



# Church of Christ in Gwinnett

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*The birds of the air come and perch in its branches.  
- Matthew 13:32*

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*We hope everyone's year is off to a great start, and we pray that whatever 2024 brings our way, we'll enjoy the good times and help one another through the hard times, by the grace and power of God!*

## *A dynamic night of music and fellowship!*



On November 18, 2023, the North River Church of Christ hosted I Thank God Worship Night for all the sister congregations in the Atlanta area. Lauri Bernard shared this picture, and says, "It was nice to see musicians from each of the churches on stage singing together, and even more remarkable was the unity we felt as we all worshipped our God together." Amen!

With thanks to Lauri Bernard for information, narrative and pictures!

## A helping hand for mamas, babies, and more!

In August, October, and November, a few CoCG members joined JeanClaude and Lauri Bernard as volunteers for the Helping Mamas Distribution Drive. The organization collects and distributes essential child and baby items from its warehouse in Norcross, GA. Working with over 150 partner agencies throughout Georgia, they provide critical items like diapers, wipes, food, car seats, cribs, pack-and-plays, and more. They provide items for children from birth to age 12.

Lauri shared, "Our hearts melted when the families responded with tears and gratefulness. One of many touching moments was when a family drove up with a baby in the mother's lap. When asked if she had a car seat for the baby, she timidly responded, 'No.' There was one car seat that day, and the parents were so happy and thankful to receive it. The father couldn't stop saying thank you. When handing these much-needed items to those who have waited, sometimes more than an hour in a long line, the discomfort of high heat, cold, or rain is forgotten. We're simply grateful to be able to assist."



(from the August volunteer opportunity)



(October 14<sup>th</sup>)

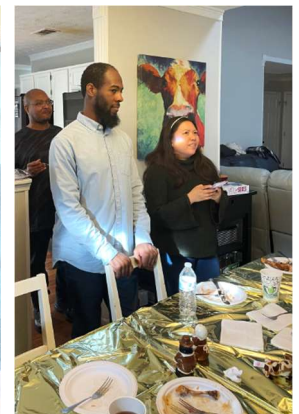


(November 11<sup>th</sup>)

Our congregation has begun to partner with Helping Mamas on an ongoing basis. By working with them, we can have a great positive impact on our community, showing God's love for those in need and enjoying the teamwork of the Kingdom at the same time! Please keep your eyes open for emails about upcoming volunteer opportunities with this nonprofit source of help for families in difficult circumstances!

With many thanks (once again) to Lauri Bernard for information, narrative and pictures!

## Giving thanks together!



Joseph and Neida Emmett hosted some of the singles for a festive Thanksgiving dinner—looks like fun!

With thanks to Danny Emmett for pictures and information!



# The family of God grows!

On Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, our new brother Mykel Rucker was baptized into Christ at the Emmetts' house. Here's a glimpse of that day's life-changing events—



With thanks (once again) to Danny Emmett for pictures!

## *Sisters learn how to "Be still and know..."*

On Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, sisters from CoCG (and our guests) gathered at Rhodes Jordan Park Community Recreation Center for our fall Women's Event. Felicia Pope prayed the opening prayer, and Ina Cook shared about what she was going through with her dad, about trying to stay close to God through this trying time and not be anxious. Then our guest speaker, Virginia Lefler, taught us more about how to "Be Still and Know." Virginia is the author of ***Bible Meditation & Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to an Ancient Practice***. In her talk, she explained six steps vital for meditation: retreat, read, reflect, request, respond and remember. She also gave each of her listeners bookmarks and small cards to help them remember these important elements.

Sherry Rouse shared, "We did a sample meditation with her (it's also in her book) on Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God." This is the first step as you retreat into a quiet place. We also read and reflected on Matthew 11:28-30 together, coming up with which words stood out to us. We then quietly requested what was on our hearts from that scripture, responded to what God might have been asking us to do from that scripture, and then picked something from it to remember, to carry with us from that point on."

Allison Collier closed out the evening with "Goodness of God," and everyone present enjoyed a great time of fellowship. What we learned and gained from this special time together will no doubt bear fruit in our lives for years to come! We look forward to the next women's event in the spring—details will be announced when the plans come together!



With thanks to Sherry Rouse for information, narrative and pictures!



## *Bringing hearts to light for the holidays*

For our Christmas program this year, we took a different approach than we have in years past. After Christmas carols and communion, a talented team of volunteers presented a play written and directed by Melissa Viveiros. The action was set in a store, with the employees—and one last-minute Christmas shopper—stranded in the dark when a storm shut off the power. As they wait for the lights to come back on, their conversations reveal the burdens each heart carries, and they gain wisdom, encouragement, connection, and spiritual strength from one another. Here are a few moments captured from that morning's worship and Christmas presentation—













We're so grateful for every person who participated in bringing this special morning of worship, who gave their time and talents both onstage and behind the scenes—thank you all for giving so generously, and for making this a memorable holiday occasion for all of us!

With thanks to Peter Berry for help with pictures, and to Mark Vogt and the audio-visual team for the video that provided the screenshots! (Note that picture quality varies due to the stage lighting.)

### *A little extra help...*



...can go a long way! Please remember, we have a small food pantry available to disciples and their friends and families— whoever finds themselves able to pay their bills or purchase groceries, but not both. We ask disciples to restock the shelves as needed; you might have noticed a large foam-core board in the lobby from time to time, covered in sticky notes—each note lists some item the pantry is low on, and you can stick that note onto your wallet or shopping list so you remember to pick that item up on your next shopping trip. We can only handle shelf-stable foods—groceries in boxes, cans, or sealed bags, no produce, bakery goods, or refrigerated/frozen foods—so we also ask for \$15 gift cards which can be used for groceries or for fuel (Walmart or Kroger). If you are able to contribute to this resource to help those in need, please do (and many thanks to those who have helped already!), and if you or someone you know can really use this kind of support, please contact Peter or Nancy Berry to set up a time.



We welcome news and pictures on interesting personal stories, family group activities, and more. Please send them to Nancy Berry, [nberry2@gmail.com](mailto:nberry2@gmail.com). Thank you!

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