



**The Hill Country Connection  
December 2024**

Hill Country Christian Church  
Spring Branch, TX 78070

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HAPPY  
*Holidays*



**Rick's  
Ramblings**

Sadly, Christmas has become an increasingly secularized holiday. This was brought to my attention a few short years ago while watching a

Pentatonix Christmas special on television. To end the show, what should be the penultimate expression of what Christmas is all about, they presented a rendition of

John Lennon's song, "Imagine." The now-famous lyrics begin:

"Imagine there's no heaven / It's easy if you try / No hell below us / Above us only sky / Imagine all the people living for today."

I never imagined I would hear "Imagine" performed as a Christmas song. But that's how secular the holidays have become. (Perhaps we have forgotten that the word "holiday" is shorthand for "holy day").

According to Gallup, 95 percent of Americans celebrate Christmas; but only 51 percent describe the holiday as "strongly religious" for them. One in four American adults say December 25 is simply a cultural holiday, not a religious holy day.

As our culture becomes increasingly secularized, it is vitally important that we, as believers, keep the true meaning of Christmas prevalent in our hearts and minds. "The light (still) shines in the darkness, and the

darkness can never conquer it" (John 1:5). Be that light. Not in an obnoxious, strident way, but in an alluring, drawing way. Let the light of Christ in you shine into the darkness of this world.

Our Advent series this year is "An Unexpected Gift." This past Sunday we looked at "God Is Expectant." The next three Sundays of Advent, we will consider: "God Is Dangerous," "God Is Jealous," and "God Is Faithful." Maybe you've never thought of God as being dangerous or jealous. Well, this is your opportunity to discover why those words would be used to describe God, especially during the Advent season.

You also don't want to miss our Christmas Eve service that begins at 5:00 p.m. It is simple—meaningful—and the perfect way to remind family and friends about the true meaning of Christmas. We also hold our service in an early time slot so you may experience that special Christmas Eve meal with family and friends afterwards. This time of year, people are more open to attending church services, so be sure and reach out to others and invite them to be a part of Advent worship services, and especially Christmas Eve.

A special treat: my sister and her son and daughter (my niece and nephew) are going to participate in the service. They have beautiful voices. I finally get to include my favorite Christmas song that is a trio, and we will also be singing a quartet. Plus, the gifted Peaches Kelly will also be singing "O Holy Night," and we will have live music because her friend, Daniel Jennings, will be accompanying her as well as playing our Christmas hymns. Kids lighting candles—adults reading scriptures—singing hymns together—listening to beautiful music. And then, all of us together, as the Body of Christ lifting our own lit candles to proclaim the truth that Jesus is the Light of the World. That is the thought we will "Imagine" together at Christmas.



*Waiting for Santa*  
IS HARD WORK

# Our Christmas Prayer For you

May God bless you as we celebrate the birth of Jesus and may you have  
**PEACE** to bless each day,  
**HOPE** for each tomorrow,  
and **JOY** in every season.

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Life Line Screening will be here at Hill Country Christian Church on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, offering safe, painless, non-invasive preventive health screenings that are typically not a part of a routine physical. To be more proactive about your health for yourself, your family and your community, please register for these health screenings today.

*There is no time like the present to take action!*

Three ways to get more information and to register:

- ☐ Call toll-free: 1-888-814-0466 promo code HSCA001
- ☐ Online: <https://www.llsa.social/hsc>
- ☐ Text: the word circle to 216-279-1607

*In Our  
Thoughts  
and Prayers*



**Please continue your prayers for Ann Underwood. She is home working on regaining her strength and health and definitely has ups and downs so please remember Ann and her family in your prayers.**

**Also, please send loving thoughts and prayers to Ernie and Melanie Fishlock as Ernie remains in the rehab facility.**

# Some Great Things Coming Up.....

## Community Chorus Christmas Celebration!!!

Performances will be on:

Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

Bulverde Methodist Church Sanctuary

### Christmas Eve Service

*Pastor Rick is planning a beautiful Christmas Eve Service at 5:00 p.m. All are welcome so feel free to invite family members, friends and neighbors to this special night.*

## St. Jude's Ranch for Children

We are happy to report that 100% of the items on the St. Jude's Wish List have been purchased. This could not have been accomplished without the help of our congregation. Your generosity and kindness will go a long way in ensuring that the residents of St. Jude's will have a merry Christmas.

If you still have presents you've purchased at home, please bring them to the church by the 19<sup>th</sup> so Santa can deliver them on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Again, our thanks to you all.

## December

### Birthdays

Jean Garcia - 1  
Betsy Hart - 4  
Rick Son - 4  
Paulette Saenz - 6  
Janet Sogard - 15  
Mia Murray - 18  
Jerlynn Martinez - 23  
Cherilyn Patteson - 24

Time to

Celebrate!

### Anniversaries

Smitty & Karen Smith - 12  
Wes & Jessica Willard - 23  
Mark & Janet Sogard - 24  
Rosemary & Chuck Wilkes - 27



Dear Santa,  
I don't know how  
much longer I  
can be good!  
Come quickly!  
Paw prints

HE SEES YOU WHEN YOU'RE  
EATING ...



HE KNOWS WHEN YOU'VE  
GOT SNACKS ...

I am ready, just in case .....



WANT TO KNOW WHAT I  
GOT FOR CHRISTMAS?

FAT. I GOT FAT.

Dear Santa,  
Define "Good"...





# December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am – Adult Bible Study 10:30 am – Worship	2	3 	4	5	6 7:00 pm – Community Choir Bulverde Methodist Church	7 7:00 pm – Community Choir Bulverde Methodist Church
<b>8</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am – Adult Bible Study 10:30 am – Worship 3:00 pm – Community Choir	9 	10	11 No Pastor's Bible Class until January	12 	13	14 8:30 am – Men's Breakfast and Fellowship - <b>Cancelled</b>
<b>15</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am – Adult Bible Study 10:30 am – Worship	16 	17	18 No Pastor's Bible Class until January	19	20	21 10:00 am - CWF Meeting & Luncheon
<b>22</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am – Adult Bible Study 10:30 am – Worship	23	24 5:00 pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day	27 	
29 9:30 am – Adult Bible Study 10:30 am – Worship	30 	31 New Year's Eve				

THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE HOME.



THE CHRISTMAS TREE FAINTED

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