



# Grace Tidings



A Newsletter of Avalon Grace Church

December 2024

## A Happy & Joyous Christmas

The following was written by J. C. O’Hair on **December 15, 1935**, The Berean Bible Society - that’s **89** years ago!!: May his message both edify and bless you!

**I**n wishing our readers a happy and a joyous Christmas we are thinking of many verses of Scripture. We mention three of them just now:

“BLESSED (Happy) IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD WILL NOT IMPUTE SIN.” Romans 4:8.

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT MEAT AND DRINK; BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE, AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Romans 14:17.

“NOW THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING THAT YE MAY ABOUND IN HOPE THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Romans 15:13.

**I**n these verses we read of the true happiness, of righteousness, of peace, of hope and of joy. In all three verses God is mentioned. True happiness, righteousness, peace, hope and joy come from God. “Every good and perfect gift is from above.” God is not a merchant. God is a gracious King. He is the God of all grace.

**T**he blessings mentioned in these verses are not for sale. Man has nothing with which to purchase them. So far as spiritual riches are concerned, the natural man has no earning capacity. He needs none. God longs to give to man every spiritual blessing that He holds. God is a Great Giver. Man is a poor receiver. Spiritually speaking, every man is bankrupt in Adam, but he may be a multimillionaire in Christ, for God has blessed believers with all spiritual blessings in Christ.



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**Pastor Phillip McClellan, Jr.**  
**Pastor Emeritus Arthur Sims**  
**Kathleen Smith, Editor**

**All Are Welcome!**

**Sunday Worship 10:30 AM**  
**(Sunday Messages available on website)**  
**Children’s Sunday School 10:45 AM**

“And to make all men see  
what is the fellowship of the mystery,  
which from the beginning of the world  
hath been hid in God, who created  
all things by Jesus Christ: . . .”  
- Ephesians 3:9

## A Happy & Joyous Christmas (continued from Page 1)



Many, who know little or nothing of the rich spiritual blessings, may be very grateful to their Creator or Supreme Ruler for temporal blessings and offer thanks for good health, food and raiment, a good income, a nice home and some splendid friends.

But they are unacquainted with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Truly many in this land are enjoying many of the by-products of Christianity and still shut out the Christ for whom there was no room in the inn.

God's Word declares that the man without Christ is without hope. Ephesians 2:12. If an eternity of darkness and despair is before the hopeless sinner, how can he know anything of true happiness or true peace or true joy?

Speaking of joy we are at once reminded of Hebrews 12:2, "Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

What a glorious fact! What-blessed good news! God's Son came down from heaven and God's Son went back to heaven. He paid a thirty-three year visit to man's temporary home, this earth. What a reception was His! What disgraceful and cruel treatment the Creator received from His creatures! Truly He was the man of sorrow and acquainted with grief.

But for the joy that was set before Him He went to Calvary. There on the cross the sinless eternal Christ for us made peace with God; there He suffered for sin to bring us to God; there He bare our sins in His own body on the tree; there He provided a positive Divine righteousness for us and then He went back to heaven having obtained eternal redemption for us. All of these facts are declared in the Word of God.

"Happy is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." If our sins were charged to Christ on the Cross, and we by faith have made Christ ours, our sins have

been forever put away. No happy Christmas without the knowledge of the good news. How can man be happy with all of his sins charged against him and the wrath and judgment of God waiting for him?

If we have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of the Son of God's love, God's own righteousness is ours, the peace of God that passeth understanding is ours and the joy of the Holy Spirit is ours. This is the only true joy.

No better wish can we ask for you than Romans 15:13: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit."

"Fill you". "Abound in Hope". Fill you with joy and hope. The God of hope must do this. No one else can do this for you. Believing is your part. Believing comes through the hearing, the reading, of God's Word. To be filled and to abound is enough to make any believer have a happy Christmas and an every day happy life. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit and the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Janet, Joshua and the entire McClellan family wish you all a blessed and a very Merry of Christmas!



To God be the Glory! Pastor Phil

*Just as candles brightly flicker  
with a warm and soft glow,*

*Just as sunlight gleams like diamonds  
on the freshly fallen snow,*

*Just as stars keep shining brightly,  
twinkling down from high above*

*May Christmas  
gently bless all your  
World with hope,  
peace and love!*





*“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was not room for them in the inn.” - Luke 2:7*



Please plan to join us on Sunday, December 8, 2024, at 10:30 AM

For our Annual Christmas Program

When we set aside a brief time to read the Scriptures that chronicle  
Our Lord’s incarnation and remember His Birth.



It will be a time of rejoicing, reflection, praise, and song, as we celebrate and remember  
the birth of our Savior, The Lord Jesus Christ!

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

- Matthew 2:11



### CHRISTMAS MORNING

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit:

— 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-10 KJV



# The Tale of Three Trees

By Angela Elwell Hunt



Once upon a mountaintop, **three little trees** stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The **first tree** looked up at the stars twinkling like diamonds above him and said, *"Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. People could fill me with gold, silver and precious gems. They could decorate me with intricate carvings and everyone would see its beauty."*

*"I will be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!"*

The **second tree** looked out at the small stream trickling by on the way to the ocean and said, *"Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take kings and queens across the seas and sail to unknown places. Everyone will feel safe because of the strength of my hull."*

*"I will be the strongest ship in the world!"*

Finally, the **third tree** looked down into the valley below where busy men and busy women worked in a busy town and said, *"I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. People will see me on top of a hill and raise their eyes to heaven and think of God."*

*"I will be the tallest tree in the world."*

Years passed. The rains came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain.

The first woodcutter looked at the **first tree** and said, "This looks like a strong tree. I can sell the wood to a carpenter." After being cut down, the tree was happy because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

The second woodcutter looked at the **second tree** a woodsman said, "This looks like a strong tree. I can sell it to the shipyard." The second tree was happy because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the **third tree**, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down, his dreams would not come true. A woodsman said, "I don't need anything special from this tree so I'll just take it back with me."

When the **first tree** arrived at the carpenters, they made it into a feed box for animals. It was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. They cut the **second tree** and made a

small fishing boat. They cut the **third tree** into large beams and left them alone in a lumberyard.

Now, the years went by, and the three trees nearly forgot their dreams. Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the feed box made from the **first tree**. As the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood, the tree could feel the importance of this event. Now the tree knew that it was holding the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the **second tree**. One man went to sleep. A great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man. He stood and said *"Be calm"* and the storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the tree knew that he was carrying the King of heaven and earth.

Finally, someone came and got the **third tree**. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. Later, they nailed the man to the tree and raised him up to die at the top of a hill. On the third day, the tree knew that God's love had changed everything.

It had made the **first tree** beautiful. It had made the **second tree** strong. And every time people thought of the **third tree** made into a cross, they would always think of God. And that was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

## God's Plan and Transformation

We all have dreams and plans that, when surrendered to God, may turn out very different from what we imagine. But God has a plan for each of us and loves us deeply. Even when things are not going our way, know that God will never forsake us. In the long run, God's will is the better way. We do well to dream with confidence in God-given desires combined with trust in God to achieve His will in due time.

*Have a Merry Christmas Season!* 

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

- *Philippians 1:6*

# 3RD Annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner with our Avalon Grace Church Family



Just like last year, this year's Thanksgiving celebration was a wonderful time of fellowship, all of us together enjoying the bounty of God's goodness and grace, and His love for us. This year, 3 turkeys were roasted/deep fried accompanied by all the traditional holiday fixings and sumptuous deserts including pumpkin pie (rightly divided) :)

Pastor Phil spoke about our Savior's great love for us by His coming to earth, dying on the cross for our sins, and rising again to give us eternal life freely! Then Pastor Phil led us in prayer seeking God's blessings with hearts of overflowing thankfulness to God for His provisions for us every day! Then we all dug in and enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving dinner! Here are just a few pictures capturing all the fun and joy (and the food)!



Thank You  
Jesus







Every year, Avalon Grace Church supports and participates in Samaritan's Purse worldwide ministry, "Operation Christmas Child." It is wonderful to know that our small fellowship in Naples, FL is part of a greater worldwide ministry caring for children in bringing the gospel message of Jesus Christ to children at Christmas and, hopefully, all year long.

Most of these children have never experienced the surprise and joy of receiving a gift freely given. In short, that is the gospel message . . . Eternal life, a gift freely given by our Savior Jesus Christ.



Thank you all for participating in this Christ saving ministry with your monetary gifts and little toys and story books, stuffed animals, coloring books, toothbrushes, and even T-shirts for kids across the globe. Avalon Grace Church had a total of 12 shoeboxes filled to the brim with toys and Christmas gifts to delight little children with the gospel message of Jesus's love for them in addition to 6 more shoe boxes purchased on-line due to your generous monetary gifts supporting this wonderful ministry! We will be able to track our boxes to see where they are delivered. Thank you all so much! Here is a picture of the 12 shoe boxes that are on their way to little children. Thank you so much for your participation and generosity!



Avalon Grace Church will be sending \$300.00 to Brazil's Project ABBA this Christmas! ABBA is a ministry of "Things to Come Mission" that reaches children with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Brazil. Michell and Joe Campos have been missionaries with "Things to Come Missions" in Brazil since 2002. Each year, Avalon Grace Church participates in providing poor and underprivileged children an opportunity to hear the Gospel and receive

a few small Christmas gifts. Your generosity makes that happen! Thank you so much for your generous gifts and prayers for the success of the outreach in reaching more souls for Christ and your support of this life-saving ministry.

### *Quotes for the Wise & Young at Heart:*



*"Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life." ~ Corrie Ten Boom*

*"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." ~ John 1:14*



*"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas;  
Soon the bells will start, and the thing that will make them ring is the carol that you sing  
Right within your heart." - Meredith Willson (1902-1984)*



# 'T WAS THE NIGHT before CHRISTMAS

By Angie Mosteller

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the earth,  
Every creature was stirring, awaiting a birth.  
The time for Messiah was certainly near,  
The prophets foretold it; the Bible was clear.

From the book of beginnings, the very first sin,  
God's Word made it clear how His grace entered in.  
Born of a virgin, He'd come as a man.  
The Creator among us, the time was at hand.



The stars were arranged to show marvelous things,  
Setting Wise Men to journey and find the true King.  
Shepherds in Bethlehem gazed at the sky,  
Longing to see him . . . the Lord, the Most High.

How could they know that the very next night?  
An angel of God would speak words of delight?  
How the Savior was born, it was news of great joy.  
In a manger they'd find their Savior, the new baby boy!

And a heavenly host would soon join to sing  
Of the glory of God and of wonderful things!  
Jesus entered creation, set his majesty aside  
To show us how deeply his love did abide.



Sin sent us away from our almighty Lord.  
He became one of us that we may be restored.  
He's the Prince of Peace; the One who makes us whole.  
He is Wisdom Incarnate, a Shepherd of Souls.

He's the Author of Life; He's the Ruler of All.  
He offers salvation, on His name we call.  
The shepherds and Wise Men did bow down and adore  
The Redeemer born among men – Jesus is Lord!

## Ornamental Memories

(Unknown)

Ornaments brightly decorate our Christmas tree . . .  
Some delicate, some sturdy, some old, some new.  
Different shapes and sizes,  
Crystal, glass, wood or ceramic,  
Ornaments dangle on the branches,  
Catching colors from a window, or a candle,  
or a twinkling light.

The old ornaments bring back memories  
of Christmases gone by.

And how they warm our heart.

The new ornaments represent hope and promises  
for the future.

And when the holidays are over,  
and the ornaments are safely  
wrapped and packed away  
In their boxes  
till the next holiday season,  
we still recall the priceless ornaments  
that hold precious memories.  
Some funny, some happy, some sad,  
Times of celebrations, birthdays, holidays, and vacations.

They glow and sparkle in our minds,  
catching the light of our memory  
from hearing a favorite song,  
or seeing a familiar sight.

Ornamental memories,  
are cherished & treasured.  
They brightly and forever decorate  
our Christmas tree each year  
throughout all seasons of our life  
They become more meaningful and dear.

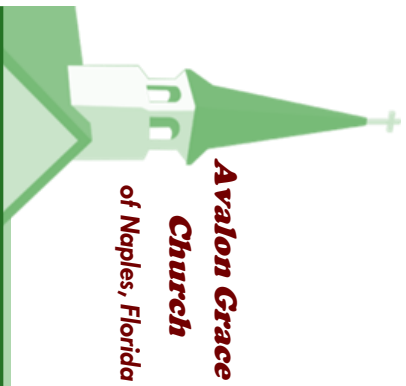






*"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* - Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)





**Avalon Grace**  
**Church**  
of Naples, Florida

# December 2024



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

1 9:45 Sunday Breakfast

10:30 AM Sunday Worship

10:45 AM Children's Sunday School



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!**



7th Christian Stevens

10th Jordan McClellan

18th Willard Barrett

18th Barbara Marshall

19th Rick Baldwin

19th Kathleen Smith

28th Art Sims

**COMING IN JANUARY 2025**

5th 9:45 AM Sunday Breakfast

8 9 10 11 12 13 14

10:30 AM Sunday Worship & Christmas Program  
10:45 AM Children's Sunday School

1 5 1 6 1 7 1 8 1 9 2 0 2 1

10:30 AM Sunday Worship  
The LORD'S Supper Observed  
10:45 AM Children's Sunday School

WINTER BEGINS

2 2 2 3 2 4 2 5 2 6 2 7 2 8

10:30 AM Sunday Worship  
The LORD'S Supper Observed  
10:45 AM Children's Sunday School



CHRISTMAS EVE

2 9 3 0 3 1

10:30 AM Sunday Worship  
10:45 AM Children's

NEW YEAR'S EVE

