

Greetings “called” ones! That greeting may be confusing to some, but for the last few weeks we’ve been trying to weave the idea of being “called” through just about everything we do. We’re doing that because understanding what it means to be called is so important to the first step in our Dawnings journey. In brief, all believers are called. We’re not only called to faith in Christ, but called to commit our lives to service in ministry through the gospel of Jesus Christ. That’s right, God has a plan for your life...a calling. Sometimes, it is hard to put our calling into words; Christians may simply not be able to put their calling into words; however, many times we can discover our calling in our own stories.

On November 19, 50 of our congregation gathered in the fellowship hall for the first of four Dawnings sessions. Individually, we shared stories that revealed things that we treasured, the people and events that have been important to us, the values in which we have invested our lives. Then, we helped each other organize those stories and shape their ideas to help us identify our individual strengths and purpose. This is the first step in determining God's vision for our church, because, after all, the church is made up of each of us. We also shared some prayer practices that we hope will enrich your personal devotional life and help you get a clearer vision for yourself and our congregation.

Several people have asked for a description of “Dawnings.” The best way to understand the process is with the literal meaning of “dawning.” Dawn is that time of the day when darkness gives way to light. Objects that were indiscernible begin to take shape, details begin to gradually be filled-in, that which was unseen is slowly seen clearly. That’s what we’re trying to accomplish through “Dawnings.”

By seeking God’s clarity through prayer, by listening to each other’s stories, by listening to the stories of our congregation, by identifying our community and its needs, we believe God’s plan for us will become clear.

Our coming together as a new church is both exciting and challenging. Leaving behind our past identities so that we might become something new is no small thing. Human beings don’t always accept change very well, yet here we are in the process of changing many things. Let’s be patient with ourselves, let’s listen to each other, let’s listen to the call of our God on our church. (Notice we didn’t say, “churches”.) Pray without ceasing – for indifference to all but God's will and for God to clearly reveal who we are to be and what we are to do.

Blessings to all you saints of the Lord. Embrace your calling!
Your Pastors

Advent and Christmas

We are entering the season of Advent, which begins on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas. Advent means "coming." It is the season when we are especially reminded that Christ has come, Christ is always coming into our lives, and Christ will come again. During this season, we have provided several ways for you to prepare your heart to celebrate Jesus' birth:

- **Advent devotion books** are available for you to pick up in the foyer. If you prefer an online devotion, we recommend www.followingthestar.org.
- **Poinsettias:** Beginning December 17, the sanctuary will be decorated with beautiful poinsettias given to the church in Honor or in Memory of friends and loved ones. Each poinsettia costs \$10.00. The names will be published in the worship bulletin on December 17. An order form is available in the foyer. This year we are adding an option: You may make a donation in the amount of your choosing in honor or memory of a loved one and have their name printed in the bulletin without the need to order a poinsettia. The donation will be for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) Global Missions. Orders and payment need to be in the church office by Sunday, December 3. Please place your order form and check (note "Poinsettia" on check) in the offering plate if at the church or you can mail your order and payment to Calvary Baptist Church, PO Box 12226, Roanoke, VA 24023. Poinsettias will need to be picked up following the Christmas Eve Service.
- **Missions:**
 - **Keystone Community Center Christmas Food Boxes:** Sunday, December 3, is the last day to bring food for these boxes. If you haven't picked up a list of the items needed, contact the church office. We will be happy to e-mail the list to you.
 - This year's **Global Missions Emphasis** for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is "Because Presence Matters" Each week during Advent, we will pray for and learn about the ministry of a CBF missionary. 100% of what you donate to our Christmas Offering for Global Missions will support CBF field personnel in the U.S. and around the world. Offering envelopes are available in the foyer.
 - We are taking part in **Angel Tree Ministries** again this year, purchasing gifts for children with an incarcerated parent). If you would like to help wrap and/or deliver the gifts to families, please let Pastor Melissa, Jim Rhodes, or other members of the Missions Committee know. If you would like to help with the cost of the gifts, place a donation in the basket by the tree in the

foyer. After donating, take one of the ornaments made by our youth. When you see it, remember to pray for the families we are assisting.

- **Worship:** Beginning December 3, our sanctuary will be adorned with symbols of the season – wreaths, lights, Chrismon tree, and more. Our pastors and choir will be marking this holy season by wearing robes. We will also be changing some parts of the service (such as the call to worship, doxology, and benediction response) with seasonal elements to help prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. Our sermons will focus on “The Called of Christmas,” as we read about the people of the first Christmas and how they responded to God's call.
- **Christmas Cantata:** On Sunday, December 17, during morning worship, our choir will present a special musical program to celebrate the birth of Christ.
- **Christmas Parties**
 - **Youth Christmas Party** is Friday, December 1, 6-11 p.m. Join us for a waffle and hot chocolate bar, Christmas games, and a “dirty Santa” gift exchange. We'll also be shopping for Angel Tree gifts. Please bring a wrapped gift (\$5 or less) for the gift exchange. Friends are welcome; please let Pastor Melissa know if friends will be joining us so we have enough drivers.
 - **Deacons Potluck Dinner:** Deacons are invited to a potluck dinner on Thursday, December 7, 6-9 p.m., at Townes of Hidden Valley Clubhouse (4800 Layrn Lane). Please bring a dish to share and a wrapped gift for a gift exchange.
 - **Children's Christmas Party** is Friday, December 8, from 6-8 p.m. Children in preschool-fifth grade are invited to join us for a fun evening of celebrating Jesus' birth. Dinner will be provided. Please let Pastor Melissa know by Sunday, December 3 if your children will be attending.
 - **College Students and Young Adults** are invited for a Christmas party at Pastor Melissa and Ric's house on Thursday, December 14 at 6:00 pm. Wear your festive Christmas sweater (or pajamas, if you'd prefer). We'll have yummy food, play some Christmas games, and catch up with each other.
- **Christmas Eve:** Christmas Eve is also the fourth Sunday of Advent this year. We will follow our regular schedule on Sunday morning (Sunday School at 9:30, worship at 10:30). At 4:00 p.m., we will hope you will join us for a Christmas Eve service of carols, candlelight, and communion.

New Year's Day Open House

Pastor Melissa and Ric Scott invite you to a New Year's Day Open House at their home from 2-5 p.m. on January 1.

Opportunities for Bible Study

- **Sunday Morning Bible Study** is a great way to connect with God and with our church family! We have classes for all ages and stages of life at 9:30.
- **Midweek Bible Study** meets at noon on Wednesdays in the conference room and on Zoom (www.bit.ly/cabcbiblestudy). Rev. Steven Harris will lead us through a study of call stories in the Bible.

Book and Magazine Collection: The Evelyn Townsend Circle is collecting reading materials for the Roanoke City Jail library and for TAP. Paperback books and magazines will go to Roanoke City Jail and hardback books will go to TAP. Please place your donations in the appropriate box in the foyer.