

## Waiting for Christmas

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year. As Christians we live with joy all year long, but at Christmas we receive the extra blessing of the message of Jesus' Incarnation. I have had the joy of celebrating more Christmases than many, and one I always delight in remembering is what took place when I was about thirteen. Our family lived on the edge of town a quarter of a mile from our mailbox. Every Christmas my grandmother and aunts packed a large box of gifts for us, but that Christmas Eve their package had still not arrived. By supper time it was dark, but I said to my parents, "I think I'll walk to the mailbox one more time, just to make sure." And sure enough, the long-awaited package had arrived!

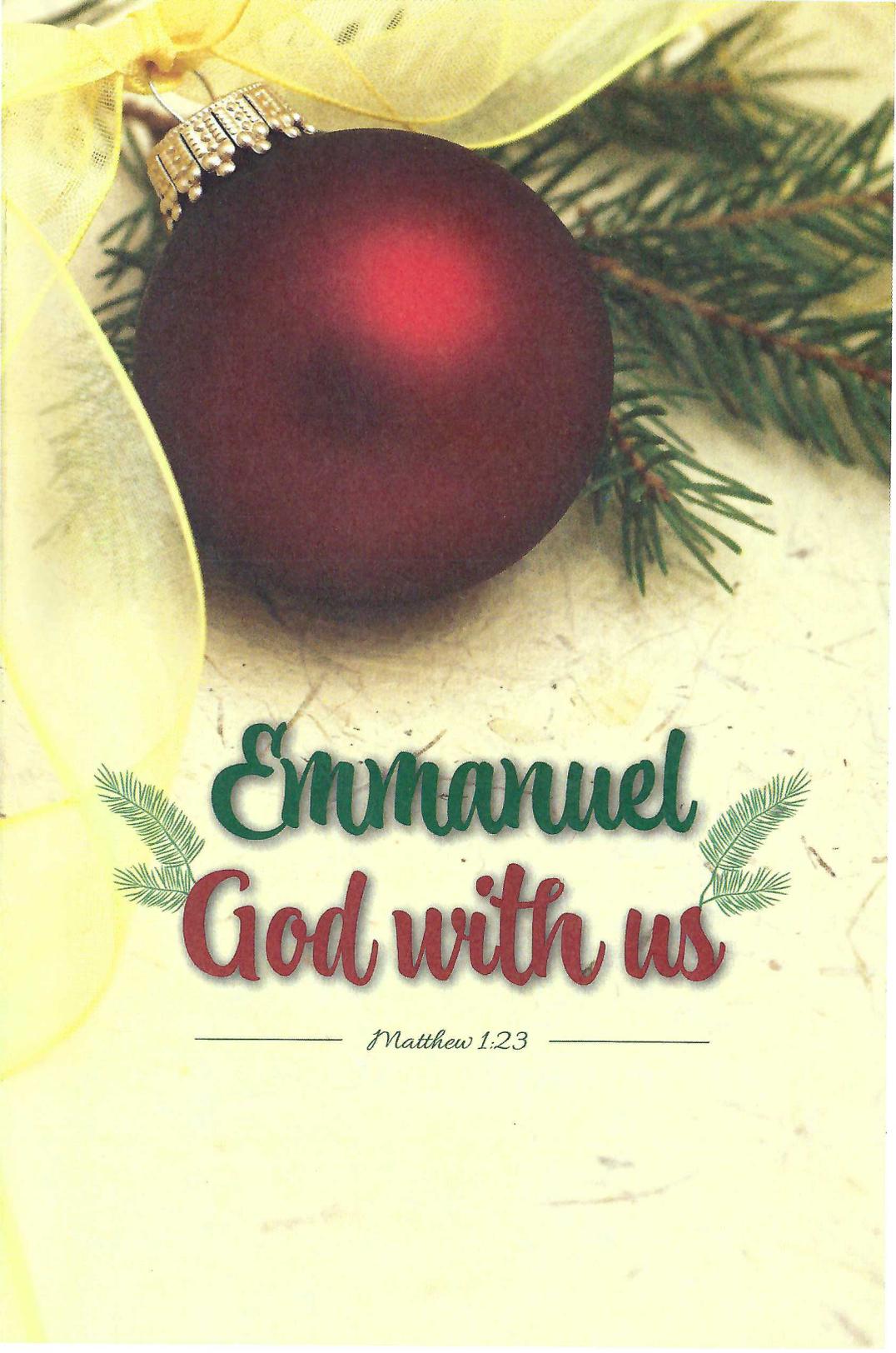
In Galatians 4:4–5a we read about the exact timing of the Christ child's birth: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Some might speculate that "the fullness of time" was too late. God had promised Eve in Genesis 3:15, after she and Adam sinned, that from her offspring would come a Savior to defeat Satan. But that was more than 4,000 years before Jesus was born.

In Isaiah 7:14 we read, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." That promise was made 700 years before Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. But God had a purpose for the long delay. It proved that man could not come up with his own solution for sin. The Israelites had said they would keep the ten laws He gave them, but they could not. At just the right time by His clock, God sent the Savior we needed.

It has now been over 2,000 years and many have not yet received Him as their Savior. Have you? No one can truly celebrate Christmas without knowing Him personally. His gift to you is still waiting to be received by faith. The Bible said to first century Christians as it does to us now, "Behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2b). Remember, Jesus is the reason, the only real reason, for the season.

*Paul J. Twist*

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Emmanuel  
God with us

— Matthew 1:23 —

# Covenant Church

3115 N.W. 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Gainesville FL 32605

December 10, 2023

**Call to Worship**

*Sounds of Hope*

**Invocation**

*Pastor Don Mauldin*

**Sing Unto the Lord**

Hymn # 277 Hark the Herald Angel Sing

**Welcome and Announcements**

*Ron Marks*

**Recognition of Guests**

**Mission Moment**

**Birthdays and Anniversaries**

**Advent Reading**

**Worship in Song**

Hymn # 277 Angels We Have Heard on High

**Offertory Prayer**

*Craig Alexander*

**Offertory**

*Rose Morgan*

**Special Music**

*Covenant Choir*

**Sermon:** *Pastor Don Mauldin*

**Scripture:**

**Benediction**

Peace, Joy, and Love

*Pastor Don Mauldin*

*352-262-5349*

***'Tis the Season!***

## ***Covenant News***

Our ministry for December is Helping Hands Clinic. Helping Hands is a group of volunteer health professionals who have provided free healthcare to the poor and/or homeless for over 30 years. The clinic is staffed by social workers, registered nurses, advanced registered nurse practitioners, physicians, and community service volunteers.

### **Save the Dates**

**Holiday Social today after church**  
**"Color it Christmas" Musical December 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**Since Christmas Eve is on a Sunday, we will only meet that morning at our regular time.**



Our favorite flight attendant!