

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

TO ALL OF OUR ANGEL TREE



YOU BLESSED US WITH....



December 23, 2017

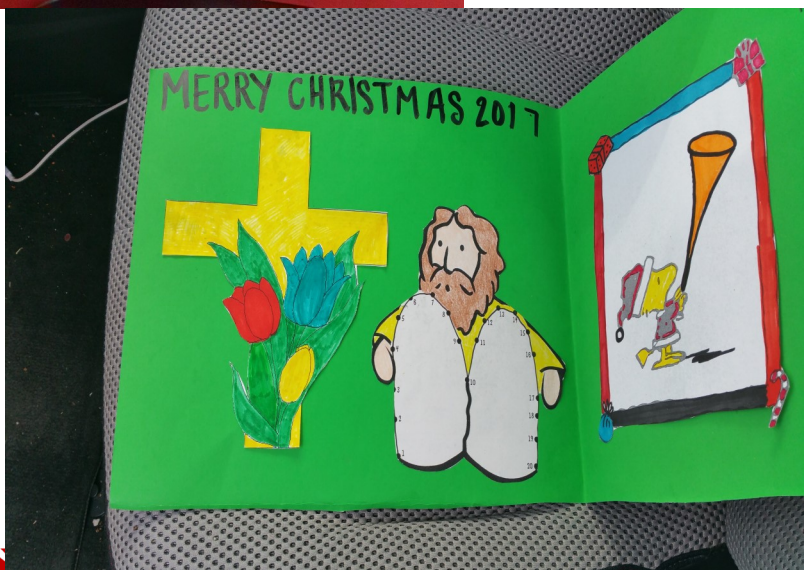
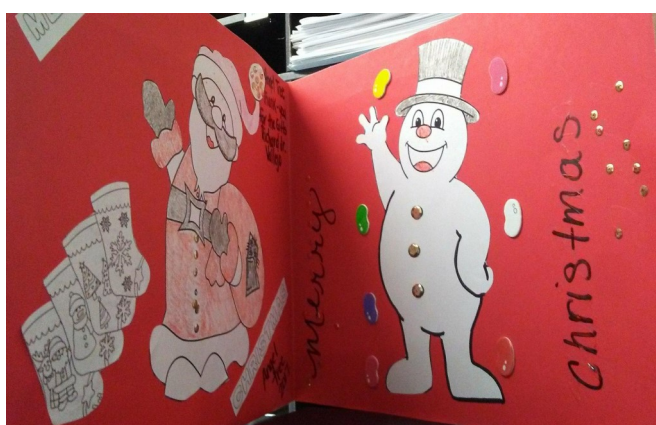
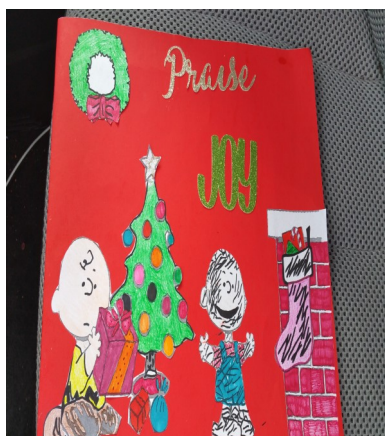
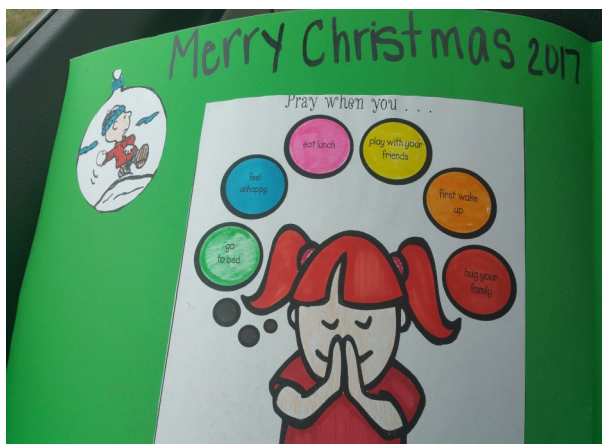
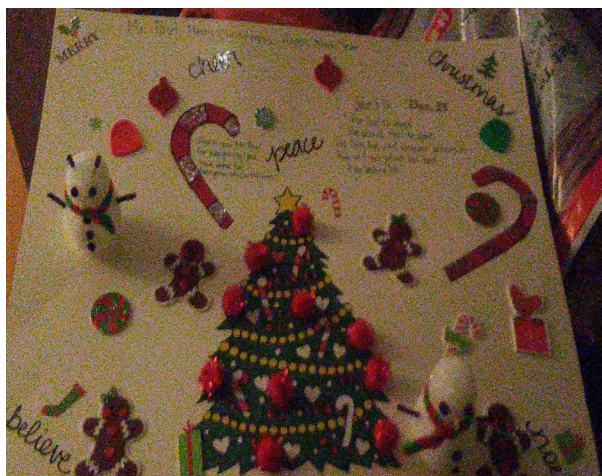


NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

**WE SAY THANK YOU WITH...
CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE AND
APPRECIATION FROM THE HEART.**



December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNEXION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“Let Those Trees Clap Their Hands!”

Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Rebecca Longino

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

December 17th, 2017: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 55:1-13

1Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. 4See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. 5See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. 6Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; 7let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. 9For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. 12For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. 13Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

The table is set and the Lost Boys find their places.

Peter Panning approaches the table, famished and ready for the feast.

It has been too long since his last meal and he's anticipating all of the good food that awaits.

Rufio, the leader of the Lost Boys tells then to say "Grace" and then they dig in.

Even Tinkerbell joins in, filling her tiny belly.

This is one of my favorite scenes from the movie "Hook" starring Robin Williams.

I love this scene where this community gathers around the table to enjoy a good meal.

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNEXION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“Let Those Trees Clap Their Hands!”

Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Rebecca Longino

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

December 17th, 2017: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Because all of the plates and serving dishes appear to be empty.

The Lost Boys are playing their favorite game of imagining a feast.

“What’s the Deal?” Peter asks. “Where’s the real food?” He pleads with a growling stomach.

Tinkerbelle offers some insight:

“If you can’t imagine yourself being Peter Pan, you can’t be Peter Pan. So eat up” She exclaims.

“Eat what? There’s nothing here.” Peter responds.

The people of Israel could relate to that sentiment: “Eat what? There’s nothing here.”

For the people of Israel, Isaiah’s words were perhaps a bit confusing.

They may have felt like that grown Peter Pan, sitting at that table with no food.

Wondering what was going on.

Isaiah speaks of a full table.

A feast with the most delicious of foods: Milk and wine and bread.

Everything available in abundance.

“Celebrate!” Isaiah tells them. “Indulge yourselves in the goodness of the meal!

Don’t worry about money, just enjoy!”

I wouldn’t be surprised if the Israelites responded with suspicion and confusion.

“Indulge?” they ask. “We’re just trying to survive, Isaiah.”

The Israelites might not have known how to receive these words from the prophet.

After all, they’ve just recently been brought out of exile, away from the Babylonian Empire.

Back to a life of freedom and restoration.

But they’re nowhere close to living the lavish lives that Isaiah describes.

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNEXION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“Let Those Trees Clap Their Hands!”

Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Rebecca Longino

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

December 17th, 2017: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Sure, they're now free.

Sure, they're no longer under that cruel regime.

But life is still difficult.

Their future is still uncertain.

Their journey out of exile is a bit like a parolee's journey out of prison.

The sweet smell of freedom is better than jail,
but the recently released face many obstacles:

Finding stable housing or drug and alcohol treatment or a steady job, just to name a few.

The task of surviving after prison is daunting.

Same goes for the People of God after their time in Babylon.

As the Israelites begin to rebuild their lives after exile,
they find themselves still drowning in debt and obligation to the Babylonians.

In some extreme cases, families have to sell their children into slavery, just to pay off their debt.

They find themselves working and toiling just to make ends meet.

Desperately trying to dig themselves out of this mess they're in.

Life after exile is anything but easy.

And so they need a word of hope.

That yes, life is hard. Yes, they are struggling to survive.

But Isaiah reminds them that there is hope beyond their situation.

God is with them.

And God's covenant with them remains solid.

Through all of these years in exile, when God seemed to be silent and distant?

God was there.

During this time of trying to put their lives back together?

God is there.

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNE^XION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“Let Those Trees Clap Their Hands!”

Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Rebecca Longino

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

December 17th, 2017: 3rd Sunday of Advent

In the coming days when they work toward restoration of their nation?

God will be there.

Isaiah is calling them to look beyond what is seen on the surface.

To recognize the ways God’s fullness is experienced in times of feast and famine, scarcity and abundance.

Isaiah speaks these words into their despair.

Calling them to remember what life at God’s table looks like.

Inviting them to recall the time, way back when, in the Garden of Eden.

Long before work was a concept known in the world

Back in the time when humanity simply got to enjoy being in God’s presence,

Enjoying an endless feast.

Isaiah calls them to remember that time before sin entered the world, before the chasm between God and humanity was formed.

Isaiah knows how much they are struggling.

that they are at their wits end with stress and exhaustion.

And so, Isaiah speaks these words of hope into their despair.

Calling them to remember that there is something more to life than the day-to-day struggle,

the daily grind, if you will.

“Everyone who thirsts,” Isaiah beckons, “come to the waters and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!

Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant.”

Isaiah is like those Lost Boys, trying to help Peter Pan remember who he is.

Isaiah is trying to help the People of God remember who they are.

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNE^XION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“Let Those Trees Clap Their Hands!”

Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Rebecca Longino

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

December 17th, 2017: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Help them remember that they belong to God.

And that God is good and that God provides a feast before them.

Setting the Table with abundant life.

Isaiah describes this feast paired with images of mountains and hills bursting in song.

And trees of the field clapping their hands.

It seems all of creation finds joy at this feast.

Perhaps now more than ever, we need this reminder from Isaiah.

We need to be reminded of God's abundance.

Of God's feast set before us.

Especially in these days when it can be difficult to maintain our hope.

There's a bumper sticker that says "If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention."

There's a lot to be outraged about these days.

Just turn on the news and take your pick of headlines.

Regardless of whether you vote Red or Blue,

Both sides of the aisle have plenty to be angry about.

But even if we're a bit removed from those headlines,

Even if those current events don't really affect our day-to-day,

Life is challenging.

Whether engaged in the frenzied rat race, or struggling to find a job.

Whether we're wishing for more for our family, or wishing for more in our family,

We all face our challenges.

It can be so easy to get caught up in that dismal thinking that we don't have enough or that we aren't enough.

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNEXION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“Let Those Trees Clap Their Hands!”

Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Rebecca Longino

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

December 17th, 2017: 3rd Sunday of Advent

But these words from Isaiah remind us that there is hope beyond our despair.

That God's abundant feast is set before us.

This is a feast that knows no bounds,

It isn't confined by the limitations of our world.

God speaks love and hope into the world, just when we need it most.

One of the many reasons I was drawn to New Covenant while in seminary,

Was the unwavering commitment to celebrate communion each Sunday.

There are so few churches willing to devote the time and the energy to partaking of this meal each week,

And I'm so thankful that New Covenant does.

Sure, it requires more work each week, from the hands who prepare it and clean up from it.

Sure, it makes our worship service a bit long each week, stretching past the one hour mark that I'm accustomed to in Presbyterian worship.

But this weekly meal serves as a reminder of God's love for us,

Of God's abundant care for us.

When we return to this Table, again and again, we're reminded of the new creation that Jesus Christ brings.

That even in our difficult days and painful circumstances, God is there and God provides.

When the world seems to be falling apart,

God is there and God provides.

When our lives seem to be falling apart,

God is there and God provides.

And God invites us to join in that work of setting the Table.

Of joining in the work of this feast.

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNEXION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“Let Those Trees Clap Their Hands!”

Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Rebecca Longino

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

December 17th, 2017: 3rd Sunday of Advent

It wouldn't be much of a feast if God were the only participant.

If God were the only one seated there, providing food for one.

No, a feast is truly a feast when a good sized crowd is gathered, ready for food and fellowship around the table.

A good feast is one in which many hands bring food to the table,

Much like the pot-blessing we're about to enjoy after worship today.

A good feast has dishes brought from many households.

God invites us to share in the work of making this feast possible.

Bringing ourselves to the table, and inviting our neighbors to the table.

Offering that gift of hospitality to those around us.

Sharing God's abundant love with those around us.

What I love about that scene from "Hook" is when Peter remembers how to participate in that feast.

He starts out not understanding what to do.

He is hungry, and he doesn't see any food.

But then he taps into his imagination, dusting it off after years of neglect,

and he's then able to see the food.

Taste the food!

He even throws the food in an epic food fight with the Lost Boys.

This was one more step in remembering who he is.

In remembering the joy of being a child and entering the world of imagination.

As he remembers how to join in that feast, he begins to remember who he is.

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNEXION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

“Let Those Trees Clap Their Hands!”

Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Rebecca Longino

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

December 17th, 2017: 3rd Sunday of Advent

As we join God in the abundant feast set before us,

Let us remember who we are.

Let us rest in the assurance of Isaiah's words which still resonate with us today.

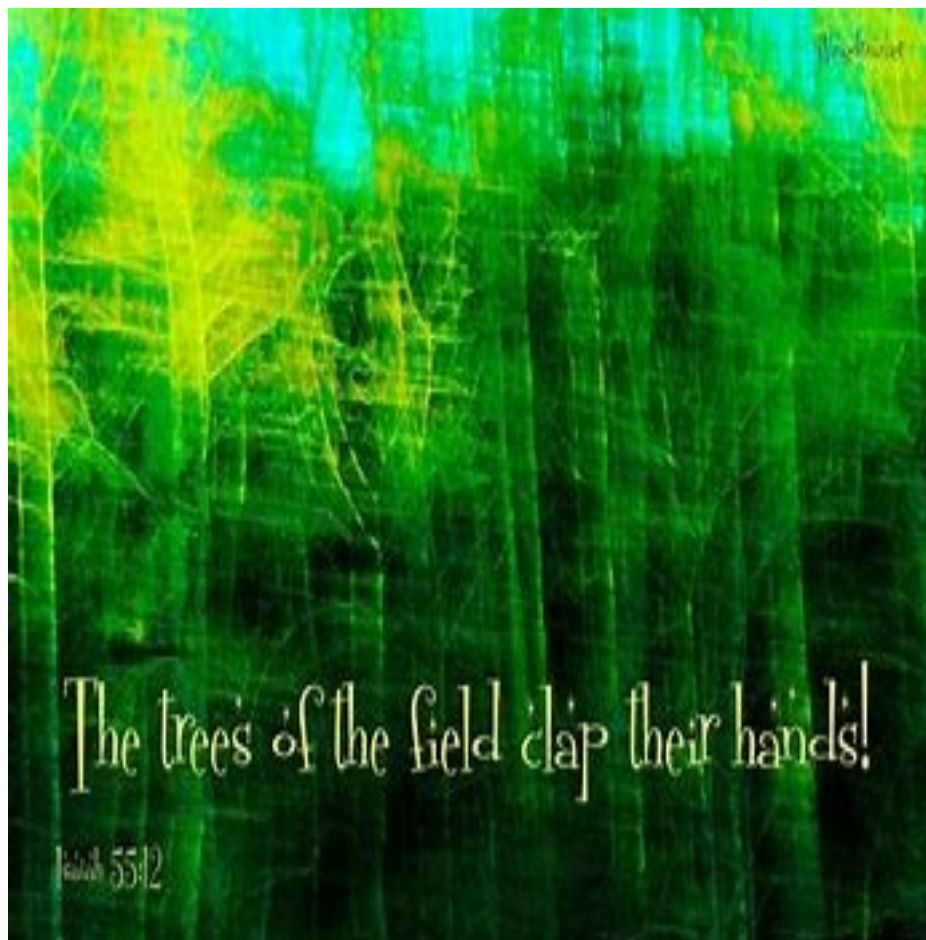
That God is there and God provides,

and that as children of God, we are invited to partake in this abundant meal.

Let us join God in this meal which invites all of creation to celebrate.

Let those trees clap their hands in response to this joy-filled feast!

Amen.



December 23 2017



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

2017 Matching Grant

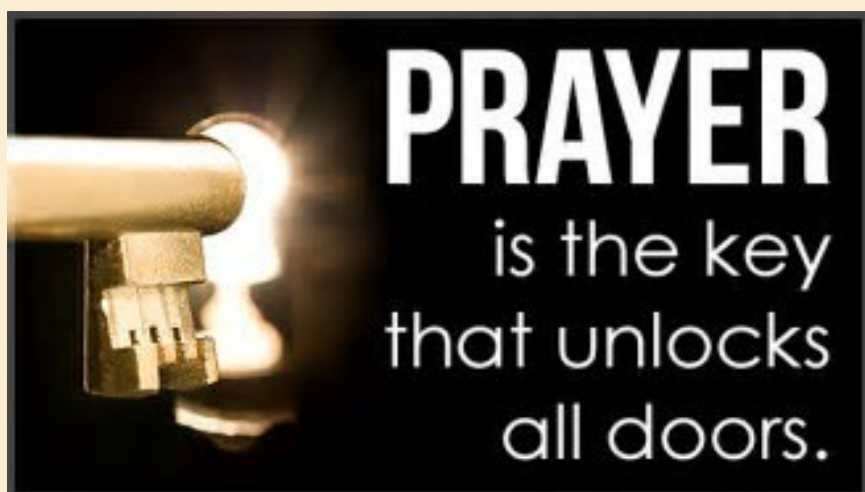


Matching Grant to Date:	\$ 12,023.00
Leadership Pledges	\$ 200.00
Balance Due to Meet \$15,000 Match	\$ 2,777.00



Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

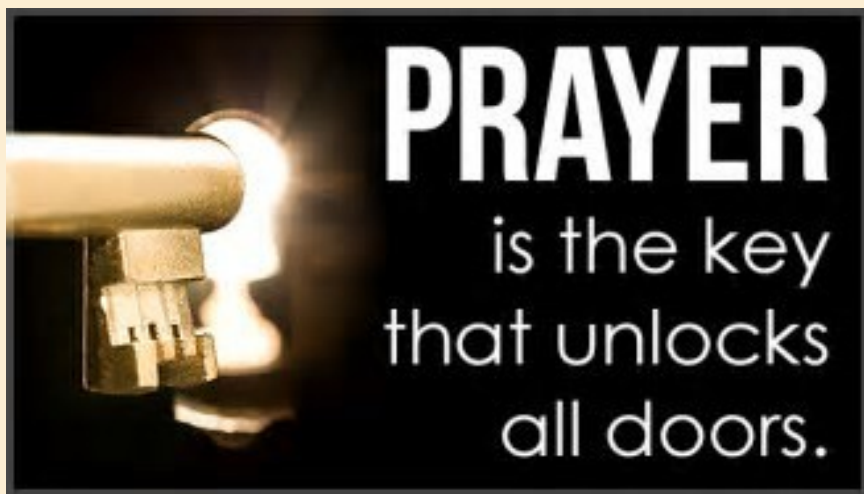
PRAYER AND PRAISE



- ⇒ *Praise the Lord for the wonderful provision of many food donations through Kathy's workplace to our Deacon's Pantry, and for Bonnie delivering the excess donations to Texas Central Food Bank.*
- ⇒ *Prayer and praise for Christian turning 18 on Friday.*
- ⇒ *Praise for Becca's wonderful sermons through this Advent Season.*
- ⇒ *Thanksgiving for the availability of public transportation for Craig, for his opportunity to work two jobs, and for his presence with us in worship this morning.*
- ⇒ *Thanksgiving for Estela's presence in worship and praise that her semester is over.*
- ⇒ *Thanksgiving that MaryAnn is in worship today, and lift her up as she leaves to go to the University of Houston.*
- ⇒ *Praise and thanksgiving to God for our members and friends coming together for worship and fellowship during Advent. Praise for the kids having things to do, and thanksgiving that the adults have ongoing coloring projects as well that provide beautiful artwork—with a stained-glass effect—to display on our walls this season.*
- ⇒ *Thanksgiving for all the family recipes prepared, turkeys and ham cooked, the exceptional quantity of additional dishes, and Z's beautiful table directions for today's luncheon being held after worship, and for the participation of our friends from Genesis. Praise for all who are able to help set up.*
- ⇒ *Praise for Jimmy's parents, Kimberly's mom, Becca, and Carol for Saturday's daylong participation in caregiver training in support of Jimmy and Kimberly's anticipated special needs foster child. Prayers for Jimmy and Kimberly as they finish the process to meet all of the requirements.*

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE



- ⇒ *Prayers for rapid healing of Kimberly's sprained ankle this morning.*
- ⇒ *Lift up Placid and Fortune returning home for Christmas break, as well as all travelers through this season.*
- ⇒ *Praise for Ashley's opportunity to participate yesterday in the "Equal Justice Initiative" that is based in Montgomery, AL and going around the nation memorializing and unveiling dedications to the history of lynching in North America, and bringing that to the forefront so that we are able to acknowledge and heal. Austin/Travis County is the first in Texas to unveil this at Wesley United Methodist Church on E. 11th St., an historically African-American church since 1865, and praise that 275 people turned up at this event. The place that is our greatest hurt is also the place of our greatest healing. Praise and prayer for the church being a part of that.*
- ⇒ *Lift up Lucy's brother Michael, whose cancer is spreading into his lungs. He needs a biopsy so a treatment plan can be decided, and he also has a septic infection in his arm. Prayers for healing, and for him to know the peace of Lord Jesus Christ. Prayers of comfort for Lucy's family.*
- ⇒ *Lift up Oliver for healing and his doctors for wisdom as his new treatment plan is underway.*
- ⇒ *Prayers for Grace and all who have been grieving and especially now during this holiday season. Thanksgiving for the wonderful memory of her Dad's constant faith in the power of reconciliation through God's love.*

Dear Lord,

We lift up all of these prayers and praises, and we lift up all of our members and friends who are present as well as those who are not and those who may return soon. We praise You for how You are working in all of our individual lives, how we are living out Your call through caring for the least of these and for each other. We pray for the sick, the broken-hearted, the oppressed, and we thank You that even in the midst of all the pain in this world, You continue to work and weave Your love through all of our lives, and we pray that our eyes continue to be opened to that love and that hope that you offer this world through Your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

January 21st, 2017



There will be a **congregational meeting/ town hall meeting on January 21st**, when Session will present their plan for moving forward, including the 2018 budget.



December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNEXION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

N C F A SUNDAY MORNINGS

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday, December 24th

Rev. Rebecca Weaver-Longino

Interim Session Moderator-Predaching



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.**

**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

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

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

December 23, 2017



NCFA CONNEXION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



DECEMBER

- 12-1 Favour Unegbu
12-2 Connie Jones
Sam Okyere-Mireku
12-3 Cathy Angell
12-9 William Moreno
12-12 Destiny Edwards
12-15 Pat Nemir
12-16 Elizabeth Smith
12-22 Chuck Coffman
12-22 Christian Mojica
12-24 Sherrena Lee
12-28 Randy Mojica

Session Members

- *Rev. Rebecca Longino
Interim Session Moderator
*Elder Nikkie Shubitz
Clerk of Session
* Elder Cathy Angell
Administration & Personnel
* Elder Zaira Amado
Buildings & Grounds
*Elder Randy Mojica
Children and Youth
*Elder George Washington IV
Discipleship & Men's/Women's Ministry
*Elder Mary Jo Mojica
Finance & Stewardship
*
Congregational Life/
Lay Ministry
*Elder Kimberly Hall
Missions/Evangelism
*Elder Viola Lee
Worship & Membership

Deacons

Ulysses Cox
Rey Mojica
Ashley Phillips
Scott Phillips
Roxann Vallejo

DECEMBER 2017

- 24th 4th Sunday of Advent/
Christmas Eve
9:30am Praise Team Rehearsal
10:15am Worship at Wilshire Blvd.
Rev. Rebecca Longino, Preaching
Sunday School—Nursery & Ages 3-5
(Room. 1A & 1B);
10:45am Children & Junior/Senior High
(Room 8-Narnia)
25-26th Merry Christmas—Office will be closed.
27th Wednesday Night Activities
CANCELLED
31st 1st Sunday after Christmas
9:30am Praise Team Rehearsal
10:15am Worship at Wilshire Blvd.
Rev. Al Krummenacher, preaching
Sunday School—Nursery & Ages
3-5 (Room. 1);
10:45am Elementary – Grades 1-5
(Room 8)
10:45am Junior/Senior High (Room 5)