



# *Joy to the World* BLUFF PARK

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

733 Valley Street Hoover, AL 35226 205.822.0910

*December 20, 2015*

*Seek God, Lose Yourself, Find Life*

## **Worship Services**

### **Sunday Morning Worship**

Sundays @ 8:45am and 11:00am  
featuring our Advent Sermon Series

### **Lessons & Carols Service**

Sunday, December 20th @ 8:45 am and  
11:00 am

### **Advent Morning Prayer**

Thursday mornings @ 7:30am

### **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship**

December 24th @ 4:00pm and 6:00pm

### **Sunday After Christmas Worship**

December 27th, one morning service @  
10:00am

**A**nother Christmas at Bluff Park UMC! On behalf of the staff of our church, I want to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas! We are so thankful to be in ministry with such a wonderful congregation. When you think about Christmas and what it means for each and everyone of us, it really is fitting that we celebrate together.

Born so long ago was the Son of God. God right here with us. Jesus born to unite God and humanity once more. We have become a family because God chose to come to us that special day. We could not be who we are today without the miracle of Christmas. So we as a church family have a lot to celebrate each and every Christmas.

We are also people looking for hope and meaning. In the church we believe that Jesus Christ was born for all humanity. Each and every one of us. This means that God loved both you and me enough to come to us. If God is filled with that kind of love, then that means that no matter how dark and how lonely we may find ourselves from time to time, God still seeks to provide hope and meaning to each of us as we grow closer to Him.

This Christmas, I believe it is time for us all to consider who in our networks of neighbors and coworkers might be looking for this same hope and meaning. Please consider inviting anyone you might think is interested to our Christmas Eve worship services on December 24th at 4:00 and 6:00 PM. We are making every effort to make sure that this service is inspirational and educational for all people.

Again, Merry Christmas to you all. I consider myself blessed to spend another Christmas with my Bluff Park UMC family!

*Mike*



# News of the Week

## DECEMBER 27TH SUNDAY WORSHIP

On the Sunday after Christmas, we will have a special worship schedule. There will be one morning worship service at 10:00am and a church-wide coffee hour from 9:00-10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. There is no Sunday School. Our normal schedule resumes January 3rd.

## ADVENT MORNING PRAYER

Our final Advent Morning Prayer will take place on Thursday, December 24th, at 7:30 AM in the Sanctuary. This is a service of Prayer, Scripture and Holy Communion. The service lasts approximately 30 minutes.

## 2016 ALTAR FLOWERS

The 2016 Flower Calendar is now posted in the office and there are plenty of dates open (for now!) Please sign up to remember a loved one or to commemorate a special occasion. One arrangement is \$50.00; both \$100.00. We have two arrangements each Sunday. Dates available include: January 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31. Check with the office for other available dates. Please sign up in the main office or call (205) 822-0910.

## BLOOD DRIVE SCHEDULE FOR 2016

We will host four blood drives in 2016. They will be held on January 10, April 17, July 31, and November 13. Please mark your calendar and make plans to donate in the coming year.

## SYMPATHY OF THE CONGREGATION...

The sympathy of the congregation goes out to the family of Thelma Skeahan, who passed away on December 7th. Our prayers are with them in their time of sorrow.

## FINANCE OFFICE HOURS

The Finance Office will be open on December 31st from 8:00am–12:00pm. Any contributions that need to be recorded in 2015 must be dropped off by noon on the 31st.

## IN THE HOSPITAL...

Elaine Clinton—Lakeshore

## INVITE A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR...

Christmas is a time of year when people are often receptive to an invitation to church. We have prepared a color postcard with an invitation to our Christmas Eve worship that you can use to invite someone to church. The cards are available at the Welcome desk in the Narthex, and also in the church office. One fun idea is to tape a mini candy cane to each card before sharing them.



## CELEBRATING GIFTS AND YEAR-END GIVING

Churches typically receive as much as 25% of our gifts in the last two months of the year. As you make your plans to complete your 2015 financial commitment, here are three additional possibilities for resources beyond cash gifts. Please note that these possibilities are listed for educational purposes. Please consult your personal advisor for your specific information.

### Gifts of Appreciated Stocks or Bonds

You can transfer ownership of stocks, bonds or mutual funds to the church and receive a charitable tax deduction based on the full fair market value of the securities on the date of the transfer. This avoids the capital gains tax while giving the church the benefit of the full value of the security. To receive this benefit, it is important to transfer ownership before the security is sold. For your gift to apply to the current tax year, the securities must be in the account of the local church (or our Foundation) by December 31st. So, allow plenty of lead time for your broker to complete this transaction.

### Gifts of Real Estate

A charitable gift of real estate can be especially tax advantageous. If a home, vacation home, acreage or farm property has appreciated in value over the years - its sale could result in a sizable capital gains tax. If the real estate is given to the church prior to the sale, you can avoid the tax and realize a charitable deduction for the full fair market value of the real estate. One could even consider a bargain sale transaction with half of the funds to the church and the other half to the donor.

### Gifts of Life Insurance

When you name the church as the owner and beneficiary of a life insurance policy, it usually offers you a tax advantage in the year you make the gift. You can take a charitable deduction approximately equal to the cash value at the time of the gift. Additionally, continued payments of premiums qualify as charitable tax deductions each year.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

**CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AND PARTY THANK YOU:** A special thank you to everyone who made the Christmas Pageant and Party so special. Whether you helped decorate, put up or tore down tables, helped with rehearsals, watched cherubs, watched my daughter Katie during the craziness, or anything else, we could not have done it without you. It was a total team effort, and that is what made it so great!

**MISSION TRIP/FIELD TRIP:** Due to the busyness of the holidays and the strong attendance we have had by placing these trips on school holidays, we have decided to move the field trip/mission trip that was scheduled on December 30th to Martin Luther King Day, January 18th. We will be shopping for supplies to help a local backpack ministry that sends food home with elementary aged children who are not getting enough to eat at home, going to Pizza Hut for lunch, and then going Ice Skating in the afternoon. Drop off will begin at 7:30, we will leave the church at 9:30, and pickup will be at the church between 4:30 and 5:30. Please RSVP with Melissa Hendon at [mhendon@bpumc.org](mailto:mhendon@bpumc.org) as soon as possible as we only have 26 spots available.

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH:** In order to abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policy of our church, we are in need of one adult volunteer for each session of Children's Church. This person will assist Mr. Stanley in crowd control and leading the worship service. There is no pre-planning for this volunteer spot. Simply show up and worship with Mr. Stanley and the children! If you would like to volunteer in Children's Church, please sign up at <http://vols.pt/22XY7w> or contact Stanley Davidson at [sdavidson@bpumc.org](mailto:sdavidson@bpumc.org).

**SUNDAY SCHOOL THIS WEEK:** This Sunday (12/20) we will be in the Fellowship Hall eating breakfast and decorating Christmas cookies with all children 3K-5th grade.

## STUDENT MINISTRY

**YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY & CAROLING - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20TH** We'll meet in the Youth Wing at 5pm and divide into vehicles to go Christmas Caroling. Then we'll return to the Church for a covered dish dinner and a game of Dirty Santa. Parents: Please send a side dish or dessert. Students: We need a fun, goofy, inexpensive gift for Dirty Santa AND we need a monetary donation or a gift card to Publix or Target for a family in need that we're helping this holiday season.

**DISCOVERY WEEKEND - JANUARY 29-31, 2016** Save the date for this incredible weekend of spiritual formation, when our high school students will lead our middle school students in worship, discussion, prayer and fellowship with the assistance of our college students and adults. High school students will begin meeting to prepare on Sunday afternoons as soon as we're back from Christmas break. We cannot wait to see what God has planned for our students! Online registration will be open very soon.

**DOWNLOAD OUR MOBILE APP & KEEP UP WITH THE FAST-MOVING WINTER/SPRING SCHEDULE.** There's so much going on as we end the fall and get ready for 2016: Discovery Weekend, Confirmation Class and more. You can keep track of things via your smartphone or tablet by going to your app store and downloading our free app. Just search the key words Youth Wing to find it.

**SAVE THESE DATES:** Friday-Sunday, January 29-31: *Discovery Weekend.*

### THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 20, 10:00am  
Sunday, December 20

Sunday School in the Youth Wing  
Caroling & Christmas Party in the Youth Wing

## SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### THURSDAY DECEMBER 17

**SHEPHERD'S CENTER CHRISTMAS PROGRAM** The fun starts at 10:00am with Brad, Bobby, & Jerry, Pictures with Santa, lots of Christmas cheer, fun for everyone. Come See, Come Sing, Come Hear, Come Enjoy. Bring a White\Elephant gift, and a bar of Soap, to be given to the Church of the Reconciler. This will be our last Shepherd's Center Meeting until Thursday January 7, 2016.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
to  
EVERYONE**

Thank you for a wonder year at Bluff Park United Methodist, your prayers, your love and your support - but most of all your friendship to Senior Adult Ministries and our Shepherd's Center. Wishing everyone a Happy New Year.



## Bluff Park United Methodist Church

733 Valley Street  
Hoover, AL 35226  
(205) 822-0910

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
AUTO  
BIRMINGHAM, AL  
PERMIT NO. 1816

### Pastors

Mike Holly, mholly@bpumc.org, ext. 104  
Angela Martin, amartin@bpumc.org, ext. 107  
Tom Duley, tduley@bpumc.org, ext. 112  
**Director of Senior Ministries**, ext. 103  
Betty Hottenstein, bhottenstein@bpumc.org  
**Director of Student Ministries**, ext. 118  
Bart Styes, barts@bpumc.org  
**Director of Children's Ministries**, ext. 105  
Stanley Davidson, sdavidson@bpumc.org  
**Director of Finance and Administration**, ext. 117  
Jason McCrory, jmccrory@bpumc.org  
**Financial Manager**, ext. 101  
Joe Pitard, jpitard@bpumc.org  
**Director of Communications and Media**, ext. 119  
Andrew Seltz, aseltz@bpumc.org  
**Secretary**, ext. 111  
Catherine Ward, cward@bpumc.org  
**Director of Worship Music**,  
Lonnie Parsons  
**Organist**,  
Dr. Lorna Lee Curtis  
**Preschool Director**,  
Tracy Estes, imaginations@bpumc.org



## The Week of December 20—December 26

### Sunday, December 20

8:45 am Lessons & Carols Service  
9:45 am Sunday School  
11:00 am Lessons & Carols Service

### Monday, December 21

10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry

### Wednesday, December 23

6:00 pm Men's Chorus  
6:00 pm Handbell Choir  
6:30 pm Choir

### Thursday, December 24—Christmas Eve

OFFICE CLOSED  
7:30 am Advent Morning Prayer  
4:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
6:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

### Friday, December 25—Christmas Day

OFFICE CLOSED

### SUNDAY, December 20, 2015

8:45am and 11:00am Morning Worship  
*"Lessons & Carols Service"*

No Evening Worship Service

### Lectionary Scripture Readings

Micah 5:2-5a  
Luke 1:46b-55  
Hebrews 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45

### SERVING SUNDAY

**Ushers**  
8:45 Footsteps 11:00 Davis  
**Cross**  
8:45 Jackie Fort 11:00 Rebekah Rice  
**Acolyte**  
8:45 Emma Patton  
11:00 Penny Rose Pearson  
**Greeters:** Vitality  
**Meals on Wheels:** Martin

## Last Week's Record

December 13, 2015

Children/Youth	109/46
Morning Worship	571
Weekly Contributions Expected	\$26,673.00
Weekly Contributions Received	\$31,914.86
Annual Contributions Expected	\$1,386,978.00
Contributions Expected to Date	\$1,333,610.00
Contributions Received to Date	\$1,331,985.27
New Members in 2015	25

### LIVING OUR LEGACY

January 1, 2013—December 31, 2015

Amount Pledged	\$1,083,250.00
Received Last Week	\$18,108.33
Received to Date	\$941,402.87

**BLUFF PARK UNITED  
METHODIST COLUMBARIUM**  
Information Sheets in Narthex and Church  
Office

### BPUMC FOOD PANTRY

1st Wednesday each month  
We are serving 200+ families a month.  
We appreciate all donations!

### VALET PARKING

Every Sunday morning! Drive to the covered entrance near the nursery and Fellowship Hall.