

## A Word From The Pastor

One of my favorite Christmas Scriptures comes from Galatians 4:4-5 where it says, “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

These two verses are full of mystery and intrigue regarding the Christmas event. For example, “when the time had fully come:” What was God looking for that made this moment in time just the right time for the birth of His Son in this world? There was a great peace over most of the then known world. It was called the *Pax Romana*. Travel would have been the safest it had ever been (that is a relative statement considering). Communication would also have been at a peak with the Roman mail system. And most of the lands around the Mediterranean Sea would have spoken the Greek language.

Even with all of that, life still was not all that it is today. The average life expectancy would have been 35-40 years of age. A letter might take two or three weeks to get to its destination. The diet of the normal person rarely contained meat – it was mostly comprised of bread and vegetables. And not everyone spoke the language of the day. Pirates and brigands still patrolled the waterways and highways looking for an easy target to steal from. So what made it the right time?

And then “God sent forth His son.” How can we ever figure that out scientifically? We can voice the fact, but to try and figure it out takes more than we can muster with our finite little human brains. Moreover, WHY would God do that? Send His Son into the world as it existed then? As one song states, “He left the splendor of Heaven knowing His destiny ...” He would make His arrival as the poorest of the poor. Health conditions were bad – there are many reasons why the average age was 35-40 – a lot of children and teenagers died before reaching adulthood. Governments were corrupt and monarchs were all powerful. His coming was certainly a strange way to save the world.

Nevertheless, the greatest mystery of all is that He, God’s Son, came to redeem we who were born under the law and give us the full rights of children of God! What exactly did WE have to offer God? How could we bring any kind of benefit to Him? Why would God want us to be born again into His forever family with the full rights of children? How could God ever give His Only Begotten Son for our benefit? The very thought is staggering; indeed, beyond our comprehension. Just watch the evening news to be reminded of what kind of people we really are: power-hungry, deceitful, lying, murdering, stealing, hurting, dividing people—yes, that’s us! And yet, “God sent forth His Son.”

Christmas is indeed a mystery. Some of the answers to our questions are as mysterious as the contents in those brightly decorated packages under our Christmas trees. None the less, God so loved the world . . . That’s you and me at our worst. Yes, He loved us enough to send His Son in the fullness of time to redeem us from sin and the penalties of sin and make us His very own children. I hope that as we sit and ponder the contents of those brightly decorated packages under the tree with OUR name on them, we may also contemplate the mystery of the greatest gift of all, given to us by our heavenly Father, the gift of new birth and new life through Jesus Christ His Son.

Merry Christmas!

Dr. James L. Fleming

**COLLEGE PARK  
CHURCH OF GOD**

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**OUR MINISTRY TEAM**

**Senior Pastor**

Dr. James L. Fleming

**Children's Director**

Vanessa Small

**OUR SUNDAY SERVICES**

10:00 a.m. - Sunday School

11:00 a.m. - Worship Service

**WEEKLY ACTIVITIES**

**Wednesdays**

Evening Bible Study  
6:00 p.m.

**MONTHLY ACTIVITIES**

**Women's Christmas Party**

Saturday, December 4  
1:00 p.m.

**Food Drive Collection**

Interfaith Emergency Services  
Sunday, December 26

**OFFICE HOURS**

Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday  
9:00 a.m. to 3:00/4:00 p.m.



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY**

The Women's Christmas Party will be Saturday, December 4, at 1:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Food will be catered. Everyone will need to bring a Christmas item gift (\$10 or less) in a gift bag to exchange. Please use the sign-up sheet in the narthex if you plan to attend.

**POINSETTIAS**

Let us rejoice by purchasing a poinsettia to decorate our sanctuary for the holidays. The price is \$6 and is due by Sunday, December 5. Sign up in the narthex.

**CHRISTMAS POST OFFICE**

The Christmas Post Office is set up in the narthex. This is a place where you can leave Christmas cards for others in the congregation. Please place in alphabetical order by last name. Check regularly for cards addressed to you!

**CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY OFFERING**

Christ's Birthday Offering will be collected on Sunday, December 19. This special offering helps to support worldwide ministries and missions of the Church of God. Please prayerfully consider what you will give.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

Invite your friends and family to join us for a Christmas Eve service of carols and candles on Friday, December 24, at 6:00 p.m. as we celebrate the birth of our Savior! If you would like to bring refreshments, sign up in the narthex.

**GAITHER CONCERT**

The Gaither Vocal Band will be performing at First Baptist Church of Ocala on Friday, January 21, 2022. Please sign up if interested in going. Cost is between \$25.00 - \$30.00 per person.

**METAL PULL TABS**

The Women's Ministry requests you save the metal pull tabs from soda, soup, and vegetable cans. A container for these tabs is in the narthex. This mission is for Ronald McDonald House. See Lorraine, Dee, or Linda for more information.

**Happy Birthday!**

- 01 - Harvey Radford
- 02 - Ryan Lee
- 04 - Amanda Pfeffer
- 05 - Peggy Damsma
- 07 - Irene Rogers
- 07 - Denise Skinner
- 12 - Gail Fleming
- 25 - Jackie Cook
- 25 - Fred Skinner
- 28 - Matthew Mitchell
- 30 - Donna Smith

**Happy Anniversary!**

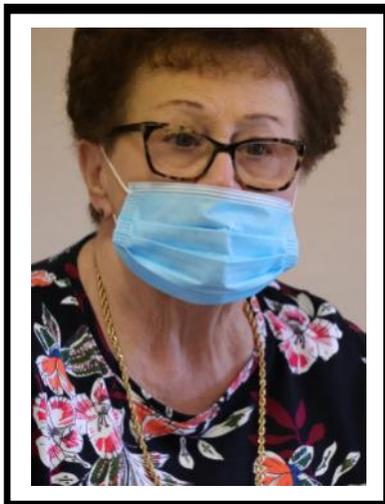
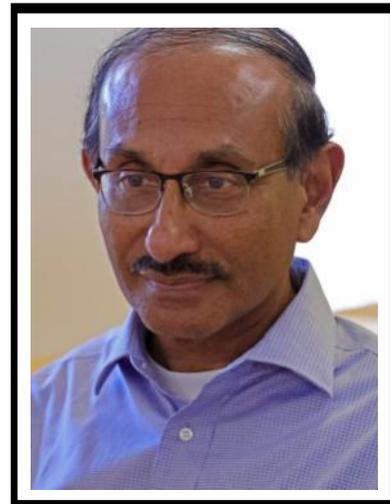
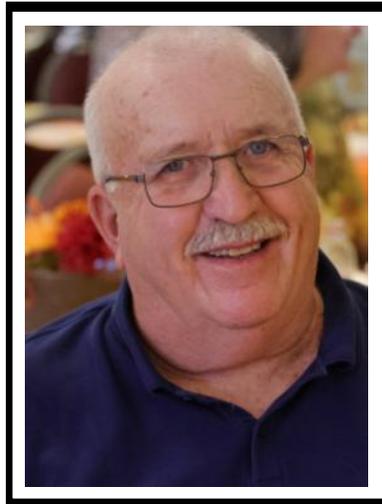
- 03 - Ted & Susan Owenby
- 15 - Basil & Althea Clemmings
- 29 - Werner & Grace Edwards



*If you would like your birthday  
or anniversary added to this list,  
please contact the church office.*

# *Thanksgiving Dinner*

Sunday, November 14, 2021



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