

# Connections

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 2021

VOL XI: ISSUE 12 LBCPC.ORG



*MERRY CHRISTMAS*

*Jesus is the Reason for the Season*



# A Message from **M.R. Hamilton**

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SENIOR PASTOR

December is simply the best month of the year for all kinds of reasons. First is Christmas and how everything from television to shopping take on a new life of expectation and anticipation. It is a season of hope and celebration as we look forward to friends and family coming back together for some of the best fellowship of the year. The power of hope transforms our society in such a way that people talk openly about the magic of Christmas.

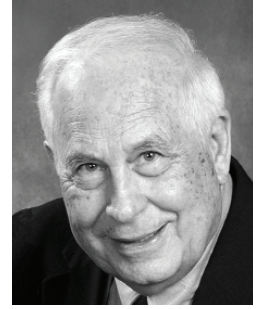
**We understand it isn't magic but is in fact faith, hope and love that make this season so special.** We search for the greatest gifts and then wait in anxious anticipation for the moment they are finally opened. The Bible is played out and proven time and time again during the season we call Christmas. We discover that it really is better to give than receive. We discover that Hope really does have the power to transform our view of tomorrow. We might not be able to see just how this season is going to play out but we believe it will be great and that my friends is the very definition of faith. **Faith in others, faith in God and faith in a better tomorrow are all core essentials in making the magic of Christmas come true.** Not everyone will experience the magic of Christmas because they lack one or more of the ingredients of Faith, Hope and Love. The Bible teaches that these three are the greatest of all the gifts of God. And the magic of Christmas is nothing more than the promises of God coming true. God really did say that a child like faith is the very secret to experiencing a life more abundant and free.

We can all remember Christmas when we were children. I remember not being able to sleep I was so filled with excitement. I remember waking up before dawn and hitting the ground running to see that my dreams had indeed come true. That lack of doubt and absolute certainty that my parents had a plan to bless me filled me with anticipation. That anticipation filled me with hope and enthusiasm. That knowledge made my future look so bright that I literally wanted my present day to just hurry up and get over. Well friends let me tell you the truth, that is the power we call the magic of Christmas. Friends God did say He has a plan for you this very day and you don't even have to wait until tomorrow. He told me that He has a plan to bless you not curse you and He wants to give you a hope and a future. Now what would happen if you took God at His word and responded to Him like you did your parents when you were a child? Trust me you would have a hard time sleeping and you would hit the ground running in the morning to see what He had for you today. Try it and see if God means what He says and keeps His promises. Get up in the morning and start looking for the blessings God has ready for you today. You might say that sounds good but that has not been your experience. I really do understand as I am living in the same world you live in. But what if the reason our world is the way it is because it is living up to our expectations? If I expect a blessing and get up searching for it will I find it? If I expect a cursing can I get up and find one? It has been my experience that trouble is the easiest thing in the world to find and I succeed every single time I go looking for trouble. Life really is all about what we choose to do with it in the end. I can choose life or death, blessing or cursing just like God said. I can choose to anticipate a cursing or a blessing and that choice will change my view of tomorrow. I can choose to look for trouble or to be a blessing, to add to the problems of this world or be an answer. God has given me a choice so I can choose to believe God and experience the Magic of Christmas all the days of my life. I choose to look for the life God promised and have been blessed to have had every promise God ever made to me come true.

God Bless & Merry Christmas!



# A Message from Dr. Jerry Horner



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MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP & OUTREACH

Seven hundred years before it actually happened, the prophet Isaiah foretold the greatest event in history, when God came to earth in the form of a baby boy named Jesus (see Isaiah 9:6-7). Without an understanding of this event, even the most learned people lack the key to knowledge. How sad to know biology, the study of life, and not know Jesus Christ the giver of life. How sad to know astronomy, to study the stars and to see how the heavens go, and not to know Jesus Christ the bright and morning star and how to go to heaven. How sad to know geology and the strata of the rocks, and to chart all of the geological ages, and not know Jesus Christ, the rock of ages, and to be able to say, "On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand." How sad to know botany and the study of flowers and not to know Jesus, Sharon's sweetest rose, who can perfume any life. How sad for a person to claim to be educated, and to know history from beginning to end and to miss the central event in history, which is the story of Jesus--His story. A wise person is ignorant, a rich person is poor, and a strong person is weak without a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The first Christmas gift was when God wrapped His deity in humanity and sent Jesus into the world to reveal God to us and to save us.** John 1:1 tells us that Jesus is the "Word" of God, and Hebrews 1:2 declares that God has spoken fully and finally to us by Jesus. A word is the expression of a thought, a concept, an idea. Jesus Christ is called the Word of God because he is the expression of God. Jesus Christ articulates God. A foreign language that you don't understand must be translated into a language that you do understand. God exists in a realm that we cannot understand, so God translated himself into a word that we could understand. And the name of that word is Jesus. Apart from Jesus there is no true knowledge of God.

Many people reject the fact of the virgin birth, declaring that it's impossible for a virgin to conceive. Even Mary wondered how such a thing could happen, and the angel gave the simple answer, "With God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:34-37). Anyone who doesn't believe the virgin birth actually is calling God a liar, because His word plainly teaches that Jesus was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; 1 John 5:10). Why do people have difficulty believing that a child could come into this world without an earthly father, when God made the first man out of nothing? If you can believe Genesis 1:1, you shouldn't have any difficulty with any miracle. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." When you believe that, then you're not going to have any difficulty believing in the rest of the miracles.

Why is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ so important? Because the deity of Christ is wrapped up in His virgin birth. A Child is born, a Son is given. Jesus came as He did, born of a virgin, to be what He was--sinless. He was what He was, sinless, to do what He did--die for our sins as a sinless substitute. He did what He did that we might be what we are--sons and daughters of God by faith in what He did upon the cross. You see, no virgin birth, no sinless Christ. No sinless Christ, no atonement. No atonement, no forgiveness. No forgiveness, no hope of heaven. No hope of heaven, you die and go to hell. Thank God for the virgin birth. Take away the virgin birth and the whole house of Christianity collapses like a house of cards. Unto us a Child is born. Unto us a Son is given.



# A Message from Andrew Spires

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MINISTER OF STUDENTS & SINGLES

It's Christmastime once again. For Christians, this along with Easter, are the two most significant holidays (holy-days) we celebrate each year. Often, at this time of year, you'll hear the word 'Advent' tossed around. **Advent is defined as; the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event.** Each December, when I was growing up, we would light a candle at my home church in the advent wreath. It was always something that I thought was unique and every child hoped to be the one chosen to light the colored candle of the week. The pastor would always explain to the children and the congregation what the candle stood for that week, but looking back I couldn't really remember what **Advent** stood for? The word advent is derived from the Latin word **adventus**, which means **coming**. So, in the **First Advent**, we celebrate the coming of Jesus as a babe in Bethlehem. One day, we will celebrate His **Second Advent**, when He returns.

The whole of the **Old Testament** was pointing towards Christ and the **patriarchs** eagerly awaited the arrival of the unnamed **Messiah**. There were hints and clues over time, sent through God's prophets, but they faithfully waited for God's appointed time. All of the patriarchs died, faithfully waiting, not having seen the Messiah with their own eyes. **Hebrews 11:39-40** says; "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect." The patriarchs had the Law, but not the Gospel. They had truth, but not grace. The patriarchs awaited the unnamed Messiah, but we know His holy name. Jesus is the Truth, the very Word made flesh who dwelt among us, full of mercy and grace.

Some Protestant churches have gotten away from even mentioning **Advent** because it's not found in the bible and because it finds its roots in tradition from the Catholic Church (although the earliest Protestants actually celebrated Advent as well). For all Christians, **Advent** should hold a special place of **preparation**, as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus at Christmastime. In this way we join with our spiritual ancestors of the Old Testament who waited on the promised Messiah to come. We also join with the New Testament Church, who for two-thousand years have been patiently and faithfully awaiting His return. For Catholics, the colored candles have different meanings but for Protestants, we assign them more biblical and practical meanings such as; royalty, hope, joy, the blood of Jesus-forgiveness, and purity. Reflect on Jesus' **First Advent**, and the sovereign plan of God that unfolded in the life and ministry of Christ. Then, examine your hearts, and ask yourselves several questions; 1.) Are you looking forward to His Second Advent?, 2.) Are you ready?, and 3.) Who are you taking with you?

God bless & Merry Christmas,  
drew

# A Message from David Stephens

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CHILDREN'S MINISTER



This is a very special time of the year. We have decorated our homes, our church, some will decorate their cars, and it is festive and great fun. We are celebrating Jesus and it is good. **Because Jesus is Love, Joy, Peace in perfection.** We have Hope because Jesus came to earth and walked among his beloved, us. God is with us, and he can be with you more while on this earth. A Relationship with this Jesus that we celebrate allows us to have Peace. Relationship with this Jesus allows us to have Joy thru tragic situations. This God that has come to earth is so big, I have a hard time putting it to words. I cannot help but be overwhelmed when I begin to think about the fact that the Creator God came to earth to live among his beloved creation. "Who does that?" We are a messed up people, and deserve death. Our finite brains are not capable of fully understanding the Awesomeness of God. This makes me want to give everything that I am to help others to see and then know personally this God. I am filled with Joy almost to tears, when a child comes to me and wants to talk about getting saved and being baptized. (Sorry, maybe I get emotional when kids want to give their heart to Jesus) My heart is that every parent can participate in this heart change with their children. Every grandparent is able to see their kids raising kids to know this Jesus. Our celebration must be more than just a story and the pageantry of a festive season. It must be personal relationship building with the Gospel in focus. It must point to Jesus and ultimately the cross. We must be open and available to showcase why we are celebrating. We must listen to the Holy Spirit and act with courage when we are prompted. Let's serve each other with a fervor this season. Let's open the eyes of people in our community to see Jesus as more than just a baby in a manger, but as a Savior for all.

Thank you all for being Awesome!

### **Date to remember:**

Wednesday December 15 will be our last Awana meeting for this year. We will have our Awana store where our kids will be able to spend their much earned Awana bucks for Christmas. This is a fun night celebrating your kids heard work this past semester.

(I am accepting donated kids gift items for our store, preschool – 6th grade)



## Circles of Influence Spotlight



"MercyMed gives me an opportunity to put hands and feet to my faith - to do some things that show, hopefully, I'm living out what I say I believe: that Jesus died on the cross, that my sins are forgiven, that there's nothing I could do to earn that...and my life is supposed to be radically transformed to where it's not about me, it's about him and people around me...Mercy Med allows me to give back to other people in a way that Jesus has given to me: something I didn't deserve but that blesses me greatly."

-Dr. Jimmy Brooks, M.D.

Ophthalmologist, Volunteer Doctor- Board Member

## Community Prayer Tree



Please join us for a special program every  
Monday night starting November 29th@ 7:00pm

December 6th, 13th & 20th

Light Refreshments

*All are welcome to add their prayer requests  
to the tree and/or come and pray*

*Sponsored by the Women's Ministry of Lakewood Baptist*

# Lakewood Happenings

## December 2021

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			10:30am Virginia Kennedy Women's Missions			
			1	2	3	4
	7:00pm Prayer Tree					
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
5:00pm Deacons Meet 6:00pm Choir, Cello & Violin Christmas	5:00pm Bus Trip to Opelika 7:00pm Prayer Tree					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
6:00pm Instrumental Christmas	7:00pm Prayer Tree			Office Closed	6:00pm Christmas Eve Service Office Closed	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Office Closed				New Year's Eve Office Closed	
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## October Giving

	BUDGET	CTB	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
10/03	\$21,849.92	\$260.00	\$1,420.00	\$562.00	\$24,091.92
10/10	\$20,807.39	\$200.00	\$2,916.04	\$466.00	\$24,389.43
10/17	\$16,523.00	-	\$527.50	\$169.00	\$17,219.50
10/24	\$11,678.31	-	\$2,281.50	\$200.00	\$14,159.81

### ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

#### SUNDAY

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

#### WEDNESDAY

- 6:00pm AWANA/FLYTE
- 6:00pm Prayer Meeting
- 6:30pm Youth Worship

In Memory of:

Andrew Currier

From: Gail Brantley for Samaritan's Purse  
Brenda Evans for Student Missions  
Charlene Keeter for Student Missions  
Glenda Medley for General Fund  
Jan & Shelrea Funderburk for Food Bank  
Carole Ray, Clint & Cory Collins for Virginia Kennedy Women's Ministry  
Clara Jean Watson for Lottie Moon

Harry Horne

From: Grant & Katy Bowden

Clara Grimes

From: Carole Ray for Music Ministry

Judy Carter

From: Carole Ray for Music Ministry  
Rex Carter for Amen Choir

Gene Cameron

From: Mr & Mrs Eddie Hightower for Amen Choir

Leon Wooten

From: Clara Jean Watson for Lottie Moon

In Honor of:

Clara Jean Watson

From: Terry Grimes for COI

Lyn Jones

From: Terry Grimes for OCC

Glenn & Daphne Hughes

From: Patricia Thomas for Food Bank

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**Bus Trip to Opelika**

**Victorian Front Porch Christmas Tour**

**December 13th @ 5:00pm**

**Dinner at McDonald's in Opelika**

**Call Gail @ 706-315-1744 to reserve your spot**

**REX W. CARTER**

AND

**SANDRA E. CLIFFORD**

**CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO  
OUR WEDDING**

**JANUARY 8TH, 2022**

**2:00PM @ LBC**

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**RECEPTION & LIGHT MEAL TO  
FOLLOW IN THE FAC**

~

**KINDLY RSVP BY DECEMBER  
18TH BY TEXT TO:**

**208-512-3054**

MINISTERIAL STAFF

• **MR Hamilton**

• PASTOR

• BROTHERMR@LBCPC.ORG

• **Charles Keown**

• MUSIC & SENIOR ADULTS

• CHARLES@LBCPC.ORG

• **Andrew Spires**

• STUDENTS & SINGLES

• ANDREW@LBCPC.ORG

• **David Stephens**

• CHILDREN

• DAVID@LBCPC.ORG

• **Jerry Horner**

• DISCIPLESHIP & OUTREACH

• JHORNER@LBCPC.ORG

OFFICE STAFF

**Melissa Costello**

FINANCE ASSISTANT

MELISSA@LBCPC.ORG

**Carol Breault**

OFFICE ASSISTANT

CAROL@LBCPC.ORG

**Linda Keown**

MUSIC ASSISTANT & MEDIA

LINDA@LBCPC.ORG

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

4011 LAKEWOOD DRIVE

PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA 36867

O: 334.298.6433

Fax: 334.298.4873

FAC: 334.298.6460

LBCPC.org

HOURS: M-TH 8:30AM-4:30PM

FRI 8:30AM-12PM

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