

# Old Providence ARP Church

## Old Providence News

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Dear Old Providence Family,

As I sit to write this article, I have a confession to make. I have broken my own “No Christmas Music till After Thanksgiving” rule. I thought I would make it to November 28<sup>th</sup>. Really, I did. After all, last week temperatures were in the 70s. I was still wearing shorts. I even mowed the lawn at the manse! But this past Sunday the temperature changed. The wind started playing its wonderful tune. A certain church member dropped off some black walnuts for me. And to top it all off, Sunday morning when I got in my car the radio started playing the Johnny Mathis rendition of “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year”. It wasn’t my fault, you see. But who am I kidding? At least I’m not alone.

Apparently, early Christmas celebrations are a big thing for 2020. Social media has been buzzing with pictures of Christmas trees, recipes, music playlists, etc. While I haven’t heard any official reason for such an early jump to Christmas festivities, the prevailing thought seems to be that Christmas signifies the end of the year and so people are ready to start celebrating now. Another way to put it is that people want 2020 to be over. I don’t find myself in that state of mind, but even so, it sure is nice hearing Johnny Mathis on the radio instead of any number of modern day “artists”.

But what about you? Are you ready for 2020 to be over? Let’s be honest. 2020 has not been an easy year. And, as a result, Christmas may not be easy, either. Perhaps you find yourself in a different setting this year, facing different circumstances than those of years past. Perhaps you are facing problems that are new or the same problems that have troubled you for some time. Maybe this year you’re just not in a Christmasy (if you’ll allow me that term) kind of mood. If this is where you find yourself then allow me to encourage you.

While the cultural side of Christmas is enjoyable (to me, at least), it isn’t the trappings of Christmas that make Christmas special. Nor is it even nostalgia from times past or the hope of things to come that makes Christmas so wonderful. What makes Christmas the most wonderful time of the year is the tangible reminder we receive that there was a time when the world was full of darkness and without hope. Yet into that darkness came light, the True Light that gives life to all people—Jesus Christ. It is because of Jesus Christ that we have hope for the future no matter what we face. It is because of Jesus Christ that we can celebrate Christmas with the boldness of those who know the greatest gift ever given wasn’t wrapped and put under a tree, but instead, was hung upon a tree so that all those who would trust in Him would have life in abundance, even throughout eternity.

Know that the Lord is with you no matter what you are facing, whether it is the happiest of happy times or a time of sadness, or maybe even somewhere in between. We serve the God of the Ages, and that includes 2020. Remember the promise of Christ that He will never leave or forsake His people. This Christmas, focus on Jesus Christ, the greatest gift of all.

Merry Christmas!

Patrick

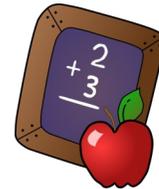
### Elections

Our stated Congregational Meeting to approve the Budget and to elect Deacons will be held on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The Congregational Meeting will begin after the 9:00 a.m. Worship Service, the meeting will go into recess, and will be completed after the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service. For those who are not able to attend Worship Services at this time, the Ballots for Deacons will be available at the church office from December 6<sup>th</sup> – December 13<sup>th</sup>. You may fill out a ballot and your vote will be counted. Copies of the 2021 Proposed Budget are available at the church office as well. Please be in prayer for Officer Elections and our Annual Stated Meeting.

### Offering Envelopes

If anyone who **does not currently have** offering envelopes but would like to have them for 2021, please contact Terri by Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Preschool Update



Preschool registration for the 2020/2021 school year has been cancelled due to safety concerns regarding COVID-19. The Committee decided preschool will not resume for the second half of the school year in January 2021. They hope to begin registration in the spring for the 2021/2022 school year to start next fall.



## December 2020 Calendar of Events

As of publication of this Newsletter, we have two Sunday Worship services, one at 9:00 a.m. and the other at 11:00 a.m. Please choose the time that suits you best. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or believe you have been exposed, please refrain from attending. COVID-19 cases are on the rise in our area. Please be in prayer for those who have been affected and ask for the Lord's protection for those who are at risk. We will continue to hold church services and youth group, but due to the rise of COVID-19 cases, the Session has decided that it is best if everyone who is able to wear masks do so while inside the church facilities. While wearing masks is not ideal, this will allow us to return to singing in our worship services. In order to aid in social distancing, worship services will still be abbreviated, and children's church and nursery are still cancelled. The Session will meet on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to decide how to proceed at that point. If you would like a copy of any Sunday sermons on CD, please call the church office to let us know.

All other church activities except Youth Group are cancelled until further notice. Youth Group will meet every Sunday at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Our pastor's Daily Devotionals will continue at 7:00 each morning, Monday through Friday, for live stream on our church's Facebook page. It will remain available on Facebook to view any time, and it will also be available on sermonaudio.com.

### December 2020



#### Saturday, December 5

3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - Drive Thru Dinner

#### Sunday, December 6

5:30 p.m. - Youth Group

6:30 p.m. - Diaconate Meeting

#### Sunday, December 13

5:30 p.m. – Youth Group

#### Sunday, December 20

COMMUNION

5:30 p.m. – Youth Group

#### Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve- Church Office Closed

#### Friday, December 25

Christmas Day – Church Office Closed

#### Sunday, December 27

No Youth Group

#### Thursday, December 31

New Year's Eve- Church Office Closed



### January 2021

- 1 New Year's Day – Church Office Closed
- 3 Session Meeting

- 10 Diaconate Meeting
- 17 Special Offering for WRE

(Please keep in mind, these dates are tentative and could be cancelled or rescheduled after publication of the Newsletter.)