



The Center Chronicles

December 2024



The Advent Season marks the beginning of the Church year in preparation for the birthday of Jesus. On the Last Sunday of November, God drew our attention to the what is to happen on earth with the second coming, also called the second Advent of Christ Jesus. I then gave an invitation that in order to more fully understand the the second coming of Christ, we must learn the prophetic richness of the first Advent of Christ coming which

inadvertantly gives support to the Advent Project that was started back in 2005 by the Rev. William Peterson who is an Episcopal Pastor and Professor of Bexley Hall Seminary. In an article by Jason DeRose, he writes, “**Petersen believes that Advent for Christians is as much about hope for the Second Coming of Jesus—sometimes called the Second Advent—that will usher in the reign of God as much as it is about commemorating the first coming of God in the person of Jesus in first-century Palestine. Petersen says that tension is where we all reside, which is why Advent is what we need. "In its dwelling in the already and the not-yet, Advent can ground and strengthen us in all of that uncertainty and help give us an ability to connect."**

Long before Peterson, Dietrich Bonhoeffer had this same thought when his Letters from Prison was published. While waiting in a Nazi prison cell in 1943 a few weeks before Advent, Dietrich Bonhoeffer [wrote](#) a friend, "A prison cell, in which one waits, hopes, does various unessential things, and is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened *from the outside*, is not a bad picture of Advent."

Shortly after penning those words, the Nazis executed Bonhoeffer. But he was right: the door of freedom for him and for us today is still opened *from the outside* by the coming and second coming of Jesus Christ.

That is why, as believers, Advent is a time for us to be reminded how the doors of our hearts were opened “from the outside” when Christ Jesus, “set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! (The Message Translation, Philippians 2:7). Each candle we will light this Advent (three purple candles, one pink candle and one white candle) will illuminate our faith and reveal the keys Christ came and used to set us free from our sin prisons. What are these keys?

- **HOPE-** Hope is that which we look forward to even in the midst of our most difficult times. “Romans 15:13 - May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

- **PEACE-** Peace is that which only Christ can give when we live life. As Paul says in Philippians 4, “**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**
- **JOY-** Joy which is more than happiness. John 15:11- “**I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.**” I Peter: 1:8-9- “**Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**”
- **LOVE-** Love that God gives without condition. John 3: 16- “**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**” I John 3: 16- “**This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.**

As we enter the Advent Season, join with me as we explore how Christ Jesus came to unlock these four things in our lives so that we may experience the freedom to follow Christ Jesus.

Blessings,
Jon



The Annual Christmas Candle Walk

December 7 marks the Annual Christmas Candlewalk on the Mainstreet of Tellico Plains. There will be music, snow at the Bakery with the Grench and Santa making appearances. There will also be the Cherokee Women’s annual bake sale which raises monies for student scholarships. Be sure to stop in and check out the variety of cookies that will be available for purchase. The sale goes from **4-8pm**.



Sweetwater Sanctuary Redication Service

December 8 @ 5pm

The Session of First Presbyterian Church Sweetwater invited all to come and join them as they rededicate their sanctuary for the Lord’s service. There will be a time of fellowship to follow.



Pat Sherman Service of Celebration

December 12 @ 1pm

On December 12 at 1pm, we will be celebrating the life of Pat Sherman, who was a Soprano anchor of Center Presbyterian Church and an active member of several local ministries in the area including the Dorcas Ministry, the Mountain Music String Band and Cherokee Women's Group. The Service will be at Center Presbyterian Church with fellowship to follow.



Youth Live Nativity Program and Christmas Party

On December 14 at 7pm, the Youth invites everyone to celebrate Christmas with them as they act out the Gospel story with a live nativity program. The youth Christmas Party will follow the Nativity presentation in the Fellowship Hall.



Come and See Christmas Cantata

The Center Church Choir and Friends invites you to "Come and See" how the Christmas story is played out in song. The Program will take place during worship in December 15 at 10am and later that evening at 6 pm.



Annual Christmas Food Tote Ministry

Volunteers are needed once again to shop for 100 families this Christmas as we convert the Fellowship Hall into a grocery packing processing center. Things start at 9am on December 23 when we meet at Sav A Lot to shop and transport everything to the church to be distributed to each tote. Then on December 24,, we will be begin at 8am to deliver the totes to needy families in the area.

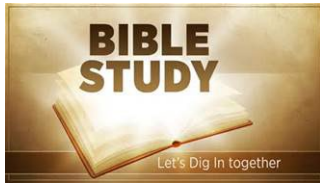


Let's Go Christmas Caroling

Wednesday, December 18 at 5pm



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7pm



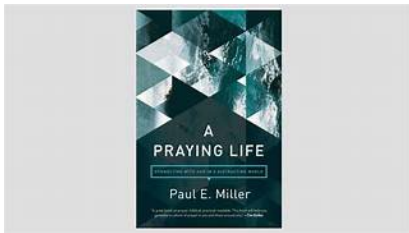
Men's Bible Study will meet on December 7

Men's Bible Study will meet on **December 7 at 9am** to watch the final episode of Season 4 of the Chosen Series. We will then take a break through the Christmas season and will return in January of 2025.



Dorcas Ministry meets every first and third Wednesday at 9:30am

The Dorcas Ministry is a vital ministry of Center Church. What a blessing! If you want to get involved, please contact Sandra Black at 423-253-3876.

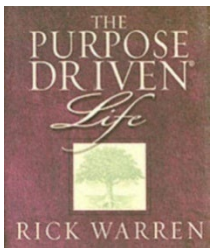


Wednesday Night Bible Study on Prayer at 5pm

We invite you to join us on Wednesday night at 5pm as we study how to develop a praying life using the book, The Praying Life, by Paul Miller.

Adult Sunday School Update

Come and join Donald Bivens as the class studies Rick Warren's classic, The Purpose Driven Life. Adult Sunday Class meets at 9:15am on Sunday morning.



We will have our annual Congregational Meeting on **January 5, 2025** to elect Elders and Deacons officers and approve the Pastor's Salary package.



The Pastor will be Away December 29-31

The Pastor will be spending time with family in Western North Carolina.