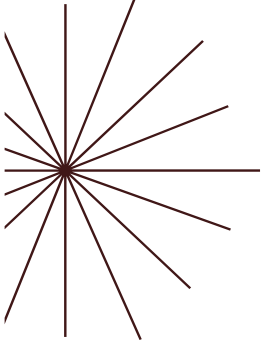


Connections

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 2022

VOL XII: ISSUE 12 LBCPC.org

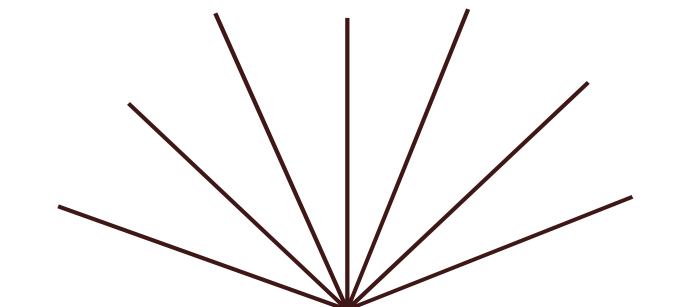


Christmas at LBC

December 4th @ 6pm
Instrumental Christmas

December 11th @ 10:00am
Special Music & Preaching

Joint Worship | No Bible Fellowship



A Message from **Andrew Spires**

SENIOR PASTOR

.....

I have been hesitant about whether or not I should share with you an event that took place when I was nine years old, because I do not like to talk about myself, and want to be careful that all glory goes to God alone. Yet, after you, the body of believers here at Lakewood chose me to be your pastor, I thought it was an appropriate story to share.

As many of you know, I grew up at Edgewood Baptist Church in Columbus. Like many other churches in those days, we had Wednesday night prayer meetings and I went each week with my mom. Only a small percentage of the church body would come to prayer meetings and I was often one of the only children in attendance. At Edgewood, the pews were equipped with padded kneelers, which folded down from their upright mounted position behind each pew. These prayer meetings could last up to an hour or more depending on the length of the pastor's prayer list that week. Most of that time was spent on your knees before the Lord. It was there, that I first began to learn to pray and to have a conversation with the Lord. This was an organized prayer service that went something like this; the pastor would get up in front of those in attendance and lead in corporate prayer for some length of time, then he would announce prayer needs and the people would pray through those needs. We were also encouraged to repent of any sins and to pray for any personal needs and concerns. However, there was a part near the end of each Wednesday night service that I dreaded most. It was the part where the pastor asked you to split into small groups and pray for each other. At that time I was shy and introverted and a

bit of a mama's boy. I didn't have much in the way of people skills and I was easily intimidated when around people I didn't know.

On one such Wednesday night, during a prayer meeting, the pastor asked us to split into small groups and pray. My mother looked around and only one other lady was sitting on our pew. Not recognizing her, my mom thought she might be a visitor. So, she walked over and invited her into our group. It was only my mother, this lady, and myself. I couldn't tell you the woman's name or how old she was (since everyone is old when you were nine), but she joined our group. I also couldn't tell you any of the prayers we lifted to the Lord that night only that it went on for some time. We knelt and began to pray while holding hands, and my mother would squeeze my hand when it was my turn to pray. We were nearing the end of the service as we waited for more instruction and guidance from the pastor. The woman looked at both of us with a big smile and said; "One day, your son will be a pastor." She said it as if it were a fact, with no qualifying statements. In my childish mind, I thought she must have said that because she had been impressed by my willingness to pray. My mother quickly thanked her for the gracious comment and we went into the final moments of prayer. I probably wouldn't have remembered the comment at first, if I wasn't so shy and introverted and therefore it was terrifying to imagine a calling that would require me to speak in front of others weekly. Secondly, what really cemented this occasion in my mind was what happened next. (cont.)

(Drew's article cont.) Remember we were holding hands, my mother on my left side, me in the middle, and the lady next to me, all three of us kneeling, with heads bowed and eyes closed. We were kneeling at one end of the pew, with the rest of the pew empty beyond the woman. The pastor closed the service with a prayer and as soon as he said amen my right hand dropped and when I opened my eyes the woman was gone. I was stunned and looked at my mother and asked where the woman went. My mother turned around and I could tell she was also confused. She told me she really didn't know where the woman went and neither of us ever saw her again. To my nine-year-old mind, it seemed totally illogical that a woman of some age would have said nothing, just dropped my hand, risen from kneeling, walked to the end of the pew, and made it out of the back of the auditorium before either I or my mother could lay eyes on her. Moments later my mother opened her bible and quoted Hebrews 13:2 which says; "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

To this day I have no idea who that woman was. I certainly am not wise enough to know whether or not this woman was just a visitor to our church or something more, but her words stuck with me.

I began to reflect on this event more and more over the past few weeks after the pastor search team informed me of their decision. I thought about it more as we neared the church-wide vote. I still don't know if the woman's words were somehow prophetic or if she was just a woman who was being nice, but I will never forget it. I will also never forget when God, in His amazing grace, chose this weak and foolish vessel to be your pastor. I am humbled and amazed at His goodness. As the song says; "What I earned, was not what I got. What more can I say about Him, my God is love." May God's grace and love be real and abundant to you during this Christmas season!

God bless,
drew
John 3:30



A Message from **Dr. Jerry Horner**

MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP & OUTREACH



Who is Jesus Christ? Answer that question right and live by it, and everything else will be right. Answer it wrong, and everything else will be wrong. There is none other like Jesus. He is absolutely unique, and you cannot compare Him to anyone else. It is that uniqueness that makes our faith different. You can take Buddha out of Buddhism and still have Buddhism. You can take Confucius out of Confucianism and still have Confucianism. You can take Mohammed out of Islam and still have Islam. You can take the founders of Hinduism out of Hinduism and still have Hinduism. But you cannot take Christ out of Christianity and still have Christianity. With all those others, the founders are not necessary, because you can just salvage their teachings and try to live by them. But Christianity is not a creed, not a code, not a cause, not a cult; it is Christ. To take Christ out of Christianity would be like the notes out of music or numbers out of mathematics. There is nothing left if you take Jesus Christ out. Others say, "Here is a sign to the way," but Jesus says, "I am the Way." Others say, "Here is a philosophy that points to the truth," but Jesus says, "I am the Truth." Others say, "Here is the way to find life," but Jesus says, "I am the Life."

The uniqueness of Jesus is declared in the virgin birth, when God became man. "God, who at various times spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son" (Hebrews 1:1). The book of Hebrews does not begin with an argument. It begins with the incredible announcement that Jesus Christ, the babe of Bethlehem, is God's final word to humanity. You see, up until this time God had been speaking to human beings partially and gradually. He had spoken through nature. He had spoken through conscience. He had spoken through history. He had spoken through the law. He had spoken through the prophets. But now God says, "All that I have to say to this world is Jesus Christ." When you

say "Jesus," you've said it all. Not only is He God's final word, Jesus is God's full word. Hebrews 1:3 says that He is "the brightness" of God's glory and "the express image" of God's person. He is God's word in fullness, God's word in focus, and God's word in finality. To know Jesus is to know God. "Brightness" means that He is the radiance of God's nature. "The express image" translates the Greek word from which our word "character" comes. It signifies an exact imprint, having the idea of something that is made with a dye or a mold. When you take the mold away, you find that the thing stamped is identical to the thing that stamped it.

Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). The Bible emphatically declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Why is Jesus called the Word? It's because logos, translated word, is the expression of an idea. Jesus is the expression of God. When you hear Jesus, you hear God. Jesus is God speaking to us in a language we can understand. Jesus said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Revelation 22:13). Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last letter. If He were speaking to an English audience, He would say, "I'm the A and the Z." If you want to say anything in print, what do you do? You use the alphabet, 26 letters in English or 24 letters in Greek. Do you realize that the Bible you are holding is made up of just 26 letters? Jesus is saying that the same thing that is true about the written word is true about the living Word. He is the first and the last and everything in between. He is God's Word in fullness, God's Word in focus, and God's Word in finality. God has nothing more to say to anyone who refuses Jesus, because Jesus is His final word.



Christmas Celebrations

**Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
6pm**

**Christmas Day
12/25 11am**

No Bible Fellowship

A Message from **David Stephens**

CHILDREN'S MINISTER



It's December. It's Christmas. It's busy busy! We have just finished off the remaining leftover turkey and ham from Thanksgiving, now into the hustle and bustle of Christmas. We must remember this month we are celebrating the miraculous birth of Jesus. God appeared to Abraham, Moses and others in all kinds of different creative ways, but now he is putting on humanity. God is living among his beloved creation to experience everything we do. He is dealing with all the temporary stuff. This has never happened. The birth of Christ to the world is the hinge point for all of history. We have Before Christ (BC) and Anno Domini (AD) in the year of our Lord. The sky split in two and heaven declared the joy of the good news. The whole of the Old Testament has lead up to this exact moment in time. It really would be quite tragic and sad if the Old Testament was the end of the story. The prophets spoke of a New Covenant. A Child born and a Son given. He was to be an eternal King that would rule. It is no longer up to us to manufacture or create kingdoms of man. God himself thru Jesus has created his Kingdom and He reigns supreme!

As I reflect on this past year, there is so much to be grateful for. Our response to the Christmas story must be bathed in gratitude. Our celebration of the Christ child isn't limited to one day a year. How can we limit what is infinite and eternal? We cannot ever fall into that trap. It must be a constant reality. Christ is birthed a-new in us every day. For those who come to Christ and surrender all are responding to the Good News like the Shepherds and the Magi. These guys came on bended knee to worship God. It is in this vain that we celebrate this season.

A few weeks ago our Children's lesson was

on Daniel and our main idea was "I can keep my cool because God is in control". We talked about how Daniel was taken out of everything he knew to live in a foreign land, he kept his cool with his stressful job. This helped him to get promoted. People who didn't like his advancement schemed against him creating a silly law that they knew he would not obey. Daniel could have prayed in secret for a month. But no, he opened his window for all to see. He kept his cool when he was arrested. He kept his cool when he was thrown into the lion's den. The king was freaking out, Daniel wasn't. The following morning the king finds Daniel hanging out with the lions with not a scratch. As we lean into the Christmas story and this season, reflecting back on everything that has happened this past year, God has always been in control. We can choose to not allow all the 'busy' of this season and the changes that are upon us to tip us over into losing our cool.

This year has been a blessing. It is my honor to serve. My family and I wish you all a blessed Christmas. We are excited for the new adventures 2023 will bring us.

Calendar

December 11:

Combined service Christmas Program 10AM, we will have programming for children and nursery.

December 14

6 - 7:30pm

AWANA Store and Christmas Party (this will be our last AWANA meeting for this year)

January 4

AWANA will start back.

Lakewood Happenings

December 2022

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				6:00pm Widow/ Widower Christmas Banquet FAC		
				1	2	3
6:00pm Instrumental Christmas	10:30am Amen Choir	6:15pm Alleluia Choir	10:30am VK/WMU			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10:00am Joint Worship Music & Preaching 5:00pm Deacons Meet	10:30am Amen Choir		6:00pm Last AWANA Store & Party	6:30pm JEG/BW		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	10:30am Amen Choir	6:15pm Alleluia Choir	7:00pm Finance Team meeting		Office Closed	6:00pm Chritmas Eve Candlelight Service
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Christmas 11:00am Joint Worship	Office Closed	6:15pm Alleluia Choir				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

October Giving

	BUDGET	CTB	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
10/2	\$21,650.64	\$360.00	\$1,835.14	\$832.00	\$24,677.78
10/9	\$21,782.10	\$50.00	\$1,542.00	\$2,702.97	\$26,077.07
10/16	\$13,244.66	\$100.00	\$2,713.00	\$1,367.09	\$17,424.75
10/23	\$13,454.10	-	\$1,100.00	\$1,190.09	\$15,744.19
10/30	\$13,603.54	-	\$5,314.55	\$1,340.50	\$20,258.59

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

SUNDAY

9:00am Contemporary
Worship
10:00am Bible Fellowship
11:00am Blended Worship

WEDNESDAY

6:00pm Prayer Meeting
6:00pm AWANA
6:30pm Youth Worship

In Memory Of:

Pansy Slocumb

For Music Ministry
From Carole Ray
For Amen Choir
From Norman Davis
For Bereavement
From Brenda Evans

Billy Norris

For Amen choir
From Norman Davis
For COI
From Janice Noble
For Bereavement
From Brenda Evans

David Mathews

For OCC
From Carole Ray
For Student Ministries
From Mr. & Mrs. JD
Whitehead
For Bereavement
From Brenda Evans

Becky Smith

For OCC
From Mr. & Mrs.
Fred Van Horn
For Bereavement
From Ricky Smith

Margaret Clark

For OCC
From Carole Ray

Lou Loughry

For Food Bank
From Mr. & Mrs. JD Whitehead

Vincent Currier

For Lottie Moon
From Myra Currier

Linda Scarborough

For Bereavement
From Brenda Evans

King & Rain Thomas

For Food Bank
From Patricia Thomas

Joyce Swartz

For Postage for Homebound
From Lakewood Baptist

In Honor Of:

Jerri Tidwell

For Food Bank
From Pat Holland

**“MERRY
CHRISTMAS”**

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FRI 8:30AM-12PM

**WELCOME
NEW MEMBER
BRENDA PARKINSON**



CONNECTIONS (USPS #463270) is a monthly publication by Lakewood Baptist Church. Periodicals paid at Phenix City, AL.

POSTMASTER: Send all address corrections to: Lakewood Baptist Church, 4011 Lakewood Drive, Phenix City, Alabama 36867