

Volume 23, Number 12
December 1st, 2017

East Cross News

Monthly Publication
of East Cross United
Methodist Church



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www.eastcross.org



Newsletter
articles for the
next issue are due
in the church office
by noon on
Wednesday,
December 13th.

Email articles to
office@eastcross.org



east cross

Christmas Sampler

Wednesday, December 13

5:30pm Dinner and Treats followed by Program

Featuring: East Cross Sanctuary Choir

Special Guest: BHS Jazz Choir, EC Kids, EC Praise Band

**Bring your favorite must-have holiday treat
for sharing and sampling during meal time.**



Christmas Eve Services at East Cross

**10am Traditional Candlelight Worship Service
& Communion, Sanctuary**

4pm Children's Service, Christian Life Center

**6pm, 8pm, 11pm Candlelight & Communion,
Sanctuary**



Each Candlelight Service will be the same —

We will gather together to hear the Christmas story told through scripture and song, share in Communion and light candles in celebration of Christ's birth. Nursery will be available for infants through preschoolers for the 10am, 6pm and 8pm services. Choose the time that works best for your family, invite your neighbors and friends, and make plans to attend one of these very special candlelight services.

ANOTHER STEP IN OUR JOURNEY...

Singles

During this past year I have noticed that we are missing out on doing some great ministry with some awesome people of East Cross and this community. Some of us are married and some of us are not married, yet we don't have a Singles' Ministry for those of us who are not. I feel that we should come together to love, support and disciple one another and I think we can do better at that with a Singles' Ministry in place.

We want to begin a ministry that will be here to personally help singles through the single adult stages of life. Our goal will be to provide singles with a place to gather pertinent resources, have great conversation and most of all a place to have a meaningful life as an effective Christian single adult.

The primary focus of the Singles' Ministry will be to provide a safe place for Christian singles to fellowship with other singles in a Christ-centered environment that promotes healthy relationships. We want to grow a ministry that serves singles of different ages, cultures, ethnicities, and social economic levels, helping all to engage in a process of growing personally, socially, spiritually, and intellectually.

SO, I need your help. If you are single and are interested in being on the ground floor of a new Sunday Morning Small Group for Singles and are interested in participating in a monthly night for fellowship (with childcare if you have younger children at home), please contact me so we can begin to develop what I think can be one of our best ministries at East Cross.

You can email me at jeffb@eastcross.org or text me at 918.977.0658.

Pastor Jeff

***let your heart be light...* CHRISTMAS SAMPLER**



Everyone has a must-have treat or snack that is a tradition during the holidays. On December 13, you will have the opportunity to share your must-have holiday treat at our Christmas Sampler. This will be the last Wednesday of Connections before the new year, so this will be a perfect way to celebrate together as a church family!

Let your heart be light with amazing entertainment featuring the Sanctuary Choir with special guest appearances by the BHS Jazz Choir, the EC Kids, and the EC Contemporary Band. This will be a fun-filled evening where we take a stroll through all the wonderful memories that make the Christmas season merry. All of us can recall the traditions that make the holidays special. The right foods, the perfect decorations, being with family, your favorite Christmas songs and the joy of children are some of our favorite things that conjure up memories of special times.

Come celebrate with us!!! Bring your favorite must-have holiday treat for sampling. You can even include recipe cards to exchange your favorite and then find many new favorites after sampling all the goodies. Don't forget to wear your Christmas sweaters! This is one Christmas event you will not want to miss! Mark your calendars on December 13 for the Christmas Sampler. Dinner and treats will begin at 5:30pm and the program will follow. Let your heart be light!

Margie Green, Traditional Worship Director

From Pastor Chad...

I am writing this article on Cyber Monday. Cyber Monday is the internet's version of Black Friday (you know, that crazy time of the year where people wait in line for hours, starting on Thanksgiving Day, to capture amazing deals on everything from TV's to cars to toys). Cyber Monday is just like that—a day that online shopping takes over the retail world and you can get everyone on your Christmas list everything they ask for for up to 70% off... with free shipping!

Just as I have for the last who-knows-how-many years, I did my fair share of Black Friday and Cyber Monday shopping this year. However, as I was waiting in lines and visiting hundreds of websites I kept thinking about that one gift I would want to make sure that everyone on my list had. Now the requests for a new phone or an new game system kept popping up, but they all seemed temporary. After all, there will be a new phone that will come out within a few months that will replace what's out now. Time frames between game systems seem to be a little longer, but eventually they will be outdated too. What gift could I give that would have a lasting impact?

Then I realized, God already took care of that. God has given to all humanity a gift that will last for all eternity in the coming of the Baby Jesus. This is the gift that you don't have to wait in line for or search a thousand websites for or even have to pay for. It is a free gift of love that leads to everlasting life as John 3:16 tells us. It is a gift that shines light in to the darkest parts of our existence as we read in John 1. It is a gift, as we see in 2 Corinthians 5:17, that has the power to transform and even renew our lives. It is a gift that brings mercy and hope (1 Peter 1:3). The coming of Jesus is the perfect Christmas gift and this is why we celebrate. I know you know this, but it is not about the gifts that we give to others. It is all about God's gift to us.

As you watch your loved ones open their gifts this Christmas, take a moment and think about God's gift and answer these questions: Have you thanked God for this amazing gift? Have you accepted this gift of love in your life? Have you allowed the gift of Jesus to fully transform your life? Have you shared this gift with those you love?

Have a Merry Christmas!

Pastor Chad

Contemporary Worship...

What an amazing year it's been at East Cross! We have seen so many lives changed by the generosity and faithfulness of our congregation! We are fulfilling the calling of Christ by reflecting the light He sent into this world. This month, we celebrate the birth of that light! As we approach our Christmas Eve services, as a worship team we want to focus our attention on spreading the light of Jesus into the hearts and minds of all people. The American novelist Edith Wharton said it best when she proclaimed, "There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." As Christ followers, creating light was never our job. We are, however, called to reflect the light and love of Christ. As we gather together with family and friends this month, it is our prayer that God blesses your time together, and provides a window of opportunity to reflect His light. We hope that you will join us on December 24 at one of our Christmas Eve services to celebrate the coming of the Light of the World!

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light." John 1:5 (CEB)

A special thanks to all of those who have been so supportive of our Contemporary Worship Ministry this year! We are so excited for all of the things that we have been blessed with, and look forward to the many wonderful things we know are in store for next year!

God Bless,

Zack Michel, Contemporary Worship Director

EC Kids...

Every December, we celebrate the greatest gift ever given—and every good and perfect gift comes from God. In fact, generosity is at the very core of God's character—He even gave us His own son, Jesus!

This month we will focus on 1 Timothy 6:18, "Command the rich to do what is good. Tell them to be rich in doing good things. They must give freely. They must be willing to share." And, because God freely gave us Jesus and Jesus freely gave His life, we can be generous towards others. Not only that, but when we are generous towards others, we prove that we love God by loving the people He loves. We pray that this Christmas, as kids celebrate God's amazing generosity, they'll see how they can be generous with their family, friends, and neighbors.

Wishing you and your family a blessed and very Merry Christmas!

Aimee Hall, Director of Children's Ministries

PARENT'S NIGHT OUT—Friday, December 8

That's right, East Cross parents. This one is for YOU! You are amazing. You work extra hard to keep the house festive for the holidays. You know just what to cook each night. You do endless chores, chores, chores. You work your tails off. And you deserve a night off.

Friday, December 8, drop your Kindergarteners through 5th Graders off at East Cross from 6-10pm and enjoy a date with your spouse. Or get some Christmas shopping done without little humans begging for everything. Or simply go home and take a nap.

Your kids will be in great hands as we eat pizza, play games, decorate Christmas cookies and watch a Christmas movie!

Cost per child is \$5.00 to cover the cost of pizza. **RSVP BEFORE December 1st!** This is for our East Cross family!



BABY JESUS BIRTHDAY PARTY—Sunday, December 17

Come celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with cake, bingo, games and a photo booth. This party will be held during 2nd service in the CLC and will be a blast! You won't want to miss it!

PANCAKES AND PAJAMA PARTY—Sunday, December 31

Church + Kids + NYE = PARTY!

Join us at 9:45am on New Year's Eve day as we celebrate the end of another year!

Kids, say goodbye to 2017 in style by wearing your finest pajamas. Yes, to church! We will serve pancakes, muffins and fruit as we relive our favorite memories from the year.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER...



We recently held our Preschool program's **Parent / Teachers Conferences** which are always very well attended by the (*currently 53*) children's families. Our **Scholastic Book Fair** was very well received and was one of the greatest in sales therefore giving us the opportunity to ADD many new books and classroom items/equipment which is GREATLY appreciated!

Our program will again be offering, for its 8th year, our "Count Your Blessings" fundraiser which solely provides for each of our classroom teachers a small "holiday bonus" made available by our Early Childhood Center program's *families!* All contributions are a very nice way to show gratitude for the time they are working with each of their classroom children – thank you!

These are the women that are blessing the children and their family's lives:

Parent Day Out Program:

Ms Whitney and Ms Lacey (Infant classroom)

Ms Liz V. and Ms Nancy (Toddler classroom)

Ms Amber and Ms Traci (Two-Year Old classroom)

Ms Colleen and Ms Shirley (Young 3's classroom)

Preschool Program (for 3 and 4-Year Olds):

Ms Christy and Ms Lindsay; Ms Valerie and Ms Gloria;

Ms Melissa and Ms Tasha; Ms Jenni, Ms Sonia and Ms Genna;

Ms Nora (Director's Assistant and Classroom Substitute)

Each woman shares her own gifts, talents and love of young children. I personally feel continually blessed that I work in this ministry with these women and can call them friends too!

A personal favorite....

May the Lord bless you and keep you;

May the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you;

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen

Numbers 6:24-26 NRSV



~ Coleen Williams, Director @ East Cross Early Childhood Center

C3 Student Ministry

Thankful

What a time to be thankful. I see the lights being put up in preparation for the Christmas season and I see the stores getting busier. I can't help but think past the Thanksgiving season. Our students have been talking about how to Grow this year. Whether we are growing spiritually toward God or bringing our friends along in our faith journey and introducing them to our wonderful Savior. It can be a tiresome road and sometimes a lonely one. I remember feeling left out and alone as a young Christian and getting sour and angry very quickly. Then God would remind me of the things I should be thankful for.

Not only do we have an amazing Savior that saved us from death but we have a loving God that does so much for us in our lives. Look around you. Creation screams of the beauty of its' Creator. The people that God has placed in our lives are blessing us if we would just look around. There is a saying that, "circumstance can kill your thankfulness." If you think about all the times that you have had expectations and they were not met, you got upset. In 1Thessalonians, God calls us to give thanks in ALL circumstances. This doesn't just mean when it's easy to be thankful. It means even when nothing seems to be going your way. It means that you must continue to pray even when you feel like God is not listening. It means to rejoice even when the outcome of all your hard work is not what you were wanting. That verse just got a little more difficult to follow didn't it? But it's true!

In order to grow, you must have self-perspective. You are very blessed. God loves you. God is still the same today, yesterday, and forevermore. And how great is it that right before the season to celebrate God's gift to us that we can stop and be thankful for all the blessings he bestows. God bless.

Evan Holmes, Director of Youth Ministries

EAST CROSS NURSERY...

It's that time of year again. December has come and with it all the joy of Christmas, but what is the real meaning of Christmas? Is it the gifts under the tree, the lights in the windows, cards in the mail or turkey dinner? Christmas is a season of great joy. It is a time of God showing His love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. Yes, you see Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Take time this season, among all your busy activities, to rest a little in the Lord and to think about what He has done for us. God sent His son to live a life of truth, love and hope, and to save us from our Sins.

"For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

Merry Christmas,

Liz VanDeVenter, Nursery Director



December Outreach News—A Time to Celebrate!

Mountain of Food

Kay Ruehlen reports that this year East Cross members contributed over \$19,000.00 for food to help the needy. Thank you to those groups/people that picked up the food from Aldi's. Thank you also to Keith Kliewer and all the people who loaded and delivered the food to AGAPE, CONCERN, and the Lighthouse. Thank you, Kay Ruehlen for your tireless efforts to coordinate the annual Mountain of Food drive.

Angel Tree

Angel Tree gifts are due back to the church by Sunday, December 10. If you took an angel and did not sign your name on the list, please call the office and tell Linda your name and the number of the angel you took. You may also just wait till Sunday and sign your name on the list. This will help assist in making sure all of our angels are covered! Thank you so much for your generosity in making Christmas better for these children. Any questions, please call Jeretta Amburn at 918-907-0104.

Generosity Boxes

The **Food 4 Kids Program** (through Agape Mission) is the Outreach Mission for December. Did you realize that The Food 4 Kids Program **sends out over 2,000 packs of food each month** to 14 area schools for the children who are at risk of going hungry over the weekend? These packs of shelf-stable food items are sent out weekly. This program is in need of the following items to supplement what they are able to obtain from the local food bank. ***Pudding cups – vanilla or chocolate; fruit cups; applesauce cups; small boxes of raisins; fruit snacks – the ones with 100% fruit juice, and small fruit juice boxes.*** So while you are shopping, pick up a few of these items, toss them in your cart and put them in the **Generosity boxes** that are conveniently located at **EACH** entrance to ECUMC! You will be blessing many of our local children!!!

Red Bird 2018 Information Meeting

The VIM team meeting for the July 21 – 28, 2018 Red Bird VIM will be held January 14 at 2:00pm in the East Cross Christian Life Center. You must be present to secure a place on the team. We will be going over details, including cost of the VIM and filling out forms. This VIM is for youth and adults. Please contact Bill Amburn, 918-607-9911 if you have any questions.

2018 Team Leader Training

East Cross needs a few people who are willing to be VIM team leaders to attend the 2018 Team Leader Training. The Outreach Committee of East Cross will pay for East Cross members registration fee. All Oklahoma Conference mission teams must have a certified team leader and training needs to be renewed every four years.

January 20 at Tahlequah FUMC

February 24 at Wesley UMC, OKC

To register go to <https://okumc-reg.brapp.com/vimtraining201671>

Fall dates will be added later in the year.



The Chili Cook-off will be held Sunday, January 28, 2018. All proceeds will go to missions! Please enter chili, donate to the silent auction, but at least come enjoy the fellowship of your East Cross family!

Prayer Needed

Hurricane and natural disaster victims as well as VIM teams helping with recovery efforts
CONCERN and MUTUAL as they minister to the community
The children receiving the Angel Tree gifts
Methodist missionaries around the world



Baptism...

We celebrated the baptism of Wesley Allen Clump during the 11:00 service on Sunday, October 29.

Pictured with Wesley are his parents, Bryan and Rachel, and his big brother, Andrew.

Our East Cross family looks forward to continuing the journey of faith with Wesley and his family.

Congratulations to....

Mike and Courtney Roberts on the birth of their daughter, Eleanor Quinn, born on October 31. She weighed 6lbs 1oz and was 19 1/2" inches long.

Proud grandparents are Randy and Kelley Lawrence.

Congratulations to all!



*Thank
You*

Dear East Cross,

We thank you for the diapers, wipes, paper towels, cookies, toilet tissue, and your kindness in helping us! We appreciate all you do for us!

Concern Child Learning Center; Staff and Children

Dear East Cross Family,

Many thanks for all the ways you softened the days of the sudden illness and death of our brother, and uncle, Ed Long. Your prayers were especially appreciated. --Wanda Cook and Linda Smith

STAFF APPRECIATION GIFTS...

We are so thankful for our pastors and staff members and would like to provide an opportunity for all of us to show our gratitude. If you would like to participate, simply make a donation by Sunday, December 17 and note "Staff Appreciation" on the memo line of the check or giving envelope. Staff Parish Relations Committee will distribute your gifts to our staff before Christmas.

Your generosity is appreciated.

Matt Epperson, SPRC Chair

PRAYER LIST

New Prayer Requests...

Tammy Baughman, Leon Brammer, Al Bunge, Janice Holt (Emmalene Lennon's daughter), Amy Kelton (Teresa Dietz' friend), Celia McClinton (Virginia Messick's sister), Sharon Reeves (Linda Thornton's friend), Deb Richardson, Kay Ruehlen, Mary Lou Tanzey, Joyce Taylor, Raymond White

Alan Beckworth, Richard Burress (Jeff's brother), Geoffery Christensen (Eileen Christensen Perrin's son), Kathy Christian, Bryant Collier, Joan Collins (friend of Pam Knuth), Val Cottle, Eddie Danford (father of Brenda Commons), Stan DeFehr, Debbie Dagenette, Ed Gordon, Janelle Hale (Judy Stephens' sister), Gertrude Hughey, Barry Knuth, James Kuntz, Louis and Emily Kuntz, Mike Paxson (brother-in-law of Coleen Williams), Linda Piersall, Debbie Potter, Marie Puckett, Rita Putney (Becky Bryant's friend), Euela Randall, Spence Rigdon, Carol Stithem, Vernon and Hopie Taliaferro, Kermit Tanzey, Jan Waldorf, Jeremy Waldorf, Terri Woods

Condolences to...

Myrna Collier on the death of her brother-in-law.

Richard Herman's family and friends on his death November 22.

If you know someone that needs to be added or removed from the Prayer List, call the church office at 918-333-0810.

Pray for our Military

MAJ Todd Abshire	LTC Darrin Cox	LCDR Eric Rolfs
SSG Gary Mabry	SSG Jared Seat	CPT Derek Smith
CDR Robert Staten	CPT Neil Gorham	Robbie Lawson
Mark Hathaway	CPT Daniel Smith	SFC Clifton White
Esn. Lisa Freeman	PFC Luis Balli	

All persons serving in the military and their families.



If you have a loved one or a friend currently on active duty in the military and would like them added to our Wall of Honor, please contact Charlie and LeAnne Christensen at chasleanne@gmail.com or 918-327-1226.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Annual Meeting and Tea

Friday, December 1, 2017 at 1:00pm

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

210 SE 9th

All East Cross men are invited to meet for breakfast and fellowship at Boulevard Diner on Saturday, December 2 at 8am!



Sunday Morning Van Ministry

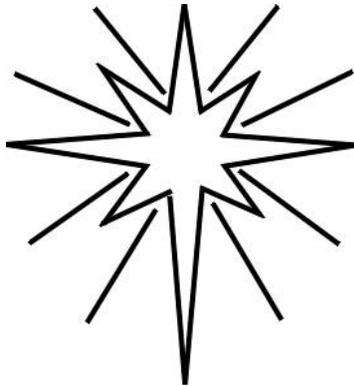


Call the church office at 918-333-0810 and **leave message on extension 105 before 7:30am on Sunday mornings.** You may also have a standing request to be picked up each week.

ONLINE GIVING... You can give electronically by going to our website www.eastcross.org. Click the menu tab on top of the Welcome page and click on "Give Online" OR scroll to the bottom of our Welcome page and click on "Give." Funds can also be withdrawn automatically weekly or monthly by completing a request form available in the treasurer's office.



East Cross also offers a mobile version of our online giving page to make it easy for you to give anytime from your smart phone. Simply scan the image to the left using your phone's Quick Response (QR) code reader.



Sunday Worship Information

Sunday, December 3

1st Sunday of Advent
Marvelous Light
Psalm 19:1-4
Communion

Sunday, December 10

2nd Sunday of Advent
Invasion of Light
Matthew 1:18-24

Sunday, December 17

3rd Sunday of Advent
Keeping the Light
Isaiah 60:1-3

Sunday, December 24

4th Sunday of Advent
Lighting the Way Home
John 1:1-5, 9-14



Sunday, December 31

That Awesome Baby Boy
Luke 2:22-40



The church office will be...

CLOSED — Monday, December 25

OPEN — Limited Hours (call before coming)

Tuesday, December 26—Thursday, December 28

CLOSED — Monday, January 1, 2018

OPEN — Tuesday, January 2

If you have an emergency, please call:

Jeff Burress 1-918-977-0658
Chad Perceful 1-918-850-4402

*Merry Christmas from your
East Cross Staff!*

Jeff Burress and Chad Perceful – *Pastors*

Evan Holmes – *Director of Youth Ministries*

Aimee Hall – *Director of Children's Ministries*

Linda Smith – *Ministerial Coordinator*

Linda Thornton – *Treasurer-Membership*

Coleen Williams – *Early Childhood Center Director*

Liz VanDeVenter – *Nursery and Childcare Director*

Margie Green – *Traditional Worship Director*

Zack Michel – *Contemporary Worship Director*

Seth Weimer – *Sound Tech*

Jon Colliver – *Building & Maintenance Coordinator*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 <i>1st Sunday Of Advent</i> Communion	4 6:30p Prayer Shawl Ministry	5	6 Connections 5:30p Meal 6:00p Small Groups	7	1 8 6p EC Kids— Parents Night Out 7p Church Bridge	2 8a Men's Breakfast at Boulevard Diner 9
10 <i>2nd Sunday Of Advent</i> 5p PG Small Group	11 6:30p Young Adults	12 7p Outreach	13 5:30p  Meal & Treats followed by Christmas Sampler Program	14	15	16
17 <i>3rd Sunday Of Advent</i> 11a Birthday Party for Jesus	18 6:30p Prayer Shawl Ministry 7p Miriam Circle 7p Trustees	19 6p Piecemaker Quilters	20 No Connections Tonight	21 6:00p Blue Christmas Service	22	23
24 10a Traditional Worship 4p Children's Worship 6p, 8p, 11p — Candlelight	25 <i>Christmas Day</i> <i>Church Office Closed</i>	26	27 No Connections Tonight	28	29	30
31 9:45 EC Kids Pancakes & Pajamas Party	<i>December 2017</i>					

Weekly Activities at East Cross

Sunday

8:30am Traditional Worship Service
9:45am Small Groups for all ages
11:00am Contemporary Worship Service
5:00pm Youth

Monday

9:30am-3:00pm Early Childhood Center

Tuesday

4:00pm Prayer Group

Wednesday

9:30am-3:00pm Early Childhood Center
(Not on 12/20 or 12/27)
5:30pm Connections Meal
6:00pm Small Groups
7:00pm Sanctuary Choir
7:30pm Praise Band Practice

Thursday

Friday

9:30am-12Noon Early Childhood Center
(Not on 12/22 or 12/29)

Saturday

EAST CROSS NEWS (USPS 164-540)

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Margie Green
Traditional Worship Director
Pianist
Amelia Nash, *Organist*
Zack Michel
Contemporary Worship Director
Seth Weimer
Sound Tech
Jon Colliver
Building & Maintenance Coordinator

learning to follow Jesus, inviting others to join the journey

Mountain of Food

Several of our adult Small Groups picked up cases of food from Aldi's, unloaded the items at East Cross, and then distributed the Mountain of Food to three local organizations in time for Thanksgiving.

Thank you to all our volunteers and to those who participated by purchasing food for Concern, Lighthouse Outreach Center and Agape.

