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## **Letter from our Pastor**

Each year the craziness of the commercial Christmas season comes earlier and earlier. And soon you hear people begin in on the "war on Christmas" or complaining that stores shouldn't play Christmas music before Thanksgiving. This year feels different. Grinches I know and pastor friends who are Advent purists seem to be silent this year. It seems most of us are glad to welcome the sights and sounds of the season. But still, we may not really be ready for the usual happiness and joy of the season.

Traditionally the church has used purple (and pink) to observe the Advent season. It's the same purple we use during Lent, to symbolize penitence (and the pink for joy). The penitent purple makes sense when we focus on the aspect of Advent as the time when we prepare for Christ to come again in judgment. In the last 25 or 30 years some churches have switched to blue for Advent to help set a different tone. The reasoning behind the switch is that if purple signifies repentance during Lent, then we need something different to signify the hope of Advent.

Diana Butler Bass, Christian author ([Grounded: Finding God in the World - A Spiritual Revolution](#)) wrote recently about using blue this year for Advent. While shopping for fresh candles for her home Advent wreath she picked up blue candles with the thought "That's what I feel like this year. Not penitent. Not joyful. Just blue."

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"Advent," Bass explains, "should not be a mini-Lent; it is not a time to examine sins, engage in self-denial, and confession. It is not about penance. Rather, Advent is of a different spiritual hue: It is a time of waiting, of expectation, of hope in the darkness. The blue candles symbolize the color of the sky right before dawn, that time when the deepest dark is just infused with hints of light.

Blue holds the promise that the sun will rise, and that even after the bleakest, coldest, longest night, the light will break forth, as the new day arrives. Blue may be the color of sadness, but blue is also the color of hope...

Advent recognizes a profound spiritual truth - that we need not fear the dark. Instead, wait there. Under that blue cope of heaven, alert for the signs of dawn. Watch. For you cannot rush the night. But you can light some candles. Sing some songs. Recite poetry. Say prayers. Trust that waiting is active - making ready for what comes next. When the sun rises, there is much work to do."\*

In recent years at St. Andrews we have used both blue and purple for Advent. I love it because it helps us hold in tension both aspects of the season, preparing for Christ's return *and* the joy of welcoming the Christ child again. This year we have new banners in our sanctuary. Margaret Williams has adapted banner designs by Ellen Cavendish Phillips (originally used at Central Presbyterian Church in Atlanta) to create a new set for St. Andrews. Earlier in the fall the congregation painted fabric with swirls and splatters, lines and circles, using blue, purple, and pink paints. Our chaotic and creative efforts have been transformed into beautiful reminders of the hope, peace, joy, and love of the Advent season. What a fitting image for the church and for the season!

If you would like some guidance for your daily devotions during this season you can pick up an Advent devotional booklet in the narthex or church office. We also have a "Manger on the Mantle" activity for children.

As we make our way through the season of Advent, whether you are feeling joyful or blue or a little bit of both, it is my hope that you all will witness the light shining brighter in the darkness. And when we gather on Christmas Eve with a sanctuary full of candles, may we be encouraged to shine that light in the world.

Peace,  
Camille

\*excerpt from "Forget red and green: Make it a blue holiday instead" by Diana Butler Bass. Published online by *The Washington Post* November 25, 2016.

## ***Advent Sermon Series***

During the season of Advent our sermons will reflect on the traditional Biblical texts of the season through the lens of some of our favorite Advent and Christmas Hymns. Together we will listen for new insight in both the songs and the scriptures.

**November 27-** Hope: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**December 4-** Peace: "Silent Night, Holy Night"

**December 11-** Joy: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

**December 18-** Love: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

## ***Take My Life Generosity Update***

As of Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup> we have received 82 pledge cards amounting to:

General Fund, \$328,501 pledged toward the goal of \$373,800

Thank you to all who have already pledged. It's not too late to make your commitment of financial support of the ministry of St. Andrews.

## ***Christmas Services***

**Lessons & Carols-** December 18th at 6:30 p.m. A family candlelight Worship service of Scripture and Music preparing for the celebration of our Lord's birth with carols for choirs, instruments, handbells and congregation. A Christmas Cookie Celebration reception will follow the service in Heffner Hall. Bring your friends and neighbors and share the good news of Christ's coming. Nursery will be provided.

**Christmas Eve Family Service at 5:00 p.m.-** Children and Adults of all ages are welcome as we read the story of Jesus's birth, sing favorite Christmas carols, and share the light of Christmas.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service at 11:00 p.m.** Organ Prelude of Christmas Music at 10:30 p.m. Worship with Word, Sacrament and Candlelight at 11:00 p.m.

## ***Parents Night Out***

Christmas is a busy time of a year, especially for parents of young children. That is why the St. Andrews Youth will offer FREE childcare for children ages 3-11 Sunday, December 4th from 5-7p. Young children must toilet trained. There will be

games, crafts, a movie AND pizza. A free will offering will be accepted to cover the cost of pizza. Help us to get the word out to all the parents in the church, the daycare, and community! We also will need some adult disciples to help with check-in, and serving dinner. You will find a sign-up sheet in the narthex or sign up online by going to this link: <https://goo.gl/zJ4FS7>

### ***39ers in December***

The 39ers Lunch will meet on Monday, December 5th in Heffner Hall. Please plan to arrive before 11:30.

### ***Christmas Joy Offering***

The annual Christmas Joy offering of the PCUSA will be received on December 20. The proceeds from this offering helps fund two programs. The fund helps provide financial assistance to current and former church workers and their families and enables deserving students to attend Presbyterian-related racial ethnic colleges and schools. Click [here](#) for more information.

## **WOW Adult Programming**

**December 14-** *It's a Wonderful Life*-The Richest Man in Town

Frank Capra's beloved holiday classic-is considered among the greatest movies of all time. Jimmy Stewart portrays George Bailey, a hardworking, self-sacrificing businessman who eventually becomes dispirited when an unfortunate turn of events threatens to sink his company. After watching scenes from the film we'll discuss the love and strength that exist in relationships we establish and in the community that surrounds us, and the wonderful gift of life that God has bestowed on us all.

### ***Northlake Children's Chorus Concert***

The Northlake Children's Chorus and Music Academy is so glad to be a part of the Tucker, Northlake Community. NCCMA has private music students, group music classes, three choruses and offers support to our community in countless ways. Our partnership with Globe Academy, Briarcliff United Methodist Church, St. Bede's Episcopal and St. Andrews Presbyterian

Church has enabled us to bring music to our neighborhood in new and exciting ways.

We would like to invite you and your family to our 2nd Annual Holiday Concert on December 11th. The concert will be held at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 4882 LaVista Road, at 3:00 pm in the Sanctuary. We are so excited about the performers. We have selected the best musicians from our Music Academy to perform. The Girls Ensemble will be singing holiday favorites and Jennifer Trezek and Beverly Blissit will be sharing dazzling four hand piano duets. In addition, the Ukulele Club from Midvale Elementary will be sharing a special selection. We hope you will join us. It is inspiring for children and youth to see their peers performing at a high level.

NCCMA will also be performing at Northlake Mall on Saturday, December 3rd from 10:00 am-6:30 pm. Students have signed up for 10 minute slots and we will be providing music all day for our community. One of our mission statements is to take music to the community. If your child is not participating for this event but would like to be included in future events, please email Beverly Blissit. We have another community event in March featuring all of our students from beginner to advanced. Look for us inside the mall by the Macy's lower entrance. Look for the fountain, listen for the beautiful music.

The NCCMA Girls Ensemble will be singing with the adult choir at Briarcliff United Methodist Church on Sunday, December 4th in the 11:00 am service.

## ***Session Report***

The Session of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church met in the Meeting Room of SAPC on November 13, 2016 at 11:30 a.m. The Rev. Camille LeBron Powell was the moderator. A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by B. Moore, seconded by J. Thomas, and approved.

- The Session shared joys and concerns, followed by a time of prayer, and the unison reading of the SAPC Mission.
- Motion to approve the transfer of membership for Linda McKay to Buford Presbyterian Church at her request was made by D. McCowen, seconded by D. Buchanan, and approved.
- Motion to transfer Mike Stevens to the Church Triumphant was made by E. Johnston, seconded by M. Darnell, and approved.

- Motion to approve the removal of the following individuals from active member roles of SAPC: Denise Dreyer; Philip, Corinne, and Calvin Graffunder; John Seymour; Sandy Speer; and Kathy Yanez; was made by C. Barnhart, seconded by E. Johnston, and approved.
- Motion to approve a congregational meeting for Sunday, January 29, 2017 as the annual meeting of the SAPC Corporation was made by M. Darnell, seconded by D. McCowen, and approved..
- J. Thomas, Chair of Management, and M. Mahaffey, Treasurer, presented a budgetary planning worksheet and the proposed 2017 SAPC Budget. Session discussed the issues raised, considered possible options, and approved the budget proposal. Needed changes to line item details will be determined by individual ministries and provided to the Management Ministry for finalization. The 2017 budget will be presented to the congregational at the Annual Meeting in January 2017
- Annual Reports from all Ministries are due to M. Noble no later than January 8, 2017. Reports are to be prepared in narrative style of the year in review. Reports are to be prepared by the 2016 Ministry Chair(s). M. Noble will convey this data to individuals not at the meeting.
- The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 12:45 p.m. The next stated Session meeting will be held on December 11, 2016, in a joint meeting with the SAPC Diaconate.

***"Little Light of Mine" presents  
"The Christmas Story"***



**Sunday, December 18, 2016, 2:30 p.m.**  
at Briarlake Baptist Church Sanctuary  
(3715 Lavista Road - Decatur, GA 30033)

The angels will dance - the choir will sing and sign - and the Scriptures will be recited by the members of Little Light of Mine.

Admission Is Free. Please Contact Linda Weaver - Music Director for "Little Light of Mine" - if you have

any questions. This ministry is sponsored by Briarlake Baptist Church for people with special needs.

### ***December Birthdays***

3rd= Curtis Morse, Marsha Ashby  
4th= Jim King  
5th=Maureen Hill  
6th=Amelia Pattillo  
8th= David Barnhart  
11th= Edward Forrester  
12th= Marco Compton  
13th= Peggy Benedict  
14th= Anne Howland  
15th= Jackson Powell  
17th= Teresa Maloney  
21st= Peter Shenkman  
23rd= Jane Thomas  
24th=Mary Jentoft  
27th= Elinor Bryan, Bariture Komi, Mark Talgo, Vicki Worrell  
28th=Tina Evans, Mary McCowen  
30th= Russell Darnell

### ***December Anniversaries***

14th= Paula & Lewis Gleason  
21st= Gwen & Walter McDuffie  
27th= Jane & Clyde Wentz  
29th=Heather & Curtis Morse  
31st= Barbara & Orin Mattheis

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