



Washington Street Baptist Church
256 Washington St.
Lynn, MA 01902

Tower Talk

Tel. or FAX 781-595-2550
Website: www.lynnwsbc.org
E-Mail: lynnwsbc@gmail.com
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/LynnWSBC>

Rev. James R. Smith
Interim Minister

Marquis Lockhart
Youth Minister

Laura Johnson
Office Administrator

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The Miracle of Advent

Matthew 13:57–58 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown and in his own home.” So he did not do many miracles there because they had no faith.

In our technology filled world today, do we have room in our hearts and minds for a miracle?

We trust our GPS navigation system without knowing exactly how it works and follow the directions of a computer generated voice even though it occasionally sends us down a dead end street. In November a driver turned onto a Penn. train track, “She said her GPS told her to take the route onto the tracks, according to police.” We bang away on our computer keyboards, surf the net and store stuff in the cloud and think nothing of it.

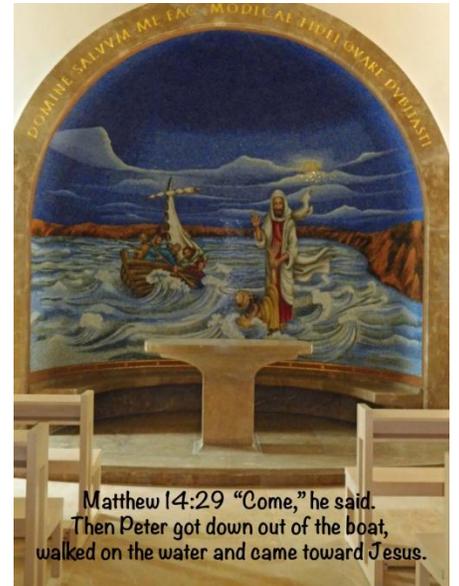
We trust science and technology without a second thought, but when it comes to the Bible narratives and miracles, we too often say, “That was then, but this is now.” We question the veracity of God’s Word while easily accepting the “settled science” we read online or hear in the classroom. “The truth is that science is never ‘settled.’ Science deals in probabilities, not certainties.” (James Wight)

Sadly, in our world today, we could come face to face with a miracle and never recognize it. Some credit science, a good diet, positive thinking, karma or good luck while ignoring God’s hand in creation. Christmas has become more about Santa Clause and gifts than about the miracle of the birth of Jesus, God born of a virgin come to redeem creation.

“Today some claim that Jesus is just an idea, rather than a real historical figure, but there is a good deal of written evidence for his existence 2,000 years ago. The abundant historical references leave us with little reasonable doubt that Jesus lived and died.” (The Guardian)

I invite you, this Christmas, to step away from your phone, tablet, computer and TV for a few moments and consider the miracles you have experience in your life. Set aside coincidence, luck and good fortune and you will find God’s hand at work in your life, your family and His creation. Read your Bible this Advent with an open mind and an open heart. Allow God to speak to you as you read, taking time to listen to the wooing of the Holy Spirit as He reveals Himself in the Scriptures. Be mystified.

“It's not our job to take the Bible's mysterious stories and make sense of them, to get rid of the strangeness or the unpredictability. If a story is mysterious, then the church needs to practice being mystified, not jump as quickly as possible to some explanation that removes all the shadows as well as the light.” (Dr. Catherine Taylor)



Matthew 14:29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

The Mosaic Chapel in
Magdala, Israel



James R. Smith, Interim Pastor
Washington Street Baptist Church, Lynn MA
Photos to accompany this text can be seen at
jrsmithblog.wordpress.com

The Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation, Nazareth, Israel

NEXT TWO WEEKS AT WSBC

Friday, December 7

7:00 PM Prayer Meeting

Sunday, Dec. 9

9:30 AM Sunday School

10:45 AM Worship Service

12:15 PM Christmas Vespers Practice

12:15 PM CoffeeTime Fellowship

12:30 PM Cantata Choir Practice

1:00 PM International Choir Practice

3:00-6:00 PM SWAP (*Sunday Worship and Praise*) Youth and Young Adults Meet

Tuesday, Dec. 11

6:00 PM Trustees and Search Committee Meeting at Parsonage

6:30-7:30 PM Line Dancing

Wednesday, Dec. 12

7:00 PM *Live Out Loud* Youth Group

Friday, Dec. 14

7:00 PM Prayer Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 15

10:00-11:30 AM Food and Clothes Pantry

Sunday, Dec. 16

9:30 AM Sunday School

10:45 AM Worship Service

12:15 PM CoffeeTime Fellowship

12:30 PM Cantata Choir Practice

1:00 PM International Choir Practice

5:00 PM Christmas Vespers Service

Tuesday, Dec. 18

6:30-7:30 PM Line Dancing

Wednesday, Dec. 19

7:00 PM *Live Out Loud* Youth Group

Thursday, Dec. 20

5:00 PM Kids Club Christmas Party

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Dec. 2, 2018 Worship: 65

CHURCH SERVERS

Dec. 9, 2018

Nursery: *Danielle Geldart-Lenners & Marilyn Geldart*

BLAST: *Evonne Malcolm & Deanna Mulvihill*

Worship Assistant: *Jeannie Boyle*

CHRISTMAS MAILBOX

The Christmas mailbox is now set up at the back of the sanctuary. You can drop off cards for people, organized by their last name. And check to see if anyone left a card for you!



CHURCH FAMILY

Phyllis Manoogian, the mother of *Paula Cole*, passed away this week. The viewing will be held on Friday, Dec. 7th from 2-5 PM at Conway Cahill-Brodeur Funeral Home, and her funeral will be held on Saturday, Dec. 8th at 10 AM. Please keep the whole family in your prayers.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need volunteers to serve in church this winter. We are looking for Worship Assistants who will read the scripture on Sunday morning and lead the responsive reading. Also needed are volunteers to prepare coffee and serve coffee and cookies after the worship service. If you would like to help with childcare during the service, that would make the load lighter for those who serve. *We currently have no one scheduled after this Sunday, Dec. 9th, so please do consider helping out.*



PRAYER MEETING

We had our first prayer meeting this past Friday evening. We prayed for our church and our city, and brainstormed new ways to reach out to our neighbors. We'd love to see you there this Friday at 7:00 PM!

LIVE OUT LOUD

During the month of November, the focus at Live Out Loud was primarily on building community. Students need more than just sermons and worship songs; they need deeper relationships. So conversations and time spent together was key. I put more effort into speaking with students outside of youth group gatherings. We also had a night of just fun and games the night before Thanksgiving. It gave us the chance to strengthen our bonds and enter into Thanksgiving with joy. Keep us in your prayers as we move into the Christmas and start making little changes to our youth group format.

Marquis Lockhart

Mission Statement

We are a family of faith, bound by God's love, following our Lord Jesus Christ as we worship and grow together. Called to join God in God's saving mission to the world and relying upon God's empowering Spirit, we go forth to serve and build the Beloved Community in Jesus' name.

Contact Information

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Office Administrator: Laura Johnson
Organist and Choir Director: Joseph Gurkan
Sexton: Rick Penn