

It is hard to believe that we are facing the end of another year. As time flies by, I am reminded of the need we have to "make the most of every opportunity" (Ephesians 5:16). The Christmas season provides unique opportunities to heed this instruction. Soon the Christmas parties and family gatherings will begin and we will be wrapped up in Christmas. In the midst of the busyness, I hope that you will consider the opportunities we have to invite people to church. People are open to the invitation during this time of the year, and research shows that the unchurched are most likely to attend a Christmas Eve service. People are also prone to come to a special event, such as our Christmas Musical or your Sunday School party. So, who do you need to invite?

This is also the time when we focus on international missions and collect the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. The need continues to be great to take the Gospel to places where the name of Jesus has never been heard. Please prayerfully give an additional gift to this offering, above your regular tithe and offering. In the past, we have set a goal and although we have come short of the goal, we have increased our giving the past few years. This year, we do not have a goal because I want us to give out of the need, not to reach a goal.

The Christmas season also allows more opportunities to be part of the local church, and we will begin to look hard at how individuals can serve in new capacities as we adjust for the new year. I believe that every child of God should have a deep appreciation and love for the church. Jesus gave His life for the church and it is the bride of Christ. Just as any husband worth his while will not allow you to talk about his wife or mistreat her, Jesus has the same feelings toward His bride. If we love the Lord, I believe that we will have a love for the church.

The following question was asked in a recent discussion with some other pastors: "What, if anything, does it mean if a church is not experiencing numerical growth?" Now, I have spent many hours in classrooms talking about church growth, have read many books, and have attended many seminars. There are many factors to church growth, including the church's willingness to grow, the church's willingness to change, and the demographics of the community.

The early church in Acts 2 experienced great growth. As a matter of fact, they grew from 120 to an additional 3000 in one day, a 2500% increase. Can you imagine! As the new believers began to join the early church, we find that "fear came over everyone." This fear is a reverent fear of God. This fear arose as "many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles." These actions were performed in order to demonstrate God's hand in the organization of the church. This enabled early churchgoers to have confidence that they were rightly aligned with God's desires and purposes. Through the wonders and signs, they had assurance that the church was established by God.

We begin to see how much they cared for each other throughout the text: "all the believers were together and had everything in common" and "they sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all." Some people use this passage to promote some type of "early communism." This is incorrect because the believers gave up their possessions voluntarily. There was no government involvement. This was a group of people, joined by their love for God, who voluntarily chose to help out each other. In addition, not all property was common to all, as private property is seen in the fact that they were breaking bread from house to house.

These early believers demonstrated the early church's commitment to Jesus' commandment to love one another. The reason for selling property and having common goods was to help other people, as anyone had a need. In other words, the early church made sure that every member's physical needs were being met. They saw each other as a close family, bonded together by a saving relationship with Christ.

We also see that these people were diligent: "every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple complex." We may not go to church every single day, but we ought to commit ourselves to regular attendance. Further, we ought to find ways to invest in relationships with fellow church members on a regular basis. It is vital that we build relationships with others in our church who can pray with us, listen to us, and encourage us in our relationship with the Lord.

The result of their efforts is that "every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved." The early church was a growing church. It did not have some elaborate church growth strategy. Rather, it simply sought to honor the Lord. They had a reverent fear for God that guided them in their daily living. They made love of other believers as themselves a priority for their fellowship, even to the point of selling private property in order to provide for members in need. They followed Jesus' great commandment to a "T." God honored them for that by blessing them with new converts every day.

I believe we can say that a church not growing is a church that is not honoring the Lord. God rewards His people. May we be a God-honoring church!

Lastly, from my family to yours: Merry Christmas!

Bro. Clint



## Chile Mission Trip

### Fund Raiser



The Chile Mission Team will be selling Boston Butts and Turkeys for Christmas.

Additional information will be available soon in the bulletin & on line at [fbcyazoo.org](http://fbcyazoo.org)!

## Deacon Ordination

December 3 at 5:00 pm

Please join us as we ordain our new Deacon Council members in the fellowship hall.

Herman Jones

Tim Manor

Bill Meeks

Paul Rice

## Student News

December 17: Student Christmas Party

January 26 - 28: D-Now

Registration for D-Now will begin soon. Please keep and eye out. Registration instructions will be in the Sunday bulletins & at [fbcyazoo.org](http://fbcyazoo.org).

**Christmas Eve**  
candlelight Service  
in the sanctuary  
**Sunday,**  
**December 24**  
**5:00 pm**

**Text to Give**

You can now give by texting any amount to 662-516-5333. The first time you use Text to Give you will be prompted to enter your preferred payment method. After that all you have to do is text the amount you want to give and you're done.

There are no fees to your cellphone account.

**Please Join Addison & Whitley**  
*for Christmas Treats*  
**December 17**  
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Come and Go  
**866 Highland Drive**  
**Yazoo City**

### Important End of the Year Contribution Information:

As the end of the year approaches, please make note that any contributions you wish to have applied to your 2017 Giving Statement must be received in the offering on Sunday December 31 or in the church office by December 28. All contributions sent in the mail must be post marked by December 30. If you are giving online please allow 3 to 5 days for the transaction to process in order to be received by the church by December 31. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Buffey in the church office at 662-746-2471 or [buffey@fbcyazoo.org](mailto:buffey@fbcyazoo.org).

### Gifts were received for the following designated funds:

To the Harvest Offering in memory of Philip Dixon & James Johnston

To the Harvest Offering in honor of Louise Dixon

To the Chile Mission Fund in honor of Clint, Jennifer, Addison & Whitley Ritchie

\*\$19,183.41 required weekly to meet budget.

| November 5         | November 12        | November 19        | November 26     |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Bible Study        | Bible Study        | Bible Study        | Bible Study     |
| Attendance         | Attendance         | Attendance         | Attendance      |
| 280                | 256                | 273                | 273             |
| Worship Service    | Worship Service    | Worship Service    | Worship Service |
| Attendance         | Attendance         | Attendance         | Attendance      |
| 292                | 268                | 286                | 253             |
| Budget Offering    | Budget Offering    | Budget Offering    | Budget Offering |
| <u>\$18,273.00</u> | <u>\$15,066.84</u> | <u>\$15,497.62</u> | N/a             |
| Harvest Offering   |                    |                    |                 |
| \$39,540.76        |                    |                    |                 |

### Financial Report through October 2017

Total Budget Offering \$727,916.43 less Expenses \$807,535.27 = **-\$79,618.84**

Total Approved Budgeted through October 2017 = \$835,785.20

Actual Expenses \$807,535.27= \$28,249.93 *spending under budget*



Merry Christmas everybody! Are you prepared for the hustle and bustle of the season? I've heard some say; "Yes, I've completed my shopping", and others; "Not so much"...The comments and opinions vary greatly from family to family.

In the busyness of the season, it is easy to become overloaded or stressed and, through sheer fatigue, say or do things you would not ordinarily say or do. I was reminded of this fact not long ago in regard to some of our current ministries. Something I saw years ago came across my desk and was a nice reminder.

"Before you speak, *THINK.*"

T – is it true?

H – is it helpful?

I – is it inspiring?

N – is it necessary?

K – is it kind?

## Breakfast at Bethlehem



Sunday,  
December 17  
9:45 a.m.  
in the fellowship hall

Children ages 4k-6<sup>th</sup> grade  
Come and have breakfast with  
Bernard the Shepherd.

Have a great breakfast then hear his personal story of that wonderful night.



December is upon us and our Sanctuary is filled with beautiful decorations and will be filled with beautiful and stirring music each week. Why do we make such a big deal of Christmas? **Because it IS a big deal.** We celebrate the Almighty God coming to earth as a humble baby to begin the fulfillment of his plan for the redemption of man.

We also see the Body of Christ coming together and giving of their gifts and talents expressed in the decorations, the music, and much more. I'm especially proud of our choir, accompanists, and tech crew. We have been working diligently preparing for Christmas since August. This year's musical presentation, "*The Story Never Changes*", will be on **December 10<sup>th</sup>** in the **11 am worship service and again at 5 pm.** This year's music will feature several of the choir's favorites from the past 6 years along with some new selections. We also welcome our guest artist, Zoe Brumfield, who will be playing the bagpipes on a couple of numbers. During this time of year, hearts seem to be softened and more receptive to the gospel. At the same time, many feel lonely and depressed due to life's circumstances. What better way for you to say that you care than by inviting them to come with you to one of this year's presentations? **The Gospel gives hope, and the Gospel will be shared.** Plan to bring your loved ones and friends.

Ken

*Christmas*  
*The Story Never Changes*

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

presented by the Sanctuary Celebration Choir  
December 10, 11am & 5 pm

# December 2017

**Regular Weekly Sunday Services**  
 9:45 am—Sunday School  
 11:00 am—Worship Service &  
 4:00 pm FAITH Teams, 5:00 pm—Awana & Small Groups

**Wednesday Services**  
 5:30 pm—Family Supper  
 6:00 pm—Prayer Meeting, Children's & Students Bible Study and Ladies Bible Study  
 6:45 pm—Choir Practice

| Sun  | Mon   | Tue                                | Wed  | Thu                                 | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Mark your calendar now for our annual meeting and the "Looking Back, Looking Ahead" service on Sunday, January 21, at 5 pm. This is our annual Chili Cook-off for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Plan NOW to be in attendance and celebrate the past year and look ahead to what is in store of 2018. |   |                                    |  |                                     | 1   | 2   |
| 3<br>Deacon Ordination—5 pm  | 4   | 5                                  | 6<br>Christmas Music Dress Rehearsal 6:45 pm<br><br>Meal by Gerry McGraw Class | 7<br>Office closed<br>Staff Retreat | 8   | 9   |
| 10<br>Christmas Musical<br>11 am & 5 pm  | 11  | 12<br>Deacon Christmas Party - 6pm | 13<br><br>Meal by the Choir  | 14                                  | 15  | 16  |
| 17<br>Breakfast in Bethlehem 9:45am<br>Student Christmas Party<br>Treats with the Ritchies 2- 4 pm   | 18  | 19                                 | 20<br><br>NO SERVICE   | 21                                  | 22  | 23  |
| 24<br>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 5:00 pm  | 25<br>Office Closed   | 26                                 | 27<br><br>NO SERVICE   | 28                                  | 29  | 30  |
| 31   | <b>Deacon of the week: 3 - Dan McLeod, 10- Grant Andrews, 17 - Dallas Powell, 24- Craig Standley, 31- Richard Pickens</b> |                                    |  |                                     |     |     |



### WATCH US LIVE ONLINE!

Sunday morning service are available **LIVE** online. You can watch the service live by going to [www.fbcyazoo.org](http://www.fbcyazoo.org) And clicking on the "Live Stream" on our home page.



328 Grand Ave. Yazoo City, MS 39194

RETURN ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED to PO Box 780 Yazoo City MS 39194

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday

8:00 am - 5:00 pm

FRIDAY—CLOSED

### PHONE:

662-746-2471

### Website:

[www.fbcyazoo.org](http://www.fbcyazoo.org)

### EMAIL:

[clint@fbcyazoo.org](mailto:clint@fbcyazoo.org)

[john@fbcyazoo.org](mailto:john@fbcyazoo.org)

[aaron@fbcyazoo.org](mailto:aaron@fbcyazoo.org)

[taz@fbcyazoo.org](mailto:taz@fbcyazoo.org)

[blanche@fbcyazoo.org](mailto:blanche@fbcyazoo.org)

[buffey@fbcyazoo.org](mailto:buffey@fbcyazoo.org)

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

YAZOO CITY MS

PERMIT NO. 7

Delivered to the post office November 28, 2017. POSTMASTER please do not hold.