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Check us out on:

Facebook.com/grovesparkchurch

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Sundays	5:00 p.m.	Family Night
Mon., Wed., Thurs.		Devotional on Facebook Live
Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	Gospel of John
Wednesdays	6:30 p.m.	Facebook Prayer Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Prayer Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal (unless otherwise noted)
Thursdays	7:00 p.m.	GPBC Book Club
December 1	6:00 p.m.	Deacon Fellowship
December 4	12:00 p.m.	Romeo's
December 12	7:00 p.m.	Alamance Chorale Concert
December 14	3:00 p.m.	Alamance Chorale Concert
December 17	9:00 a.m.	Red Cross Blood Drive
December 18	6:00 p.m.	Longest Night Service
December 19		Alternative Christmas Market Closes
December 24	6:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service
December 25-26		Office Closed for Christmas
December 29		Service of Lessons and Carols



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF GROVE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH | DECEMBER 2024

Some of the fondest memories of my childhood are woven around Christmas. My brother and I were the only grandchildren and to say our parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunt doted on and spoiled us would be an understatement. Each year, our parents would take us down to the mall where we could talk to Rudolph, see his red nose light up, and then go shopping in a specially designed kids store at Belk to buy our gifts for the family. Christmas Eve meant traveling to the Northwoods neighborhood in Jacksonville where this wonderful couple “hosted” Mr. and Mrs. Claus, who would listen to our last minute lists. One of the best traditions though remains the television specials, one of which celebrates its 60th Anniversary this year—“Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.”

I encourage you to tune in on December 6 if you have not watched it recently. One of the greatest parts of the show, aside from the animation, is how the narrative involves the Island of Misfit Toys. This is the island that Rudolph, Hermey the wanna be dentist elf, and Yukon Cornelius land on when they flee the Abominable Snow Monster. The island is inhabited by unloved or unwanted toys brought there by the isle’s king, a winged lion named King Moonracer. King Moonracer works to find homes and children for the ‘misfit toys.’ King Moonracer allows the trio to stay of the island if Rudolph will reach out to Santa about joining in this work, which Santa does at the end of the show.

By now, I hope the light bulbs are beginning to flash in your hearts. There once was a time when we were unloved, unwanted, and cast aside until the Lion of Judah came to rescue us and brought us to a safe place of love and care. All churches are supposed to be Islands of Misfit Toys, the problem arises when they begin to think otherwise. Church is where the cast aside of the world come to find safety, love, and hope. It is where the inherent worth of each person is emphatically declared as places of service in God’s Kingdom are found. We see this most vividly portrayed in the Nativity scenes that we use as decorations this time of year. The Nativity characters are all a bunch of misfits and outcasts. Joseph, who should be able to find a place to stay in a town teeming with family, is forced into a stable. And why? It is the simple fact that his betrothed scandalously claimed her pregnancy was due to the Holy Spirit conceiving the child she carried. Then there are the stinky shepherds who were declared ‘unclean’ by the religious authorities of the day. Let’s not forget the Magi, who though were not there at the same time we believe, did eventually arrive to the spot to which the star guided them. The shepherds were at least Jews, the Magi were of another ethnicity entirely. And yet, all these misfits compose the first church service as they worship Christ the newborn King. As we come to adore the newborn King this month, remember your misfitness, slide over to make room for other misfits that we might bring or even more pointedly, that the King may bring, to our Island of Misfit Toys for love and care, and pray that God places a bright star over us to guide other misfits here to Grove Park.

Grace Abounds,
Marc



“Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do...”

(1 Chronicles 12:32)

Today, I’ve been driving around Burlington to take care of some projects, and I’ve been paying attention to signs. I’ve noticed church signs of varying quality, road signs warning me about upcoming hazards, and even some leftover political signs from November’s elections that haven’t yet been taken up. Signs are everywhere!

Issachar was one of the twelve tribes of Israel. We don’t know a lot about them; they didn’t have famous members who accomplished memorable things. But I think it’s interesting how they are described in this passage. Issachar had “...men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.” They paid attention to the signs around them and knew how to respond.

During December many signs will come across our paths. We’ll see signs for upcoming events in our neighborhoods. We’ll encounter many, many signs about sales going on in different stores. We may even see a few signs that remind us what Christmas is all about.

We’ll also see signs people post through their attitudes and their actions. Their smiles may tell us that they love every moment of the holidays. Their walk may show that they are hurried and stressed. Their eyes may display joy or depression. These are signs we need to notice, and hopefully we will understand what we ought to do in response.

While you are out and about this month, pay attention to the signs you encounter in other people. Even more importantly, be very aware of the signs you are putting up yourself through your actions and your expressions.

This month (and every month), let’s understand the times. Let’s make sure we use the opportunities of the season to share God’s grace and mercy with those around us.

Dale

The women’s shelter is in need of 2025 pocket calendars. If you have any that you can donate please leave them in the missions room .

Hope Boxes

We are thankful for the continued contributions to this outreach ministry. During the month of December our focus is on collecting toys (\$5-\$10).

The GPALS are in need of 20 jars, quart size, preferably wide-mouth, with or without the rings and lids, by December 8. Contact Candy Reavis if you can help.



**The
Lottie Moon Post
Office is now set up
In the
Missions Room.**

Alamance Chorale invites you to experience

Christmas Joy

Thursday
December 12
at 7:00 pm
and

Saturday
December 14
at 3:00 pm

Both concerts are free and will be followed by a reception.

**American Red Cross
Annual Holiday Blood Drive
Tuesday, December 17th 9:00 am- 6:00 pm
at Grove Park Baptist Church.
Make your appointment online at:
www.redcrossblood.org, sponsor code: Holiday
or call 1-800-RED CROSS**

Ministers On Call for the Month of December

*Dec 5– Dec 8 Caleb Warren
Dec 12– Dec 15 Matthew Byrd
Dec 19– Dec 22 Jason Bogart
Dec 26– Dec 29 Mirian Brewer*

December Birthdays

Larry Snead	December 01
Don Moriarty	December 03
Stuart Latham	December 03
Sue Atkinson	December 04
Lois Dickerson	December 05
Lillian Anne Culler	December 10
Ruth Tyler	December 11
Beth Canada	December 12
Thomas Overby	December 13
William Overby	December 20
Brian Weatherman	December 20
Graham Parrish	December 22
Melanie Fitzgerald	December 31
Nancy McMillan	December 31



Advent Devotionals

The first Sunday of Advent is December 1st. Once again, we will have a book of daily devotionals available for reflection during the Advent season. These will be available on or before December 1st. Each day’s devotion can also be found on the GPBC website.