

*“Come now, let us reason together, says
the LORD: though your sins are like
scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they
shall become like wool.”*

Isaiah 1:18

UnlockingtheBible.org



FIRST CHRONICLES

December, 2023

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***“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you,
“Violence!” and you will not save?” – Habakkuk 1:2***

Christmas is on the horizon. I’m sure we are all aware of this by now. Decorations are probably going up—if they aren’t already up. (Let’s be honest, some of us probably had these up at the beginning of November!) Gifts are being picked out and wrapped, family gatherings are planned, and students are looking forward to Christmas break. “Looking forward”—those two words most likely characterize many people’s thoughts of Christmas.

For Christians, this is why we celebrate the season of Advent. Advent is all about waiting—and it is also about preparing. Just like an athlete prepares in the months and weeks before an event, and then warms up and stretches in the minutes and seconds before competing, so we prepare ourselves for our coming celebration of the birth of Jesus. That’s what the word Advent means—“the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event.” We look forward. We anticipate. We prepare.

The Jewish people believed that God had come to them in the Exodus. They knew that it was God, working through Moses, who liberated them from slavery in Egypt and guided them in their early days as a nation. They also believed that He would come again in the Messiah and establish His kingdom. When this did not happen, they cried out, “O Lord, how long?!”

But then Jesus came! He was—He is—Immanuel, “God with us.” He grew up and lived a perfect, sinless life. He died on the cross—taking our place, bearing our punishment, and nailing our sins to the cross. Three days later, he rose again. He defeated sin. He defeated death. Through Him, we can have peace with God. Then He ascended into heaven where He sits at God’s right hand and intercedes on our behalf. He is our Savior. He is our God. And He promised to come again.

But 2,000 years later, we find ourselves echoing the same question—“O Lord, how long?!” Those in Ukraine and Israel long for a cease in warfare. Those in the broader Middle East, North Korea, and in China wonder if they will ever be free from persecution. Even those who aren’t experiencing overt persecution are in the midst of discrimination and feeling a rising tension. We cry out, “O Lord, how long?” These words are even on the lips of the martyrs in Revelation 6:10. “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood...?” Their question is our question. How long will the Lord wait?

This Advent season, let’s ask ourselves: will we be patient and stay alert even when waiting is difficult? Will we be looking for signs of God at work, eager to see and join in? Or will we be like the Israelites who grumble and moan, missing the signs because they don’t match our preconceptions? I hope that during this Advent, we will find hope, peace, joy, and love—even in our waiting. May we prepare to celebrate Jesus’ birth and be ready for His ultimate coming again.

In Christ,
Jesse

OUR SCHEDULE!

GREETERS	NURSERY WORKERS
Sunday, December 3 Henry & Joan Boneschans	Sunday, December 3 Judy Eben
Sunday, December 10 Doug & Donna DeBoer	Sunday, December 10 Rachel Kramer
Sunday, December 17 Greg & Sharon DeBoer	Sunday, December 17 Gerri Spangler
Sunday, December 24 Stan & Crystal deBoer Judy Eben	Sunday, December 24 Terresa Wagenaar
Sunday, December 31 Jim & Sharon Douglass	Sunday, December 31 Donna DeBoer



December	1	Kenny & Mavis Kanengieter Delores Jurrens Michael Kramer Dawn McVey
	3	Remi Hanenburg Jamie Reemtsma
	4	Junior Stubbe
	5	Bethany DeBoer
	6	Sweer Arends Ross Kooiker
	7	Aaron & Jamie Reemtsma
	11	Jesse DeGroot Trent Thompson Gwen Winter
	13	Cole Middleton
	14	Jozephine Kaufman
	16	Harold & Helen Eben Anna DeBoer
	18	Dax DeGroot
	22	Dave & Rita Busse Katie DeBoer
	26	Kelly & Stacie DeBoer Raelyn Thompson Grace DeBoer
	28	Jesse Schrick
	29	Richard Swacker
	30	Dustin DeBoer Glenda DeBoer
	31	Barry Arends Bob Johnson Jesse Cottington



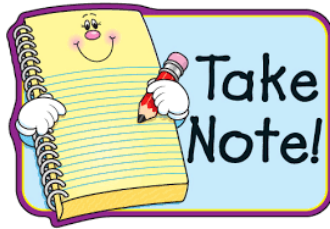
Bud and Lois Fuchs continue working with the ICF (International Christian Fellowship) in Utah as Cross-Cultural Equipper.

This past summer the Fuchs were very busy with the summer picnics. They hosted students from 12 different countries from South America, Africa, Spain, and Haiti/Dominican Republic. They spent time in fellowship with food and games creating teamwork and lots of fun. Key leaders would then also hold one-on-one evangelism sessions giving the students Bibles and literature.

From October to April 2024, Bud and Lois will be hosting ICF in their home for the second year. They were fortunate to have some support ministry from other states to help in October. They were also invited to the International Festival of 11 different countries.

Bud and Lois would like to thank everyone for the prayers and support this year. They each had doctor's appointments which lead to positive reports. They will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary then end of December. It would be nice to shower them with cards for this special occasion. Bud has asked for prayers for the churches in the region as many are facing trying times. Please pray also for their son Nate as he is now the Lead Pastor in his church, as well as he continues to do the ministries of Elevation Project and a podcast of testimonies of former LDS people.

Mission Board



- Project Warm Up will be Sunday, December 3 after the morning service. We will be having a luncheon and Group 3 will be working in the kitchen and will need to bring 1 dozen prepared buns. The congregation can bring a pie or any type of dessert.
- Christmas Program Practice will be during Sunday School for all grades on December 3 & 10. On December 17, there will be a dress rehearsal during the Sunday School Hour, and then the program will be during the Sunday service. On December 17, please have your children go to the sanctuary for dress rehearsal (adult Sunday School will be in the gym area). Christmas sacks will be available after the service.
- We will be filling Christmas sacks after the Sunday morning service on December 10. All are welcome to help!
- Join us for a Night of Holiday Music on Sunday evening, December 10, at 6:30. Lunch to follow. Group 4 is asked to work in the kitchen and bring bars or cookies.
- Pastor Jesse & family would like to invite the church to the parsonage to celebrate Christmas together on Sunday, December 17, from 4:00-7:00pm. There'll be music, soup, Christmas cookies, and hopefully you! Feel free to stop by at any time and leave when you'd like. We hope to see you there!
- There will be no Sunday School December 24 or 31.



Thank you to all who donated items/money to purchase items for the Christmas Shoeboxes. We were able to pack 97 boxes (which is what we had), so thank you to all who stayed to pack them! -CE Board

Thank you so much for the cards, food, money, text messages, and beautiful flowers that I received when I was sick. It is much appreciated! -Gerri Spangler

Many thanks to First Baptist Church for the prayers, cards, and the gift from the church. I'm so glad to be part of a caring church family. Even though the heart procedure wasn't successful, I'm grateful to be here once again. Your heartfelt concern will always be remembered. God Bless.

-JoAnn Schneiderman

We as Gideons of Northwest Camp want to say thank you for the nice gift of money given in the form of a hog check from someone at First Baptist. The amount was \$984.00. We really appreciate it. That amount will purchase a good amount of Bibles that might reach someone for Jesus Christ. Thank you. -Gideons of Northwest Camp