

# THE LAMPLIGHTER



A First Church of God Newsletter

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The Nutcracker Christian

We can see many parallels to our faith in what happens to the characters. Clara, the main character, is at that "in between" age and always waiting: waiting to grow older, waiting for someone, waiting to understand the world. She is loved dearly by her peculiar godfather who gives her a special gift – the Nutcracker. After the Nutcracker later comes to life, he battles the evil Mouse King, only to die in battle. However, the loving godfather resurrects the Nutcracker, who then takes Clara to his kingdom to the acclaim of many who have awaited his return. Sound familiar?

“ Like Clara, we Christians understand what it’s like to live in an “in between” time of life. We live in this world, raise families, enjoy traditions, and celebrate holidays and holy days. Yet Paul encourages us to not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” (Romans 12:2). Like Clara, we find that it is often in these periods of waiting that we see the most growth in our lives.

Or consider Drosselmeir, Clara’s peculiar godfather, who gives her the Nutcracker. He also produces a puppet show that foreshadows future events, though it doesn’t disclose everything that will happen. If we are watching the play for the first time, we may not know this. But if once we have seen the play in its entirety, we know what events lies ahead.

Similarly, the Scripture passages during Advent foretell the coming of the Messiah, God’s gift of his only begotten son. We know now that Jesus is the King of Kings, but people in the first century did not know the full story. “Scripture doesn’t tell us everything we want to know,” writes Rawle, “but it does reveal everything that we need.”

Take a look at the Mouse King, the villain of the story. We’re not quite sure who he is or why he wants to battle the Nutcracker, but Clara fears him from the start. Are there times when fear and suspicion are the dominant feelings in our day? Are we constantly fighting battles, both real and perceived ones, throughout the day? Clara finds comfort when the Nutcracker is by her side, but what about us? Do we truly feel peace and the hope for a new life by realizing that God will never abandon us?

The final section of the story deals with the Nutcracker, and the “the greatest gift.” When Clara receives the Nutcracker at the Christmas party, she doesn’t know what to think about the gift. It wasn’t something that she wanted, but she found out later that it was a gift that she needed. In one sense, Jesus is the gift we wanted, but we are surprised to find that he is also the gift we need. Jesus calls us all to turn the other cheek, welcome our neighbor, feed and clothe the poor, even carry his cross. If we are to welcome the Christ child into our lives at Christmas, we must also embody his teachings and act more like Jesus during the rest of the year..

## last week

<b>Attendance (12/11-12/17)</b>	
Bible Studies	36
Community Groups	51
Prayer Groups	6
Sunday Morning	35
<b>Offering (12/17/23)</b>	
Weekly Budget Needs:	\$ 2,736.00
Total Budget Giving:	\$ 1,114.33

**December**

- 19 Staff Meeting 11am
- 20 Corporate Prayer—Noon
- 21 Men’s Prayer B’fast at Haystax 8am
- 22 STM Christmas Party 5pm
- 23 Prayer Walk 8:30-9:30am
- 23 Church Adult Christmas Party 5-8p
- 25 Christmas Day Service 10:30a

### Birthdays & Anniversaries

December

- 11 Don & Nicole Iverstine
- 18 Mia Reus
- 27 Miriam Stephens
- 28 Ron & Barbara Holder

If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let Sarah Aleshire know so we can update our registry.

Student Ministries

  

**Update**

We will be having the Student Ministries’ Christmas event at “the Barn” on Friday, December 22nd at 5pm.



Church Finances  
Outreach  
Pastor James



**Contact us**

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