

Keeping You Current

“Keeping You Current” is a monthly publication of Harris Creek Baptist Church. Its purpose is to keep the church family informed of financial, organizational, and informational happenings at the church.

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue 16 - December 2011

Children’s Musical

Join us Sunday, December 18 at 6 pm for our Children’s Christmas Musical. Our kindergartners - 6th graders will be performing a musical called “For the Glory of the King” and are directed by Molly Armstrong. Our elementary kids have been working hard all year to prepare for this big event!

Elev8

The last Elev8 of this semester is on December 2 from 8 to 10 pm. Elev8 is a front door event for our 5th and 6th grade students that provides an opportunity for them to play games, hang out, and hear a short devotional. Elev8 will take place in the Youth Room.

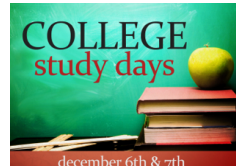


Youth Christmas Party

Our final youth event of 2011 is coming up on Sunday, December 18. Our 3rd Annual Tacky Sweater Christmas Party will be in the Youth Room from 6-7:30 pm. We will play a few games with Christmas themes, drink some egg nog and hot cider, and have a white elephant gift exchange. Come close the year with a bang!

College Study Days

College students are invited to come out to the church on Dec. 6 and 7 between the hours of 8 am and 10 pm. Come find a place to study by yourself, use our classrooms and whiteboards to brainstorm with peers. Also enjoy provided snacks and drinks in addition to free Wi-Fi and Nintendo Wii for your study breaks.



Lessons and Carols

We are holding our 2nd annual “lessons and carols” service on December 11 at 5:30 pm at The Palladium. This is a traditional Advent service with Scripture reading and carol singing. We will also have refreshments including hot chocolate, cider, and coffee, as well as cookies from Collin Street bakery. Please bring your entire family out to this event!

Connections Class

Our next membership discovery class called “Connections” is THIS SUNDAY immediately following the 10:30 worship service. We will provide lunch and childcare for all who are in attendance. Please email Galan Hughes (ghughes@harris creek.org) to RSVP.



B U D G E T A N D F I N A N C E S

We budgeted \$57,000 in receipts for the month of November and took in a total of \$78,407. Expenses for November exceeded the budget by \$1,687. This was due, in part, to training, maintenance and

repair, and technology updates. For the month of December we have budgeted receipts of \$95,000. We have had only one month this year in which contributions exceeded \$95,000 so we need to make sure that we finish out the year on a positive note. Also, please do not forget to turn in



Your tithes and offerings help fund great ministries and outreach opportunities like these!

your Advent Conspiracy pledge cards and checks. As mentioned, we will be matching your contributions to Living Water Ministries up to the point our Global Impact funds are depleted for 2011. Please also remember that, in order to get contribution credit for 2011, your

contributions must be either delivered to the church or post marked by December 31. On Saturday, December 31, we will have the church open for those who would like to bring a check by. The office will be open from 10 am - 4 pm. Finally, we are asking each Life Group Leader to go over the instructions in your next meeting for how to go online to print out your 2011 Contribution Statements. We will also be introducing the 2012 Proposed Budget in the next couple of weeks.

The Scandal of Christmas

One of the traditions around Christmas time in the West is the tradition of sending Christmas cards to your friends and family members. This is a tradition that started in the 1850s and is still going strong today. A variety of symbols and images are typically found on these cards. Most of the images are serene and tranquil ones: a horse drawn carriage in the snow, a smiling snowman or teddy bear, peaceful angels playing horns, playful animals like reindeer, or food like a gingerbread man and candy cane. All of these images summarize how we think of the Christmas season in the West. It is a time meant for happiness, warmth, goodwill, and all other homey sentiments. While it is a great thing that we think of the season of Advent in this way, it does not exactly give us the complete picture of how the original story of Christmas is told in Scripture.

The story of Jesus Christ entering the world in the New Testament is a story laden with scandal. The term “scandal” or “scandalous” implies



Encountering the story of Christmas with a fresh lens.

something is “shocking, improper, or disgraceful.” We are so comfortable and familiar with the story that we tend to forget just how scandalous the story actually is. Why is the original story of Christmas so scandalous? Because it is a narrative that contains a less than stellar family lineage, an unwed pregnant teenager, the slaughter of young children at the hands of Herod, a violent prophecy from a prophet named Simeon, and many more shocking facts. In fact, when John of Patmos writes about the “Christmas narrative” in Revelation 12, we get the angels’ viewpoint and a dramatically different scene. Revelation doesn’t mention shepherds and wise men; rather, it pictures a dragon leading an all-out cosmic struggle in heaven. This is

obviously a dramatically different picture than the one celebrated today. This is why Philip Yancey says, “It’s a fine thing, I suppose, that we honor a sacred holiday with such homey sentiments. And yet when I turn to the gospel accounts of the first Christmas, I hear a very different tone, and sense mainly a disruption at work...In contrast to what the cards would have us believe, Christmas did not sentimentally simplify life on planet earth.”

This Advent, we are going to return to the original story of Christmas as we always do this time of year, but rather than celebrating a domesticated holiday purged of any hint of scandal, we are going to look at the shocking nature of the story. We are going to see how God becoming flesh was, as many Christian authors throughout history have called it, actually more like a Great Invasion. Throughout history Christians have believed that the story of Christmas changes everything, and we are going to remind ourselves why this is still true today.

Here are a few opportunities for you to join the movement called “Advent Conspiracy” through Harris Creek this Advent Season.

Worship Fully - Lessons and Carols

While the whole Advent season will have opportunities for you to worship, a special way to “**worship fully**” is by coming to our annual Lessons and Carols service on December 11 at The Palladium. A traditional Lessons and Carols service celebrates the birth of Christ by reading Scripture and singing hymns and Christmas music. This special worship service will be at 5:30 pm and will replace our regular worship service at The Palladium for December 11. Bring your whole family and enjoy a night of worship in our downtown location!

Spend Less - Living Water International

One way you can “**spend less**” this year is by participating in our drive to build a well with Living Water International. Did you know that 884 million people in the world today do not have access to safe water? This is roughly equivalent to 1 out of every 8 people in the world. 1.8 million children die every year as a result of disease caused by unclean water and poor sanitations. That’s about 5000 deaths every single day. Ironically, one of the greatest needs right now is for wells in Ethiopia due to drought conditions. As you may know, we have a missionary family from Harris Creek serving in this part of the world. So, we are asking for you to spend less and give more to this water crisis. Here’s the kicker, though: we don’t want you to spend more this Christmas by donating to this fund on top of everything else. So, we are asking you to sign-up to spend less and scale back on giving presents to your family. Then we are asking you to give whatever money you would have spent on your family and friends to Living Water International. All money given will go toward building a well in Ethiopia. The cost to build one well to serve an entire community in Ethiopia is \$9,200. To donate to this fund, please make checks out to Harris Creek and write “Water” on the memo line (Remember: this is not for open donations, but only for those who have pledged to scale back on a portion of their Christmas gift-giving). To sign-up for this portion of Advent Conspiracy, please fill out a pledge card and turn it in at the Connect Desk or email it to Elise Haykin (missions@harris creek.org).

Give More - Blood Drive

There are many ways to “**give more**” outside of giving money and presents during the Advent Season. One way we are asking people to give more is by donating blood to Carter Blood Care on December 4. Waco’s blood bank is reaching some all-time lows and desperately needs more blood to be given. Did you know that one of the biggest uses for blood is for patients receiving cancer treatment? Carter Blood Care and Project Neighbor have invited us to help them with their annual blood drive. So, on December 4 after worship at The Palladium, we are asking you to come down and get screened and give blood. The blood drive will last until 10 pm (subject to change, so keep your eyes open for the latest information). Carter Blood Care has also offered for all of the “points” earned through this drive to go towards Wren Horn if she needs to receive blood in the future.

Love All - Mission Waco Toy Drive/Toy Store

One additional way you can “**love all**” is by participating in the annual Mission Waco Toy Drive and Toy Store. Toys have been collected, and last Sunday the Mission Waco bikers picked them up between our 9 and 10:30 am worship services. Also, you can sign-up at the Connect Desk or by emailing Emily Gist (egist@harris creek.org) to volunteer to serve at the Mission Waco Toy Store. The Toy Store is on Saturday, December 3. Please indicate which shift you are available to serve – 8:30 am to 11:30 am or 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. For questions or more information, contact Emily Gist or Elise Haykin (missions@harris creek.org).

December

- Dec. 3 Mission Waco Toy Store
- Dec. 4 Connections Class for New Members
- Dec. 4 Blood Drive (at The Palladium)
- Dec. 11 Lessons and Carols (at The Palladium)
- Dec. 18 Baby Dedication
- Dec. 18 No Life Group Childcare (Christmas)
- Dec. 21 No Life Group Childcare (Christmas)
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Services
- Dec. 25 No Church Services
- Dec. 25 No Life Group Childcare (Christmas)
- Dec. 28 No Life Group Childcare (Christmas)
- Dec. 31 Church Office Open until 5 pm for year-end giving

January

- Jan. 1 No Equipping Classes
- Jan. 1 Corporate Worship at 10:30 am only
- Jan. 1 No Life Group Childcare (New Year's)
- Jan. 4 No Life Group Childcare (New Year's)



HARRIS CREEK CONTACT INFORMATION

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For more information, make sure you check out these publications in the church slat walls and on our web site:

- The Parent Link—Children's Ministries
- The Pulse—Youth Ministries
- Creek Connection—Weekly Church-wide Announcements
- The Source—Weekly Prayer Guide of Harris Creek