

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of November 27, 2022 -

| | |
|--|----|
| Sunday Morning Service ----- | 36 |
| Sunday Evening Service ----- | 18 |
| Wednesday Eve., 11/30/22 Service ----- | 14 |

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of November 27, 2022 -

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|--|--------------------|
| <u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings ----- | \$ 1,254.90 |
| TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/27/22: | \$ 1,254.90 |

- Week of November 20, 2022 -

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings ----- | \$ 1,572.90 |
| Lighting for church street sign ----- | \$ 25.00 |
| TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/20/22: | \$ 1,597.90 |

- Week of November 13, 2022 -

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings ----- | \$ 1,967.75 |
| TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/13/22: | \$ 1,967.75 |

- Week of November 6, 2022 -

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings ----- | \$ 2,230.31 |
| TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/06/22: | \$ 2,230.31 |

- Week of October 30, 2022 -

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings ----- | \$ 1,423.81 |
| TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 10/30/22: | \$ 1,423.81 |

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for church operating expenses EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00



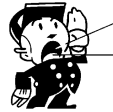
LISTEN TO -



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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



THANK YOU For Your Continued Faithfulness In Giving!

During the early part this pandemic, we were unable to meet in the church-house. But - that did not mean that the expenses of having a church-house were suspended. We still had bills to pay - electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, phone, internet, facility insurance, copier lease, office supplies, etc., and, praise the Lord, His people kept praying, watching online, & supporting their church with their giving.

Sadly, some people only give when they are in attendance at church - sort of like paying for "services rendered" - but the truth is that they are robbing **THEMSELVES** of God's blessings when they withhold their tithes and offerings and only give when they are here (see Malachi 3:10). Thankfully, most of our people have remained faithful, in so many ways, during this crisis, including financially.

WE HAVE 3 WAYS YOU CAN GIVE:

1. **By mail** - 23 East Wells Blvd., Sapulpa, OK 74066
2. **Drop it off** - call the Church Office to arrange it. 224-1924
3. **Online** - Go to the link below and give electronically:

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=433047>

**WE ARE GLAD WE CAN NOW GATHER TOGETHER TO PRAISE GOD & STUDY HIS WORD TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH-HOUSE!
YOUR FAITHFUL AND GENEROUS GIFTS WILL HELP US KEEP UP WITH THE BILLS AND CONTINUE OUR RENEWED OUTREACH EFFORTS!**

Church Directory

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Todd W. White ----- | Pastor |
| Lois Mae Floyd ----- | Pianist/ Organist |
| Mickie Shatwell ----- | Evening Pianist |
| Derek Quinnelly ----- | Greeter |
| Larry & Mary Byars ----- | Outreach |
| Bertha Segebarr ----- | Custodian |
| GinaMarie Shufelt ----- | Flowers |
| Seth White ----- | Sound/Video |

**SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY
REMINDER**

Volume XXVIII

December 4, 2022

Number 48



What About Santa Claus?

Every year, many sincere Christians ask their pastors,

"What's wrong with telling your kids that Santa Claus is real?"

Once I was asked this question by a member of a church I pastored at the time. After a lengthy discussion, I didn't get very far. It seems that I could not get across to this person that it is not acceptable to lie to our children for any reason. Nor could I make clear the plain truth that, later in life, Satan could easily deceive a child by using the fact that his parents lied to him about Santa Claus to make him doubt whether or not they lied to him about Jesus Christ.

Though well meaning, I am certain that our sweet member left feeling that I was some sort of an extremist nut. I left that conversation feeling as though I had failed to communicate effectively the need to keep the real reason we celebrate Christmas - to commemorate Christ's birth - in the forefront of the holiday season.

A few days later, I came across this little article by the late Dr. Bill Rice. It is reprinted here by permission for your edification. Perhaps Dr. Bill will do a better job of presenting these truths than did I.

Should Children Be Taught About Santa Claus, Easter Bunnies and Good Fairies?

Q: *I have a problem that in recent days has caused me to question my stand.*

I was raised in a Christian home and have been saved for several years. My husband is an unsaved church member and doesn't take a stand for or against anything.

I have never taught our children to believe Santa Claus brings Christmas presents or that good fairies leave money for teeth. To me, Christmas is the start of a home in Heaven. I could not believe Christ died if I did not believe He was born. I have received lots of laughs and criticism for this belief. I never paid it any thought until our music director, a student of a great Bible college, laughed and told me how silly I was not to tell my children about Santa Claus, etc.

How do you feel? How did you teach your family when they were growing up? Can I teach my children to love and serve God if I also teach them things that I must tell lots of lies about?

A: My good friend, you are another who is going to cause me a lot of trouble! When I answer this, I'm going to get letters from irate preachers, angry parents, and outraged businessmen. If ever in my life I have wished I were a man of tact, I wish it now. But I do not know any honest way to answer your letter that will also sound kind and make everyone love me.

So - you ask a plain question, and you deserve a plain answer, and here it is -

Any Christian who teaches little children the fable that there is a Santa Claus is, at best, incredibly thoughtless and shallow.

(continued inside)

How blind one must be not to realize that the Christian who tells children about Santa Claus is bypassing the Gospel of Christ that brings salvation just as much as a modernist (liberal) who teaches that the Bible story is not true.

Surely nothing could please Satan more than for Christians to talk about Santa Claus, Easter bunnies, and good fairies rather than about Jesus Christ.

The Devil Wanted A Detour

Satan tried to keep Jesus from going to the cross in the first place. On the Mount of Temptation, Satan offered Christ the kingdoms of the world without a crucifixion. In the Garden of Gethsemane, I believe Satan tried to kill Jesus and thus prevent His going to the cross. When Simon Peter insisted that Jesus should not die, the Saviour significantly said, **“Get thee behind me, Satan.”**

The idea that Jesus should not die on the cross for sinners was clearly of the Devil.

Substituting Something Good for the Gospel

Today, Satan wants to substitute something else for the Gospel of Christ.

Perhaps the most beautiful story ever told is the true story of how Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary in the little town of Bethlehem. Angels sang to the shepherds to announce the Saviour’s birth.



Surely there is no more beautiful story in all the world than this. Christmas is the day set aside by Christians to commemorate this great event.

But, little by little, the fictitious story of Santa Claus has become a tradition. In many places it has been substituted for the true story of the birth of Christ. In almost all places, it is at least on an equal with the story of Jesus. One may walk down the streets of a great city at Christmastime and hear “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer” sung in the same collection with “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”

Many Christian parents tell their children the Santa Claus fable because it is a cute story and an entertaining one. Many do not dream that they are actually aiding the Devil by substituting a lie for the truth. Parents tell the Santa Claus fable lightheartedly

while telling themselves that Junior will soon realize that it is not a true story, and when he is older he will understand that the Santa Claus fable was just a beautifully-told tale and not the truth.

So, what harm is done? A great deal. **Every time the Santa Claus story is told - the true story of Jesus is NOT told!** And the emphasis is on Santa Claus rather than on Christ.

After all, how many times have you ever heard someone ask a little child, “What will you be given for Christmas in Jesus’ name?” Actually, I doubt if I have ever heard that question in all my life! But I have heard, “What is Santa Claus going to bring you for Christmas?”

There certainly no honor to Jesus Christ in that!

I certainly do not object to the giving of gifts to loved ones at Christmastime. I love Christmas and think it is fitting and right for us to give gifts to our loved ones in the spirit of Christ who gave Himself for us; but I am dead set against telling little children that gifts come from Santa Claus when the Bible says, **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights . . .” (James 1:17).**

What About Easter?

Easter is a day on which Christians commemorate the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The importance of His resurrection is absolutely impossible to overestimate or over-realize. Paul wrote in **I Corinthians 15:16-19:**

“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

How foolish, then, for any Christian to add silly stories of the Easter Bunny laying eggs right along with the true and vitally important story of Jesus being raised from the dead! Easter ought not to be a time when the primary thoughts of any Christian have to do with Easter eggs, colored chicks, baby ducks, little rabbits or new clothes. Even though the stories may be cute and the clothes attractive, we are shallow to allow ourselves to be duped by Satan to share the Gospel story with these things.

Any Substitute Suits Satan

Just about anything that is used as a substitute for the Gospel is satisfactory to Satan.

It must be a matter of great satisfaction to Satan that many orthodox churches have become so engrossed with satined-glass windows, a beautiful “sanctuary” and a stiff, formal service that soul winning is no longer on the agenda.

Not only should a Christian be careful always to tell the truth - and stories about Santa Claus, Easter rabbits, and good fairies are definitely not truthful - but he ought to be careful never to let anything detract from the story of Christ. □

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

• **T. D. JAKES SAYS HUG YOURSELF** - T. D. Jakes, one of America’s most popular and influential preachers, is exhorting people to hug themselves. On Nov. 6, 2022, he preached, “The courage you need to survive must come from within you. When it doesn’t come from around you, it must come from within. ... [Say to yourself,] ‘I’ll encourage myself, I’m taking myself out to dinner. I’m gonna be my valentine. You’re not going to help me. I’m gonna be my own valentine.’ ... If the kids don’t bring you no roses, get yourself some roses. If they don’t send you no card, get yourself a card. Encourage yourself! I want you to do something right now. I want you to throw your arms around yourself and hug yourself. I want you to rock from side to side and say, ‘I got you, I got you.’ In the season you are in your life, hug yourself and say, ‘I got you. I got you.’ You’re gonna get through this” (Jakes, “Stop Living in Limbo,” Nov. 6, 2022).

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves...” (II Tim. 3:1-2).

• **HUNDREDS OF CONGREGATIONS LEAVING THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** - Hundreds of congregations are leaving the United Methodist Church (UMC) over the issues of ordaining homosexual pastors and hosting same-sex marriages. Though the denomination officially bans these things and its Book of Doctrine says “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching,” many congregations have flaunted homosexual rights.

The result is a large ongoing split, with the more conservative congregations departing to join a new denomination, the Global Methodist Church, which was formed in April 2022. This month, 249 North Carolina congregations departed, which is 32% of the total (“Nearly one-third of church split,” Fox News, Nov. 23, 2022). They join 58 congregations in Louisiana and 70 in North Georgia. In other states, many churches have expressed their intention to leave. Typical of these is Lanes Chapel United Methodist Church in Tyler, Texas. Jeff Gage, senior pastor, says, “We will be disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church at the end of the year. It’s not the denominational structure that troubles us. It’s what’s happening across the denomination that is contrary to what we see as solid biblical teaching” (“Methodist church split,” KETK.com, Sept. 23, 2022).

• **POLISH PARTY LEADER SPEAKS OUT FOR TRADITIONAL GENDER DISTINCTIONS** - The following is excerpted from “PiS Party Leader,” The European Conservative, Nov. 12, 2022:

“Poland’s ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party has come out in defense of traditional gender distinctions. On November 12th, the head of the party, Jarosław Kaczyński, gave a speech in Wadowice during which he harshly attacked the LGBT movement’s effects on children. ‘We do not want, ladies and gentlemen, a country in which twelve-year-old girls declare themselves lesbians, although unfortunately these things are already spreading in Poland,’ said Kaczyński. Kaczyński also

spoke out against the transgender movement, to which his country has become increasingly susceptible. Polish universities, Kaczyński asserted, were implementing policies friendly toward an agenda, in which normative behavior and honest debate were punishable. On college campuses in Poland, if a student, ‘a boy, two meters [6 feet] tall and 120 kilos [264 pounds] in weight with a beard says he is Zosia [a female name], then the teacher has to call him that or be fired. This is madness, ladies and gentlemen, and this madness must be fought. What is in the genes cannot be interpreted,’ the party leader warned. ... Kaczyński’s colleague and Polish Minister of Education Przemysław Czarnek urged Poles to take responsibility for the unique role they play in staving off the destructive ideologies of the West, warning them they ‘must be counter-revolutionaries’ ... To him, gender ideology ‘destroys the family, destroys common sense.’”

• **EPISCOPAL CHURCH LOSES NEARLY 60,000 MEMBERS, SEES DROP IN WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: REPORT** - The Episcopal Church continued to suffer declines in membership and worship attendance in 2021, well below pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels, according to recently released statistics. According to a report released last week, the denomination had approximately 1.678 million baptized members, which is nearly 60,000 fewer than the 1.736 million reported for 2020.

The Episcopal Church’s 2021 membership is also nearly 400,000 fewer than it was in 2012, when the mainline Protestant denomination had over 2 million baptized members. Average Sunday attendance was also in decline, with 2021 reporting approximately 312,000 worship attendees on average, contrasted with around 483,000 in 2020. The 2021 attendance numbers also sharply contrast with 2019, the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns played a role in the numbers, which reported over 547,000 in average Sunday attendance.

HIS BIRTHDAY



Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.—Revelation 3:20