



December Update



“This Year Will be Different” by Ann Weems

Who among us does not have dreams
that this year will be different?
Who among us does not intend to go
peacefully, leisurely, carefully toward Bethlehem,
for who among us likes to cope with the
commercialism of Christmas
which lures us to tinsel not only the tree
but also our hearts?
Who among us intends to get caught up in tearing around
and wearing down?
Who among us does not long for:
gifts that give love?
shopping in serenity?
cards and presents sent off early?
long evenings by the fireside with those we love?
(the trimming devoid of any arguing about
who’s going to hang what where,
the aroma of cinnamon and nutmeg mingling
with the pine scent of the tree,
and carols gently playing over our idyllic scene)
and the children! the children cheerfully talking about
giving instead of getting?
Who among us does not yearn for
time for our hearts to ponder the Word of God?
moments of kneeling and bursts of song?
the peace of quiet calm for our spirit’s journey?

This year we intend to follow the Star
instead of the crowd.
But, of course, we always do
intend the best.
(And sometimes best intentions tend to get the best of us!)
This year, when we find ourselves off the path again
(and we invariably will!),
let’s not add yet another stress to our Advent days,
that of “trying to do Christmas correctly”!
Instead, let’s approach the birth of our Lord
with joyful abandon!
And this year
let’s do what Mary did and rejoice in God,
let’s do what Joseph did and listen to our dreams,
let’s do what the Wise Men did and go to worship,
let’s do what the shepherds did and praise
and glorify God
for all we’ve seen and heard!
As for the Advent frantic pace, we don’t have time for
that. We’ll be too busy singing!
This year will be different!



Inside this Issue:
“This Advent Will be Different!”
by Pastor Alison & the Advent
Calendar of Events

This Advent Will be Different!



How many times have we said to ourselves, "This year will be different!" But just as soon as the words have left our lips, we begin to fill our calendars with a multitude of different events and set out to the mall to fill our Christmas lists.

There is a growing movement amongst churches to return to the true meaning of Christmas. This movement, known as Advent Conspiracy, reminds us that:

- The story of Christ's birth is a story of promise, hope, and a revolutionary love.
- So, what happened? What was once a time to celebrate the birth of a savior has somehow turned into a season of stress, traffic jams, and shopping lists.
- And when it is all over, many of us are left with presents to return, looming debt that will take months to pay off, and this empty feeling of missed purpose. Is this what we really want out of Christmas?
- What if Christmas became a world-changing event again? Welcome to Advent Conspiracy.

This year let us return to the promise, hope, and revolutionary love of Christ's birth. Let us not allow the culture of consumerism to over take this sacred season. By committing ourselves to worship fully, redefine generosity and give presence instead of presents, rebel against the culture of consumerism, and love all, we can reclaim this season.

This year, we have tried to be very conscious of the amount of events offered during the Advent season in the hope that Southsiders might feel encouraged to spend their time differently this season. Instead of rushing around, let us spend more time at home with family. Instead of racking up credit card debt, consider new traditions of gift giving in your home. Instead of becoming overwhelmed by stress, let us be overwhelmed by God's love, shown to us in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

One opportunity to pause in the midst of the busyness of the season is the Wednesday Night Bible Study, every Wednesday from 6:30 to 7:30pm in the Library. This will be a time for refreshment, fellowship, worship, and study. We will begin with tea and a brief time of silence, then we will reflect upon the music and the scripture behind Handel's *Messiah*. Please consider joining us for this time in the midst of your week to pause, breathe, and worship fully the One for whom we wait.

This year can be different!

In faith, *Pastor Alison*

December 4: The Tucson Arizona Mass Choir 12th Anniversary & Gospel Christmas Concert



Join the Tucson Arizona Mass Choir under the direction of Mrs. Dorothy Reid for an afternoon of Christmas inspiration on Sunday, December 4 at 3:30pm at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church (3809 E 3rd Street). Joining the Mass Choir are the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church Choir and Praise Team, Native Praise of Yuma, Canara Price, Carl Hawkins, The Tate Music Group, Chillie Willie Groove, and Danny Winans of the Winans Family. For more information, see Linda Edmonson (305-0619) or Kay Fitch (579-6208).

Financial Update

By Susan P. Halversen, Elder for Stewardship & Finance

As you can see from the figures below, Southside continues in its financial downturn. The monthly total for October was better than that for September, but the year-to-date total is worse. Money is never an easy subject to discuss, particularly for church members, and, especially, it seems, for members of Southside. Yet it is a topic that we cannot avoid, if Southside is to continue in its mission of service to the congregation, to our homeless brothers and sisters, to the neighborhood, and to the larger church. As we approach what is generally thought of as the season of giving, let us remember that in giving, we also receive, and so share what we have with those who have not. May we all give and receive blessings this Christmas season.

In the spirit of disclosure of our financial circumstances, here are figures for October and for the year to date:

	October 2011	Year to Date 2011
Income	\$16,256	\$167,264
Expenses	\$20,681	\$193,402
Totals	(\$4,425)	(\$26,138)

Tucson Girls Chorus Winter Concert

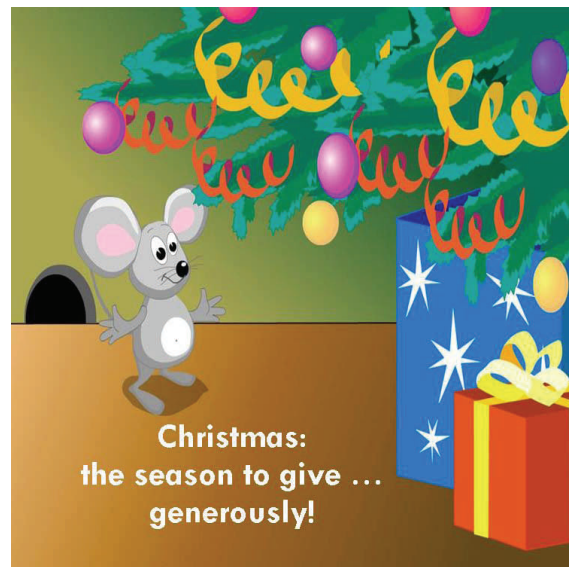


Come support Jordan Claussen as she sings with the Tucson Girls Chorus on Saturday, December 17 at 5:00pm at Catalina Foothills High School (4300 E Sunrise Dr.) Tickets are \$15 per person. See Linda Ray for more information or call 577-6064 to order tickets.

Committee Meetings & Deadlines in December

In lieu of committee meetings this month, committees are encouraged to attend the December 10 Decorating the Kiva event. The following committees will meet this month:

- Deacons' Christmas Party** Tuesday, December 20 at 6:00pm, Pastor Alison's
- Facilities and Maintenance** Thursday, December 15 at 6:00pm, Kiva Office
- January Newsletter Deadline** Thursday, December 22
- Samaritans** Every Tuesday at 7:00pm, Kiva
- Samaritans Training** Sunday, December 4 at 2:00pm, Kiva
- Session** Tuesday, December 13 at 6:00pm, Library
- Session Reports Deadline** Thursday, December 8
- Stewardship & Finance** Tuesday, December 13 at 5:00pm, Library
- Worship** Friday, December 9 at 5:00pm, Library



Thank you!



With gratitude to the dear people who signed letters for Bread for the World, 171 "blessed" letters were delivered on Tuesday, the most ever! Bread for the World wrote that "if the

planned cuts to the budget happen in the next 10 years, it will undo all the work they have done in 37 years!" Our letters were needed NOW. For more information on Bread for the World and the Offering of Letters, see Pat Brandenburg.

Vivian Lippman Stoutimore

Vivian Stoutimore passed away on November 19 at the age of 92. She had been in poor health for several months. She had fond memories at Southside, and continued to correspond with some of you,



including the church office until her death. Condolences may be sent to: John R. Stoutimore, 5725 E Lancaster Ave. Fort Worth TX 76112. Copies of her obituary are available from the church office.

Advent Has Begun! The first candle has been lit.





The Official Guide to Advent & Christmas Activities at Southside

Worship



Join us for worship **each Sunday in Advent** starting November 27 at 9:30am. We will light the Advent candles each week as we focus on the practice of

simplicity as we journey together towards the celebration of Jesus' birth.

December 22 at 7:00pm Solstice Service
December 24 at 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service
December 25 at 9:30am Christmas Day Service
January 1, 2012 at 9:30am New Year's Day Service

Tween, Youth, Children & Family



December 18 at 5:30pm The Parents Groups will meet at the LePeaus' home for dinner and a walk through Winterhaven. Bring a can of food for the Community Food Bank!

December 24 at 6:00pm Christmas Play Rehearsal: Kids will meet at 6:00pm to rehearse before the service which starts at 7:00pm.

Personal Devotions

Journey with Henri Nouwen through Advent. You can pick up a copy of the devotional, *The Lord is Near*, beginning November 27.



Congregational Nurture

December 10 from 4:30 to 8:00pm Hanging of the Greens, Christmas Decoration Making, Sock Stuffing & Potluck: Come prepare the Kiva for Christmas! This event is for both young and old. There will be activities for children.
December 18 at 2:00pm Christmas Caroling: Join the Deacons to bring musical Christmas cheer to the homebound.

Cross Street Ministries

Monday, December 26 at 10:00am Christmas Dinner and Sock Distribution: Volunteers are needed to prepare food and help with the dinner. See Bill Captain to volunteer.



Wednesday Night Bible Study

Take time to pause in the midst of the busyness of the season every Wednesday from 6:30pm-7:30pm in the Library. This will be a time for refreshment, fellowship, worship, and study. We will begin with tea and a brief time of silence, then we will reflect upon the music and the scripture behind Handel's *Messiah*. Please consider joining us for this time in the midst of your week to pause, breathe, and worship fully the One for whom we wait.