

Connections

LAKEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH DECEMBER 2023 VOL XIII: ISSUE 12 LBCPC.org



LAKEWOOD BAPTIST
CHRISTMAS
Services

DECEMBER 3RD | *SHEPHERDS & KINGS*

5PM | LIMITED SEATING 7PM | SEATING FOR ALL

DECEMBER 17TH @ 6:00PM | *INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC*

DECEMBER 24TH | *CHRISTMAS EVE*

NO BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

10:30AM | COMBINED SERVICE

6:00PM | CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE



A Message from **Andrew Spires**

LEAD PASTOR



As we approach Christmastime, we as believers may find it hard to understand why so many others don't view Jesus the way we do. Many people just believe Jesus was a good and moral teacher. Do you understand why this is actually a very dangerous view? Many of you have heard what C.S. Lewis once said and wrote about Jesus; "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else He would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." In simplest terms, Lewis said that Jesus was either a lunatic, a liar, or He is Lord, as it has been often simplified.

Consider the story of the Magi or wise men found in Matthew 2. We are told that the wise men traveled from the East, possibly Persia, Arabia, or further as they followed what we have come to call the star of Bethlehem.

However, there are some common misconceptions about the wise men. First, the bible doesn't say that there were three exactly. We assume, because of the gifts they brought (gold, frankincense, and myrrh) that there were three men. By early tradition, their names were Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. In the mid-1800s a man named John Henry Hopkins Jr. wrote the song; "We Three Kings" permanently cementing the idea that there were three kings who came to visit Jesus. So, in truth, we do not know how many there were or if they had any kingly titles. Second, though we might say that they followed the star of Bethlehem, they did not come to a stable in Bethlehem, but to a house in Jerusalem (Matt. 2:1, 11). They did not arrive just as Jesus was born, but much later, likely within Jesus' first two years of life, since that is the infanticide order that Herod gave, to kill all male babies two years and younger after being fooled by the wise men (Matt. 2:16). Third, these Magi just didn't happen upon a star but were likely learned astrologers (the Greek meaning of the word Magi) who apparently studied the heavens. They may actually have been royal advisors or wise men who served kings, but we don't know for sure.

No matter the uncertainty of all the facts, isn't it amazing that foreigners

sought out the child born the King of Jews? They literally dropped all that they were doing and went to see the baby king. They were fully convinced by the star (and possibly by prophetic Scriptures) that God was at work and so they came to worship Him. What an odd thing to do; to fall down and worship a baby! I wonder if these Magi were shocked to see Jesus at home with blue-collar parents and not living in some royal palace. Nonetheless, before Jesus was capable of any lordship claim of His own, people came at great expense, from great distances, bearing costly gifts, to recognize

Him as Lord and King. We might find it hard to believe that people today could miss who Jesus really is, yet some of His earliest visitors certainly recognized His true nature. Jesus was no lunatic, He is not a liar, but He is indeed Lord! In fact, He is the King of kings and Lord of lords! Matthew 2:10 says; "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed." I pray this is your response when you consider the true meaning of Christmas. That you are overjoyed to fall down and worship the King! God bless,
drew

Thank you to everyone who packed and prayed over an Operation Christmas Child shoebox this year!

Thank you to everyone who served Christ at the OCC Central Drop-Off Center at Lakewood!

As a Church we collected 1,042 shoeboxes...837 of those packed by our AWANA kids with your help!

As a Drop-Off Center we put 8,315 shoeboxes in cartons...and as a central hub for 6 other Churches who were also Drop-Off Centers, we sent 19,868 shoeboxes by truck to Atlanta!

Each shoebox comes with the story of Jesus in the language of the child who receives it. Pray that God brings a tremendous harvest of souls to Himself as children and their families read about the greatest gift...our Savior Jesus. God bless you!



LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Growing up in Virginia, Lottie Moon and her siblings chose to rebel against Christianity. At 18, Lottie followed Christ and was baptized. When she was 33, she sailed to China as a Southern Baptist missionary. She saw firsthand the world's greatest problem

– LOSTNESS.

In letters to Southern Baptists in America, she pleaded for increasing prayer and giving. Her letters raised more support for missionaries to be sent to China.

Every year, Southern Baptists collect the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® where 100% of the gifts collected send and support missionaries.



Your financial gifts to the Lottie Moon offering support pioneering efforts to take the gospel to unengaged, unreached people groups.

A Message from Israel Jane

INTERIM STUDENT & YOUNG ADULT PASTOR
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Hey Church Family,

As we dive into the holiday season, let's remember that this time of year might be challenging for some. The twinkling lights and festive songs can sometimes highlight the struggles we face. But fear not, because the story of Jesus brings a powerful message of hope.

In Isaiah 9:6 (NIV), it says, *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* This verse reminds us that Jesus came into the world as a source of comfort, strength, and peace.

In Matthew 11:28 (NIV), Jesus Himself invites us, saying, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* During the hustle and bustle of the holidays, let's remember that we can find rest and solace in the loving arms of our Savior.

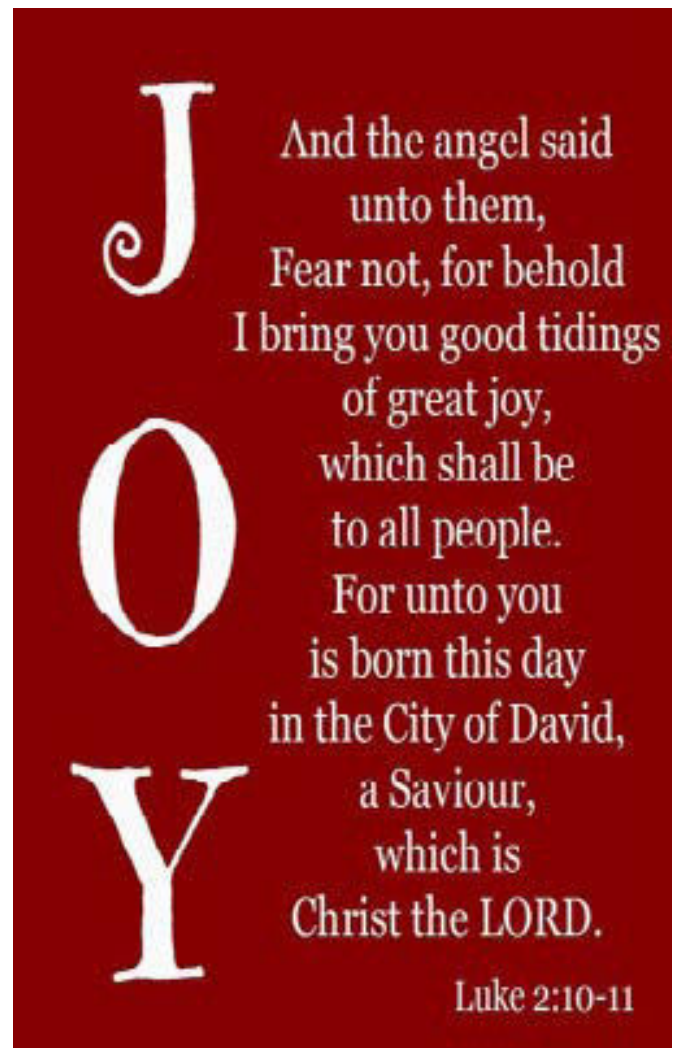
For those who may be feeling lonely or overwhelmed, the story of Jesus' birth reassures us of God's immense love for each of us. In Luke 2:10-11 (NIV), *"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'"*

So, as we navigate the ups and downs of the holiday season, let's lean on the hope that Jesus brings. Let's extend a hand to those who

may be struggling, reminding them that the story of Christmas is a beacon of hope that shines even in the darkest times.

Wishing you all a blessed and hope-filled Christmas season.

In Christ's love,
Israel Jane



Lakewood Happenings

December 2023

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
5:00pm Shepherds & Kings 7:00pm Shepherds & Kings 3	10:30am Amen Choir 6:00pm GriefShare 4	5	10:30am VK/WMU 6	6:00pm Widow/Widower/ Single Seniors Banquet in the FAC 7	8	9
5:00pm Deacons Meeting 10	6:00pm Sister 2 Sister Shannon Scruggs 11	12	Last AWANA for 2023 13	14	15	16
6:00pm Instrumental Christmas 17	10:30am Amen Choir 18	19	7:00pm Finance Team Meeting 20	21	22	23
No Bible Fellowship 10:30am Combined Worship 6:00pm Candle Light Service 24	Merry Christmas 25	Office Closed 26	No Events Tonight 27	28	29	30

October Giving

	BUDGET	CTB	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
10/01	\$20,307.22	-	\$2,430.00	\$1,936.00	\$24,673.22
10/08	\$206,679.00	\$130.00	\$1,050.00	\$2,091.00	\$209,950.00
10/15	\$12,802.22	-	\$1,381.92	\$445.00	\$14,629.14
10/22	\$12,621.07	-	\$6,490.00	\$147.00	\$19,258.07
10/29	\$11,813.43	-	\$5,841.31	\$525.00	\$18,179.74

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

SUNDAY

8:45am Worship
10:00am Bible Fellowship
11:00am Worship

WEDNESDAY

6:00pm AWANA
6:00pm Bible Study
6:30pm Youth Worship

A Message from **David Stephens**

CHILDREN'S PASTOR



This month let's celebrate the birth of Jesus and worship him as Lord in the secret place with renewed vigor. Let this worship flow with passion into the public place. Let all your family and friends see your priority of worship, and be pointed to Jesus. Let all people see the character of the Christ child through you. Our worship is our gift to God. Our public worship is the overflow of what God has been activating in our private worship. Our God is not "relevant". He is Holy, and we have been made Holy through the blood shed on our behalf on the cross. We are blinded by his Holiness. We 100% did nothing to deserve it, but we've been made Holy by Jesus and his sacrifice. We are nothing and we did nothing. We can only come to worship thru Jesus. When we come to worship with anything other than Jesus we are fooling ourselves. The me and mine attitude must be changed to you and yours. We must worship "convinced" that Jesus is all that we need. The preacher is really good at persuading, but it's the Holy Spirit's work through the Word of God being preached that convinces. Are you convinced? Has the me & mine attitude died? Do you bring your gifts and your time under the authority of worship to God? Is your brain, job, career, talents matched together as a sacrifice of praise? Is your sacrifice pleasing to the Lord? Do we bring our resources and our goals to the altar of worship? We must bring our dreams that we are investing in to him in worship. Our ultimate business plan must be "Jesus, I just want you" in all

that I do. We must bring a song of praise to the Lord when we are in the valley and when we are on the mountain top. We must worship together in the public space at our highs and our lows. This is Church! You cannot feel the weight of the gentleman 4 seats down as well as the elation of the lady 2 rows up unless you come to church.

I'm convinced! I will worship my Lord, and when I have little to bring to worship I will worship anyway. I'm not going to offer any worship today that cost me nothing. Let's be the Church for each other when we meet together, so that we can be the Church to our community and our world when we leave our gathering. This Christmas season let's celebrate Jesus, but also ask God to help us grow in our worship to our savior, who sacrificed to the point of death for us, His beloved. Let's finish this year well. We have much to be thankful for. It is truly my honor to serve you.

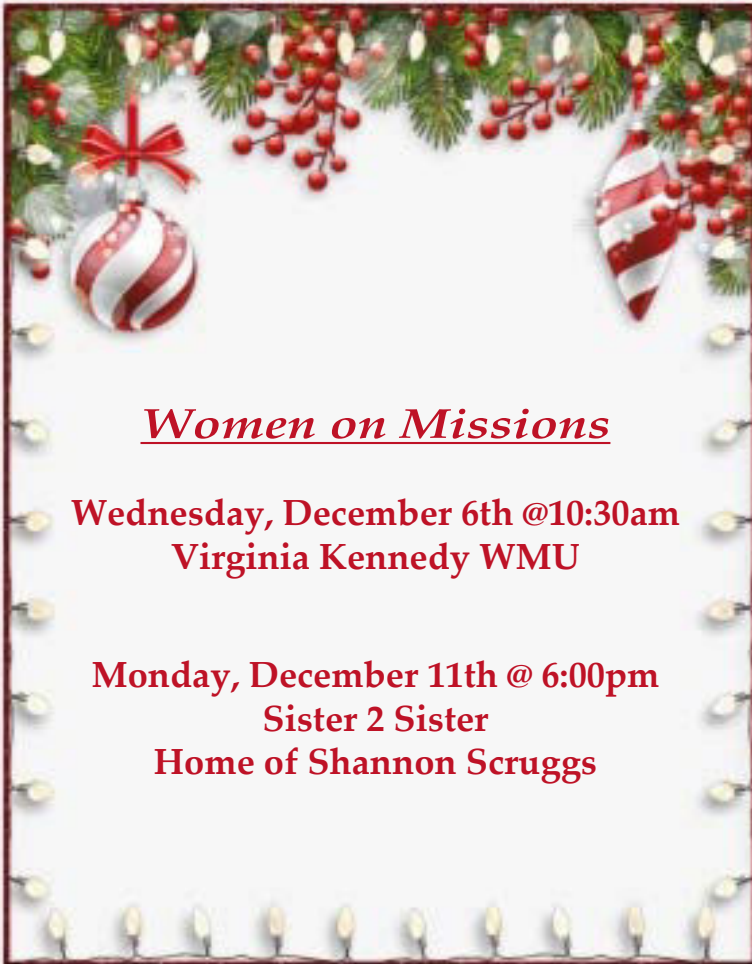
*Have a very Merry Christmas
from my family to yours.
David*

Calendar

Last AWANA:

Christmas Party and AWANA store
will be **Wednesday December 13**

AWANA will start back up after
Christmas break on **January 10**



Women on Missions

**Wednesday, December 6th @10:30am
Virginia Kennedy WMU**

**Monday, December 11th @ 6:00pm
Sister 2 Sister
Home of Shannon Scruggs**

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

**JESUS
IS
THE
REASON
FOR
THE
SEASON**

MINISTERIAL STAFF

ANDREW SPIRES

- LEAD PASTOR
- ANDREW@LBCPC.ORG

•

Charles Keown

- WORSHIP & SENIOR
- ADULT PASTOR
- CHARLES@LBCPC.ORG

•

Israel Jane - Interim

- INTERIM STUDENT &
- YOUNG ADULT PASTOR
- ISRAELDJANE@GMAIL.COM

•

David Stephens

- CHILDREN'S PASTOR
- DAVID@LBCPC.ORG

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In Memory of:

Arthur Burrows

For Homebound
from Steve & Nancy Stainsby
Clara Jean Watson

Steve Harris

For General Fund
from Jeff & Mary Lynn Black

Becky Smith

for LOAF
from Ricky Smith

Peyton Beck

For OCC
from Glenda Medley

Dr. Vincent Currier

For Lottie Moon
from Myra Currier

In Honor of:

Judy Ezell

For Lottie Moon
from Myra Currier

OFFICE STAFF

Melissa Costello

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT
MELISSA@LBCPC.ORG

Carol Breault

OFFICE & PASTORAL
CARE ASSISTANT
CAROL@LBCPC.ORG

Linda Keown

WORSHIP & MEDIA
ASSISTANT
LINDA@LBCPC.ORG

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH
4011 LAKEWOOD DRIVE
PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA 36867
O: 334.298.6433
LBCPC.org
HOURS: M-TH 8:30AM-4:30PM
FRI 8:30AM-12PM

