



Atlanta Church of Christ ⁱⁿ Gwinnett

www.acocg.org | info@acocg.org

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

Issue 23
January 3, 2018

In this issue: Out with the old, in with the new! – p. 1
Jesus' story told from fresh perspectives – p. 2-4
Making tasty Christmas memories – p. 5
Greater safety in a dangerous world – p. 5
News from the Shultz family in China – p. 6-7
Remembering 2017 in pictures – p. 8-11



As we turn the page on the calendar from 2017 to 2018, we celebrate the fresh start it symbolizes—new beginnings are exciting! But as disciples we don't have to wait for a new year to get a clean slate; we can be renewed and transformed every day, by God's power and grace (Romans 12:1-2). Amen! Here's to all the possibilities that lie ahead of us in 2018!

And it's exciting to have the new AcoCG website up and running! A *big* THANK YOU to *everyone* who worked long and hard to bring the updated site online, including AnnJo Huwer, Sunny Stovall, Cory Morgan, Dennis Haughton, and Eric Fisher (from a sister congregation), among others. It's still a work in progress—we'll be adding real pictures of individuals and groups from the congregation over time to replace the stock photos we put in to hold the places as the pages were developed—but we hope you'll check back often to watch it come together!



[Home](#) [About](#) [News](#) [Ministries](#) [Give](#) [Q](#)



Three trees tell their tales

Our Christmas program brought us the story of Jesus not just at His birth, but through His ministry, crucifixion and resurrection—told from the point of view of the trees that supplied materials for each stage of His life. Each tree dreamed of what its wood could be made into, and each found its dream more than fulfilled—although not in ways any of them expected. We appreciate every talented individual who took part in this imaginative production, both on stage, in the orchestra pit, and behind the scenes!

Here are some moments captured during the performance—



We opened with children from Kids Kingdom singing their love for God—



—then the trees began their tales.



As the trees grew, their destinies unfolded in unexpected ways—



—the narrative enhanced by our excellent music ministry team! (I couldn't get a picture of the group of singers who accompanied as well as the instrumentalists—sorry!)





Christmas cookies, anyone?

Some of the sisters in the Latino ministry made the most of the opportunity to enjoy a fun and delicious holiday tradition. They made the time to get together and make three kinds of Christmas cookies at the Berry house on a Saturday morning early in December. They made red and green M&M drop cookies, and shaped and decorated both delicate sugar cookies and spicy gingerbread cookies. Everyone took cookies home, as well as cookie dough to make more rolled cookies—and warm memories of a great time together!



Pictured are Carmen Mazo, Alicia Ruiz and son David, Joselina Craven and daughter Audry (Leonor Netzahuatl had to leave before this picture was taken)

SAFER AND MORE SECURE

*"Know that the LORD, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (Psalm 100:3)*

God takes care of us both directly and through the shepherds He appoints for us. Our elders take this charge seriously, and so they have asked some members of the AcoCG who work in the security field to develop plans to bring us safely through emergency situations that might arise during church services.

The brothers pictured here—Derrick Brewer, Daniel Medrano, and Tim Willis—briefed us at a recent midweek service on plans to hold emergency drills so we'll know how to deal with a fire or other natural disaster; we even received some basic tips on how to react to an active shooter scenario. These situations can be frightening to think about, but in this dangerous world we live in, knowing how to conduct ourselves in hazardous circumstances with faith and clear thinking will give us and our families the greatest chance of safety and survival. We'll have a practice drill soon—watch the announcements for more information!



News from the Shultz family!

Nǐ hǎo Xīnnián kuàilè (Hello and Happy New Year) from the Shultz Family in China!

We are thinking about and really missing all of you. As most of you know, we moved to Guangzhou, China in July of this year. After a few months of transition, we couldn't be more thankful for this opportunity and are having the time of our lives. It all started a year ago December when we arrived in Foshan, China to visit Daniel, who had moved there two years prior to be a part of a mission team. By the end of our visit, we caught a vision of doing a one-year sabbatical. Much to our delight Jon Marc chose to join as well! Below are pictures referenced in this newsletter, which you can also find here: https://www.facebook.com/todd.shultz.357/media_set?set=a.10215633616853678&type=3

This includes the 4 of us, along with Daniel's wonderful girlfriend, Sofia, celebrating Christmas last week.

We live in a two-bedroom apartment, on an island within Guangzhou (the 3rd largest city in China), which contains eight of the top universities in Southern China. Todd just finished teaching a semester of Human Resources Mgmt. to International Students at Southern China University of Technology, which he thoroughly enjoyed (see picture below). We both work together tutoring Chinese students, ages 5 – 10 in our apartment which has also been a lot of fun. Particularly, it's been great getting to know our kids' parents. Karen has become close friends with one of them, named "TT," who is the librarian at the Pharmaceutical university. She's taken Karen to two exhibitions of local disabled Chinese artists. At the first one, the artist, who has no use of his arms, painted beautiful calligraphy using only his mouth in Chinese characters, and personalized it by adding Karen's Chinese name, 蕭碧燕, and presented it to her (picture below). After the second exhibition, another famous artist brought Karen and TT to his studio where he painted her portrait (picture below). He's a prestigious artist who at one time earned the prize of best painter in all of China!

However, the absolute greatest blessing of being here has unquestionably been the new relationships. We have taught numerous English corner classes for Chinese students (picture below) and gotten to know many of them quite well. We've also drawn very close to the Christians here, both Chinese and Western who live incredibly inspiring lives.

China is a beautiful country and we've been so fortunate to take trips to the mountains of Huangshan (picture below) and Hong Kong. We're also grateful for amazing excursions to Vietnam with some friends from China and Hawaii to see our friends the Miyashiro's and Roberson's.

Daniel and Sofia volunteered to move from Foshan to be on the latest mission team planting to Dongguan, China in August of this year (see picture below of the official sendoff of the team at the 30th anniversary of the Hong Kong Church of Christ). Daniel has been going to school for intense language learning, initially in both Cantonese and Mandarin, and now just focusing on Mandarin, to add to his already solid foundation. He also teaches other English teachers and his own students at a local school. Jon Marc lived with us for the first couple of months but has since acquired his own place and teaches English at various locations around the city. His kids love him so dearly and attempt to tackle him frequently. He's dating a great girl named Irina from Russia and is busy exploring China.

We'll be returning to our home, jobs, family and friends in Atlanta in July, 2018 which we look forward to but already know that we'll be leaving a big chunk of our hearts here, as we did when we left each of you back home. We'd love to hear from you. If convenient, please send us an electronic version of your newsletter (if you have one) or simply an email to catch us up.

May God bless you and your families richly in 2018!

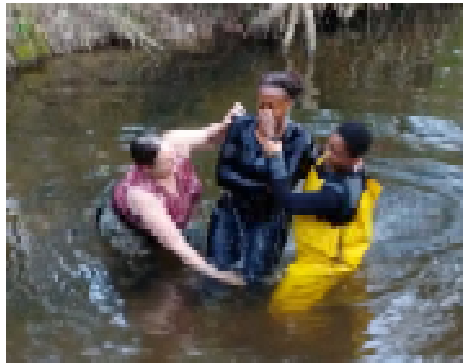
All our love, Todd & Karen tshultz_99@yahoo.com, karenschultz81@gmail.com



Looking back at 2017

As we move forward into the new year, here are just a few pictures to remind us of what God has done among us during the last year—

We are so grateful for everyone baptized into Christ in the last 12 months! Here are some of these new disciples:



Here are the disciples who shared their stories with us in interviews in 2017:



And here are glimpses of some of our activities together last year:







So many warm memories from 2017...looking forward to new memories we'll make in 2018, by God's grace!

We welcome news and pictures on interesting personal stories, family group activities, and more. Please send them to Nancy Berry, nberry2@gmail.com. Thank you!
 Copyright © 2018 the Atlanta church of Christ in Gwinnett. All rights reserved.
 To subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact us at info@acocg.org