

Contact

Pastors Notes

The Christmas season is already in full swing by the time you get this newsletter. I hope that each of you have a Merry Christmas. May you also find time to spend with your family as it was also an important aspect of the birth of Jesus. His family was there even in the hard times to encourage and direct his path. Even the extended family as those who came to visit was special in the sight of God. When we have our parties and our family gatherings may

we also take the time to remember the reason for the season. Salvation has been delivered to us in the form of God's only beloved Son "that whosoever would believe on Him would not perish, but have everlasting life." The family of God is very important to Him!

The theme for our church for this past year has been "Wear the Armor". I hope this has been a special year for you to realize the protection God gives when we are obedient

and follow his commands. This coming year we have chosen as our theme "Arise and Shine". As God has armed us to serve, we need to be willing and ready to rise up and go in full obedience to God's command. Through this year may we learn to be true disciples of Christ. In the words of Isaiah 60:1, "Arise, shine: for thy light is come..."

May 2017 be a prosperous year in the Lord for you and the church. Happy New Year!!

Volume 45, Issue 12

December

Special points of interest:

- Singing Christmas Tree ; December 2 & 3 @ 7:00 pm
December 4 @ 4:00 pm
- Lenten Service 2 SMU each Wednesday @ 12 Noon
- Children's Christmas Program December 18th @ 10:00 am
- Church Family Christmas Dinner, December 18th @ 11:15 am
- Christmas Day service December 25 @ 10:00 am

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*Merry Christmas
from your Staff at
First Baptist Church,
Sparta, NC*



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Sara Williams
- 2 Sherry Shaw, Amos Wagoner,
- 3 Garrett Bare, Jo Roskosh
- 4 Patricia Resendiz
- 5 Letha Kenchel, David Osborn
- 6 Abigail Wilkins
- 8 Misti Hernandez
- 12 Marilyn Shepherd
- 14 Margaret Royal
- 15 Alice Estep
- 17 Joshua Braxton, Josh Howard
- 18 Brooke Bedsaul,
- 19 Stacey Edwards,
- 20 Mary Becker, Sharon Leftwich, Carol B. Gaultney
- 21 Linda Goodwin
- 22 Tom Miller, R.B. Ridgeway,

- JM Sturgill
- 25 John Black
 - 26 Taylor Franklin, Brittany Poole, Devin Caldwell
 - 28 Tim Caudill, Maghan Edwards, Aaron Gambill
 - 29 Morgan Lyons, Earnest Shaw
 - 30 Steven Cassell

This is
Christmas:
not the tinsel,
not the giving
and receiving,
not even the
carols, but the
humble heart
that receives
anew the
wondrous gift,
the Christ.

—Frank
McKibben



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

December 1, 1979
Ben & Kaye Royall

December 7, 1995

Santiago & Elaine
Reales

December 17, 1977

Roger & Carla Collins

December 17, 1995

Steven & Karowin
Cassell

December 26, 1959

Walt & Shelby Greer

December 26, 1976

Gerald & Sharon
Leftwich

December 27, 1980

Gary & Beverly Poole

Overcoming Despair

Christmas can be a difficult time for people who are hurting or grieving. In the 1860s, poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow had reason to despair: America was at war with itself, his son was severely wounded in battle and his wife died in a fire. The first Christmas after his wife's death, Longfellow wrote, "How

inexpressibly sad are all holidays."

Three years later, on Christmas Day 1864, Longfellow penned a poem that later became the song "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." The lyrics move from despair to hope — and, thanks to Jesus, so can we.

And in despair
I bowed my head.

There is no peace
on earth, I said;
For hate is strong,
and mocks the song
of peace on earth,
good will to men;

Then pealed the bells
more loud and deep:
God is not dead,
nor doth he sleep;
The wrong shall fail,
the right prevail,
with peace on earth,
good will to men;

Notes of Interest

Transportation—If anyone is in need of transportation to church on Sunday Mornings please contact the drivers for the month of December. They are Randy Murphy @ 336.200-1464 and Brett Jarrett @ 336.480-7173.

Family Night Dinner: The Family Night Meal for the month of December will take place on Sunday, December 18th @ 11:00 am. Following the Children's Christmas Program. Please bring your favorite dish or dessert to help with our Christmas Dinner and come enjoy this time of fellowship

with your church family.
Bulletin Information: Announcements and information for the Weekly Church Bulletin needs to be in the church office by each Wednesday afternoon.
Newsletter Information—Keeping the church informed is a big responsibility. If your group, committee, or organization has information, or opportunities that needs to be published in the newsletter, please have your information ready by the 20th day of the month. You can email the church office with your info at fbc_sparta@skybest.com or there are forms located outside the church



office to fill out and place in the box beside the office door. Please consider placing your information in the monthly Contact.

Newsletter Folding Party—Are you interested in helping get the newsletter assembled & ready to mail on **Wednesday, December 28th @ 9:00 am**? If you would like to volunteer, please contact the church office at 336-372-8446.

“Because of his boundless love, Jesus became what we are that he might make us to be what he is.”

—Irenaeus,
3rd-century Christian apologist



Mission Opportunities

In December there will be a lot of emphasis on gift giving. The week of prayer for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will be the first week of December and this is the offering for International Mission work. There is a lot of work going on globally and a lot of these

workers are in harms way and we need to pray for their protection as well as give monetarily to the work. Don't forget to bring in your gifts for the angel you have selected and items needed for the food closet as we remember the greatest gift of all

when we reflect on the activities that remind us of the birth of CHRIST. Have a Wonderful and Blessed Christmas.

Missions Coordinator,
Eva



Sundays
@ 4:00 pm

Wednesdays
@ 6:00 pm



Wow, I can't believe that it is already December. We have had an amazing year and we want to thank everyone for everything that you have done for us. Our fundraiser for November was a

success. We were able to raise \$672.00. This will be great for next year. We have just a couple things going on this month. We will be having our Christmas/ New Years lock in after Christmas. Also we are planning to go out to Eva Rice's house to clean up leaves. Please as always keep us in your prayers. This time can be one of be harder times for our youth with the many different

things that they have going on in their lives. We have several new youth that are coming and they are all from very different backgrounds. Please pray for them that they do not get pulled into the worldly temptations of the season. Thank you all and I hope you have a blessed Christmas and New Years.

Mitchell Reedy



Poinsettias

If you purchased a poinsettia in honor or memory of someone, please feel free to take your poinsettia home with you on

Sunday,
December 18th

following the morning program so that you may enjoy them for the holidays.

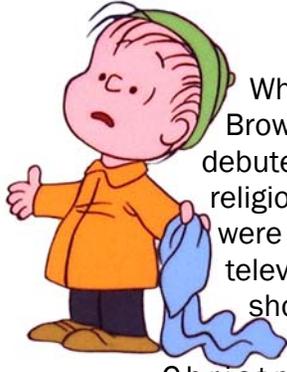
The Singing Christmas Tree



The Singing Christmas Tree will take place on Friday, Saturday, & Sunday, December 2nd, 3rd & 4th, Friday and Saturday Performances will be @ 7:00 pm. The Sunday Performance will be @ 4:00 pm.

Tickets are still available. You can come by the Church office and pick them up. Please be sure to get your tickets early, they go very fast.

Where's Your Security



When A Charlie Brown Christmas debuted in 1965, religious references were unheard of on television. Yet the show's climax features the Christmas story verbatim. As Linus begins reciting Luke 2, he's clutching his ever-present blue blanket. Yet, as pastor

Jason Soroski points out, Linus drops it right as he utters the words "fear not" (Luke 2:10).

Soroski believes the timing is intentional and that "Peanuts" creator Charles M. Schulz sends a simple, brilliant message. "The birth of Jesus separates us from our fears," Soroski writes. It "frees us from the habits we

are unable (or unwilling) to break ourselves. The birth of Jesus allows us to simply drop the false security we have been grasping so tightly, and learn to trust and cling to him instead."

"How many there are ... who imagine that because Jesus paid it all, they need pay nothing, forgetting that the prime object of their salvation was that they should follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ in bringing back a lost world to God."

- Lottie Moon
Tungchow, China on Sept. 15, 1887

After the more than a century, the annual offering continues its steady growth. Your giving enables missionaries to be sent to make disciples and

Starting in 1988, Lottie Moon Christmas offering was established to empower the International Mission Boards efforts for Southern Baptists.

Lambs & Sheep

Please note that our "Lambs & Sheep" ladies bible study will not meet on Tuesday, December 20 & 27. we

plan to return to our normal schedule on January 3, 2017.

Lottie Moon

multiply churches among unreached people and places for the glory of God. Lottie Moon Christmas Offering gives us a chance as believers to make a difference. Take advantage of this opportunity and be part of the Great Commission.



How many wise men followed a star to Bethlehem to worship Jesus?

- A. two
- B. three
- C. four
- D. We don't know because the Bible doesn't say.

Answer: D (See Matthew 2:1-12.)



EMBRACE Women's Ministries

As of now, we still are in desperate need of someone to answer God's call to step into the role of Women's Ministry leader. As women, we have the privilege of joining God in his work of reaching others for Christ in ministries, outreach,

missions, fellowship, spiritual growth, and worship. This ministry is vital for our church to function in those areas where the need might not be met otherwise. From Beth Moore's latest Bible study, she stresses that "the sign of a great potential leader is not the

eagerness to take charge, but the eagerness to take the charge." So, I charge you that until you have the opportunity to do what you feel called to do, do what needs to be done and serve where there's a need. We need you!!

Operation Christmas Child

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Operation Christmas Child shoebox ministry this year! We collected 134 boxes!! I appreciate your donations of items,

time, and money. Thank you for sharing God's greatest gift to us, His Son. I pray the Lord will multiply these gospel opportunities to draw many to Him. May you all have a blessed Christ filled

Christmas.

Merry Christmas☺
Love, Tammy M.

"Christmas,
my child,
is love in action.
Every time
we love,
every time we give,
it's Christmas."

-Dale Evans



Fun for Seniors

The senior adults Christmas Luncheon for the Surry Association will take place on De-

Attention Senior Adults

cember 13th @ 11:30 am at Siloam Baptist Church. Everyone that plans to attend please bring a covered dish and a canned good for the Medical Ministries. Also dress in Christmas

attire. The bus will leave at 10:30 am. If you plan to attend please call the church office at 336.372.8446.

Angel Tree

If you selected an angel from the angel tree, please try to deliver your presents back under our angel

tree by Monday, December 5 so they can be delivered before school is out for Christmas.

Deacon's Minutes

Mike Rowe called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer. Gerald Leftwich gave the devotion. Chairman Mike Rowe welcomed J. D. Brooks who has agreed to serve the remaining term for Charles Adams.

The minutes from our October 11th meeting were reviewed, a motion to approve was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The financial report for **October 2016** was reviewed. Expenses over income continues to lag by \$22,316. This is an improvement from the September report. There was a motion made to approve the financial report and seconded. The motion carried.

Old Business:

It appears as though the Heat Pump

Installation has begun. Hopefully this will be completed within the next two weeks.

Status of Automatic door opener for downstairs lobby still in limbo due to parts on back order and health issues of contractor.

Bathrooms remodel still unclear. Mike will check with Ricky Royal for an update. Church did vote to move forward without shower facilities.

New Business:

The Deacon Family ministry assignments were reviewed and appropriate actions are being taken. J. D. Brooks will assume the families assigned to Charles Adams.

There was a discussion of families and prayer concerns and the prayer list was updated.

Tommy Andrews lead the group in prayer for these needs.

Discussion on separation of Church and State. Further discussion will be picked up at the next meeting.

A question of how to deal with construction and storage of Christmas Tree used for the annual Singing Christmas Tree was brought up. Clint Bedsaul has provided

storage and construction assistance in the past however, he has sold his business.

Harold Jones indicated he had an impromptu discussion with Clint concerning this topic. Clint indicated that he was going to work with the church to resolve any issues.

Deacons Meeting



Monday,
December 12th,
2016 @ 7:00 pm

*Amid this
sometimes crazy
season, quiet my
heart, Lord.
Help me find
Christmas
peace in you.*

From The Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee reports at the end of October that our expenses are \$23,000 over our contributions and we are experiencing

\$46,000 below our current budget. We are asking that everyone be generous with your Tithes and Offerings at the year end so we as a Missionary Church can

continue to spread the Gospel -not only locally but around the World.



PO Box 668
202 South Main Street
Sparta, NC 28675

Phone: 336-372-8446

**Wear The Armor
of God**

**Sunday School Attendance
In November, 2016**

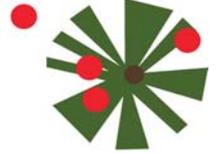
Date	Attendance
6	88
13	83
20	95
27	84
Sunday School Enrollment	119
Average Attendance	88

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Return Service Requested

Committees and Special Services for December

**Nursery
Schedule**

**Zelma Shepherd
(336-467-1748)**

**4 Ryan & Shelley
Higgins**

**11 Aaron R & Michelle
Tompkins**

**18 Children's
Christmas
Program**

25 Christmas Day

Ushers

**Mike Rowe
Gerald Luffman**

Van Drivers

**Randy Murphy
@ 336.200-1464**

**Brett Jarrett
@ 336.480-7173**

**Family Night
Dinner**

Sylvia Jackson (chair)

Linda Bedsaul

Virginia Cox

Mary Beth Gambill

Helen Reedy

Kathy Barnes

Carolyn Caldwell

**Heat & Air
Controller**

Alan Dowell

**Brotherhood
Breakfast**

**No Breakfast for
the Month of
December**