­Pastor’s Corner

*“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.”
John 1:14a (The Message)*

 The Christmas season is upon us, and has been for some time. I first saw yard decorations around Halloween, Christmas marketing started even before that, and even live Christmas trees have been for sale since Veterans’ Day. Now you can’t go in a store without hearing Christmas music, and our calendars are already filling up with Santa photo ops and family get-togethers. The “most wonderful time of the year,” to borrow a line from Andy Williams, is also the most all-encompassing time of the year – Christmas is big business, and important for family connections, so it is everywhere around us for a good chunk of time.

 Yet for the Christian, the Christmas season isn’t just a time for gift-buying and family trips. It is also, and in fact is even more importantly, a time to think theologically. Now, theology is not necessarily a practice we often want to engage with, certainly not during a hectic time. But Christmas is one of the most specifically-theological holidays of the Christian year. It is a time to remember and reflect upon the reality that God’s own Son, Jesus, stepped from his throne and became *incarnate*. Eugene Peterson, in his Message paraphrase of the Bible, makes that word a little more understandable: Jesus, the Divine Word, became flesh and blood. He came and lived among us. He was with us.

 This is a big thing to wrap our minds around – that God, who is Holy and Other, would become one of us, living with us and experiencing the life we lead – but it is also sensible. How can love be shown from a distance? How can love transcend barriers of status and type? By being with one another. By talking together, by eating together, by walking together, by *living* together. Jesus showed God’s love to us by being with us…and in the process showed us how to love one another, too.

 This Christmas, may we remember the Child born in a manger, who got down in the flesh-and-blood issues of his day and lived the day-to-day struggles of his world. May we experience the love that led him to be among us. And may we mimic his approach as we seek to show love to one another and to all who need to know God loves them, too. Merry Christmas!

In Christ,
Adam

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**Wednesday Dinner**

**December 11 -** Christmas Dinner - Baked Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, Broccoli Casserole, Banana Pudding

The Hospitality Committee requests that reservations be made by Monday, December 9th, by calling 434-352-8847 or emailing ghbcoffice@yahoo.com. Suggested donation is $5.00/adults and $2.00/youth.

From the Deacons

Greetings! Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The Deacon Council meets monthly to focus on Family Ministry, Benevolence, and the ministry of Grace Hills. We appreciate Linda Jo Mays and Joyce Bennett serving as Deacons of the Month during November. Hank Davis and Janice Marston are Deacons of the Month for December.

During November, the Deacon Council agenda included a discussion of deacon training and ways to better serve our families. We also reviewed and updated benevolence guidelines. Pat Torrence, Tim Peterson, and Janice Marston were approved to serve as a Benevolence Committee to administer this program with approval by the Deacon Council. Your donations are supporting helping those with electric bills they cannot pay, helping build a ramp for a church member (along with a family donation and other funds) and helping two families who are struggling. As colder weather nears, we recognize that requests for electrical and heating assistance will increase. We welcome your suggestions and thoughts regarding helping the less fortunate.

Thanks to all who supported Staff Appreciation Month. Grace Hills is blessed with outstanding staff members who minister to us in so many ways. Donations were generous. We will be giving these expressions of love to our staff as Christmas gifts from the church family.

A responsibility of the Deacon Council is to support and assist the pastor in ministry. The Pastor shared with the council about the Christian ministry he is leading at Grace Hills. He is also beginning his service as President of the BGAV. We congratulate him on this honor. We appreciate those who were able to attend the BGAV meeting in Roanoke and shared joy in Adam’s election. Deacons will be praying for Adam’s work. You are encouraged to join in daily prayer for our pastor.

The Deacon Council is a ministry of service and Christian love. If you are aware of those for whom we should pray, visit, or assist, please contact any deacon.

May the grace and peace of God and His great blessings be with you,
 Janice Marston, Chair

The **Seenager’s** will be attending a free concert featuring **The Commonwealth Chorale singing Handel’s Messiah** on Sunday, December 8th, at the Farmville United Methodist Church at 3:00pm. To carpool, meet in the GHBC parking lot at 1:45pm. RSVP needed by December 1st to Pat or Dennis Torrence for a Christmas meal (Dutch Treat) at Charley’s after the concert. See Dennis or Pat for more information.
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The **Grace Hills Youth** will be **collecting Christmas cards** through December 8th and distributing them on December 15th.  With the Christmas card delivery, you can **make a donation to the GHBC Youth Group**, and the donations will go toward youth mission projects and summer camp.  Thank you for your continued support!

***Happenings ~ December 2019***

***Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. -Philippians 4:8***

We celebrate the season of joy! Christmas is a happy time of year; a time of joy. For some it is a time of struggle. We think of those in need and respond generously with gifts, time, talent, and most of all with love.

In the past month, Good Neighbor listened and provided guidance or resources to those seeking help with probable eviction, beds to sleep on, medical requirements, and food. In coordination with Compassion Ministries in Appomattox, Grace Hills Benevolence, the Appomattox Ministerial Association, and family donations, a ramp was built for an individual in our community. A bed was donated by a member, and resources were given to assist a woman to be able to stay in her home. Food resources were sought for a family in need. Also, the Good Neighbor Council provided a light meal and fellowship for two families, a way of connecting these families with fellowship and the love our church has for them.

Lloyd and Shirley Walton scheduled and worked with the Centra Mammography Unit which provided services to 15 women.

Every month is like this at Good Neighbor. Calls keep coming and people have needs. We celebrate this season of Christmas knowing how blessed we are and remembering those less fortunate. We may not always give you names and locations, because of privacy concerns for those seeking help and we sometimes can’t meet the needs brought to us. We try. Talk to any of our council or volunteers. Good Neighbor is your mission in the community. Pray for those to whom we are reaching out and especially for those whose needs are too big or too great for us to meet.

We celebrate this season of love in the spirit of knowing this dedicated mission is a voice in the community provided through faithful servants. If you want to get involved, we welcome any and all.

Merry Christmas and Blessings,
The Good Neighbor Team

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**New Member Committee Year-End Report**

Since October 2018, 18 folks have joined the fellowship of Grace Hills Baptist Church.  We have gladly welcomed Joe and Dixie McDowell, Ginny McDowell, Kristine Harmeyer-Byer, Andi Bryant, Ron and Kathy Heeman, Charlie Peterson, Dan and Michelle Marcellino, Jessica Jordan, Zack Winters, Shelby Marcellino, Jacob Saunders, Ryan Davis, Eddie and Krystina Sale, and Jennifer Tucker.  This is a talented and worthy group; we are delighted to have opportunities to write notes of welcome to them, to encourage them to find Sunday school classes, and to recognize them before the congregation, gifting them and assuring them of our congregational love and support.  Please add your personal welcome whenever you see these folks.

Linda Mays & Nancy Williams
New Member Committee

🎶 🎶 **MUSIC NOTES** 🎶 🎶

**Christmas Ring December 1st at Mt. Comfort -** Join us in the sanctuary of Mt. Comfort United Methodist Church for a Christmas Ring at about 6:45pm.  We have been warmly invited there to help celebrate their December United Methodist Women Banquet.  The banquet happens earlier, but you can enjoy the music in the sanctuary, along with their folks.  Take Route 26 past Walmart, through Penn's Lane, then turn left onto Lime Plant Road and continue there until you see the church and large parking lot on your right.

**Children's Christmas Play December 15 at 6 p.m. -** Bring a Christmas dessert and come Sunday evening, December 15th, to Grace Hills for a holiday program led by the children.  The sanctuary choir will begin the program with music, and the children will sing and present their play to you.  You will be singing throughout the evening.  The art work (letter posters) has already begun to appear, and it is beautiful.  Thanks to all those Grace Hills folks who agreed to contribute art work in the form of letter posters.  We can't wait to see them all together and to hear what the children have to say about the meaning of Christmas.  And as the program ends, we will enjoy holiday desserts and snacks in the Fellowship Hall.

**Christmas Music All Around -** Susie Thomas will be participating with the Commonwealth Chorale Dec. 1st in a joint performance of Handel's “Messiah” and Vivaldi's “Gloria.”  This event will be held in Blackstone.  The following weekend the music will be presented in Farmville.  For details of time and place, see posters in the choir room and in the educational wing hall.  Jefferson Choral Society will present its Christmas concert at Heritage United Methodist Church in Lynchburg Dec. 7th and 8th, consisting of Aaron Garber's “Magnificat” and other holiday favorites.  Nancy Williams, Jayne Enochs and Henry Enochs will participate in this event.  Again, see the poster in the choir room for details.

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Grace hills early learning center
Director: Leslie Galloway Bookkeeper: Lisa Dawson
Phone: (434) 352-2273 Fax: (434) 352-4422 Email: gracehillselc@aol.com

* ELC council meeting: Tuesday, December 10th at 4pm
* ELC Closed Dec. 24th, 25th, and 26th

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**Grace Hills Baptist Church**

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Appomattox, VA 24522-0807 gracehillsbaptist.com

Office hours are Monday thru Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm (open later on Mondays, and closed Tuesdays and Thursdays after 11:00am). Submissions for our January Newsletter are due 12/15/19 by 5:00pm. Contact the office anytime to update your information or to request a digital copy of the newsletter! Have a **Merry Christmas**!