

REFLECTIONS

On the Friday after Thanksgiving, sometimes called Black Friday because of the trauma of holiday greed, my car radio rudely switched songs in the middle of my easy listening music. An up-tempo Andy Williams launched into *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*. I was not feeling it. At the least they should have waited until December to start holiday music. But the message was received loudly and clearly, get in the Christmas shopping mood now, or all the good stuff will be gone or cost even more. What has happened to Christmas gift giving?

It starts when we are young. *What do you want for Christmas, boys and girls?* Later it becomes, *What did you get for Christmas?* Selfishness is built in. The "present" becomes the point of Christmas time. There is a healthier guide to gift-giving for parents and grandparents. It goes like this, limit up to 4 gifts: something they want, something they need, something to wear, something to read. If giving to another adult, you can substitute with something to eat, like fruit or nuts, or a restaurant card. Ask yourself, who am I trying to impress?

When the Church began to celebrate the birth of Christ, some 300 years after the fact, the image of the Magi bearing tribute offerings to the newborn King of the Jews was emphasized. The gifts were for Jesus. Going forward a century, Christians used the day to worship and give gifts to the poorest people in the area; think of the Saint Nicolas story. In time Christmas Day came wrapped in all kinds of local traditions, blending secular religious practices and fundraising. Martin Luther is credited with the indoor, candle-lit evergreen tree. Christmas became fantasized and commercialized in the 1800's. Today, getting in the Christmas spirit is demanded by advertising and social pressures.

My model and mentor for being a pastor was Dr. James G. Harris, Senior Minister of University Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. Harris would repeat occasionally before the ushers received the Sunday morning offering, *"Anyone can give without loving, but no one can love without giving."*

Keep healthy. Pray mightily. Enjoy your life today. Love gives the best. And let's experience the love and power of God together.

Bro. Darryl

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The Evangel

Braden Park Baptist Church
4739 East Fifth Street (5th & Yale)
Tulsa, OK 74112-2716

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning

Continental Breakfast

Worship

Bible Study & Conversation

9:20 a.m.

10:00 a.m.

11:15 a.m.

Wednesday Evening

The People's Pantry

The Clothes Closet Ministry

Prayer Service

5:00 p.m.

6:30 p.m.

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The Evangel



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Braden Park Baptist Church
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December 8, 2023

No. 46



Our Church Family

AT HOME

Kevin Avery	Paula McPherson
Alice Barrett	Georgia Metcalf
Elizabeth Burke	Bonnie Nutting
Marion Corbett	Annette Ford Parker
Lydia Ford	Margaret VanHorn

IN REHABILITATION CENTER

Alice Barrett Franciscan Villa Room #75, Broken Arrow

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

December

11	Katy Cook
16	Lydia Ford

NEW 2024 CHURCH DIRECTORIES

The latest abridged church member directory for 2024 is now available at church. Pick one up on Sunday or contact the church office if you would like to have one mailed to you: Office@BradenPark.org



Looking Ahead

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

Second Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast
10:00 a.m. Abiding in Peace, with Kevin Avery
—Luke 2:8-14

Silent Night, Holy Night proclaims that all was calm, all was bright that first Christmas. But was it? How are your days going? All is calm, all is bright? How do we abide in Peace in times like these? Invite your family and friends to church this week and be blessed.

11:15 a.m. Conversations with the Pastor
Ladies Bible Study
11:55 a.m. Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
Finance Committee Meeting

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

8:45 a.m. Monday Morning Prayers
Call (712) 832-8330, then access code: 887-7647

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

8:00 p.m. Prayer for the Nations
Kevin Avery's Facebook Zoom link

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

5:00 p.m. People's Pantry Ministry
Clothes Closet Ministry
6:30 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

10:00 a.m. Abiding in Joy

Behind the Scenes

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Finance Committee Sunday, December 10, at 11:55 a.m. to discuss the 2024 church budget. The members include *David Dryer, Donelle Enos, Bill Ess, Wilma Robins, and Tina Steel.*

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVE SCHEDULE

December 24, Christmas Eve, is on a Sunday this year so special plans are underway for meaningful times together. Everyone is invited to begin the morning with a **Christmas Brunch at 10:00 a.m.** around the tables in Fellowship Hall. Menu includes a Breakfast Casserole including eggs, cheese, potatoes and ham, as well as fruit, juices, and biscuits and gravy.

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Lord's Supper Service will begin at **6:00 p.m.** in the Sanctuary, followed by a reception.

END-OF-YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

The following information is from IRS publication 526, Charitable Contributions: "You can deduct your contributions only in the year you actually make them in cash or other property. A check that you mail to a charity is considered delivered on the date you mail it." Therefore contributions should be received by the church postmarked by December 31, 2023, which is on a Sunday.

FOR THE CHURCH RECORD

Weekly Budget Need	\$ 2,050.00
General Receipts December 3	\$ 3,163.00
Lottie Moon Global Missions Offerings To Date	\$ 300.00

Thank You to all who are providing sustaining tithes and offerings.