymnals. Pastor Hodong made inquiries through the Presbytery, and from these efforts we were fortunate to be able to obtain more recent hymnals from South Presbyterian Church for free. These blue-covered hymnals are in the worship area now.

## The Nativity as the New Year (continued from page 1)

Through failing at many New Year's resolutions, the idea of making these resolutions has become almost laughable and meaningless to me. Maybe our spiritual resolutions like reading the Bible and praying to God more regularly follow the same track as our other behavioral resolutions, which may explain why many Christians also hesitate to make spiritual resolutions in the new liturgical year.

Perhaps it isn't a good idea to make our resolutions before we inquire of ourselves what values of life we uphold most and what relationships we desperately hope to improve. If we are able to tearfully pray to God for his intervention and guidance in our lives as we begin a new year, if we can privately write down our deepest affections for our loved ones, if we strongly aspire to and appreciate God's call for our life, we will have experiences that are much more valuable than how long we keep our resolutions, even though they are not totally separable. For the new liturgical year of 2018, my suggestion for you is to spend a day or two of solitude to find your center before God, meditating on the meaning of Christmas in your life and appreciating the presence of your loved ones in your life. After all, our confession – that we are only servants of God as His son humbled Himself and became incarnate in human flesh – is all we can bring to God.

## Birthdays

Carrie Eby	12/1
Isaac Kamara	12/1
Israel Kamara	12/1
Kevin Koek	12/5
Maureen Shea	12/10
Emery Faulkner	12/12
Jeffrey Faulkner	12/12
Tara Nickel	12/12
Dorothy Stubbings	12/13
Leanne Martin	12/16
William Eby	12/19
Courtney Chiafery	12/21
Alex Holton	12/22
Sandy Desassure	12/24
Stephanie Templeton	12/25
Mike Eby	12/29

## Anniversaries

Brett & Tracy Apthorpe 12/30



## Prayer Requests

Gordy Benoit's friend, John, who has a serious eye infection

Stephanie Templeton's father, Gus, who recently had surgery

Dorothy Stubbings, who is going through medical issues

Doris Naundorf's friend Walter

Shirley Snyder's sister-in-law

Tara Nickel's friend, Chris

Cindy Westfall's mother & sister

Lynn Willard

**Those who are homebound:** *Susan and Allen Beauregard, Norma Glamack, Doris Naundorf, Shirley Snyder, and Ann Wood*

**Our Missionaries:** *John and Beaj Reed with SIM; The Shalhoub's with the Navigators; The Robinsons in Haiti; The McKees with SIL/Wycliffe*

**Our College Students:** *Jonathan Alcorn, Jessica Apthorpe, Alex Baronsky, Brooke Cheyne, McKensie Galusha, Katie Kerekes, Jenny Moore, Meredith Rogers, Kyle Schultze and Julia Smith*

**Those in the Military:** *Killian Anstee-Sgt. US Army, currently stationed/Ft Polk, La.; Garrett Koek - Captain US Army, currently stationed/Ft Stewart, GA ; Michael Spillane, US Army Reserve, currently stationed/NC*