

~ Visions ~

GLENDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

A caring community of equality and grace.

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Wednesday Nights in January Rightly Dividing the Wealth A Financial Study for 2004

Wednesday nights during the month of January have a lot to offer everyone at Glendale. On the first Wednesday night, **January 7, the Discernment and Search Committee** will give us an update on their activities. This will include a response from the Personnel Committee and April Baker, our associate pastor. A repeat of this discussion will be held on Sunday morning, January 11 (immediately following worship) in Fellowship Hall for any who could not attend on Wednesday evening.

On Wednesday, **January 14, we will have the first of two planning sessions for a financial study we have chosen to call Rightly Dividing the Wealth.**

We will use a question and answer format to help us better understand our debt, our giving history, our 2004 budget, the psychological and sociological factors surrounding finances, and how our current interim situation affects our giving and our future needs as a community of faith. We also want to consider the following questions: calling and conviction, what the scriptures have to say, churches throughout history, our vision of God and the world, our covenant, and our moral and ethical obligations. We will use knowledgeable Glendalers to lead us in determining which of these questions, and other relevant questions, we need to consider. Everyone's questions are welcome! A repeat of this program will be held on Sunday morning, January 18 in Fellowship Hall.

On Wednesday, **January 21, we will have Part 2** of our planning session. We will use our time in brainstorming *constructive proposals* as a follow-up to our first session. A repeat of this exercise will be held on Sunday morning, January 25 in Fellowship Hall, with opportunities for input available on the website

and by e-mail to the church as well.

January 28 will be a Vespers Service, which will provide an opportunity for prayer and contemplation.

We will ask representatives from the Church Council, Discernment and Search Committee, Interim Committee, and the Budget Finance Committee to join us in looking at the information we will have gathered, to come up with a plan of study and/or proposals to present to the Church Council, DSC and Interim Committee. Our goal is to have a plan ready for presentation to the church by mid-February.

Why do this now? At a time when the positive energy is at an all-time high and our identity is perhaps most clear, we find ourselves with a debt that needs to be reduced and a budget that needs to be funded. It is time to give ourselves permission to discuss the financial processes of the church and our obligations to that process. We have enjoyed an exciting Visioning process, and now it is time to address how we plan to make those priorities become realities. As April has stated to the Church Council, "we are simply tending to our covenant." We are preparing for the days ahead. We anticipate a new staff person, perhaps a new youth minister, continued mission projects along with some new endeavors, a vital youth and children's ministry reinforced by a growing congregation. This is precisely the time when we need to think about money and what it means to each of us as an individual and as a member of Glendale Baptist Church.

Come join the discussion . . .

Martha Jo Berry, Eileen Campbell-Reed, and Raye Nell Dye
Church Council, Discernment and Search Committee
and Interim Committee

Discernment and Search Committee Update

Our primary task as a committee right now is to read résumés. In our first meeting to discuss our findings, we agreed that the task is both an amazing and daunting! The candidates unfurl their lives and work into carefully crafted words on paper, and often we catch glimpses beyond those words into rich and complex people, stories and callings. Please pray for our committee as we do this work and for the candidates who have entered into this process of mutual discernment with us. May God's wisdom and spirit guide us all.

As we discern with candidates right now, we are also keeping an eye toward space and budget considerations so that we will be prepared for a new person to join us. It is indeed a season of preparation! Blessings to you in this Advent and Christmas season!

Eileen Campbell-Reed, Lou Clifton, Jimmy Davis,

Christy Halbert, Jim Hiett, Nell Magee, David Shepherd

Wednesday, January 7, 2004 (and repeated immediately following worship on Sunday, January 11)

We will bring you an update, including our findings from other churches who have also attempted a shared, partner, or co-pastorate model. On that day we will also hear reports from April Baker and from the personnel committee.

JEAN SHAW PASSES AWAY

A long-time member of our church, **Jean Shaw**, passed away on Dec. 12 after a long period of declining health.

A **memorial service** will be held on Sunday, **January 4**, at 2:00 p.m., at the Glendale Baptist Church.

Jean, who was born in 1932 and earned her M.A. in Education from Peabody, spent most of her career in the field of early childhood education. While working with the children of low-income families, she was once interviewed for local TV by Oprah Winfrey.

CHRISTMAS IN CUBA

One of our children (or grandchildren) asked me how Christmas is celebrated in Cuba. I contacted a professor in Cuba asked him the question since I had never asked anyone before. Here is what he wrote me about their Christmas celebration.

"Christmas is celebrated in this country on two special days. The first is La Nochebuena (Good Evening Dinner), in which all the family meets for a dinner with the most delicious dishes of the year. First of all, the main dish is roasted pork, usually cooked in the yard of the home. This tradition of eating pork comes from the reign of Isabel the Catholic of Spain, in the sixteenth century. It includes exotic dessert dishes, from the Arabian tradition; fruits like figs, apples, and pears; and wine. There are exchanges of visits in the homes of friends late at night, and at midnight the 'Rooster Mass' is celebrated in the Catholic Church, heralding the arrival of the 25th of December. On the 25th, the churches have the main celebration.

"The other great celebration is January the 6th, the 'Wisemen Day,' dedicated to the children. On this day, presents for kids are put in the Christmas tree (they are brought by 'The Three Wisemen' or 'Three Kings'). In the past colonial times, this day was the only time when the local authorities would give permission to the African religious practitioners to go out in the streets in their typical garments and perform traditional dances. It was a day of tolerance of the non-Catholic religions of some Cuban people.

"I don't think that there is another more important holiday celebration than these."

In further explanation, the "Good Evening" (La Nochebuena) is Christmas Eve because it is the night of the birth of the Baby Jesus. But in Cuba, as in some other parts of the world influenced by the culture of Spain, it is an evening for church services to celebrate the birth of Christ—not a day for giving gifts. That's why the Cuban Professor who wrote the explanation above said, "The churches have the main celebration." The family and gift-giving part of Christmas comes on the "Day of the Three Wise Men" when "The Wise Men" put gifts in the Christmas Tree for the children of the house. Ask your Sunday School teacher or parent to tell you about "Epiphany," as the Day of the Coming of the Wise Men is called in the church in English. It is also "The Twelfth Day of Christmas" that you hear about in one traditional song about Christmas.

At this Christmastime, you might pray for our partner church in Cuba and especially the children there. Pray that they will have a joyous celebration of Christ's birth and a happy time on "The Day of the Three Wise Men." Oh, and, as they say in Cuba, "Feliz Navidad."

David Gooch, Cuba Partnership Coordinator, Missions Division

Youth Happenings

The past month. . .

Pizza and Titans football were the agenda for Sunday, December 7. Thomas hosted a great party!

The Youth did a great job **narrating The Surprise Christmas Pageant** on December 10. Ben's harmonica "playing" was astounding as he tended sheep with his fellow shepherds. Gabriel (Carson) always waited for the cue of trumpets sounding before speaking. Daniel, Evelyn, Josh, Paul, Peter, Phillip and Rachel had everyone laughing at times, as well. Thanks to Linda Ray Miller for finding the theatrical talents of all our Youth!

The **Youth Band** is in full swing. New members are invited to join. See Thom Elsberry for details.

Thomas had a full house on December 14! The **Youth Christmas party** was a success and enjoyed by all. Thanks to Annette for organizing lunch.

The Youth have been faithful in helping **set up for Room in the Inn** every other Wednesday. Thank you!

Things to come. . .

Youth band practices are scheduled on a variety of Sundays, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. Please plan to attend on January 4, 11, and 25, and February 22 and 29.

Kid's Corner



*If we all loved each other we would not fight.
We would hold hands. We would share.
—Ramdaye Singh, age 5, Trinidad*

Thanks to **Linda Ray Miller and Rosalyn Ramage** for a special production of **The Surprise Christmas Pageant** on December 10. The children sang many songs to a captive audience.

Molly Boyd has volunteered to **coordinate paid childcare**. Thanks to Molly, we needed the help of very few Glendalers during Advent.

Larry Cohen joined Jennifer White as a permanent teacher in the **3-4 year old class**. Thank you, Larry, for volunteering for this special place of service!

Our **3-4 year old class** participated in worship during Advent by bringing hay and animals to the manger. How special it is to include some of the youngest Glendalers in worship!

The **children's choir** sang in worship each Sunday of Advent.

Elementary children will be hosting Room in the Inn on Friday, January 16. All children (and parents) are invited to help prepare dinner and eat with the guests on Friday. Children in grades 3-5 will spend the night upstairs and help with breakfast in the morning. They will ride on the van to the Campus to pick up the guests in addition to helping prepare and serve dinner. We will have a time of preparation prior to the evening.

Faithful Friends is scheduled for the usual third Sunday, January 18.