

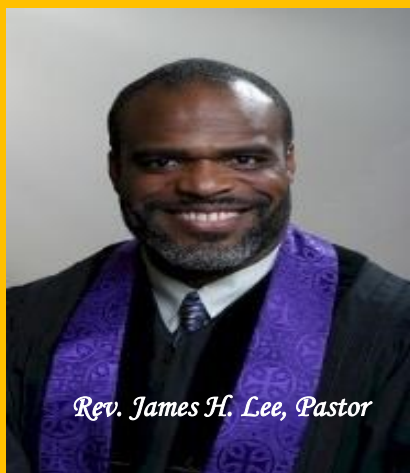
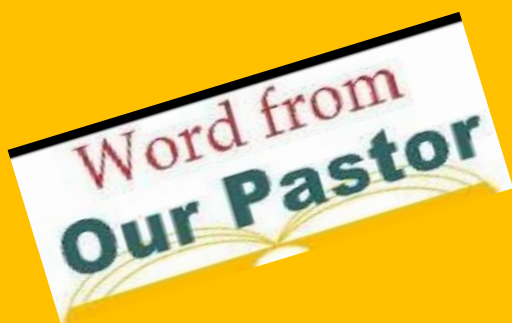
December 24, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

[WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG](http://WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG)

***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***



*Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor*

NCFA Family and Friends:

The week got away from us. We have been working frantically to prepare our Annual Report for the Congregational Meeting on the 27th. The Annual Report captures some of the many incredible moments that took place this year. It is through reviewing and reflecting that we can make appropriate renovations.

Please plan to join the Rev. Jeff Saddington and members from both New Covenant Fellowship and Genesis Presbyterian Church on Thursday evenings beginning January 7 at 7pm as they begin a study of the Gospel of Luke.

Please join me in celebrating Masa Prodanovic, Assistant Professor in the Department of Petroleum and Geosystem Engineering at the University of Texas. She made tenure and will be an Associate Professor in the fall of 2016. Of course, Schuyler, Dario, Danita, and the rest of the family are "proud as punch" or "Orange Crush." We will have our Christmas Eve service at 6:30pm on Thursday, December 24th. We will have apple cider and cookies after worship. Please come out and spend a wonderful evening together.

Please plan to attend our 8:15 morning worship, where I will be preaching from *Micah 5:1-5*, and our 10:15am service, where I will be preaching from *Hebrews 10:5-10* and *Luke 1:39-55*.

On the 27th, we will have worship and then our Congregational Meeting, which shouldn't be too long. It allows us to present our approved budget for 2016 based upon the pledges received and acts of faith. You will also have an opportunity to affirm the new and existing church officers for 2016. Lastly, you will have an opportunity vote on my terms of call. It's a good time to have any questions answered regarding the stewarding of our resources.

I want to encourage us to take advantage of the time we have with family during the holidays. Traditions and memories are so meaningful when those you love are not around. Tomorrow is not promised to any of us, so let's let love abound today. My prayer for us all in life but especially when we are spending more time with those we love and who know us best:

***So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and then be thankful.***

***Colossians 3:12-15***



December 24, 2015



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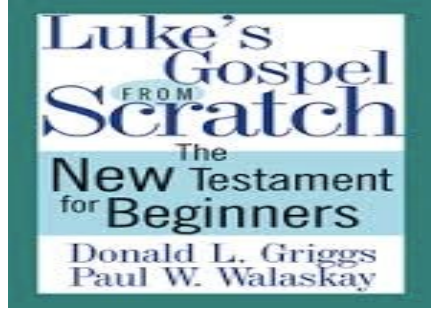
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## Congregational Meeting



# December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015

During this meeting the Session will present the approved 2016 budget and the congregation will vote to approve Pastor Lee's terms of call so that he may continue to serve as our pastor.



### **Study of the Gospel According to Luke, January/February, 2016**

*Led by Rev. Jeff Saddington, Chaplain, Hospice Austin, 512-426-8805*

**Luke** is the Gospel of focus during the new church year beginning at Advent 2015. Lectionary preachers have nearly 50 opportunities to proclaim the Word using a Lukan text during this coming church year.

**Study Text:** ***Luke's Gospel from Scratch: The New Testament or Beginners***  
by Donald Griggs and Paul Walaskay  
ISBN 978-0-664-23499-7

**When/Where:** Thursdays, 7-8pm, January 7, 14, 21, 28; February 4, 11, 18, 2016. Fellowship Hall

**Class Format:** As with our study of **Mark**, we will need to pre-read **Luke** and be willing to engage in discussion, prayer, and even occasionally end in singing a relevant hymn. We will rely on the Holy Spirit to reveal to us what the Holy Spirit wishes us to see and hear in this great summary of the life and work of Jesus by doctor Luke, a very careful and detailed author.

In anticipation of your interest, a dozen books have been purchased and are for sale for \$13, first come, first served. Please contact Jeff Saddington for purchase and payment.

**The Gospel of Luke** is a marvelously rich text, uniquely containing so many familiar teachings, such as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, Zacchaeus in a sycamore tree, and a young Jesus conversing with teachers in the temple. It also relates stories of Jesus that are found in other Gospels, such as the Feeding of the 5,000 and a different version of **Matthew's** more familiar Beatitudes. It contains the most familiar of the Jesus birth narratives, with a manger, shepherds, angels, and no room at the inn. Food is also a theme, as Jesus in **Luke** is often going to a meal, at a meal, or leaving a meal, and each setting presents a wonderful teaching moment for us!

In **Luke** men and women serve side by side, and Jesus is very clear about the need to care for the least, the last, and the lost, and anyone who is out on the margins of society.

Come, be immersed in study! It will be a wonderful time to be together in the Word because of what all of you seekers bring to it. ALL ARE WELCOME!!

Until the whole world hears!

December 24, 2015



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- ◇ “When something is broken you fix it, you don’t throw it out.” Praise the Lord for deciding to fix our sinfulness rather than throwing us away!
- ◇ Lift up God’s mercy, peace, calm, comfort, guidance and deliverance for Robert P. and his loving family. May the Lord take away all his fear.
- ◇ Caly’s niece Selena graduated from college Saturday night!
- ◇ Lift up healing for Vi from an infection. Praise for her being able to care for little Lee for a few days so his parents could celebrate their anniversary.
- ◇ Praise for our college students visiting during their Christmas break.
- ◇ Praise for commissioning Doug and Patricia to a new call, and thanks for the years of loving NCF. They will be missed.
- ◇ Praise for Elizabeth S. and Cathy A. celebrating birthdays.
- ◇ Lift up the mother of Charles’ cousin as she undergoes a small surgical procedure on Monday.
- ◇ Lift up Pastor Lee as he prepares for surgery at the end of the month.
- ◇ Lift up Tracey and Tim as they seek solutions to aid Tracey’s mother Cathy and her husband.
- ◇ Lift up Nekia and Charles for comfort while she is deployed in Iraq and they miss their first Christmas as a married couple.
- ◇ Lift up travel safety for all Christmas travelers.

**HAVE YOU  
TALKED  
TO GOD  
TODAY?**

December 24, 2015



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# N C F A SUNDAY MORNINGS

## NCFA Sunday Schedule

### 8:15am - Worship Service

1507 Wilshire Blvd.  
41st St. and Red River

### 10:15am - Worship Service

1507 Wilshire Blvd.  
9am Adult Sunday School  
10am Fellowship  
10:45am - Children's Church



## NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 8:15am -- Wilshire Blvd.

Come rise and shine with us  
at our 8:15am service  
where we glorify God  
through the Word, Prayer, Hymns,  
and Communion.

1507 Wilshire Blvd.

In the words of Phillips, Craig & Dean,  
"Come, just as you are, to worship."

All are welcome to this traditional,  
intimate style of worshipping our Lord.

## NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10:15am

We would love to have you and your family come share in the CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD NEWS!

We are worshipping in the Fellowship Hall of Genesis Presbyterian Church on the Wilshire Campus starting at 10:15 a.m.

Real Church...  
Real People...  
Real Simple...

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin PC(U.S.A.) is a racially diverse community informed by the Bible, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and motivated to share God's love with all. In response to God's love, we are called to equip disciples to faithfully serve, to encourage seekers to joyfully commit, and to implore all to worship our Lord, as we love our neighbors, grow in grace, and live by faith.

**JOIN US IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD NEWS**



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*Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!*

# 2016 POINT IN TIME COUNT **REGISTER NOW!**

## **ABOUT**

The Austin/Travis County Point in Time (PIT) Count is part of the national effort to eliminate street homelessness spearheaded by the federal Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). By knowing who is on the street, where they are, and what they need, ECHO and its partner agencies can most effectively target services to those that need them the most.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- ♦ Determine the total number and characteristics of those who are homeless in Travis County
- ♦ Provide quantitative results including demographics, trends in homelessness, with stratified outcomes by homeless sub-populations (veterans, unaccompanied youth, etc.)
- ♦ Compare annual results with previous count information to assess and improve community performance in preventing and ending homelessness

## **WHEN AND WHERE**

- ♦ **Shift 1:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 3-7am-Downtown
- ♦ **Shift 2:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 5-9am-Suburban
- ♦ **Shift 3:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 6-9am-Rural

[WWW.AUSTINECHO.ORG](http://WWW.AUSTINECHO.ORG)

## **TRAINING**

Echo will provide volunteer training and assign volunteers to areas. All teams will receive maps, clipboards, flashlights, pens, and all necessary forms. All volunteers will be required to attend at least (1) volunteer training prior to participating in the count.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

We are looking for:

60 Team Leads

600 General Volunteers

Note: Team leads must register by November 24th!

## **THE COUNT**

Teams generally consist of at least three members. Volunteers will observe and count homeless individuals within a defined area of Austin or Travis County. Each volunteer will choose from 3 available shifts.

## **JOIN US**

Raise awareness and learn about homelessness in our community, along with the need for viable, long-term solutions that will alleviate suffering and improve the quality of life for all Austinites.

## **REGISTER!**

[www.austinecho.org/2016-point-in-time-count-registration/](http://www.austinecho.org/2016-point-in-time-count-registration/)

*Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!*



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
**Women in Engineering  
Program**



**INTRODUCE A GIRL TO ENGINEERING DAY (GIRL DAY)**

The University of Texas at Austin  
Women in Engineering Program (WEP)  
Saturday, February 28, 2015, 2 - 5 p.m.  
Cockrell School of Engineering Complex on Campus

**DESCRIPTION**

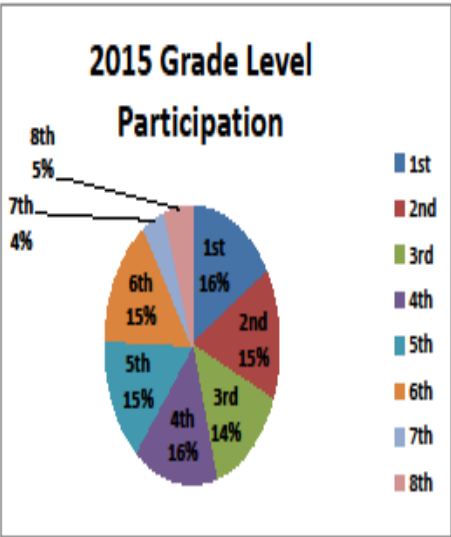
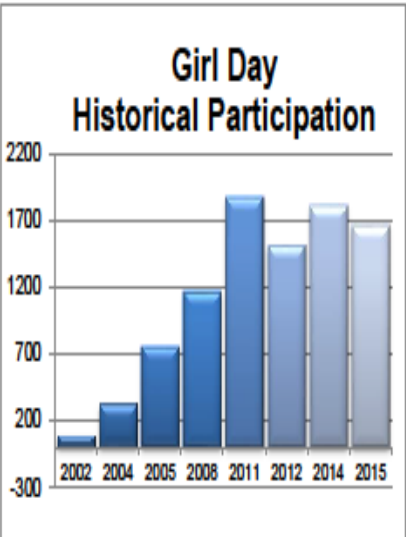
Families and educators were invited to join their students during Engineers Week for an afternoon of hands-on engineering fun during WEP at UT Austin's Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day (Girl Day). WEP at UT Austin's national award winning and 14<sup>th</sup> annual Girl Day gave over 1,600 first through eighth grade students a chance to:

- have fun doing grade-specific, hands-on engineering activities
- interact with 952 UT students, staff and faculty as well as volunteers and engineers from industry
- explore 96 activities, booths and demonstrations hosted by 113 student organizations, corporate partners, community organizations, schools and college/university partners

Participating Girl Scouts received a Girl Day patch available through partnership with the Girl Scouts of Central Texas. Current engineering students were provided leadership and presentation skills development opportunities. The day concluded with an exciting interactive show from Science in the Movies showcasing the engineering and science behind movie stunts.

**SUMMARY of STATS**

Girl Day, WEP's premier outreach program, has reached over 15,500 girls in its 14 year history. In 2015, 1660 first through 8<sup>th</sup> graders participated – 98% of participants were female, 9% African American, 26% Latina, 12% Asian, 1% American Indian and Native Hawaiian. Approximately 64% of participants came from Central Texas, 15% from the greater Houston area, 11% from the greater San Antonio area and the rest coming from as far as Dallas, Laredo, and Ft. Lauderdale. Volunteers have grown from 51 in 2002 to 952 in 2015. Note that Girl Day 2015 was hit with wintery weather which greatly impacted participation with less than 40% of those registered actually attending.



## ***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***

### **PUBLICITY & RECOGNITIONS**

Saturday, February 28, 2015 was proclaimed "Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day" by Mayor Steve Adler and the City of Austin. Girl Day was featured in a [USA Today College article](#), a [Time Warner Cable News story](#), a [KEYE TV news story](#), a [The Daily Texan article](#), and a student's [news documentary story](#). WEP's Girl Day program was also featured in a press release and a [Capitol Hill briefing](#) on Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day led by Discover Engineering. Finally, Girl Day was featured in a [promotional video produced by Discover Engineering \(previously\) the National Engineers Week Foundation](#) using extensive footage from Girl Day 2012.

### **PROGRAM SUPPORT**

The Women in Engineering Program (WEP) partnered with 113 university, corporate and community organizations to ensure the success of Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day 2015. WEP event and initiative staff, materials and supplies, and administrative and overhead costs for programs such as Girl Day are supported through corporate, community and government grants.

**Corporate:** Girl Day 2015 was made possible through generous grants or donations from Girl Day Lead Partner Halliburton along with all our fantastic Girl Day Partners: 3M, AMD, Applied Materials, BASF, Bechtel Corporation, Caterpillar, Chevron, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company, ExxonMobil, Fluor, General Motors, GivePulse, Google, IBM, Intel, and National Instruments. Microsoft provided an in-kind contribution of check-in technology. DSW, Minigrip and Payless ShoeSource provided in-kind contributions of materials for our hands-on activities. AMD and IBM provided in-kind contributions of printing. Partnering companies also hosted hands-on activities, displays or demonstrations at the event.

**Community & College:** Numerous community organizations and nearby colleges and universities have missions and goals in alignment with WEP and Girl Day. By partnering with the Girl Scouts of Central Texas, local-area Girl Scouts are encouraged to participate in the program and are able to receive a specially designed Girl Day patch. In 2015, 660 participants (40% of participants) identified themselves as Girl Scouts.

In total, 25 community organizations supported and volunteered for Girl Day efforts:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. 4-H CAPITAL  | 14. Phoenix Arising Aviation Academy  |
| 2. American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) | 15. PyLadies ATX  |
| 3. ATX Hackerspace  | 16. Science in the Movies   |
| 4. Bullock Texas State History Museum   | 17. Skillpoint Alliance   |
| 5. Central Texas Discover Engineering   | 18. Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) – Austin                |
| 6. Geekbus  | 19. Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Southwest Texas Section                  |
| 7. GenAustin  | 20. Southwest Texas American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) |
| 8. Girl Scouts of Central Texas   | 21. Texas Museum of Science & Technology (Austin Planetarium)                 |
| 9. Girl Scouts of Central Texas Lady Cans Robotics Team                               | 22. Thinkery  |
| 10. Girlstart   | 23. VentureLab  |
| 11. KLRU  | 24. Westlake High School's Team 9053 Psionics                                 |
| 12. Laurel Mountain Elementary LEGO Lions   | 25. YPW Camps   |
| 13. National Association of Women in Construction                                     |   |

In addition, 6 college programs outside of UT Austin participated in Girl Day 2015:

1. Austin Community College Renewable Energy Student Association
2. Baylor Women in Computer Science
3. Society of Women Engineers - Texas State University Section
4. Society of Women Engineers - Trinity University Section
5. Society of Women Engineers - UT San Antonio Section
6. Texas State Technical College - Waco



***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***

**UT Austin Programs and Organizations:** WEP partnered in 2015 with 67 UT Austin engineering and science student organization, research groups, classes and programs. Over 700 students, faculty and staff participated in Girl Day.

**University Partners**

1. Fun with Chemistry
2. Longhorn Energy Club
3. Physics Circus
4. Rose Research Group, Chemistry Department
5. UT Austin Center for Identity
6. UT Austin US DOE Solar Decathlon Team
7. UT Undergraduate Women in Physics
8. UT Women in Computer Science (WiCS)
9. UTeach Outreach

**Cockrell School Partners**

10. Alpha Eta Mu Beta (Biomedical Engineering Honor Society)
11. American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)
12. American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE)
13. American Nuclear Society UT Chapter
14. American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)
15. American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)
16. Architectural Engineering Institute (AEI)
17. ARE WEP Engineering Ambassador Group
18. Austin Chapter of the Acoustical Society of America
19. Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES)
20. Biomedical Optics Graduate Organization (BOGO)
21. Biomedical Outreach and Leadership Team (BOLT)
22. BME Engineering Ambassadors
23. Chemical Engineering Women (ChEW)
24. Chi Epsilon
25. Department of Petroleum & Geosystems Engineering
26. Donglei Fan Research Group
27. Dr. Korgel Research Group
28. Engineering Chamber Orchestra (EChO)
29. Engineers for a Sustainable World
30. Eta Kappa Nu (HKNU)
31. Formula Society of Automotive Engineers
32. Graduate Engineering Council (GEC)
33. Graduate Leadership Council
34. Guihua Yu Lab
35. IEEE Communications Society
36. IEEE Power and Energy Society
37. IEEE Robotics and Automation Society
38. Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
39. Institute of Transportation Engineers/Intelligent Transportation Society
40. Kinney Lab and Environmental and Water Resources Engineering
41. Longhorn Maker Studio
42. ME WEP Engineering Ambassadors
43. Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Board (MEGSB)
44. NASCENT Engineering Research Center
45. National Society of Black Engineers
46. Omega Chi Epsilon
47. Pi Sigma Pi (PSP)
48. Pi Tau Sigma International Mechanical Engineering Honor Society Texas Kappa Chapter (PTS)
49. Sigma Gamma Tau Aerospace Engineering Honor Society
50. Society for Biomaterials at the University of Texas at Austin
51. Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE)
52. Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE)
53. Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE)
54. Society of Women Engineers (SWE) UT Austin
55. Student Engineering Council (SEC)
56. Student Engineers Educating Kids (SEEK)
57. Tau Beta Pi: The Engineering Honor Society
58. Texas Theme Park Engineering Group (TxTPEG)
59. Theta Tau Professional Engineering Fraternity
60. University of Texas Solar Vehicles Team
61. WEP First-year Interest Groups
62. Women in Aerospace for Leadership and Development
63. Women in Biomedical Engineering (WBME)
64. Women in Electrical and Computer Engineering (WECE)
65. Women in Engineering Program
66. Women in Mechanical Engineering (WME)
67. Women in Petroleum & Geosystems Engineering (WPGE)

**GIRL DAY 2016 & CONTACT INFORMATION**

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day 2016 is scheduled for Saturday, February 27, 2016, 12 - 4 p.m. on The University of Texas at Austin campus. Contact Tricia Berry (triciaberry@utexas.edu or 512-471-5650), WEP Director, for all partnership and community organization opportunities.



December 24, 2015



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**Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!**

## *How Are You Living, and Why?"*

**Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18**

***Pastor James H. Lee***

**New Covenant Fellowship of Austin  
December 13, 2015 – 3rd Sunday of Advent**

***Philippians 4:4-7*** <sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

***Luke 3:7-18*** <sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." <sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." <sup>12</sup>Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" <sup>13</sup>He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." <sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." <sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

(This sermon references a YouTube called "A Christmas Story," by John Henry Faulk; here is the link.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5h4S9A9Nbs> ) We just had a Christmas story—a different genre, a different way for us to hear the Gospel, from a perspective that had a little culture in it, a childlike reverence for what just happened, watching a relationship affect how one would deal with the fact that one thought he was excluded and then learned that he was included. Putting two sawhorses down and a platform over it, and everyone had room. What I really love, he said "even the baby." That's why in Communion, our children come running down the aisle. Some folks would say they're too young to fully understand. And I would say, as old as I am, I don't fully understand! But what I do know is that when I was a baby, I was able to come to the table. And so should they. "You make sure when you go that you invite your wife to bring some pots and pans, because I don't know if I have enough for all of this." Hospitality. Working together for the sake of the whole. Powerful imageries that were so great.... "Oh, we played running to the door to smell at the kitchen door and back...." "We would run around and we would play in the dirt." Just like kids do. Joy. Rejoicing. Relationships. All from that. But why is that possible? Because a little boy wanted to go and show his orange, a peppermint stick, and an apple to his cousin. But there was a man who saw the barefoot boy in the cold and didn't bypass him. He saw the boy and picked him up. .

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***How Are You Living, and Why?"***

**Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18**

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December 13, 2015 – 3rd Sunday of Advent**

And as a result, he got a chance to hear the Gospel, and a celebration took place. Sometimes in the hustle and bustle of life, we bypass the little barefoot boys; we miss the stories and the angels around us, unaware. And then the prayer over the food. "Lord, every good and perfect gift comes from you. I sure hope You're having as great of a Christmas as we are." Someone may say we're not supposed to say "Merry Christmas," but we do, we want to be happy and joyful, for it is God who gave us the gift of Christ Jesus.

Now, we hear the Gospel (above), and John the Baptist is out in the wilderness walking in his call, doing what he was called to do in the spirit of Elijah or Elias. Because if you were Jewish, you would have known that before the Messiah would come, Elias would come. And there was John, preparing the way of the Lord. And as he's out doing that, it's not in the text, but there was noise out there...because all we know is that the people heard something was happening, and they decided they would go. John did something different. Most of us pastors would say, "Welcome! How you doin'? Glad you're here!" But when you have a prophet, he doesn't respond to you like a pastor. He said, ***"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*** Wow! And then the imagery is, if there's a fire, everybody wants to jet—even the snakes. And so you say, "Was he calling us snakes? He was saying that what you need to do is to ***"Bear fruits worthy of repentance."*** Bear fruit of repentance. And I used to think that that was just for folks who hadn't acknowledged Christ. But it is for all of us because God is sanctifying us. And repentance is saying there is a changing of our mind, changing of our behavior, changing that's taking place because we have a relationship with God...and a revelation that some things that are good for us and that we enjoy can entangle and control us, instead of us having authority over them and controlling them. So every now and then there is a call to repent. And that's what John was wanting them to do. Now I don't know about you, but when people tell me what I'm supposed to do, or tell me about myself, I get defensive. Then I want to remind them, "You're not my daddy; you don't know what I've been through. Who are you?" That's a reaction like the folks had in the text. They responded.

I want to invite us to react because that's what you're going to do on the inside: "No! I don't want to! Who are you? Leave me alone....Back off!" Then I want us to allow the Spirit of God to say, "Really? Can I pull back some of the layers and let you see it from a different perspective so that you will respond and instead of react? And we say, "Well, how did they do it?" He said in the ***10<sup>th</sup> verse, <sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."*** Then he said to the tax collectors who were there what they needed to hear. ***<sup>13</sup>He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."*** You know, we can sometimes add a little extra so we can make sure we get a profit....That's the capitalist way of doing things—we've got to make ends meet, and we may even get a little bit more for ourselves. But those are the things he says. And he says to the soldiers, ***"Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation...."*** See, we thought mob bosses were the only ones back in the days, and there were some others who would do it for the government and would do it for themselves. He says to them, "Don't do that."

December 24, 2015



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***How Are You Living, and Why?"***

**Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18**

***Pastor James H. Lee***

**New Covenant Fellowship of Austin**

**December 13, 2015 – 3rd Sunday of Advent**

What I love about this is the people who were filled with expectation and questioning. What does it mean for your mind to be renewed and to have a new understanding? And then say, "You know what, I'm going to try this." And then the other part of your mind says, "And where are you going to do it? And how are you going to do it? And how long are you going to do it? And what happens if it costs more than what you want to give?" All those things that tell you to stop when you're being told to go. And you just say in response to the thoughts that come, the fears that rise up, "I will ***'trust in the Lord with all my heart. I'll lean not to my own understanding...and in all my ways I will acknowledge him, for he would direct my path.'*** (Proverbs 3:5-6)" Why?! Because if I have two coats, God made it possible! If I have food to eat, God made it possible! If I had a job, God made it possible! If I have life, God made it possible! So God, I have a whole lot of unknowns; but you are revealing to me things that will help me to bring you glory, help me to be who I am called to be. So with expectation, questions, and fear, I'm gonna walk. I will walk and move forward!

I love the fact that Luke didn't end it right there, because remember I said 'John comes in the spirit of Elias'? See, if you're a remnant, that faithful few who has been remaining and looking to the heavens and hoping that the God you believed in, that your folks told you about but you haven't experienced, could this really be him? And many of them thought, "This has got to be him," and John said no. He said, ***"I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*** A refiner's fire. And I like the distinction of the refiner's fire because some things would just burn up, but a refining fire is heated up in such a way that the dross, the mess, the impurities will rise to the top, and then you can scrape them off. And now what you have is something beautiful that has been *refined*. When you get fearful of where God is leading you, say, "Lord, I need you to refine me!" I don't need you to burn me up, but refine me!

Then I love the other piece, the winnowing fork. <sup>17</sup>***His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.***" The cleaning of the thresholds; the preparation that needed to take place—why? For the harvest. We're the harvest of the Lord, and God had made preparation for us. He did it through Christ before the foundations of the world. And here in the text, we hear that and we see it in a different way.

I didn't read the ***Zephaniah 3:14-20*** text, but if you all get a chance read ***Zephaniah***, it tells the people to rejoice. But I want you to hear something that blew my mind and gave me great joy: ***Zephaniah 3:17*** says ***"The Lord our God is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory."*** Here's a part that I love, ***"He will rejoice over you with gladness."*** Did you hear? *He will rejoice over you with gladness!* I will say one more time, ***He will rejoice over you with gladness!*** (In the YouTube) Could you see the boys playing in the sand and laughing and having a good time? Can you imagine God looking at you, saying, *"That's my baby!"*? And rejoicing over you! But you say, "But that's not me...." and God says, *"I know who you are. I know how you are. And I'm still rejoicing over you."*



December 24, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

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***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***

*How Are You Living, and Why?"*

Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

*Pastor James H. Lee*

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin  
December 13, 2015 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

So as I close out this sermon, if God can rejoice over us with our mess, can we rejoice in the Lord always? And again I say, *Rejoice*. I may not be happy, but I can rejoice, because it could be worse. If I rejoice, it makes it a little bit easier for me to let my gentleness be known to others. Because my response out of grace and mercy is from a good place instead of a place that says "I've been taken advantage of"; "I haven't been understood"; "You don't know this and you don't know that." But when you are a rejoicer, you revel in them being rejoiced over! It's special. Then let your requests be made known to the Lord with thanksgiving. But what happens if God doesn't answer my prayer? "Did you call me [God] the source?" Yes. "Then God knows what's best." Yeah, but He doesn't always do it the way I want Him to do it.... "But that shouldn't keep you from making the request."

I'm going to tell you, my babies used to ask me to do stuff, and I was like, "There's no way on this earth I can do it!" But do you think I didn't try? I tried because they asked!! Go to that *seventh chapter of Matthew*. "*And Jesus said, 'How many of you who are kind of wicked, and not good, if your child is asking for fish, would you give them a serpent instead?'*" God loves us... rejoices over us! I want us this day to choose to respond to God's love—not out of fear, not out of frustration, but out of God's faithfulness and out of gratitude.

*Let us pray: Lord, the question of the sermon was, "How Are You Living, and Why?" Lord, I want us to be the people that don't live a certain way because of peer pressure; don't live a certain way because we're afraid; don't live a certain way because we wonder so much about what tomorrow will bring that we forget to be in a relationship with you and others. Help us. Unless you do it, it won't be done. Help us, because it's so easy for us to conform to this world; but we need you to renew our minds and transform us while we're in it. To you be glory, praise, and honor, this day and forevermore. Amen.*