

## NEW ARRIVALS

Well, tomorrow we're supposed to be picking up our new puppy. We're getting him from a rescue agency and so we aren't sure what to expect. As you can imagine the kids are excited (one continues to run around the house on all fours like a puppy in celebration). I must admit also, that I think it will be fun to have a puppy in the house. But, I also know that things are going to change quite a bit around the house. We have to be more careful to keep the puppy safe and keep our shoes, toys, computers, etc. safe from little puppy teeth. I also assume that at least a few times we are going to have to watch our step. It's going to be exciting and fun, but it is also going to take a lot of patience and work. All the books tell you how to prepare your home, but they can't fully prepare you for how much work your new puppy will require.

Now, please don't get upset as I take this to the next step. I am NOT saying Jesus is like a puppy. But, sometimes at Christmas it almost seems a little bit like we treat him like one. We talk about the baby Jesus. We imagine the tiny fingers grasping Mary's hair and the tiny toes grasped by Joseph. We talk about how Jesus had no room at the inn and how we need to make room for Him in our hearts. And He is just so cute and little in the manger that He melts our hearts. But, just as you shouldn't get a puppy thinking just about how cute it is and how much fun it will be without understanding how much work it is going to be, I don't believe we should just talk about the Baby Jesus without remembering the man He is going to grow up to be. Yes, Jesus is loving and kind and compassionate but He is also holy and righteous and the Son of God. Not that we should be afraid of Jesus, but that we should see Him for who He is. He is our Brother and our Friend, but He is also our Lord and our Savior. He is not our buddy or an acquaintance or just one more person to add to our often meaningless "Friend List" (it's a Facebook thing, ask someone). He comes into our life to save us and to transform us into someone new. And that's a really big deal.

And if we go through so much effort to welcome a pet into our home, isn't it amazing how little effort we sometimes put in when daily inviting Jesus into our lives. This Christmas let's celebrate. Let's celebrate the baby in the manger but also celebrate who that Baby grows to be. Let's celebrate the fact that God sent His Son for us that we might have the joy and privilege of inviting Him into our lives. Yes, it's joyful and yes, it can be somewhat scary. Just as things changed when Jesus came into this world, when Jesus comes into our lives, things change as well. Let's prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus and all He wants to do in our lives.

## December Highlights

- 🍎 *Holiday Luncheon*  
Sunday, December 4 @ 12:30pm
- 🍎 *Lottie Moon Week of Prayer'*  
December 4-11
- 🍎 *Christmas Food Pantry Collection*  
December 4-18
- 🍎 *Bellewood Christmas Musical*  
Sunday, December 18 @ 11am
- 🍎 *Candlelight Christmas Eve Celebration*  
Saturday, December 24 @ 6pm
- 🍎 *Christmas Morning Worship*  
Sunday, December 25 @ 11am  
(no Sunday School)
- 🍎 *New Year's Eve*  
Saturday, December 31

## Birthdays

Say **Happy Birthday** to:

Amanda Sharpsteen - December 9  
 Lynda Evans - December 9  
 Lois Guckert - December 9  
 Linda Sallis - December 17  
 Chris Lupole - December 18  
 Sarah Bradstreet - December 26  
 Jeremy Reed - December 30  
 Glenn Igleheart - December 30

## Anniversaries

**Congratulate:**

Paul & Lenore Dudzick - December 18  
 Doug & Paula Dodd - December 21  
 Lance & Sarah Bradstreet - December 22  
 Steve & Linda Sallis - December 23

## Christmas Musical Celebration

This is a great chance to share the joy and hope of the season with your friends and neighbors. May this be the year when they accept the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ. Join us Sunday, **December 18<sup>th</sup> at 11 am** for our Christmas celebration.

## Christmas Food Drive



As part of our celebration of Christmas, we'll be sharing the blessings God has given us. Starting **December 4<sup>th</sup>**, we're collecting non-perishable food for our local food pantry at St. Rose of Lima Church. This is a great way to share the overflowing of our tables with those in need in our community. We'll be collecting food until Sunday, **December 18<sup>th</sup>**.

## December Fellowship Lunch

Something different is happening at Bellewood. Our church *dinner* is becoming our church *lunch*. The Fellowship team will provide and prepare the main dish and you can bring your favorite side. All are welcome (whether you can bring a dish or not) to share in this wonderful meal. Our first Fellowship Lunch is on **December 4**, right **after our worship celebration**. We look forward to seeing you then.

←  
December 2011

## Beauty for Ashes Update



Total Pledged for August 2011-2014 = **\$100,000**  
Total Given by December 2011 - **\$32,677**

## HISHEART HISHANDS HISVOICE



2011 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering\*

Advent Candles, Christmas carols, and videos in church. It must be Lottie time.

**December 4-11** is the Lottie Moon Christmas

Offering Week of Prayer. During this week we pray for our missionaries, give support to our missionaries, and ask God how He is calling us to join in His work. This year's theme is *His Heart, His Hands, His Voice*. Let's each pray, asking God how He is calling to serve as His hands and His voice. Look for our Week of Prayer Guide and the offering envelope in your bulletin.

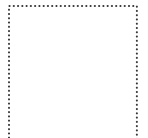
## Christmas Eve Celebration

Please join us for our Candlelight Christmas Eve celebration. In this hectic time, we invite you to join us as we take a moment to stop, reflect, soak in, and rejoice in what God has done for us in sending His Son. The celebration is on **Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm.**

*We'll see you there!!!*



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