



ATHENS-ELBERTON DISTRICT LAY SPEAKING MINISTRIES WINTER '11 NEWSLETTER

Luke 2:10-11 (King James Version)

¹⁰And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

You may be wondering why I am sending out this newsletter early? Well the answer is a couple of reasons. First, it is now less than a month until the registration deadline for the January Lay Speaking classes. Second, and probably more important I have a message for you.

I have talked with several people recently who are afraid of something. Friends were afraid of final exams at UGA. People are afraid they won't be able to find a job, or will lose the one they have. One woman was afraid her church has gotten so small that it is too late and her church will close. People on both sides of issues are afraid for the future of our country and our church.

Now read again the Christmas story. Don't you think Mary, who was probably an unwed 13 year old girl about to give birth to a bastard child, was afraid? What about the other characters? How would Joseph have felt? What about those shepherds in the field? I know if the sky opened and an angel started talking to me I might be slightly shaken. They were "sore afraid", but remember what the angel said, "Fear NOT!"

Now think about that person who is thinking about the possibility of Christ. They think Jesus might be real, but they are not sure. They have much to fear because everything is about to change. The advent message is not one of fear, but one of hope, joy, peace, and love. How will you share this message of hope to those in fear. How will Jesus be born again into your heart this year?

The book of Isaiah tell us in 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

God is with you. FEAR NOT. Jesus is about to be born again. Go, spread the message of hope!

Pax tecum,

Greg Gray
Athens-Elberton District Director of Lay Speaking Ministries

JANUARY CLASSES

The January 2011 Lay Speaking Classes are open for registration. You may find the class registration form at: <http://www.athenselberton.org/layspeaking/LSJAN2011brochure.pdf> It is one month from the deadline for the Lay Speaking classes which will begin in January. The registration deadline is January 15, 2011. Many of your churches will be changing the individuals in Lay Leadership positions at the first of the year. This is a great time to promote Lay Speaking by letting the Lay Leader in your church know that Paragraph 251 f) of the Book of Discipline states, “...Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities in order to strengthen his or her work. The lay leader is urged to become a certified lay speaker.” I would like to ask you to *urge* your lay leader to become a certified lay speaker along with many of your other lay leadership. The Conference Committee on Lay Speaking Ministries would like to have a Certified Lay Speaker in every church in the Conference.

LAY SPEAKERS CONSECRATION SERVICE

The Athens-Elberton District will hold its annual Lay Speakers Consecration Service on Thursday March 24th, 2011 7:00pm at Watkinsville First UMC. This service is not only for new Local Church and Certified Lay Speakers. This service is held annually to consecrate the ministry of all the district's lay speakers for the upcoming year. Also, as this service is lead by laity it is a time to celebrate the ministry of the laity in our district. Please make certain that all lay speakers in your congregation know to be there!