

NEWSLINE

Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ

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Doing Away With Christmas

For most of us the idea of doing away with Christmas would be considered un-Christian and un-American, and a down-right affront to the sacred gift of God's Son. While there has been no formalized single movement designed to discard this age-old tradition that extends back to the fourth century, there are plenty of hammer-blows being wielded at this annual celebration and recognition of the role of Jesus in our world.

Interestingly enough, Christians, who don't celebrate this holiday in honor of His birth, become extremely agitated about efforts to block our right to do so. Already, manger scenes are banned from many courthouse squares, Santa Claus has been blocked from entering certain school buildings, and merchants have replaced "Merry Christmas!" with "Happy Holidays!" in an attempt to respect diversity.

While we have no Scriptural precedent for celebrating the birth of Jesus as part of worship, we do have a mandate to memorialize his death, burial, and resurrection. The cross stands at the center of Christian faith. Still, for centuries His birth was prophesied, anticipated, and expected. That birth was announced by angels and celebrated by wise men. It is an event unlike any other birth in the history of man.

Christmas is one time when men, women, and children around the world stop and recognize that a Savior was born. Would the world be better if that symbol were removed? If nations did not pause and proclaim His birth? If there were no "Christmas" to celebrate, would it matter?

Under the guise of promoting diversity and political correctness, it appears to be the goal of many proponents of godless ideologies to remove all influences of Christian faith and tradition from our culture and replace them with humanistic and atheistic concepts and practices.

The fact that many Christians ask, "Do we have a voice?" indicates that we have accepted that our voice will not be heard. We need to remember that the kingdom of God advanced before there was ever a celebration of a holiday known as "Christmas", and the kingdom will still advance if we keep preaching the cross of Jesus. It is in the cross that we glory, not in the manger. We should never forget that God will hear our voice even when others will not...if we lift up His cross for the world to see.

— Al Behel

Other News/Sick:

-Tom Elkin's brother is in Cleveland Clinic with major internal injuries suffered when a four-wheeler turned over on him.

-Patty Adair is recovering from back surgery last Wednesday. She had a rough few days but the surgery is deemed successful. Prayers as she recovers.

-Tina Yates was hospitalized Wednesday night after having pain in one of her arms—a heart cath was performed. She is fine and went home Thursday.

-Debbie Little, mother of one of Marti's students, is suffering from a brain aneurysm rupture. Debbie is home and greatly improved. The family appreciates your prayers and cards. Their address is: Debbie, Randy, Michael, & Katie Little, 4152 Briggs Loop, Kodak, TN 37764. Please drop a note.

-Rick Cliett: We are really excited that Rick will be coming home Dec. 25th!

-Tyler Behel, Al's nephew, has been re-deployed to Afghanistan.

-Paul Huston, son-in-law of Gary and Priscilla Dick, deployed to Egypt for one year. Prayers appreciated.

Our Thanks And Best Wishes to all of you for your gift to each of our families and our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

— The Behels, Haynes, and Elkins

Elder Contact for Month: Marc Hayes, Phone No. 1-731-608-4148

Sermon Topics: A.M. - "No Greater Gift"; P.M. - At Home In The Psalms (Cont.)

Interpreter for deaf and hearing impaired available for AM and PM worship

Our Known Sick

-Dez Anderson— fell recently and suffered a lot of pain. She continues to battle multiple health issues and her activity level is very limited. Keep praying...God is listening and answering.

-Sheryle Elkins has completed chemotherapy and radiation for Adenocarcinoma (lung cancer). They received good news with the results of the CT scan. Her tumors have reduced 80%. A PET scan in 3 months should show if the treatments were successful. Please keep praying for our sister. Her address is: 1383 Lake Front Drive, Dan-bridge, TN 37725.

-Bill Green was back with us. We are happy he is better.

-Sue Mercer—we rejoice that she is back with us following surgery to remove a malignant kidney.

-Raelynn Bryant, newborn baby daughter of Steven and Taylor Bryant, is still hospitalized but is improving significantly.

-Kathy May –ill in Baxter. You can send her a card at P.O. Box 465, Baxter, TN 38544-0463.

-Pauline Swallows has not been feeling well. Keep her in prayer.

Friends and Family

-Ben Lachica, Mariejane's father, recovering from an apparent light stroke in the Philippines. Her mother, Marcie, just returned there.

-Mrs. Florence Tolliver is in Ft. Sanders Nursing Home, Rm 172. Her daughter, Rita Taylor from Kodak, has been visiting with us.

-Jim Dickson (he and Barbara have worked at Dollywood and worshipped with us several years) has a recurrence of lung cancer and is being treated with chemotherapy. Jim and Barbara live at 521 Green Hills Dr., Hattiesburg, MS 39402. Phone: 601-296-1547.

-Scottie Elkins, Tom and Deb's grandson, is still awaiting tests to determine if he has MS. Prayers are requested for him.

-Christopher Howell-grandson of the Littletons-spinal cord injuries.

-Robin McCollum and Peggy McCollum (Al's nieces-battling cancer).

Sue Mercer's sister, Connie Browning, breast cancer.

-Jerry Ellison, Brenda Scott's brother-in-law, failing lungs with no further treatment available.

-Al's brother, Tom Behel, - fell recently and broke the femur in his below his (good) hip. He had surgery to install a rod in his femur and is now at home. He still is unable to converse orally from his stroke.

-Rosita Juan, visitor and mother of Rose Harrington (frequent visitor), is on dialysis and awaiting a kidney transplant. Prayers appreciated. Address is: 260 River Valley Circle, Lot 6, Sevierville, TN 37862.

Sunday Bible Study

Colossians

Rise & Shine: Sundays, 9:15

Ladies Bible Class

Meets on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in the Fellowship Hall. Next study, January 6 at 10 a.m.

Times of Services

Sunday A.M.

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Sunday P.M. 6:00 PM

Wednesday 7:00 PM

Building Fund

Loan balance as of 12/04/14 is **\$1,107,602.13**. Extra contributions to reduce the loan debt are needed and appreciated. Envelopes are available in the pew.

Nursery

Located across main foyer. Closed circuit TV allows viewing and participation in worship.

CDs and DVDs of Sermons are available free at sound booth. Also available on the website at: www.greatsmokymountainschurchofchrist.com.