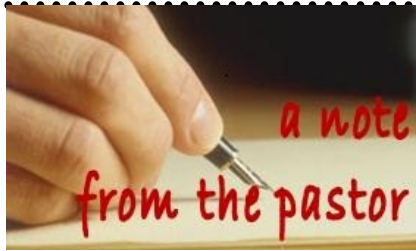


# The Springs



Rev. Don Tabberer

December 21, 2011



*"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)*

Christmas can be a challenging holiday for faithful Christians. It is at once the celebration of the present and future kingdom of God, as manifest in the birth of Jesus the Messiah and King. This concept of the Kingdom of God, being both now and in the future, is a difficult theological concept to grasp. Emmanuel – God with us – is a reality many of us struggle with. How can God's Kingdom be realized both now and in the life to come? Where is God in the midst of economic crisis, job loss, poverty and war? Why isn't God's presence obvious when my friend has cancer or my family suffers grief? Isn't God's Kingdom about the reign of Christ as King? Then how come Jesus doesn't take charge and fix everything?

John Dominic Crossan writes in **God and Empire**: *"The Second Coming of Christ is not an event that we should expect to happen soon, violently, or literally. The Second Coming of Christ is what will happen when we Christians finally accept that the First Coming was the Only Coming and start to cooperate with its divine presence."* In other words, the Kingdom of God to which Jesus constantly pointed is as fully available now and always as it was 2,000 years ago. The question is whether we will choose to live as if the One in charge is God and not "Caesar."

Now, I'm not sure I agree with Crossan's lack of expectation for Christ's return. However, he makes a valid point when he challenges us to accept the divine presence of God **here** and **now**. That is the once and future kingdom we celebrate – God came to earth in the Christ and remains here in the Spirit. The question is: Will we allow "God with us" to be in charge? Will

we seek God's counsel and ask for God's advice about everything in our lives? Will we allow our faith to inform our decision-making? Will we bring Jesus into the midst of every conversation and consider His opinions?

God's Kingdom cannot be realized if we resist God's authority over all aspects of this world. We will never recognize God in the midst of life until we are willing to take "me" out of the center of everything and focus on God. I believe that, when we allow God to be in charge, we gain clarity of purpose and peace of mind. All at once the pressure of trying to control our circumstances is lifted as we let God do what God does best – control our circumstances.

It's difficult sometimes to see through the cultural trappings of Christmas to the reality of Christ. It can be a challenge to ask God to take charge of our gift-giving habits. Taking "me" out of the center of self-centered and self-serving advertising that began in October isn't as easy as it sounds. You may not think that God has an opinion on how we celebrate this holiday; I believe that God does have an opinion and that it is our obligation to seek it and prayerfully consider it as we go about the busy-ness that consumes us this time of year.

Christmas is indeed a joyous time of year for Christians and we have much to celebrate. But even the most joyous celebrations can be filled with solemn meaning and thought-provoking reality. I pray that the joy of the season will prompt a new depth of understanding of your personal relationship with the reason for the season. Our family wishes you the best of everything Christmas has to offer. **Merry Christmas!**

*May "shalom," God's peace be with you,  
Pastor Don*



### Don't Miss Christmas Eve Communion

Saturday, Dec. 24  
5 p.m.-Contemporary  
9 p.m.-Traditional  
(If you prefer gluten free  
wafers, please let your  
communion server know.)

### Offices Closed...

The offices will be closed:

Monday, December 26

Tuesday, December 27

Wednesday, December 28

Thursday, December 29

Friday, December 30

Monday, January 2

January 2nd offices are closed, however, it is also a Newsletter Day so please, have all articles in by noon on that day.

I will be in sometime Monday to work on Newsletter (weather permitting) so that it goes out on time.

Tracey

### Kudos to our Music Department!

Thanks to **Alan Parker** and all the members of our Music Department! The Kingdom Kids, The Praise Team, The Chancel Choir, and The Chancel Ringers presented the most wonderful programs this season for our church.

Thank you to the accompanists and the soloists for all your hard work. Thank you to the musicians and singers! I cannot say enough how impressed I am by the wonderful talent we have in our church and how blessed we are by their dedication. *"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord"* has never meant so much!

Truly, the Lord is pleased with the sounds that our Music Department send up in worship and praise.

### SOMEONE'S PRAYING,

**LORD.....**Christmas is upon us. Time goes so swiftly that sometimes it seems you blink an eye and it has come and gone. Our church services and special events are what keeps us grounded in the true meaning of Christmas. The past two weeks have been so special. Our Praise Team, Bell Choir and Chancel Choir did a great job of helping

us feel the presence of God's gift to us through the birth of His Son. Also, our children truly blessed us with their special music last Sunday evening.

Let us continue to pray for our children and youth, and their leaders, that they will rely more on Jesus every day to guide them in their lives and to understand that Jesus is the best gift they will receive this Christmas.

### PRAYER FOR A CHILD

I would not deny him  
Any gaieties  
Of Santa Claus and reindeer  
and wonder-laden trees;

But let a song ring clearly  
Any let a star shine through  
And when he thinks of Christmas,  
Lord,

Let him think of You.

-Jane Merchant

### 2nd Monday Book Club

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday Book Club meets again on January 9<sup>th</sup>. We will decide on meeting dates and reading selections for the coming year. Our book club is open to anyone in our community, guys and gals, so invite a friend. See you in January!

### Estate Planning Thoughts

Consider naming your church as a beneficiary in your will or living trust. The gift could be a set dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, the remainder after other gifts are made, or a gift of that part of the estate left if designated heirs are deceased.



## KidZone

This past Sunday concluded our lessons on Advent. Children, please remember the poinsettia pictures and letters you made on Sunday should be given to someone. You did such a great job it would be a shame not to share them.

Our next shopping day will be January 1<sup>st</sup>.

The children's team is collecting Christmas cards again this year. We use them for different craft projects.

The children's team is also looking for donations of gen-

tly used items for the store (as families are cleaning out toy boxes making room for this year's toys).

Marty is missing everyone. Mrs. Debbie went to see her and she is looking great and hopes to be back in Sunday School on Jan 1<sup>st</sup>.

All the children did a great job on the Christmas program. You were few in numbers, but mighty in voice. Thank you to Mrs. Cathy for teaching our children to worship through music.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

## Christmas Eve Services

Christmas Eve services will again be at 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Com-



munion will be available and if you prefer your communion to be gluten free, please let your communion server know.

The 5 p.m. service will be filled with contempo-

rary music and a contemporary feel while the 9 p.m. service will be traditional.

We hope you can come, bring the family, holiday guests, neighbors... invite everyone to come!

All of that money is used in the pastor's discretionary fund to help people in our community who are struggling. Every little bit helps.

## Newsletter Reminder

Please remember to turn in all newsletter articles by Monday, January 2nd. Even though the office is closed, weather permitting, a newsletter will still go out on time that week. Volunteers can still come in on Tuesday, January 3 at your regular time.

## Restore Hope and Discretionary Fund

The barrel in the hallway beside the sanctuary will soon be moved out. Restore Hope no longer accepts clothing donations and any other donations can be brought to the offices. If you would be willing to take the clothes that are in the barrel now and deliver them to Good Will or another charitable outfit, please call the office to make arrangements. We need to get all of it out this week.

### Also...

This is the time of year for charity. But let's not forget, people are in need all year long. When you go up for communion, money can be left on the altar rail.

*Merry Christmas from our home to yours...*


*Linda and I want to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas.*


*It has been such a joy for us to become part of this church over the past few months. Moving to a new appointment is always challenging and exhausting. You all have been so warm and welcoming that this move has been great. Every day we find new things to be thankful for and new people who bless our lives. We are still getting settled; hopefully we will find a house soon after the New Year and be moving again into more permanent surroundings. Both of us are looking forward to a long and fruitful ministry at S&S&M.C. We pray that each of you and your families have a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.*

*Pastor Don and Linda Tabberer*

## Crumbs From The Cracker

 Follow us on Twitter: theAwakening\_

 "Like" – Facebook: "The Awakening" Ssumc youth

 YouTube Channel: SSUMCTheAwakening



**News: Shout Out!!!** Three of our own SSUMC Youth have been chosen by the Tulsa District Youth Counsel!! Those three are: Julia Henry, Lauren Miller, and Julie Ferguson!!! Be sure to congratulate these ladies! They will be representing our Tulsa District for Junior High and Senior High! Congrats girls!

### Mission Team 2012:

Get excited!! Our youth have started their planning and prepping for their upcoming mission trip to Quad Cities, Illinois. We had our first team sign up night this past Thursday and we had 12 students sign up for the mission trip. This past Sunday we had 3 more pick up the paper work! That means we have 1 spot left! If you are inter-

ested in joining the team, it is not too late, just e-mail or call asap (918-245-5955 or [gcollett@sandspringsumc.org](mailto:gcollett@sandspringsumc.org)). The cost for each student to go on the mission trip is \$300.00, but don't let money keep you from going!

Here is the 12 that have signed up and the 3 that have taken home paper work so you can be praying for them personally: Mack, Julie, Lauren, Alan, Matt, Kody, Autumn, Brooke, Julia, Ben, Jason, Michael, Ashley, Cecilia, and Makaylah.

As you know from last year, we will be doing a number of Fundraisers to support our mission trip. Here are some of the dates:

- Super Bowl Sub Sunday Fund Raiser February 5, 2012
- Family Movie Night February 10, 2012 (6:00pm-8:30pm)
- Parents Night Out Fund Raiser March 10, 2012 (6:00pm-9pm)
- Family Movie Night March 31, 2012 (6:00pm-8:30pm)
- Spaghetti Lunch Fund Raiser April 22, 2012
- Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser May 20, 2012

If you would like to make a donation or sponsor one of our youth to go on the mission trip, they would be delighted to receive any type of help! Last year, just from our random generous donors, we were able to pay for 3 full trips of our students! Let's try for 5 this year!

### Winter Retreat!

Have you ever been to Egan in the winter? This year you can go!!!! Our youth will be participating in the Tulsa District Youth Winter Retreat! It is a 2-day trip to Egan full of Jesus, Fun, and more Fun, and Jesus! Our church is in charge of the "Big Fun", "No Talent, Talent Show" and "Coffee House". This is going to be an awesome experience for our youth! So if you are a youth and you want to go, sign up deadline is January 1<sup>st</sup>. The church will pay half of your registration fee's which makes it only \$22 for you!



### Weekly Youth Topics:

Can we talk about "Sex" in church? Is it in the Bible? Well the SSUMC youth will be starting their purity series in the beginning of January. This series will take a Biblical perspective to help our students see what God and the Bible says about this touchy subject. (Parents please do not hesitate to speak with me if you have questions about this series.)

### Upcoming Dates:

- December 21<sup>st</sup> - Winterfest Ice Skating 6:45pm-9pm (Dress Warm)
- December 25<sup>th</sup> - No Small Groups!
- December 28<sup>th</sup> - No Youth
- January 1<sup>st</sup> - No Sm. Groups! Winter Retreat Paper Work Due
- January 4<sup>th</sup> - "No Petting" Series Begins

(If you are interested in being apart of any of these upcoming events please do not hesitate to call me at 918-245-5955, or email me at [gcollett@sandspringsumc.org](mailto:gcollett@sandspringsumc.org))

**Fun Fact:** Many theologians estimate that Jesus wasn't born on December 25 but sometime in September between 6BC and 30AD.



## Nametags... Clean Up... Organize...

What do these 3 things have in common? Rev. Don, with the help of a friend or two, has removed some of the nametag racks, gotten rid of the media corner and has spruced up the Narthex, making it very inviting. Be sure to notice the banners. Also, you might notice there are fewer nametag racks. This means you might have gotten reassigned! If you can't find your nametag, ask someone to help. If you still can't find it, leave a note on my (Tracey) desk and I will be glad to make you a new one!

Thanks Don – for cleaning and organizing! It makes a big difference!

## HYMNS VS. CHORUSES

An old farmer went to the city one weekend and attended the big city church. He came home and his wife asked him how it was.

"Well," said the farmer, "it was good. They did something different, however. They sang praise choruses instead of hymns."

"Praise choruses?" said his wife. "What are those?"

"Oh, they're OK. They are sort of like hymns, only different," said the farmer.

"Well, what's the difference?" asked his wife.

The farmer said, "Well, it's like this - If I were to say to you: 'Martha, the cows are in the corn'" - well, that would be a hymn. If on the other hand, I were to say to you:

'Martha, Martha, Martha, Oh Martha, MARTHA, MARTHA, the cows, the big cows, the brown cows, the black cows the white cows, the black and white cows, the COWS, COWS, COWS are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn, the CORN, CORN, CORN.'

Then, if I were to repeat the whole thing two or three times, well, that would be a praise chorus."

The next weekend, his nephew, a young, new Christian from the city came to visit and attended the local church of the small town. He went home and his mother asked him how it was.

"Well," said the young man, "it was good. They did something different however. They sang hymns instead of regular songs."

"Hymns?" asked his mother. "What are those?"

"Oh, they're OK. They are sort of like regular songs,

only different," said the young man.

"Well, what's the difference?" asked his mother.

The young man said, "Well, it's like this - If I were to say to you: 'Martha, the cows are in the corn' - well, that would be a regular song. If on the other hand, I were to say to you:

'Oh Martha, dear Martha, hear thou my cry  
Incline thine ear to the words of my mouth  
Turn thou thy whole wondrous ear by and by  
To the righteous, inimitable, glorious truth.  
For the way of the animals who can explain  
There in their heads is no shadow of sense  
Hearkenest they in God's sun or His rain  
Unless from the mild, tempting corn they are fenced.  
Yea those cows in glad bovine, rebellious delight  
Have broke free their shackles, their warm pens es-chewed

Then goaded by minions of darkness and night  
They all my mild Chilliwick sweet corn have chewed.  
So look to the bright shining day by and by  
Where all foul corruptions of earth are reborn  
Where no vicious animals make my soul cry  
And I no longer see those foul cows in the corn.'  
Then if I were to do only verses one, three and four  
and do a key change on the last verse, well that would be a hymn

From John Mark Ministries



## Sunday Lists

### Sunday Volunteers      December 25

Visitors Center & Coffee

Searchers Class

Head Ushers

Charles Campbell

Lay Reader

Sue Wiedemann

Young Disciples Lesson

Amy Miller

Children's Church

Debbie & Marty

Counters

Betty or Howard Smith & Gary Dobbs

Youth Dinner for Wednesday, *December 21*

Faith Circle

### Sunday Volunteers      January 1

Visitors Center & Coffee

CIA/Pathfinders Class

Head Usher

TBA

Lay Reader

Ellie Costola

Young Disciples Lesson

TBA

Children's Church

Marty & Debbie

Counters

Sondra Bogert & Dick Ford

Youth Dinner for Wednesday, *December 28*

No Youth

## Please Keep In Prayer

Walter Speed, Francis Joslin, Wilbur & Jewel Williams, Mel Jones, Ryder Herring, Ryan Bulmer, Gene Watson, June Horn, Mary Lea Forsythe, Ruth Weaver, Jo Nan Allen, Jim Bostwick, Virginia Vice, Martha Scudder, Don Baldrige, and all un-spoken requests

## Acknowledgements & Information

### ***A Special Thanks...***

*I want to extend a personal "thank you" to **Rob Collett** for all his wonderful work producing our "**Meeting Jesus Again**" videos. The quality of the video was excellent and it conveyed exactly the message I wanted from it. I think Rob did a great job capturing the thoughts and feelings of members of our church as they discussed very personal experiences of Jesus Christ. Please take a moment to thank Rob for his work.*

### ***Thank You...***

*Thanks for the Thanksgiving dinner. It was so good. Tell everyone who touched our lives so wonderfully we are so grateful to them. We give God thanks for each of you!!!*

*Cora Ella Malone & Family*

### ***Thank You...***

*To my church family at SSUMC—Thank you so much for all your prayers during my recent surgery. It really helps to know God's presence during a life changing situation. Thank you once again for being a wonderful church family.*

*Got Bless Our church... Love, Sherry Read*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### FLC-Family Life Center

#### Wednesday, December 21

7:30 a.m.-Men's Breakfast—Crescent Café  
10:00 a.m.-Exercise to Music-FLC  
11:30 a.m.-SIA Potluck-F. Hall  
6:30 p.m.-Youth to Winterfest Ice Skating  
6:00 p.m.-NO Chancel Ringers  
7:00 p.m.-NO Chancel Choir

#### Thursday, December 22

11:00 a.m.-Needlers-Parlor  
4:15 & 5:30 p.m.-Weight Watchers— F. Hall  
6:30 p.m.-Cub Scouts-Caleb House

#### Friday, December 23

12:00 p.m.-Weight Watchers

#### Saturday, December 24

5:00 p.m.-Contemporary Christmas Eve Communion Service  
9:00 p.m.-Traditional Christmas Eve Communion Service

#### Sunday, December 25

10:30 a.m.-Worship

#### Monday, December 26-Offices Closed

10:00 a.m.-Exercise to Music-FLC  
7:00 p.m.-Boy Scouts 101-FLC

#### Tuesday, December 27-Offices Closed

7:00 p.m.-Al Anon-Upstairs

#### Wednesday, December 28-Offices Closed

7:30 p.m.-Men's Breakfast-Crescent Café  
10:00 a.m.-Exercise to Music-FLC  
No Youth  
No Chancel Choir  
No Chancel Ringers

#### Thursday, December 29-Offices Closed

4:15 & 5:30 p.m.-Weight Watchers-F. Hall

#### Friday, December 30-Offices Closed

12:00 p.m.-Weight Watchers

#### Saturday, December 31-No Activities

Reminder: Please have all NL articles in the office by noon on Monday, January 2nd. Offices will be closed, but I will be up sometimes Monday to do Newsletter. TG

**Sand Springs UMC**

**319 N. Main Street/PO Box 336**

**Sand Springs, OK 74063**

**918-245-5955 Fax-918-245-2801**

**[www.SandSpringsumc.org](http://www.SandSpringsumc.org)**

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