



# CHRISTIAN CALLER

December 2021

VOLUME 25, Issue 11

**MISSION STATEMENT: WE DESIRE TO HONOR GOD  
BY LEADING PEOPLE TO BECOMING FULLY DEVOTED  
FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST.**

## *A Word from Our Pastor*

I remember one year we... and by that I probably mean “I” (I usually was to blame for a good idea that looked good on paper, but probably wasn’t that great of an idea come to think of it!) anyway “we” came up with the brainy idea to do our church Christmas musical/drama outside, with a live nativity, and live animals. It was picturesque, quaint, and an almost whimsical setting. I was pastoring at Allen, Oklahoma... a town of 1,000. FBC Allen was situated right in the heart of the quaint little town on Main St. You couldn’t miss it! So, we set up a flatbed trailer on the church grounds for the choir to sing on. We had hay-bales situated around for people to sit on to watch the performance, a small wooden stable to one side that had been built by several of our men, lots of our church folks decked out in Biblical costume... Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, kings, the whole bit, and animals. Live animals... a few sheep, a cow, a horse, and a donkey. Of course, you have to have a donkey right?! Doesn’t that sound cool? Pristine? Like, what could be better? Right? Perfect, picturesque setting! We showed up for the night of the performance with everything ready to go and everything in place. It was a cold...frigid Oklahoma night! The wind was howling... like it does in Oklahoma most of the time. Remember the song, “O-kla-homa, where the wind comes sweeping down the plains!” It did! And it does! My grandmother visited us in Allen, Oklahoma one time and said she would never come back again because as she said...and I quote, “I’ll never go back there again, because all they have there is wind and it blows and blows and blows, and never stops blowing!” Well, on this “Christmas Musical” night that Oklahoma wind was blowing, and it was cold...really COLD! We were bundled up tight like a bunch of Okie-Eskimo Joes... coats, hats, scarves, gloves, trying to sing as best we could in this cold blustery winter night. Then to make matters a bit more “deep-freeze-esk,” it started sleeting! You can almost hear the teeth chattering can’t you? Oh yeah! They were! And that’s not all. Our hot breath was freezing to ice on the faces of all of us men with facial hair. And you talk about “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer”... we had a few “red-noses” that were blinking like “that nose blinks like a blinking beacon.” What in the world were we thinking! It’s Oklahoma in the winter! Who thought this was a good idea? But we kept right on singing... pushing through, as they say! You know, “The show must go on!” And beside that it was Christmas, and we had a stable, and a Mary and Joseph, and angels, and shepherds, and wise men...and real live animals for heaven’s sake! So we sang, and froze, and sang some more, and kept a smile frozen in place on our faces! Then we came to one of the most beautiful and touching moments in the program. Mary and Joseph... live, pondering over the baby... also live! Nancy and our Youth Minister at the time had a beautiful duet... just to listen to it would have moved you. They did... or I should say were doing... a beautiful job. You couldn’t tell at all if the weather was affecting them. It was beautiful and so touching... moving really. And evidently the live donkey thought so too, because all of sudden he thought he would sing right along with them! And sing he did... and sing, and sing, and sing! He brayed like nobodies business, and continuously. I bet he brayed like he had never brayed before. So much so that the donkey, who wasn’t mic’d, out sang Nancy and her duet partner, who were mic’d. That donkey, I guess thought it was only appropriate to celebrate the birth of Christ in his own way. But the rest of us were done! Just done! Between the cold blustery Oklahoma wind, the sleet, the blinking red-noses, and the braying donkey braying louder than the choir... our perfect, pristine, quaint, whimsical Christmas pageant went from a good idea on paper to a bad idea in real time... just like that, and for all practical purposes, was ruined. All we wanted to do was just get inside and warm up!

You know, in reality, don’t we always have a tendency to pretty up Christmas like that? With our bright idea of the way it’s all supposed to go? To make it so pristine, quaint, and wholesome, whimsical that we almost sterilize Christmas? Well don’t we, with our elaborate costumes and fancy programming and scripting of every move? Light, camera, action! The baby even cries on cue, and the donkey never brays and interrupts the “play”... the soloist! That’s just not how it goes... or is it? Jesus came into this world on perhaps a cold winter’s night, somewhat outdoors in an animal shelter, because there was no room for Him inside where it might have been warmer. So, he was born in the chaos of an animal shelter with all the residual inconvenience of a barn-yard... if you know what I mean! Messy? Stinky? Noisy? Not just donkey’s braying, but cows mooing, sheep bah-bah-bahing, with all the coughing, grunting, slobbering, hoof pounding and snorting of real live animals. Not in any way pristine, quaint or whimsical. Messy!

Isn’t that the reality of how Jesus always comes to us, and truthfully aren’t you glad? He comes into our mess, into our messy and messed up world, with all of its brokenness, and noise, and chaos, and in the struggle of it all. He comes not in prettied up, tidied, cleaned up, sterilized array. He comes to be with us, to save in the midst of the mess we are in, to give us real life and meaning, to give us the hope of heaven and the life God created us to have. And when the donkeys start braying, and the icy wind starts blowing, and life gets frigid, Jesus still comes, and He still saves, and He loves you even in all of that. Maybe that bright idea that totally flopped, wasn’t so off mark after all. I hope you have a blessed Christmas this year, and by that I don’t mean a prettied up Christmas. I mean a Christmas where Jesus enters in and you feel His presence, and He gives you a peace and a joy, a hope in the midst of all the messiness of life.

***Merry Christmas! I love you, Bro. Buddy***

## **YOUTH NEWS—REMIND+**

*“Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” – James 1:16-18 ESV.*

I have always loved this season my whole life, beyond the lights and colors, it’s the joy of people around this time. Growing up in church this time of year for believers is when I have always noticed such kindness, hopefulness, and genuine care amongst each other. I don’t know if it’s the spirit of this time of year, or if people are just making a late push for “the nice list”. But in all seriousness, a huge part of my love for this season is the fact I get to see the church look more

like the church. I know this can be read as a cynical young minister, lamenting the short comings of his church. But please don't hear that in these words, I wish to celebrate this as I do every year. I firmly believe the heart of Jesus is that the more we consider the amazing grace this time of year celebrates it would stir within us a joy that overflows from our hearts to those we are in community with. I know typically the approach for pastors when discussing Christmas time is to talk about the secularizing and commercializing of the holiday. But I never understood that because to me the richness of the biblical message this season celebrates has always made that stuff seem so shallow. All you need to do is look around the church this year to see the genuine community that is shared, and then ask yourself to imagine a world where this was going on all the time. Verse 17 in this passage in James is a very common Christmastime bible verse, but it is always what comes to mind when I see the joyfulness of the church. It all comes from Him, the Father of lights.

*Merry Christmas FBC Buda, I love you!*

MUSIC NOTES

Merry Christmas everyone!! Can't wait for a Christ-filled December.

What a beautiful Hanging of the Green service we shared. Thank you again to all who participated. The adult choir will present "Take Me Back to Bethlehem" on Sunday, Dec.19th at 10:45 a.m. as part of our regular Sunday service. Bring your entire family and neighbors. Also, don't forget our beautiful Christmas Eve service on Friday, the 24th.

*See you there. In His Name, Nancy*

WMU

We completed Operation Christmas Child with 227 shoe box gifts. Thanks to everyone for always helping us with the mission efforts. This will help children around the world to know about the love of God.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will begin December 5th and run thru the month. Our Church goal is \$3,500.00. Envelopes will be available beginning this Sunday. The food drive for the Buda Food Pantry will run thru mid-December for non-perishable food items.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Our children are staying busy! We are so blessed with the teachers God has sent us. Be sure and have them in your prayers; April Moses, D'Aun Divine, Debbie Reed, Kim Flinn, Margaret Hughston, Kim Hodge, Nicole Wehrman, Nancy Johnson, Debbie Moore, Caitlin Quigley, and Jacqueline Powers. AWANAs are going strong. We have over 30 children registered in this awesome program. We will report the winner of the annual food drive and the number of items donated next month. Have a joyous Christmas! *In His Love, Children's Ministry Team*

DECEMBER AT A GLANCE

Dec. 1	Wednesday evening services, 6 PM Prayer Meeting, AWANA, Youth Adult Bible Study, 6:30 PM	Dec. 16	Ladies Bible Study, 10 AM
		Dec. 19	Christmas Musical, 10:45 AM "Take Me Back to Bethlehem"
Dec. 5	Lottie Moon Christmas Offering & Week of Prayer	Dec. 21	Precept Bible Study, 1 PM
Dec. 7	Precept Bible Study, 1 PM	Dec. 22	Wednesday evening services, 6 PM Prayer Meeting, AWANA, Youth Adult Bible Study, 6:30 PM
Dec. 8	Wednesday evening services, 6 PM Prayer Meeting, AWANA, Youth Adult Bible Study, 6:30 PM	Dec. 23	Ladies Bible Study, 10 AM
Dec. 9	Ladies Bible Study, 10 AM	Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Service, 5 PM
Dec. 14	Precept Bible Study, 1 PM	Dec. 28	Precept Bible Study, 1 PM
Dec. 15	Wednesday evening services, 6 PM Prayer Meeting, AWANA Youth Christmas Party, 6 PM Adult Bible Study, 6:30 PM	Dec. 30	Ladies Bible Study, 10 AM Prayer Meeting, AWANA, Youth Adult Bible Study, 6:30 PM

