

December 2019

December 2020



A Congregation of ECO
A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

Toccoa Presbyterian Church

From the Pastor

Dear church family,

We are entering into our Christmas season when we remember God's great gift of love and seek to extend this love to others.

On December 4 we will open our doors to the lonely, discouraged, and brokenhearted people of our community. "Upon a Midnight Clear" is an outreach of our church, and we are asking that each person prayerfully consider inviting people who may find the Christmas season difficult. Please invite people in the community, and perhaps you will wish to offer your guest a ride. The exceptionally warm hospitality and compassionate care of our entire community will be put into action this night. There is a ministry for each of us! After the service, there will be a desert fellowship when we can extend Christ's love to one another. The number of guests is not the primary focus, but rather the love of Christ

out-poured. Please be in prayer that our God of all compassion might be pleased to descend upon us in a powerful way through the good news of the One who was born to heal the brokenhearted.

Throughout Advent, we will be looking at various themes related to the coming of Jesus into this world, beginning on December 1, when we will meditate on Christ's glorious return when every eye shall see him. On Christmas Eve, we will enjoy a Service of Lessons and Carols where we shall read the Christmas story accompanied by the carols that we love. We will end the evening by making a circle of candlelight as we worship the One who was born for us.

On December 1, Nancy and I will have been with you for two years. We came to you during a season of loss and transition. The first months of our ministry became a time of loss and transi-

tion for Nancy and me, as well. The first years of any new ministry are filled with change and we have had our share. But our Lord's love has united us and He has blessed us with the addition of wonderful people, and as we face a new year, we can give thanks together that Christ is still coming to Toccoa Presbyterian Church. We do not know what he might be pleased to do as we honor him. We can have great expectations as we continue to seek first his kingdom and to live together for his sake and the gospel's.

Nancy and I send our warmest Christmas greetings to each of you and pray that this season might be filled with the peace and joy of our loving God.

Pastor Paul

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Special points of interest:

- *Upon a Midnight Clear Service*, 7:00 p.m., December 4th; *Dessert Fellowship to follow*.
- *Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols*, 6:00 p.m., December 24th.
- *All 2019 contributions must be received or postmarked by December 31, 2019. Contributions received after December 31 will be credited to 2020.*

Mercy Ministry

Article by Barry Hodges

What is happening in the Mercy Ministry?

1.) Requests for Assistance There have been 45 requests for assistance since January 2019.

Of these 45 requests, 10 were guided to other County agencies to meet the need; 12 were assisted by several churches and agencies pooling our resources to meet the need; 13 were assisted by TPC; 5 only needed counseling and were directed to a specialty resource, and 5 could not be assisted, other than counseling and suggested recommendations.

2.) Churches Collaborative Mercy Ministry members have been working diligently to organize a “Churches Collaborative” where churches within Stephens County could pool their resources to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the benevolent within Stephens County, and to avoid duplication of meeting the requested need and to lead them to a flourishing life with Christ.

Premise:

A.) Our county has an impressive array of agencies that assist people with particular needs. However, most of these are targeting one piece of multi-faceted, complex, and systemic challenges. A needy person is often running from agency to agency, try-

ing to meet urgent needs. It is difficult for them to address the deeper, more fundamental issues necessary for building a flourishing life.

B.) There is a need for an organization that will shepherd an individual or family through a holistic process that will enable them to put together the building blocks for a healthy life.

C.) The Church provides the best avenue for this sort of shepherding, because our Lord meets people holistically and calls his people to do the same. This begins with the establishment of caring relationships that honors each individual as an image-bearer of God and one worthy of honor and respect. As Christians we are also privileged to serve as Christ served us – called to lay down our lives for others so that they might come to know the full blessings of the peace that comes through the gospel of Christ.

D.) The challenge is that many of our churches are small and lack the various resources to assume the responsibilities that this process requires.

E.) Therefore, we are suggesting the creation of a church cooperative that will exist to holistically guide individuals and families through a healing journey to self-sufficient living and flourishing in Christ.

Initially, eight churches were invited to TPC where we had our initial meeting on October 10th.

Everyone present supported the idea of a Churches Collaborative and there were many ideas discussed.

Additional churches were invited to our second meeting on November 14th at First Alliance Church. Again we had a great deal of discussion, and agreed to pray on the idea and let God lead us to the right path.

Our next steps are for each church present to invite an assigned church(s) to the next meeting on, most likely, January 9th. The goal is to get at least 20 churches committed to move forward on the idea of a Churches Collaborative. We agreed to invite several speakers such as Noel Pauley of Family Connections, Steve Paysen of the Hope Center, Shirley’s Shelter, and many more, to gain critical insight on what they believe is needed in the County, before we decide on any one direction to take and how we might be officially organized. We all agreed we did not want to duplicate any service already provided in the County. We need everyone’s prayers for us as we seek to serve in a way that honors the Lord.

Looking ahead...



Super Bowl Sunday,
February 2, 2020

The Souper Bowl of Caring offering will be collected at the end of the service on Sunday, Feb 2, 2020.

What better way to celebrate your favorite NFL Super Bowl team than to contribute to this special offering that will benefit Steadfast Family Farm in Stephens County. The Steadfast Family Farm, a non-profit ministry, is a horse farm with other small farm animals where a person or group can experience being close to The Lord while learning to ride a

horse and take care of the horse or other small animal. Simultaneously, this person or group experiences “Joy, Peace, Belonging and Empowerment” while growing their faith in God. For some, an experience at Steadfast Family Farm becomes the first time they have been “introduced” to Our Lord.

Mercy Ministry Continued

The calling of those on the Mercy Ministry Team, as you know, is Out-reach to the community and those in need. Did you realize that part of Mercy is In Reach? It is important to care for those in the body of Christ in our own church and in our own families. There are many ways to help with In Reach. Pray about it and see if it is your gift from God to touch the hearts and lives of those in our own church family. There are many things to do and that can be done to encourage and strengthen the body of Christ in this place. Any ideas on what you can do to spread love, comfort and joy in our church community?

Blessings!

Jan Evans

Christmas Concert Piedmont College

Join us for a lovely Christmas Concert at Piedmont College on Friday, December 6th. We will take the church van and plan to leave from the parking lot at 6:30 p.m.

Some of our very own choir members will be singing in the concert. Please come and support your sisters and brothers in Christ. You'll be glad you did!

Presbyterian Women

The Presbyterian Women will not meet in December but will resume meeting in January 2020.

In January, we will begin the study of "Jesus the King" by Tim Keller. We will meet on Tuesdays, January 7 & 21 at 6:00 p.m. and on Wednesdays, January 8 & 22 at 10:30 a.m.

In February the Presbyterian Women will resume the regular schedule of meeting on the first and third Tuesdays and Wednesdays monthly.

Toccoa Presbyterian Church invites you to be our guest for

UPON A
MIDNIGHT
CLEAR | A TIME OF
HOPE

Christmas is not just a time for those who are "merry." It's also a time for the weary, the heavy-laden, and those who battle loneliness, fear, and sorrow. There is a haven - a resting place where God meets you with His most precious gift.

DECEMBER 4 at 7 PM | Dessert following

A SERVICE OF
LESSONS
& CAROLS

6:00 P.M.

Christmas Eve