

~ Visions ~

GLENDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

A caring community of equality and grace.

1021 Glendale Lane

Nashville, Tennessee 37204

269-0926 or 269-3149 — Fax. 269-0988

URL: www.glendalebaptist.org — E-Mail: GBC@glendalebaptist.org

PASTORAL PARAGRAPHS.....

“When Christmas Intrudes and Inspires

Luke 1:26-38

Christmas speech is abrupt, unexpected, decisive, and potentially world changing. The talk that first Christmas was intrusive speech which changed lives and challenged the world's agenda. Unfortunately, over the years, Christmas has lost its punch! Luke 1:26-28 is a well-known passage, but the evangelical claim of this text is often missed because of a rather mechanical focus on what has been called the Virgin Birth, which plays a rather secondary role in the Christmas story.

The speech of this text intrudes into the routine world of a young woman. It brings news that transforms forever everything in her life and potentially in ours as well. The substance of the greeting is a birth announcement. It is the initiation of a new season in the life of Mary and a new age in the life of humanity. In the story, extraordinary means are used for the extraordinary content. No doubt this is a most unusual birth.

The story does not linger over the bold claim of virginity. What takes up a major part of the text is a characterization of the child to be born, Jesus. At the very outset in verses 32 and 33, we find “enthronement” speech. In other words, this is “King talk.” The scandal of Jesus' birth is political, not just biological. Early readers of this gospel would not be shocked by the claim of virgin birth; such claims were not that uncommon in those days, after all. Instead, the earliest readers would be shocked by the political and economic implications of this story. The real surprise is that the new king, Jesus, is born to a peasant woman in a place as unnoticed as Nazareth and as unaccommodating as a manger. And what is Mary's response to this assault on her known world? She is troubled, she is perplexed, but she accepts the word and submits herself to the unreasonable announcement. The bold claim of that birth must be understood as the announcement of a new way for God to be present in the world.

This text is an invitation to reorganize our lives around words that nullify old perceptions and that challenge old securities. The political and economic content of the first Christmas story is precisely why Herod and other claimants to power were so threatened by it, and why people who find power in the barrel of a gun, or the size of a stock portfolio, or the zip code on a home address still find this story so troubling. Perhaps that is why the world has transformed the Christmas story into the more acceptable and commercially profitable notion of giving and receiving, of family togetherness, etc. The first Christmas story had nothing whatsoever to do with these things, no matter how highly desirable they remain. However much the world protests, the true meaning of Christmas is not giving rather than receiving, but that God has chosen to come in strange, troubling, and transforming ways—in ways that intrude as much as they inspire!

Mark

From the Membership Division

Fall Retreat

The "Great Glendale Gathering," held November 22-23, 2002, at Rau-Wood Retreat Center, was a tremendous success with 60 people in attendance! The festivities included a game of Family Feud between the NZL family and the Weezer family, a bonfire and s' mores, music, games, and lots of fun and fellowship. Many thanks to Dave Shepherd who played the game show host, Vic Victory and his family for the Wednesday night publicity on November 20, and everyone who assisted with and attended the event.

New Members

Over the last few weeks, several individuals and families have come forward to express their desire to become members of Glendale. Ryan and Kristie Valentine wish to join Glendale as watch care members while they are here in Nashville. Bill (John Halbert's brother) and Barbara Halbert came forward to become candidates for membership. Evelyn Pearson has been attending our youth activities over the past few months; she has now come forward, also to become a candidate for baptism. If you have not yet met Ryan and Kristie Valentine and their son Shane, Bill and Barbara Halbert and their grandnephew Zach, or Evelyn Person, please make a point to introduce yourself and welcome them to Glendale.

Kristie and Ryan Valentine
(Shane)
5156 Bay Overlook
Hermitage, TN 37076
883-7384
kristie_valentine@yahoo.com

Bill and Barbara Halbert (Zach)
1334 Otter Creek
Nashville, TN 37215
337-1228
halbert@bellsouth.net

Evelyn Pearson
130 Woodmont Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37205
298-4188
cutiepiemw85@aol.com

What Should I Do with This?!

We need your help to keep our building clean and safe. The area under the stairs in the Education hall is becoming a dumping ground for items that we don't know where to store or that are no longer useful to us. No one checks this area or has responsibility for it, so anything you put there will likely stay there, looking unsightly to all who pass by. Rather than leaving items there or anywhere else in the church, please consult with the appropriate Division chairperson or the Chair of the Church Council to determine whether there is a place the items should be stored or if they should be discarded or donated to another entity.

Lost and Found

There are several items in the church office in the Lost and Found box. Please check to see if any of these items belongs to you. All items not claimed will be discarded or donated to a good cause.

HELP WANTED:

Children's Choir Director

We have a very talented little group of children who make beautiful music. They are in need of a leader! If you are interested in helping our children develop their musical gifts and learn to use them in the ministry of Glendale, please let Julie Coulter know.

Education Notes

There will be a meeting on January 5 from 4-5 pm for parents, teachers, Education Division members, and anyone else who is interested in talking about our ministry of Christian Education following the Visioning weekend. April has been with us for 6 months now and has had time to "get her feet wet." She and Julie have some ideas and hopes that they would like to explore with this group as we plan for the spring and summer. Also, we will discuss some issues and opportunities that came out of Visioning which are specific to the Education Division.

Cuba News

Continue to pray for our friends of Iglesia Bautista Alberto J. Diaz as they worship and minister in Santa Clara. Specifically, please keep their dreams about the church building in your prayers. As most of you know, the church meets in one side of what we might call a duplex. Pastora Niubes, Benardo, and Niubesitica live in the church building. Another family lives in the other side of the building. The hope is that the church can buy the other side of the building and build a second floor that will have two apartments – one for the family that currently lives in the other side of the duplex, and the other for Niubes and her family. The church would then have space for Sunday School and other education ministries on the ground floor. Also, please pray for the governments of our two countries—that the day will soon come when we will be able to live as neighbors rather than enemies.

Medicines for Cuba

The group that traveled to Cuba in November took three duffle bags of medications, thanks to your generosity. The prescription medications were given to the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba so they can be dispensed by a physician as needed. Many of the over-the-counter medications and vitamins went directly to our partner church in Santa Clara. However, there were medications that didn't get to us in time to take them on that trip. If you have medications that were intended for our friends in Cuba, you can bring them to the church and leave them in April's study. Other groups from Alliance Churches will be traveling to Cuba in January, and we will try to get the medications to them to take to Cuba on our behalf.

Kid's Corner



*And a little child shall lead them...
(quotes from children around the world)*

*In my dream would all the children be gleaming with the light of heaven and fill the yard of the world with laughter and pleasure.
Mathusudan Mallick,
India*

Faithful Friends

Michelle Tooley will lead Faithful Friends on Sunday, January 19. She will talk with us about her travels to Central America and the work of Witness for Peace.

Cuba Connection

In January, the children will be taking pictures and writing or telling short stories about themselves to introduce themselves to the children of our partner church in Santa Clara.

Room in the Inn

Older elementary children (grades 4-6) will host Room in the Inn on Friday, January 17, and spend the night. Younger children are invited to help prepare lunches and stay for dinner with their parents. We will need food, as well as one man to spend the night. Prior to that evening, children will have the opportunity to discuss homelessness and how to interact with our guests. More information to come. . . .

Children's Choir

Many thanks to Kris Elsberry and Cecelia Caldwell for their work with the children's choir during Advent. The music that the children offered as part of our service on December 15 was an important part of our worship as we look toward Christmas and celebrating the birth of Jesus. Everyone's gifts are valued and honored as part of the ministry of this church, and we are grateful to the children for sharing their gifts with us.