



Richland Baptist Association Newsletter

December 2024

From Your Director of Missions (D.O.M.):

The month of December we celebrate the birth of our Savior. When we stop and realize that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, it is unimaginable that our Lord would leave His home in heaven to become one of us. He would experience heartbreak, temptation and trials while He reflected God's characteristics through them all.

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, let us also let him grow to be a man and teach our children the true story of Christmas as our Lord would be crucified, buried and raised from the dead. That is the complete story of Christmas.

John 3:16 tells of the great gift of the Son from the Father and the Son's sacrifice that we may become children of God. Yes a Savior was born but GOD's LOVE was displayed for all of the world to see.

Christmas was and is always a LOVE STORY. Share that love with others. If you know of a family in need, a single parent that is struggling to make ends meet, a widow that is lonely and has no one to spend Christmas with, be the LOVE STORY to them. Christmas is not only to be celebrated but to be shared. The reason for the season is Christ. I encourage you to be Christ to those around you.

I want to leave you with this thought. Children often ask me what would Jesus want for Christmas? My answer was always, YOU! You are His gift so go into the world and give Him away.

Merry Christmas to you all. I pray God's greatest blessings upon each of you.

Yours in Christ,

Johnny

Upcoming Events for the month of December 2024

- Dec. 01-08: Lottie Moon Christmas and International Missions Offering
- Dec. 06: Pastor/Wives and Staff/Wives or Husbands Christmas Party
6:00 PM at Eastside Baptist Church Fellowship Hall
- Dec. 23-26 Office Closed
- Dec. 25: Christmas Day (Merry Christmas)

Upcoming Events for the month of January 2025

- Jan. 01: New Years Day (Office Closed)
- Jan. 10: Pastor's Prayer Time 10AM @ Richland Baptist Mission Office
- Jan 10: Pastor's Conference 11AM @ Big John's Rayville
- Jan. 19: Sanctity of Life Sunday
- Jan. 27: Evangelism Conference @ First Baptist Covington, LA
- Jan. 28: Evangelism Conference @ First Baptist Covington, LA
- Jan. 28: Discipleship Collaborative Winter Meeting @ First Baptist Covington

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

Opportunities to Serve

Please join me in praying for our sister churches that are without a pastor. Also pray for those with other needs. If you know of someone that would serve in any of these capacities, please contact me.

Pastor: Bethel Baptist
Cedar Baptist
Lone Cherry Baptist
New Light
Newton Baptist
West New Home

Part-Time Youth Minister: First Baptist Archibald

**If you have a need in your church, please let us know and we will post it in the Monthly Newsletter.*

Something to Think About...

When Bro. Johnny sent me the rough draft of the newsletter to prepare it for the website and digital distribution, he added the note to “write us a good Christmas story”. One of the first ones that springs to mind apart from the traditional ones everyone knows is a story from a little book and recording set I had when I was just in elementary school as a kid. The original is called Spirit of Christmas by Marilyn Berry. However, due to space, you will get the abridged synopsis here.

Once upon a time... (No, it doesn't actually start that way) there was an old and good king but the time had come for him to pass the throne to his son, the prince. The king was proud of his son and all that he had learned about ruling the people but still felt the young man needed to pass one final test before assuming the throne. The king told him of the importance of Christmas in their land and that there was a very important lesson at the heart of Christmas and that he must find the true spirit of Christmas as his final test to be king.

The prince got right on it and asked an old sage about it who had been a helpful advisor in the past. The sage said he couldn't answer that question so easily but told him there was a person who could give him the answer he sought. The sage told him that to find this person he would need to follow the river to where it meets the sea (three days' journey). He must travel alone and bring three gifts with him: a heavy cloak, a sack of food, and a bag of gold. When he found the beggar at the place where the river meets the sea, he would give him the three gifts and receive his answer.

The young prince began right away and traveled all day and as night was falling he met an old hermit huddled by a fire. The old hermit offered to share his fire and when the young prince inquired as to if he had a cloak to keep warm, the old man said that he didn't have enough money for one and work had been scarce. He knew he needed the heavy cloak to find his answer, but he was moved with compassion that this old hermit needed it more and gave it to him.

The second day of his journey he came upon a mother with many small children that was selling small wreaths of Christmas holly in an attempt to provide food for her children. After looking over the situation, the prince knew even if they sold every wreath they had it wouldn't be enough to feed so many children. He thought of his sack of food and while struggling with the thought of losing another of the gifts he needed, he decided the woman and her family needed the sack of food more.

When he had just started out on the third day of his journey, he saw a young man struggling to pull a cart of vegetables down the path. The young man offered to sell the prince some of his vegetables as it would lighten the load and he needed the money. When the prince inquired about why he had no mule to pull the wagon, the young man recounted that his mule had been old and died less than a year ago and he had not enough money to buy another. The prince truly fretted over this as he would arrive at the beggar empty-handed for his answer if he gave the young man his bag of gold. But compassion won out and he handed a grateful young man the bag of gold so he could acquire a new mule.

As he reached the place where the river meets the sea, he was truly broken-hearted as he saw the beggar sitting there. He inquired of the beggar about explaining the true spirit of Christmas. However, the beggar asked what he would get in return for his counsel. The young prince recounted his sad tale of the journey and how he had started out with three gifts but gave the cloak to a hermit, the food to a woman and her hungry family, and the gold to a young man working without a mule. The young prince begged for the opportunity to go back and return in six days with a fresh set of gifts to find the answer. As the beggar began to laugh, the prince realized it was his father the king and he joyfully proclaimed to his son, “YOU PASSED THE TEST!”

Richland Baptist Association

(318) 303-7626

102 Horn Rd,

Rayville, LA 71269, USA

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