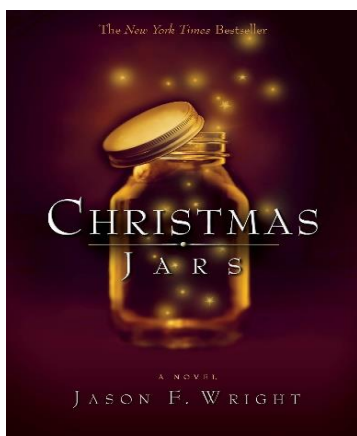


What would you do if you came home to discover that your house or condo was robbed? To make matters worse, this was already during a season of deep loss and it took place on the evening of Christmas Eve? This is exactly what happens to twenty-something Hope Jensen in the novel *Christmas Jars*. Even though Hope is grieving the loss her adoptive mother due to cancer and now her apartment has been broken into, she still discovers a silver lining. During despair Hope finds an anonymous jar full of money someone left on her doorstep. The story moves on to share how Hope uses her journalist's instincts to investigate other recipients of "Christmas jars," and to figure out who started this meaningful and hopeful tradition. This tradition of saving a year's worth of spare change to give to someone in need for the holiday.

Members of our church's outreach team have not only approached me about this novel and its message, but also are excited about implementing this ministry. On Saturday, July 23, we would like to invite congregates and friends to the fellowship hall for a purposeful and fun morning as we get into the Christmas' giving spirit. Together we will watch the movie *Christmas Jars* as well as each family will have the opportunity to create and decorate their own Christmas jar. Subsequently, throughout the year you will place money in your own Christmas jar and then give it to the person or charity of your choice for Christmas. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:3-4).



To connect this to the broader church and specifically in worship, the Sunday before, July 17, we will have a worship service as we celebrate Christmas in July. Yes, it's in the summer. Yes, it's 90 plus degrees outside and there is not even an inch of snow where our seasonal members are located. Yes, this is something we have never done before. No, I have not gone completely out of my mind. At the same time, yes, *We Need a Little Christmas*, as Johnny Mathis' song is called. Today we are surrounded by 24-7 news reminding us of the escalation of gun violence, Russia and Ukraine war, political divide, high inflation, and your favorite news station can scroll down a much longer list that has the ability to raise anyone's blood pressure. Yes, we need a little Christmas...even in July!

While we are not necessary decorating the sanctuary as if were truly in the advent season and I'm certainly not pretending to be the known American magician, David Copperfield, who "supposedly" made it snow. Nevertheless, we will have a theme of Christmas. That is, we will sing a few of your favorite advent and Christmas hymns. Additionally, Grace Anderson will be back with us as she intends to play a few classics on her violin to get us in the season' spirit. As mentioned above, while we are bombarded with news and signs that have the tendency to make us fearful and tiresome, I'll offer a sermon that highlights some of the traditional symbols and we will see how their meanings can offer us hope-even in July! For instance, to name just a few, I plan to touch on light, evergreen trees, and Christmas poinsettias. Let's remember Jesus is always with us, and I look forward to celebrating Christmas in July with everyone!



## Prayers and Praise to God from the Past Month

**Sydney D'Allesandro**, upcoming orthopedic surgery on August 1, Church Family  
**Ron Johnston**, pneumonia, Church Family  
**Betty Johnston**, bronchiolitis, Church Family  
**Linda**, came home and is weak from major heart surgery last week, Sue Fink (friend)  
**Kate Seitz**, bronchoscopy last month, Church Family  
**Beth**, praise for very successful breast cancer surgery, Judee Buhlinger (daughter)  
**Lauryn Kay**, recovered from COVID, Church Family  
**Blasi's**, recovered from COVID, Church Family  
**Shirley Runyon**, continuous eye complications, Church Family  
**BJ Turner**, diagnosed with cancer, Rubin (friend)  
**Pam Williams**, praise for a terrific report regarding a pet scan and blood work, Church Family  
**Mary Lou Childress**, prayers over her health during this season in life, Church Family  
**Prayers for the family of Marie**, recent miscarriage, Asya (friend)  
**(Update) Prayers for the family of Cathy Savage**, who died in hospice, Rubins' Friend  
**Ueli Simonsmeier**, ear problems, Church Family  
**Anne**, recovering well from recent surgery, Brookdale Family



During the next few weeks, Pastor Zach will be in and out of the office. From Saturday, June 25 thru Thursday, June 29, he will be serving as a junior camp counselor at our Disciples FL Region's campground in Ocala. Subsequently, Monday, July 4 thru July 12, Zach will be on vacation as he takes Colton to visit family for the summer.



Katy Sumrow is back and will be our guest vocalist on June 26 and July 3.

### **July Birthdays and Anniversaries**

*(Email the office if your name is missing)*

Michelle Cooper	9 <sup>th</sup>
Denny Floore	17 <sup>th</sup>
George Briggs	18 <sup>th</sup>
Leon and Mary Ann Beaty	18 <sup>th</sup>
Bob Coates	18 <sup>th</sup>
Sherry Floore	24 <sup>th</sup>
Johnny Blasi	26 <sup>th</sup>
Ray and Linda Schneider	27 <sup>th</sup>
John and Sharla Davidson	28 <sup>th</sup>
Ron and Mary Jane Ginter	30 <sup>th</sup>
Linda Lee	31 <sup>st</sup>

### **Outreach Corner**

It is time once again for us to collect needed school supplies for our friends at Tanglewood Elementary. This year they are in particular need of **backpacks, pencil boxes and water bottles**. Of course, other school supplies are always appreciated. A collection tote will be placed in the narthex for your donations beginning July 3.