

# Mountain Echoes

Newsletter of First Baptist Church of Gatlinburg  
December 15, 2018

## FROM OUR PASTOR

A mouse comes upon an elephant swimming in the pond. Obviously not intimidated by the elephant's size, the mouse begins yelling at him, *Come out of there; come out of that water right now!* He just keeps yelling and yelling. The elephant realized that if he wanted any peace and quiet he would have to come out of the water.

Slowly the elephant lumbered out of the pond and stood towering over the mouse as he asks, *Now, why did you want me to come out of the water?* The mouse looked up and said, *I can't find my bathing suit and I wanted to see if you were wearing it.*

A silly little story: There is no way that an elephant could fit its huge body into a tiny mouse's bathing suit. Yet, there have been times when things of massive substance have been compacted into impossibly small packages. In fact, that is a central theme of Christmas: That God, with all his majesty, greatness, and power, was somehow compacted into the tiny form of an infant born in a manger in Bethlehem.

The theological term for that truth is *incarnation*. Merriam-Webster defines *incarnation* as:

(1) the embodiment of a deity or spirit in some earthly form.

(2) *capitalized*: the union of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ.

In other words, in Jesus God took on a human body and nature and became both man and God.

Or as the Apostle Paul put it, *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell* (Colossians 1:19, NRSV). Dr. William Barclay explains it well in his commentary on the verse.

*Jesus is not simply a sketch of God or a summary, and more than a lifeless portrait of him. In him there is nothing left out; he is the full revelation of God, and nothing more is necessary* (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, The Daily Study Bible, Revised Edition, pp. 118-119).



In my sermon on Sunday, November 25, I referred to a moment from the 1992 Disney animated film, *Aladdin*. The big blue genie (voiced by the late Robin Williams) appears out of a magic lamp and informs Aladdin that he now has three wishes. Overwhelmed, Aladdin poses a question which the Genie has never been asked: *What would you wish for?* After a bit of coercing the Genie finally answers, *Freedom*, explaining that he is permanently tied to his lamp. Aladdin responds with a question couched in shock: *You're a Prisoner?* The Genie answers, *Oh, it's all part-and-parcel, the whole genie gig.* Then, growing to a gigantic size, the Genie says in a booming, echoing voice, *Phenomenal cosmic powers!* Then shrinking down into the cramped space of his lamp he concludes meekly, *Itty bitty living space.*

What a wonderful description of the living God's presence in the form of a little baby: *Phenomenal cosmic powers! Itty bitty living space.*

The old proverb is true: *Big things come in small packages.*

May this Christmas bring you a renewed sense of the life-changing presence, power and love of God, come to dwell among us in the small package... the *itty bitty living space*... of a baby named Jesus.

*Lamy*



## Special Thanks,

*...to all who have purchased the beautiful Poinsettias for this year's Christmas Season.*

## Stewardship Report (10,379.82 needed weekly to meet budget)

December 2, 2018

General Fund	\$9,046.00
SCFM	\$190.00
Poinsettias	\$140.00
TN CBF Missions	\$145.00
LMCO	\$265.00
New Building	\$1,356.00
Offering Envelopes	\$2.00



### REMAINING 2018 ADVENT SPECIAL EVENTS

Church Christmas Dinner, December 12, 5:30 p.m.

Candlelight Scriptures & Carols Service, December 12, 6:30 p.m.

Meal for Many, December 17, 4:00—6:30 p.m.

Church-Wide Pizza Party (Youth Serving), December 19, 5:30 p.m.

Children's Christmas Program, December 19, 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Services, December 24, 4:30 p.m. & 5:45 p.m.

December 30, 11:00 a.m. Worship Service Only

**Mother's Day  
Out**  
will resume on  
**January 9,  
2018.**

Our **17th Annual Meal for Many** is Monday, December 17 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Once again, we need volunteers to assist in many ways. We will post sign-up sheets on the first floor bulletin board to bring food items needed for the meal or to volunteer your time assisting with food preparation and serving. Special needs areas include:

- \* **COAT COLLECTION** - WE need new or gently used coats and jackets of all sizes for children, women and men.
- \* **TOY DRIVE** - Please keep gifts under \$10 if possible. Place UNWRAPPED toys in the designated box in the lower foyer.
- \* **SECRET SANTA** - If you have items to donate (gently used or new) we are looking for gloves, ice-scrapers, scarves, jewelry, books, perfume, coffee mugs, etc. that the children can give to their parents.



**PLEASE NOTE:  
THE CHURCH OFFICE  
WILL CLOSE @ NOON  
MONDAY, DECEMBER  
24TH & REMAIN CLOSED  
THROUGH WEDNESDAY,  
DECEMBER 26TH .**



### 2019 FLOWER CALENDAR & OFFERING ENVELOPES

The new flower calendar for 2019 is posted outside the church office. Please sign up to provide flowers in honor or memory of someone or in celebration of a special event.

The 2019 offering envelopes are on the table outside the church office for your convenience. If you do not see your name on a box please take one and enter your name by the coinciding number on the sheet provided.

### Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

4:30 p.m. & 5:45 p.m.



### OUR NEXT 2 SUNDAYS

December 16 & 23 will return us to our usual Sunday morning schedule.

8:45 a.m. Horizon Service (contemporary)

9:45 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Heritage Worship (traditional)

And don't forget that our Children will present a living Nativity as part of our **11:00 a.m. service on December 23.**



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**December 19, 2018**

Churchwide Pizza Party (youth serving): 5:30p.m.

Children's Choir Christmas Program: 6:30p.m.