



December 2024

Dear church family,

A few days ago, I posted on Facebook, I am where I never dreamed I would be. Then I proceeded to say I had 17 grandchildren (I have 9) and confused a lot of people. So, needless to say, I am where I never dreamed I would be in so many ways.

This will be my last Christmas as Sr. Pastor of the Towering Oaks family of faith, and I could easily become nostalgic and melancholy, but I will resist that natural pull. I love the Christmas season. One of my favorite Christmas songs is *The Hand of Sweet Release*. The song begins:

*Come thou long-expected Jesus  
Come illuminate the myst'ries of life  
Come redeem us from the refuse  
Bring an end to endless suffering and strife  
Be the star that shines so brightly  
That it draws our weary eyes  
To the sky, to heaven's sky  
Dearest Child of new beginning  
Be the start of something beautiful I cry*

I love those words, “Dearest Child of new beginning, Be the start of something beautiful I cry.” I do not see Christmas as the end of the year, but the beginning of something great. This past year has just been a prelude to what God wants to do in and through us this next year.

Christmas Eve, the Chapel will be open for families or individuals to come for a “Silent Lord’s Supper.” If you have not participated in this event in the past, it is very special.

As we move into this Christmas season, thank you for your faithfulness in all areas of ministry. Our budget giving is somewhat behind this year, but I trust God will supply through your faithfulness. I plan on making a special monetary Christmas gift to the church as a token of thanksgiving for such a wonderful year. I invite you to join me in doing so.

Thank you for serving and giving your time, talent, and treasure. Please continue to pray about how God wants you to serve His kingdom in and through our faith family.

It is an honor that the LORD has given me to come along side you as your pastor. I never take that honor and responsibility lightly. I pray that you all will have discernment, realize that God empowers those whom He calls, and that all we do is for the honor, glory and praise of God not only this Christmas season, but each and every day of our lives.

I love another line in “The Hand of Sweet Release,” It says,

*There's a dawn to follow darkness  
There's a face to fill the title  
"Prince of Peace"  
What He promised He delivered  
I am saved by the Hand of Sweet Release*

I am sincerely yours,

BTW----look for a Christmas card coming with a great looking bunch of “kids” and grandkids!

I thought this was how she spent every day.

Sitting in her rocker.

Facing the front door.

Waiting.

Waiting for my siblings and me to arrive so she could greet us with hugs and wet kisses.

My great grandmother. I always wondered how her slight frame could house such an enormous personality. Like many matriarchs of the day, she ruled her home in a quiet but clear way.

I loved her.

She had a snow globe on the shelf, year round, low enough for me to reach. It played a song I did not yet know but with each note that rang, I felt both happy and sad.

I watched the scene as it slowly turned. A baby in the center, surrounded by parents, barn animals, and shepherds. I did not understand why the scene and song drew me in but I knew it was special.

My great grandmother gifted me with the snow globe when my family moved from Minnesota to Texas. It still plays my favorite Christmas song, *Silent Night*, and the scene still slowly turns as it continues to tell the story of the greatest gift ever given.

God used Grandma Josephine and the snow globe to feed what He had already placed inside me—a great desire to know Who created this beautiful world and why.

Today, a “few” years later, I am still both happy and sad when I hear *Silent Night*. My amazement and joy overwhelm me that Jesus would step down from glory to save a soul as filthy as mine. I am sad to know people are not living in the peace His birth brings.

He also placed in my heart a great love and desire to reach boys and girls with the truth of His plan for their lives. What an awe-inspiring gift it is to be a part of their spiritual journey.

Know salvation through Jesus is a prayer away. His love, mercy, grace, and peace are for you.

How wonderful to know our Father is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is faithful. The One who created us will sustain us until He returns to take us home. Until then, let us ponder it, whisper it, speak it, shout it—CHRIST, the SAVIOR is born!



I love you all,  
Shelley

Oh, by the way—cool fact. Will and Abbie did not know my great grandma’s name when they named sweet Josie. I look forward to telling her this story one day when she is old enough to understand Great Grandma’s gift to me and the heritage passed down in the name Josephine.

by Bro. Mark

December 2024

The end of 2024 is approaching faster than we all want to admit yet, somehow, we tend to look forward to and anticipate the holiday season. Whether it's food, family, friends, or church; we love celebrating with others at this time of year, making and sharing memories.

I pray that as we think about past celebrations and those we are closest to, we are like Paul who wrote to the Philippians in 1:3-5, <sup>3</sup> "I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you," <sup>4</sup> always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now".

Do we remember each other with joy? Do we thank God for our faith family? Join with me this Christmas season praying with joy for each other. While we're praying for each other, make memories together by joining us the evenings of December 8th and 15th at 6pm, and 24th from 5-7pm. Come enjoy the Adult Choir celebrate Christmas with the cantata, *Hope Awakens in Bethlehem*, on December 8. On the 15th, check out the Kids' Ministry performance of *The Night Shift before Christmas*. Finally, on Christmas Eve, culminate the season by attending the Silent Lord's Supper that night.

It is an honor to serve



## TOCS—by Amy

As we close a time of reflection and thanks and look ahead to a time of hope and celebration of the birth of our Savior, Psalm 136:1 comes to mind. As leader of the school ministry and your fellow church member, I am just humbled and grateful for all of you, your love and support. It is a true blessing to be part of all the wonderful things happening through our ministries. We have our upcoming annual Christmas program on Thursday, December 12 at 7:00, and you are sure to enjoy worshipping our Lord with us if you can attend.



*by Bro. Greg*

-Our Miraculous Messiah-

“Unto us a Child is born...” was written over seven hundred years before Jesus was born.

Throughout the Old Testament, we find over three hundred prophecies about our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ.

Mathematicians have calculated the statistical probability that Jesus of Nazareth could have fulfilled just eight of those prophecies, and that likelihood is said to be only 1 in  $10^{17}$ ; That's 1 in 100, 000, 000, 000, 000, 000.

If some secular figure prophesied or fulfilled one percent of such prophesy, we would see ceaseless headlines reporting the events. The lack of such reporting should even more inspire us to enthusiastically herald the “Good News of Great Joy to All People.”

Let us share the Miracle of His birth - the Reason for the Season - The Joy to The World - with everyone. “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,” Jesus, is the miraculous fulfillment of those many wonderful prophecies.

# Ministry and Support Staff

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## Ladies Event

Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>

PJs, hot cocoa and make a Christmas ornament @ 6pm

Child care will be available if needed



the  
night shift  
before  
Christmas

## Kids' Ministry Christmas Musical

Brought to you by



Sunday, December 15 | 6:00pm | Worship Center

- **FaceSetters**
- December Gathering
- Monday, December 16 @  
11:30 am
- Christmas Fellowship &  
White Elephant Gift  
Exchange in Chapel
- Church will provide  
lasagna, salad, and drinks.
- Please bring a \$10-\$15  
white elephant gift
- Sign up in Bible Study  
Groups/ in the Family Porch  
Area/ or in the Foyer

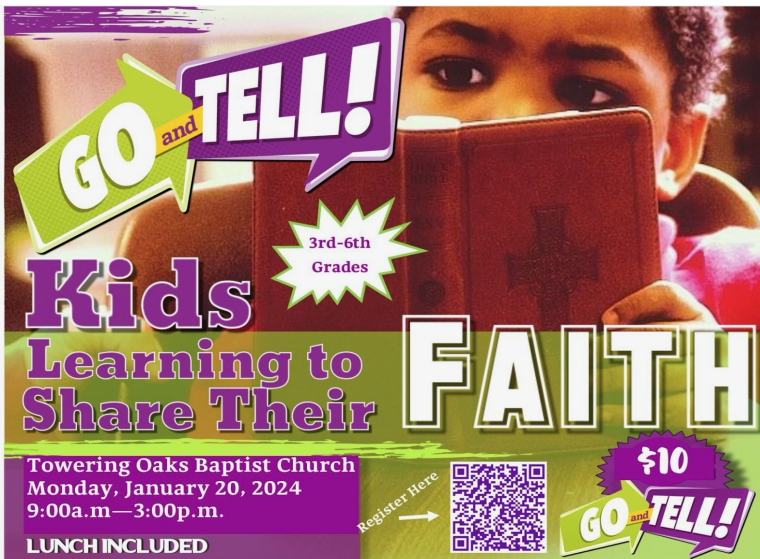


Join Us!



# Hope Awakens in Bethlehem

Adult Choir Cantata  
Sunday, December 8  
6:00pm | Worship Center




**GO and TELL!**

3rd-6th Grades

**Kids Learning to Share Their FAITH**

Towering Oaks Baptist Church  
Monday, January 20, 2024  
9:00a.m.—3:00p.m.  
**LUNCH INCLUDED**

Register Here → 

**\$10**

**GO and TELL!**

Samaritan's Purse—Operation Christmas Child

Thank you TOBC! As always, you did an amazing job by donating 1,038 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child! It is so wonderful seeing the spirit of giving in action and our church always goes above and beyond what is asked. Thank you TOBC for spreading the joy of giving to these children!



Merry Christmas from the church staff!

Tommy, Shelley, Greg,

Mark, Amy, Krystal