



Peabody, Massachusetts

December 2016

## ***Why Jesus said He Came***

As we move into this Advent - Christmas season it is our desire to reflect on the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The term 'Advent' means coming. So we celebrate the faithfulness of God's promise to send Jesus who came to save His people from their sins. But also we look forward to the Day when King Jesus will return to judge the world and gather His people to Himself to enjoy the inheritance that awaits them.

Each Advent Christmas season we try to have a theme of focus that highlights some aspect of the Christmas story of the birth and coming of the Messiah. This year it is my desire for us to focus and reflect on *Why Jesus said He came to Earth*. There are several statements that Jesus made specifically about Himself and why He came that will help us understand His ministry while He was on earth. Also to understand that though He rose and ascended to Heaven Jesus is still ministering through the Church, His called out people. As followers of Jesus we now are His hands, His feet, His Body and we are to minister as He did on earth.

This 2016 Advent Christmas Season we will be observing statements that Jesus made as to why He came and their application for us today as we live our lives as His called out people, the Church. The following below are the statements and Scripture that will take us through Advent to Christmas.

### ***Jesus said, 'I came to.....***

- To fulfill all Scripture ~ Luke 4:16-21
- To Do His Father's Will ~ John 4:31-35
- Not to Bring Peace but a Sword ~ John 10:24-39
- To Give Rest for the Soul ~ Matthew 11:25-30
- To Find Followers ~ Matthew 16:21-28
- To Bear Witness to the Truth ~ John 18:33-40

May The Holy Spirit speak to us individually and collectively this Advent Christmas Season!

Sincerely In Christ,  
Pastor Rick



## *Memorial Poinsettias*

The chancel will be decorated with poinsettias and greens again this Christmas. If you would like to provide a poinsettia (\$14.50 each) in memory of a loved one, please call the church no later than Sunday, December 11th. NOTE: Plants may be taken home following the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

### ***A Christmas Potpourri***

West Church family and friends are invited to a Christmas Potpourri, Celebrating Jesus the Greatest Gift of all, on Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm in the Sanctuary. A light supper will follow the event in Lyons Hall. For childcare needs please contact the office.

### ***Christmas Eve Candlelight Service***

Please join us in the Sanctuary on Christmas Eve at 7 pm, with your family, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. There will be special music, the reading of Scripture, the lighting of the Advent Candle and a Christmas devotional message from



God's Word. At the Christmas Eve Service we will receive our Annual ***Christmas Offering***. On this night when we give gifts to one another, it is good that we should also give a tangible gift of love to the Lord Jesus. Your Christmas love offering, in the Name of Jesus, will help us carry on His work through the Church.

### ***Christmas Lord's Day Worship Service***

We will have an informal gathering to worship our God on the Lord's Day, Christmas morning at 10:30 am. Please join us to Give God Glory and to stir one another to love and good deeds!

### ***Haven from Hunger***

Members and friends of West Church have been providing a meal at the Haven from Hunger (71 Wallis Street, downtown Peabody near the square) on the first Monday of every month. We start to prepare the meal at 3:15 pm. The dinner is served at 5:00 pm, and we clean up and leave at 6:00 pm. The more hands helping, the easier the load and the greater the opportunity to talk and share with people.

Right now there is a special need for additional help to clean up starting at 5:30 pm. Haven has had a cleanup crew but last month they were very short handed and this will probably be a continuing problem. So a couple of people at 5:30 pm to at the latest 7:00 pm to clean tables, stack chairs, etc. would be a great ministry. If you can help please contact the office.

The meal includes ice cream and homemade brownies for dessert. Church members bake the brownies (without nuts) and leave them at church the Sunday before the first Monday each month. We are trying to expand our impact by distributing additional brownies the next day marked from West Church and including a Bible verse. Therefore we would appreciate some additional homemade brownies in upcoming months.

We would like to thank all those who have remained faithful to this ministry in prayer, in helping, and financial support. The financial support not only pays for the meal but also supports Haven from Hunger programs therefore we encourage people to prayerfully consider giving to this ongoing ministry need through designated gifts.

If anyone has questions they can contact the office.

### ***Annual Reports Due***

All Chairmen of Boards and Committees, Church Officers and ALL leaders of church ministries are to turn in their reports to the church office ([office@westchurchpeabody.org](mailto:office@westchurchpeabody.org)) no later than ***Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>***. This gives time to format, copy and collate the Annual Reports for the Annual Meeting in January.

## Pioneer Girls News

We began November with a wonderful Thanksgiving Outreach to Citizens for Adequate Housing. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, the Challengers (Grade 7) baked (and froze) 10 dozen cookies. The Pathfinders (Grades 3-4) and Trailblazers (Grades 5-6) made 14 sets of 6 turkey napkin rings, and the Voyagers (Grades 1-2) created 14 personalized Thanksgiving cards. The following week, the Voyagers baked 15 loaves of sweet bread. The Challengers' frozen cookies were thawed and combined with an additional 4 dozen cookies baked at home by two hard-working Pioneer Girls, and added to all of the other delicious and delightful creations to make 14 beautiful Thanksgiving packages that were delivered the following morning by Pastor Rick to CAH. Each of the 14 plates contained goodies, a hand-made card, a set of 6 adorable turkey napkin rings, and were topped off with a beautiful bow. The 14 families residing at the Inn Transition were invited to accept a gift and enjoy the contents that were made especially for them with love in Jesus' name.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, we hosted our annual Gal Pal Kick Off Event. It was, once again, a night to remember! With 15 new pairs and 22 continuing pairs of Pals, we crammed 74 ladies and girls into Lyons Hall for an evening of fellowship, fun, singing, crafts, snacks and prayer. We are SO BLESSED to have the Gal Pals involved in the lives of our Pioneer Girls!

December is always a busy month! We look forward to special Christmas experiences and celebrations with our Pioneer Girls. We'll meet together on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. We will **not** be meeting on December 28<sup>th</sup>. Club meetings will resume on January 4<sup>th</sup>.

With the weather turning colder, it's a good time to remind you of our Snow Policy. If Peabody schools are cancelled due to snow, there will be no Pioneer Girls that evening. If the weather turns bad after school gets out and it's necessary to cancel club, leaders will make phone calls home to advise you of this decision. The church office will also be notified of a decision to cancel.



Merry Christmas to all our Pioneer Girls and their families! May God bless you in a special way as you celebrate the birth of his Son.

## Rock Solid: Youth Group (Grades 7-12)

Our Sunday night Rock Solid meetings this month will be December 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>. We will not meet on Christmas or New Years Day.

This year for snow camp we will be going to Berea for Deep Freeze, February 3-5. The cost is \$165. A \$50 deposit is due by December 11<sup>th</sup>. For more information about Deep Freeze check out: <http://berea.org/deepfreeze/>



The speaker for the weekend is Lucas Ramirez. He is a man renewed by the love of Jesus and loves to inspire passion for Christ in others. He currently serves as Executive Director for The Gathering Place ([thegp.org](http://thegp.org)), a Christian leadership development organization that impacts over 12,000 students each year with the mission to reach, equip and send them with the power of the Gospel. He is a graduate of Eastern University's Youth Ministry program and also serves on the ministry council for the National Network of Youth Ministries. Lucas now resides in Coastal Georgia, but being a native to Argentina, he is proud to be from the south. Lucas married the love of his life Thea and they have three kids: Luci, Max and Teddy.

The band for the retreat is the Great Romance, a worship/rock band from the St. Louis, MO area. They travel the country spreading the gospel of Christ through music and more.

## **THANK YOU!**

Together we collected 94 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child a part of Samaritan's Purse. Coordinators delivered all of the boxes from West Church to a local collection center on Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. These shoeboxes filled with gifts will be distributed all around the globe in the coming weeks where local pastors and community leaders will host outreach events for the children and youth in the area. In addition churches use the boxes in orphanages and other at risk area. At many outreaches they also offer a Gospel story book. To read stories about the impact that these shoeboxes make visit: [www.samaritanaspurse.org](http://www.samaritanaspurse.org)



### ***Testimony from the Pulpit Search Committee***

As we approach Christmas this year, and think forward to the New Year, I've reflected on my accomplishments and failures throughout the year. Although there are many of both, I'm most proud of the progress the Pulpit Search Committee has been able to accomplish. Early in June, when the team was just forming, the task seemed so great and formidable. We started with a blank slate, and a serious prayer to the Lord that He would guide our course, and give us wisdom to make decisions that honor him, and that lead our church to the man He has already prepared for us.

Where to start? How do we do something that hasn't been done in the last 38 years?

Although we didn't know it, the Lord was already preparing the path for us. Allow me to highlight two accounts of the Lord leading and guiding our team. Before our first meeting, I had the opportunity to meet with a friend, a pastor, who knows our church and understands the intricacies of Pastoral selection and how selection of the right man has a significant impact on the church. He recommended that I read a book titled, "When the Word Leads Your Pastoral Search." I started right in on the book, and found it rich in recommendations on how to discern who the church needs based on a scriptural foundation. I brought the book to the Deacons and a decision was made to procure copies for the entire Pulpit Search Committee. Each team member read through the book, digesting it completely prior to our very first meeting. In doing so, the Lord had started to prepare our hearts to move us in His direction, allowing us to be unified scripturally right from the start.

The second account was that of our chairman, Jim Peluso. When he accepted the call to be a member of the Pulpit Search Committee, knowing we needed solid counsel on our journey, immediately reached out to a friend who recommended he contact Pastor Terry Shanahan. Imagine a lawyer who knew we needed solid counsel. Who knew?! The Lord knew that we needed counsel and solid recommendations on "how" to conduct a successful and Christ centered search. The team met with Pastor Shanahan several times, seeking counsel on several topics. He also recommended two workbooks that provided process guidance and document templates that we've been able to use to develop our own set for West Church.

There is no doubt that the Lord has been guiding and directing not only our steps, but also our hearts as we've learned and grown, and continue to grow along this journey. Please be praying for the team as we continue moving forward. Pray that He will make our decisions clear and unified. Pray for perseverance and stamina for the team. And, pray that the Lord will prepare our leadership for this transition period within the church. All glory to God, the maker and creator of all things, from whom all wisdom and power is given.

In Christ's most capable hands,

Matt Brown, Pulpit Search Committee member

## ***No Sunday School ~***

### ***Christmas and New Year's Day***

Sunday School classes for children, youth and adults will not meet on December 25<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>. The regular class schedule will resume on January 8<sup>th</sup> at 9 am.

### ***Offering Envelopes***

A Reminder of Church Policy: The Church ONLY keeps financial records for those who use the numbered Offering Envelopes provided each year. If you are not now using Offering Envelopes, but wish to use them in the year 2017, please contact the church office, or fill in a pew card and place it in the offering plate.



### ***LOOKING AHEAD TO 2017***

Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>: Sunday School Resumes at 9 am  
Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>: Annual Meeting  
February 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>: Rock Solid Snow Camp Deep Freeze

### ***Year End Note from the Treasurer***

Anyone who may have reason to request a check from the Treasurer (i.e. for reimbursable expenses, outstanding bills to be paid for church missions or ministries, or 2016 Budget items, etc.) is asked to submit his/her request no later than December 31st. Thank you.

### ***Flowers for Special Occasions***

If you would like to have flowers in the chancel on a Sunday to celebrate an occasion that is special to you, please sign the Flower Chart on the bulletin board across from the office. The Flower Chart for 2017 will be posted in December. The cost of each arrangement is \$35, which may be included in your offering envelope or pew envelope and designate "flowers" under the heading "Other."

# MINISTRY PRAYER CALENDAR

Please use the information below to daily pray for the ministries of West Church.

Sunday

- Kingdom Kids & Nursery\*\*\*
- Rock Solid\*\*\*
- Sunday School\*\*\*
- Ushers & Greeters\*\*\*
- Worship Team\*\*\*

Monday

- Every Man a Warrior
- Gideon Ministry
- Haven from Hunger\*
- Nursing Home Ministry\*\*\*
- Pulpit Committee\*\*

Tuesday

- Board of Deacons & Deaconesses\*
- Board of Trustees\*
- Community Outreach Committee\*
- Nursing Home Ministry\*\*\*
- Prison Ministry

Wednesday

- Christian Service Brigade\*\*\*
- Girls' Growth Group\*\*\*
- Pioneer Girls\*\*\*
- Women's Bible Study\*\*\*

Thursday

- Christian Education Committee\*
- Missions Committee\*
- Home Fellowship Groups\*\*
- Missions Prayer Watch\*
- Food Pantry

Friday

- College and Career Ministry \*
- Compassionate Ministries
- Media Team
- Young at Heart

Saturday

- Gain Sewing Ministry\*
- Marriage Builders\*
- Nominating Committee
- Potpourri
- S.A.L.T.\*

*And **pray** for us,  
too, that God  
may open a door  
for our message,  
so that we may  
proclaim the  
mystery of  
Christ. . .*

Colossians 4:3

\*Indicates ministries that meet once a month.  
\*\*Indicates ministries that meet twice a month.  
\*\*\*Indicates ministries that meet weekly.