



CAMERON'S CORNER

Is Christmas Really the Day Jesus Was Born? And Other Facts About Christmas

In the early years of Christianity, Easter was the main holiday; the birth of Jesus was not celebrated. In the fourth century, church officials decided to institute the birth of Jesus as a holiday. Unfortunately, the Bible does not mention date for his birth (a fact Puritans later pointed out in order to deny the legitimacy of the celebration). Although some evidence suggests that his birth may have occurred in the spring (why would shepherds be herding in the middle of winter?), Pope Julius I chose December 25. It is commonly believed that the church chose this date in an effort to adopt and absorb the traditions of the pagan Saturnalia festival. First called the Feast of the Nativity, the custom spread to Egypt by 432 and to England by the end of the sixth century.

By holding Christmas at the same time as traditional winter solstice festivals, church leaders increased the chances that Christmas would be popularly embraced, but gave up the ability to dictate how it was celebrated. By the Middle Ages, Christianity had, for the most part, replaced pagan religion. On Christmas, believers attended church, then celebrated raucously in a drunken, carnival-like atmosphere similar to today's Mardi Gras. Each year, a beggar or student would be crowned the "lord of misrule" and eager celebrants played the part of his subjects. The poor would go to the houses of the rich and demand their best food and drink. If owners failed to comply, their visitors would most likely terrorize them with mischief. Christmas became the time of year when the upper classes could repay their real or imagined "debt" to society by entertaining less fortunate citizens.

In the early 17th century, a wave of religious reform changed the way Christmas was celebrated in Europe. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England in 1645, they vowed to rid England of decadence and, as part of their effort, cancelled Christmas. By popular demand, Charles II was restored to the throne and, with him, came the return of the popular holiday.

The pilgrims, English separatists that came to America in 1620, were even more orthodox in their Puritan beliefs than Cromwell. As a result, Christmas was not a holiday in early America. From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was actually outlawed in Boston. Anyone exhibiting the Christmas spirit was fined five shillings. By contrast, in the Jamestown settlement, Captain John Smith reported that Christmas was enjoyed by all and passed without incident. (Copied entirely from History.com, "History of Christmas - Origins, Traditions & Facts.")

Let's Celebrate God's Gift at Christmas, His Only Son, Our Savior Jesus.

Pastor Cameron

The *Journey* is published on the first and third Tuesday of the month. The submission **deadline** for the December 3rd *Journey* is **9:00 a.m. Thursday, December 12**. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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**LONG TERM
PRAYER CONCERNS**



Not listed online



CHRISTMAS CANTATA DECEMBER 16

Join us Monday, December 16, at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary for a wonderful evening of music!

Christmas Cantata, composed in 1957, is an early Pinkham work; he was then 34 and teaching at Harvard, shortly before he took the post at Kings Chapel. He subtitled the work Sinfonia Sacra, indicating a relatively large scope. The Cantata was originally scored for chorus and double brass choir (ten instruments), with an optional organ part. While, like other works on this program, it utilizes traditional Nativity texts - "Gloria in excelsis Deo...", and "O magnum mysterium...", among others - , it is original throughout, and captures the spirit of the season via its Latin texts and the variety in color and pace of its music. It begins maestoso, with the question "What have you seen, shepherds? Tell us!", accords honor to Mary, "Blessed Virgin, whose flesh has merited bearing the Lord Christ", and concludes, allegro, with a celebratory "Glory to God in the highest" in a sprightly, syncopated rhythmic drive.

YOUTH SHOPPING FOR OTHERS

This holiday season, our youth will be Christmas shopping for several local families, selecting gifts and supplying basic needs. The upcoming Funky Christmas Fashion Show on December 4 is one way to help support these families. But maybe you won't be able to participate in this fun event, or maybe you want to give even more. Through December 15, you may note "Outreach - Youth Christmas" for any amount on the memo line of your check or through PayPal on our website at fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give. Thank you for your support.



Long term prayer concerns are published once a month in the *Journey*. **Please** keep the church office informed of the status of the individuals you put on the list.

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Westwood Christian Church, Pensacola, FL
Ambassadors for Christ, Greenville, AL



THE FOOD BASKET is given in honor of Stan Ball's birthday by Matt & Karen

SAVE THE DATE

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 8, following Worship Service to discuss and vote on the 2025 Church Budget.

ATTENDANCE

Nov. 24: Worship Service: 78
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 70
Dec. 1: Worship Service: 118
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 7

CHRISTMAS SEASON WILL SOON BE HERE

Christmas Charities Year Round (CCYR), as noted in the name, is a year round locally founded nonprofit serving the area. In addition to providing assistance with basic living needs throughout the year, CCYR has Operation Believe providing gifts to children, home bound and seniors during the Christmas Season. Much gratitude for the quick response to shopping to fill these stockings which need to be returned by December 1st. Cash donations for their programs are also welcomed during this season and can be made by noting CCYR in the memo line of your check or through PayPal on our website at fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give.

Thank you in advance for your generosity with the joy brought to our friends in the local area. ccyr.org Community Outreach

THE VINE IS BUILDING A PATH OF HOPE!

The Vine Pastoral Counseling Center has great news! God has blessed us in our Legacy of Hope Capital Campaign, and we have purchased a building that will be our forever home. We have completed some needed remediation, and we are about to start renovation. We are raising the last \$550,000 that we need to completely fulfill the dreams we believe God has placed on our hearts. We need your help to get there.

Our building has a green space that will become a prayer garden. In this garden, there will be a brick walkway. Would you please consider purchasing a brick for the garden path? Or, purchase several. These bricks can be inscribed in memory or in honor of loved ones and friends. You can also just put names on them, or you could inscribe one for each of the fruits of the Spirit or include a scripture reference. I believe this will be a HOLY path and that the garden will be an outdoor place of worship. It will be an inspiration and comfort for years to many people who are pondering and seeking God in their healing journey.

Each brick is \$150.00 and will hold 3 lines of text. Think Christmas. Our goal is to sell 1,000 bricks. Thank you for your consideration. We would be honored for you to join us in this huge and wonderful thing that God is doing. Purchase a brick at <https://vinepcc.com/product/buy-a-brick-for-our-garden-path/>



HAP Pantry Wish List

Shelf-Stable Milk	Jelly
Potato Flakes	Cereal
Boxed Stuffing	Gravy Packets
Rice (1-lb bags)	Crackers
Beans (1-lb bags)	

HUNTSVILLE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM Please deliver by Dec 18th

IRS CREDIT FOR 2024 GIVING

Thank you so much for your tithes and offerings; they have a tremendous impact on the missions and ministries of our church. Please remember that all contributions to be credited toward 2024 giving must be received by the church office **before 12:30 pm on Tuesday, December 31, 2024** (that is when the office closes for New Year's Eve) or in the **collection plate on Sunday, December 29**. Mailed contributions may be credited toward your 2024 giving as long as they are **postmarked by December 31, 2024**.

IRS regulations require that checks received **after December 31, unless received by mail post-marked December 31 or prior, will be credited to your 2025 giving and not 2024**.



The 2024 sign up chart for **FOOD BASKETS** is available. You may contact the office at publisher@fcc-hsv.org or **256-881-0150** to select a **Sunday to remember or honor a friend, loved one, anniversary, birthday, or other special occasion**. Donations are \$25.00 and go to Community Outreach. Make checks payable to First Christian Church and Food Basket on the notation line. You may also make your payment through PayPal on our website at fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give