



## FROM THE PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE...

As I write this article, we're about to enter the season of Advent, which begins December 3.

The Christian Year developed through the centuries as a way of helping the people of God learn, remember, and relive God's work in his Son and among his people in the world.

Advent is *not* simply celebrating Christmas early. It's a season of penitence and preparation, of anticipation and expectation, as we prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. Advent gets us ready for Christmas. We think about how God broke into history, sending his Son to save us from our sins. We think about the preparations he made through both miraculous and ordinary events, and his promises of salvation and deliverance. But we also look ahead to the fulfillment of the promise that Christ will return in glory to raise the dead, judge the world, and set all things right in the new creation, and prepare our hearts so we'll be ready.

That's what we're seeking to do in our worship during Advent. With all our culture bombards us in its secular, commercial celebration of the holidays, it's easy to lose sight of what Christmas is really about. Advent helps us focus, reminding us that these are *holy days*. It puts Bethlehem in the context of God's great eternal purpose of redemption, reminding us that the baby in the manger was God the Son in the flesh, who will come again to bring his kingdom in its fullness!

This year, Christmas Eve falls on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We'll gather in the sanctuary for our Candlelight Communion Service at 5:30 p.m. This will be an opportunity for our church family and community to gather in praise and prayer as we hear again the good news of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. This service will be filled with Scripture lessons from the Old and New Testaments, Christmas Carols, Holy Communion, the lighting of candles, and carrying the light out into our community. I hope you'll make this service a priority on your holiday calendar!

As we move through this season of Advent to Christmas, don't get lost

# The Messenger

A Newsletter of

## Murfreesboro Baptist Church

December 2023



in the hustle and bustle of shopping, parties, decorating, and such. Stay focused on what we truly celebrate by taking time to worship, and by allowing that worship to direct your celebration. Remember that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The incarnation of God the Son as the man Jesus Christ—truly God, truly human—is what Christmas is really all about!

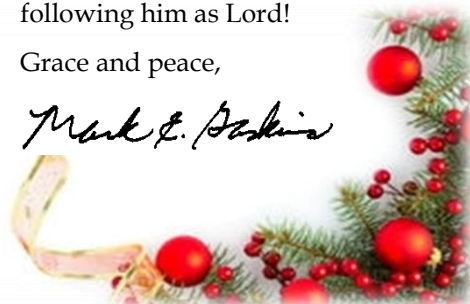
On a related note, for over a century Baptists have focused on missions during Advent and Christmas. This is most appropriate! Such a focus reminds us that just as the Father sent the Son into the world to bring salvation to all who would believe, so the Son has sent us who believe to proclaim his Good News to all the nations. Christmas is ultimately about missions!

It makes sense, then, that we receive a special missions offering at Christmas time, the CBF Offering for Global Missions. We'll receive it throughout December. Our church does a wonderful job with local missions with our food ministries and helping with other needs. But missions is not an either-or of local or global; missions is both-and, local *and* global, sharing the gospel through works of mercy *and* words of witness. I hope you'll give generously to missions!

As we approach Christmas, JoAnn and I deeply appreciate the love and kindness you all have extended to us as we've begun our journey with you. You have welcomed us so graciously and we have come to love you quickly. We are very thankful to be a part of the Murfreesboro Baptist Church family. We wish you all a blessed Advent, a Christmas filled with the joy and peace of Jesus Christ, and a new year filled with the adventure of following him as Lord!

Grace and peace,

*Mark E. Perkins*



## WHITE CHRISTMAS BOXES



Each year we provide a Christmas meal to at least 15 families in our area, and this year, the need is greater than ever.

If you would like to donate food items, each box will contain a bag of apples or oranges, a one-pound block of cheese, macaroni and cheese, canned vegetables and canned fruit, cranberry sauce, candied yams, gravy, stuffing mix, and brownie mix. Items are needed by Monday, December 18.

You can also adopt a box for \$25. For this amount, someone will do your shopping for you and a box will be delivered to one of our neighbors. Please mark your checks "White Christmas Boxes".

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Sunday, December 24 at 5:30 p.m.



We invite you, your family, and friends to join us for our Annual Christmas Eve Service. This is a meaningful time of worship in preparation for the birth of Christ. The service will begin at 5:30 p.m.

## ANGEL TREE

*Let's Help Bring  
Christmas Joy  
to Local Children!*



Thank you for your participation in the Angel Tree. Once you have done your shopping, bring the wrapped gifts back by Thursday, December 14. Please wrap your gifts with one pattern of paper or place them in a large bag together. And finally, don't forget to attach your angel with number to your gifts. Thank you for spreading Christmas joy and the love of Christ this season!

## USING THEIR GIFTS TO SERVE IN DECEMBER

**Deacon of the Month**  
Charlie Cole/Tommy Bird

**Opening the Church**  
Steve Fowler

**December Ushers**  
Don Johnson, Wayne Brown,  
Bruce Brown, and Bob Turner

**January Ushers**  
Johnny Jenkins, Freddie Bazen,  
Bob Lee, and Bob Turner

**December Radio Ministry Sponsor**  
Don and Lynn Johnson

**Caregivers**  
Dec. 3-Dec. 16 Patty Joyner  
Dec. 17-Dec. 30 Charlie & Dell Aycock  
Dec. 31-Jan. 13 Lynette Bunch

**Children's Sermon**  
Sarah Davis

**Flowers**  
Dec. 4 Advent; Dec. 11 Advent;  
Dec. 18 Advent; Dec. 25 Christmas



## FUEL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**PLEASE DONATE TO THE  
CHRISTMAS FUEL FUND  
MERRY CHRISTMAS FOR ALL**

For the last four years, Murfreesboro Baptist Church has collected funds before Christmas and, with the help of Jernigan Oil Company, Inc. and Debbie Jones, have purchased fuel oil for those families that are unable to pay at Christmas. Jernigan Oil Company, Inc. and Debbie Jones can identify those in most need and has reduced the oil prices substantially for this project. Last year over \$3,800 was raised for this cause.

Please make your check payable to: Murfreesboro Baptist Church and indicate "FUEL FUND" on your check and mail to 200 West Main Street, Murfreesboro, NC 27855. You can also call Ben McLean at 252-398-7620 and he will pick up your donation or you can mail it to him at: PO Box 556, Murfreesboro, NC 27855.

Please donate by December 22, 2023, the date the funds will be taken to Jernigan Oil Company, Inc.

**GIVE THE BEST GIFT YOU CAN GIVE  
FOR CHRISTMAS!  
WARMTH!**

### Notes of Appreciation...

Dear Mark, The 175<sup>th</sup> Planning Committee and Members of Murfreesboro Baptist Church,

Sunday was such a wonderful day. It was so apparent how much planning and preparation was done. It was a testament to the church that all living ministers returned.

Our family was so proud and honored that you asked Poppa to give the invocation. He enjoyed composing his words and visiting with so many people.

From all of us with thanks and Love,  
Tom & Ann Caulkins  
Chuck & Bonnie Revelle  
Jimmy and Charlene Eason

### Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 1:30 pm  
252-398-3613 [www.murfbc.org](http://www.murfbc.org)



## FOOD BANK OF THE ALBEMARLE

Volunteers are needed on December 19 by 1:30 p.m. in the church parking lot to distribute food.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SCHEDULE



Dec. 6 No Kids' Club  
Dec. 13 Kids' Club 6-6:45  
Dec. 17 Children Sing in Worship  
Dec. 20 No Kids' Club  
Dec. 27 No Kids' Club

## UPCOMING DATES IN DECEMBER

Dec. 12 Deacons' Meeting  
Dec. 14 Angel Tree Deadline  
Dec. 18 White Christmas Boxes  
Dec. 20 Food Bank of the Albemarle  
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Service  
Dec. 25 Merry Christmas  
Dec. 21-25 Office Closed for Christmas Holiday  
Jan. 1 Office Closed For New Year Holiday

## CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Mark E. Gaskins  
PASTOR

PAULA PRESSNELL.....ORGANIST &  
CHOIR DIRECTOR

TOM CAULKINS.....PASTOR EMERITUS

TERESA MARTIN.....ADMINISTRATIVE ASST.



**CELEBRATING  
BIRTHDAYS  
IN  
DECEMBER**

December 1	David Farnham
December 1	Johnny Jenkins
December 5	Earlene Futrell
December 5	Bob Lee
December 6	Bob Turner
December 13	Joanie Broglin
December 18	Winslow Gallop
December 23	Tommy McCormick
December 23	Tra'Vonn Sawyer
December 27	Carole Farnham
December 28	Jennifer Mitchell
December 31	Ann Caulkins

*Don't see your birthday? Please call the church office and let us know when your special day is.*

### Our Shared Commitment to Supporting Missions and Ministry for November 2023

	Nov. 5	Nov. 12	Nov. 19	Nov. 26	Monthly Total	For the Year
Weekly Budget	\$4,905.66	\$4,905.66	\$4,905.66	\$4,905.66	\$19,622.64	\$44,150.94
Weekly Tithes & Offerings	\$4,320.00	\$10,850.00	\$2,915.00	\$2,156.00	\$20,241.00	\$38,248.00
Other Income						
Over (Under)	(585.66)	\$5,944.34	(\$1,990.66)	(2,749.66)	(\$618.36)	(\$5902.94)

**The Church office will be Closed December 21, 22, & 25 for the Christmas Holiday.**



Murfreesboro Baptist Church  
200 W. Main Street  
Murfreesboro, N.C. 27855

Return Service Requested