



BLUFF PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Worship In December

**Please remember to register on Realm or with the main office for any worship service that you plan to attend.*

December 6 and 13

- 8:00 AM in the Sanctuary - Advent Word and Table (a Traditional Worship service with weekly Holy Communion)
- 9:00 AM in the Chapel - The Gathering at Bluff Park (a Modern Worship Service)
- 10:30 am in the Sanctuary - Traditional Worship

December 20

- 8:00 AM in the Sanctuary - Advent Word and Table (a Traditional Worship service with weekly Holy Communion)
- 9:00 AM in the Chapel - The Gathering at Bluff Park (a Modern Worship Service)
- 10:30 am in the Sanctuary - Lessons and Carols in Traditional Worship

Christmas Eve Worship Services

- December 23 at 6:00 pm - Traditional Worship Christmas Eve Candlelight and Holy Communion
- December 24 at 3:00 and 6:00 pm - Traditional Worship Christmas Eve Candlelight and Holy Communion (*in-person worship extremely limited seating and/or overflow seating*).
- December 24 at 3:00 and 6:00 pm - The Gathering Christmas Eve in the Chapel

Online Christmas Eve Services

Join the Livestream of our Christmas Eve worship services live from the Sanctuary or Chapel:

- 3:00 pm - The Gathering Christmas Eve
- 6:00 pm - Traditional Worship

Generosity and Tithing to Bluff Park UMC

We want our whole church family to focus on two important forms of giving during the final month of this year. First of all, if you are financially able to do so please make sure that you faithfully fulfill your pledge for the ministry operating budget. If you did not make a pledge, please consider giving generously at the end of the year so that our ministries, missions, and staff are financially supported.

Also, we are asking every family in our church to make a Preserving Beauty, Preserving Ministry one-year capital campaign pledge. This is second-mile giving over and above your 2020 or 2021 ministry operating budget giving that will help ensure that our stained glass windows and HVAC systems in the Sanctuary and Chapel are sustained for years of worship and ministry. This campaign will also ensure that our ministry operating budget does not have to take on the debt service for our elevator tower project from many years ago. You can obtain a Preserving Beauty, Preserving Ministry pledge card from the main office. And remember, this is a one-year campaign!!!

COMING IN JANUARY: Our generosity and tithing focus for January 2021 will be on making a pledge to the ministry operating budget for 2021. Look for more information in the next newsletter!

Seek God, Lose Yourself, Find Life

www.BluffParkUMC.org

Sunday Morning

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP 10:30 am

THE GATHERING AT BLUFF PARK: 9:00 am

Worship online at Facebook:
www.facebook.com/bluffparkumc

Worship online at our website:
bluffparkumc.org/livestream

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Editor, Andrew Seltz

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Our faith, our lives, and our ministries take on a new life when the stories are shared with others. Help us tell God's story of love as it unfolds in our church and community. Send news, photos, videos, and stories to newsletter@bpumc.org

Message from the Pastor

As we approach the end of 2020, I want to say thank you to everyone who has made a difference during this difficult year. For all of you who have served in missions or in online roles, thank you. For all of you who are continuing to give sacrificially to the cause of Christ and to the assistance of others in our community, thank you. For all of you leading in worship and attending in worship and complying with the safeguards in place, thank you. So many



people have stepped forward and have been more flexible than ever before! Thank you all for what you have done. I am proud to be the pastor of and a part of this wonderful church family.

I hope you will all join us either online or in-person during Advent as we light the candles of the Advent Wreath and as we journey to the manger this year. I think that I am in need of the light of Christmas and the hope of a wonderful Messiah more than ever! Even though I am in need of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love ~ I am and always have been confident that God is with us and that God will be with us throughout this time. Paul once told his friend and student Timothy that even if we are faithless, God is faithful. May the God of steadfast love and faithfulness remain with you and with all of us as we embrace the season ahead of us!

Church Council Report

Our District Superintendent, Dr. Rick Owen, led our 2020 Charge Conference. The following leaders were approved for leadership in committees in 2021:

- **Finance Chair** - Judy Smith
- **Church Treasurer** - Bill Pearson, continuing
- **Assistant Treasurer** - Jack Armistead, continuing
- **Chair of Staff Parish Relations** - Chris Matheson, continuing
- **Lay Members to the Annual Conference:** Tina Hardy, Debi Whitcomb, Kathryn Coltrane, JB Thrasher

*more committee chairs and members will be approved later this year.

White Christmas Offering

Each Advent, our church takes up the White Christmas Offering in support of the United Methodist Children's Home. Their mission is to heal children, unite families, and change lives in northern Alabama. Through your support, children are placed in safe and loving foster homes and are able to continue to be cared for in college as they transition into independent adulthood. Simply assign checks or envelopes to "White Christmas Offering" in morning worship throughout Advent, or by dropping off your gift in our Financial Office. The White Christmas Offering is sponsored by the Bluff Park United Appeal Fund.



Mission Focus: Water Utility Bills

As a Matthew 25 church, we have pledged to provide assistance with food, water, and shelter along with other means of care and assistance mentioned in the 25th chapter of Matthew. Our food assistance programs are going strong and have been celebrated in the Hoover community and beyond. Even still, they continue to need your help and support. During the upcoming holidays, however, your financial help is especially needed regarding water and utilities. We understand that there are now 12,000

customers in the greater Birmingham area that may have their water cut off due to unpaid bills. As people are struggling to make ends meet, the assistance with water bills can be a life saver! You can help by making financial gifts over and above your annual pledge to either the Pastor's Discretionary Fund at Bluff Park UMC or to Urban Ministry. If you choose to give to Urban Ministry, please make sure that the gift is clearly marked for "utility bill assistance" (i.e. in the memo line of a check). For more information, please call the church's main office at 205-822-0910 or contact Urban Ministry at www.urbanministry.org. Rev. Garret Harper is the Executive Director of Urban Ministry and can be reached via his direct line at 205-848-4095.

Church Office Holiday Schedule

The church office will be closed for Christmas Eve on Thursday, December 24th and Christmas Day on Friday, December 25th. The church office will also be closed for New Year's Eve on Thursday, December 31st and New Year's Day Friday, January 1st.

Year End Blood Drive

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive in the Bluff Park UMC gym on Sunday, December 27th, from 7:30am–12:30pm. Please make time to stop by and give the gift of life. A Red Cross Donor Card or photo ID is required to make a donation. To schedule an appointment to donate, call 1-800-Red-Cross or visit their website at Red-CrossBlood.org and use the keyword BPUMC.



CELEBRATING GIFTS AND YEAR-END GIVING

Churches typically receive as much as 25% of their gifts in the last two months of the year. As you make your plans to complete your 2020 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 may qualify as charitable tax deductions each year.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

BPUMC Christmas Drive Thru!

Join us Sunday December 13th 4pm-5pm for our Christmas Drive Thru! We will have a live nativity and Santa will be there to wave at everyone and spread some Christmas Cheer! As you drive through we will be giving the first 300 children a candy cane and a pack of hot cocoa. We will also have a special "North Pole Delivery box! Kids can pass us their letters to Santa and he will take them back to the North Pole with him! We hope you can join us!

Preschool Virtual Christmas PJ Party

Pick up your supplies and join in the fun on your own schedule! The Preschool PJ Party has gone virtual! You will swing by on Sunday December 6th 11:45am-1pm to the playground entrance to grab your prepacked craft supply kit for your preschooler's and their siblings. Just let us know how many you need. Later you will be emailed a link to a video of Mrs Claus signing songs and telling stories just for your little ones! **THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER IS NOVEMBER 29TH!**

Register for the Preschool Virtual Christmas PJ Party!

<http://bluffparkumc.org/preschool-virtual-christmas-pj-party>



Christmas Movie Night for 4k-5th Grade

Sign your kids up for our special Christmas Movie Night Saturday December 12th 3pm-6pm! We will be watching "The Star" and some other short Christmas videos. We will be serving them two snacks (one sweet, one popcorn) and water. We will also be doing a small craft. All of this will take place in the Chapel. Space is limited to 25 kids and masks and social distancing between households is mandatory. Register your kids for the Christmas Movie Night here:

<http://bluffparkumc.org/christmas-movie-night>

STUDENT MINISTRY

SERVE DAY IS SUNDAY DECEMBER 6TH 1PM-3PM

JT has created a list of folks that need a little help. We will divide up into teams to get them the help they need.

If you would like to sign your student up for serve day email mhendon@bpumc.org

(Do you need some help around your house? Call Jt at the church office or email him at youthdirector@bpumc.org to see if you are eligible for some help. We are only working outside right now with our covid precautions)

AT HOME CHRISTMAS WREATHS

Register to reserve your at-home Advent Wreath containing a round candleholder structure and four candles for the Advent Wreath. You can come to the church office to pick out your Advent Wreath kit or you may contact the church about safe in-person interaction or delivery. If you would like to donate to this initiative, about \$12-\$14 was used to purchase each Advent Wreath set.



ADULT MINISTRY

History of the Advent Wreath

Advent is a season of waiting, expecting, and hoping. Beginning four Sundays prior to Christmas and ending on Christmas Eve, Advent helps us prepare for the coming, or “advent” of the Christ child at Christmas. For hundreds of years, Christians have used an Advent Wreath to inspire their hopes for the coming of Christ.

It's thought that the origins of the Advent wreath lie in the customs of people in the far northern countries of Scandinavia - customs that originated long before the birth of Christ. Because they couldn't do farm work outdoors in the winter, people brought the wheels of their wagons into their homes and decorated them with greens, put candles on them and hung them from the ceiling on a wire. They would then light the candles and twirl the wheel to become a glowing prayer to the god of light in this time of winter darkness.

Christians later adapted this custom to celebrate the coming birth of Christ, the Light of the World.



The Open Door Café

All Open Door Café weekly programming is cancelled until further notice.



MISSIONS

November Food Pantry Report

Another successful drive-thru Pantry on the Bluff was held in November:

- 313 Households Received Food
- 24 Weekender Backpacks were Given to Bluff Park Elementary Students
- 7725 Children's Diapers/Pull-ups were Distributed
- 720 Adult Diapers were also Distributed

Our thanks to the 49 volunteers who prepared for and operated November's *Pantry on the Bluff*.

Troup 306 Packs Food

The girls from Girl Scout Troup 306 volunteered with the food pantry and packed bags on Sunday, November 22nd. They are working on earning their Philanthropy badges. The food they packed will be distributed in December.



PLEASE HELP OTHERS BY DONATING TO THE CHARITY OF YOUR CHOICE ON GIVING TUESDAY

(December 1st) or Anytime During December! Giving Tuesday is a day that encourages people to make charitable contributions. The day stands in contrast to Black Friday and Cyber Monday ~ the heavy shopping days after the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday. Since its beginning in 2012, Giving Tuesday has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. Giving Tuesday is always five days after the U.S. Thanksgiving Day, so this year it falls on December 1.

The BPUMC family has an opportunity to be a part of this effort, and this year the CARES Act offers a new tax incentive. This law allows all taxpayers to take a charitable deduction of up to \$300, even if you do not itemize. In plain English, if you donate up to \$300 in cash to a qualified charitable organization like BPUMC, your adjusted gross income (AGI) will be reduced by up to \$300~ and you can still claim the standard deduction. For those itemizing, the new law allows for cash contributions to qualified charities such as the church to be deducted up to 100% of AGI, up from 60% previously. This might be a good year to bunch multi-year gifts or to make a large cash gift to maximize both your deduction and impact the causes that matter to you.

In addition to BPUMC initiatives like the upcoming Capital Campaign and the Stained-Glass Repair fund, we have several missions/programs that are of special interest to our church family that need your prayers and contributions. If you would like to make a monetary donation to any of the following, please make your donation to BPUMC and indicate the name of the mission/program/project that the money is for.

- Water and Utility Bills (help for those who can't pay their bills)
- Festival of Three Kings (to purchase Christmas gifts for local children in need)
- White Christmas Offering (for the United Methodist Children's Home in Alabama)
- Urban Ministry (local)
- Fountain of Love/Fair Haven (local)
- McCoy Adult Day Care (local)
- United Community Center/Riley Center (local)
- John Elmore (Our missionary in Chile)
- BPUMC's Pantry on the Bluff (Food Pantry)
- BPUMC's Bundles of Hope (to purchase diapers to distribute in conjunction with the Pantry on the Bluff)
- Pastor's Discretionary Fund (to help church members or members of the community)

We know COVID has had diverse impacts on our congregation and the circumstances of many may have changed. If you are able to share, please consider these opportunities to make a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters in our local community and beyond.

Member Updates

CONGRATULATIONS...

Congratulations to Marissa and Jesse Keppley on the birth of a son, Brooks Ridge, on November 5.

Congratulations to Jill and Erik Moller on the birth of a daughter, Lotte Jane, on November 11.

Congratulations to Courtney and Carney Holland on the birth of a son, James Carney, on November 12.

SYMPATHY OF THE CONGREGATION...

The sympathy of the congregation goes out to Judy Morgan in the passing of her husband, Richard, on November 2nd. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family in their time of loss.

The sympathy of the congregation goes out to the family of Peggy McNutt Adams who passed away on November 20th. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family in their time of loss.

LIFETRACK

December 1

Luke 1:5-10 | Psalm 5

December 2

Luke 1:11-17 | Psalm 12

December 3

Luke 1:18-25 | Psalm 18:1-20

December 4

Luke 1:26-38 | Psalm 17

December 5

Matthew 1:18-21 | Psalm 20

December 6

Matthew 1:22-25 | Psalm 9

December 7

Jeremiah 33:14-16 | Psalm 25

December 8

Isaiah 40:1-11 | Psalm 28

December 9

Luke 1:39-45 | Psalm 38

December 10

Luke 1:46-56 | Psalm 37:1-18

December 11

Luke 1:67-80 | Psalm 35

December 12

Philippians 4:4-9 | Psalm 63

December 13

Judges 2:16-23 | Psalm 98

December 14

Zechariah 6:12-13 | Psalm 41

December 15

Malachi 3:1-6 | Psalm 48

December 16

Galatians 4:4-7 | Psalm 49

December 17

1 Timothy 1:12-17 | Psalm 50

December 18

Titus 3:1-7 | Psalm 54

December 19

Isaiah 9:2-7 | Psalm 55

December 20

Philippians 2:1-11 | Psalm 8

December 21

Philippians 2:12-18 | Psalm 23

December 22

John 3:1-15 | Psalm 66

December 23

John 3:16-21 | Psalm 111

December 24

Luke 2:1-7 | Psalm 96

December 25

Luke 2:8-20 | Psalm 97

December 26

Luke 2:21-38 | Psalm 148

December 27

Matthew 2:1-12 | Psalm 93

December 28

Matthew 2:13-18 | Psalm 26

December 29

Isaiah 61:10-62:3 | Psalm 20

December 30

2 Peter 3:8-13 | Psalm 21

December 31

John 8:12-19 | Psalm 27

Monthly Calendar for December 2020

Tuesday, December 1 9:30 am Becky Walker Bible Study	9:00 am The Gathering at Bluff Park 10:30 am Traditional Worship Service	3:00 pm The Gathering Christmas Eve Worship
Wednesday, December 2 7:00 am Food Pantry 5:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal 5:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	4:00 pm Christmas Drive-Thru	3:00 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
Sunday, December 6 8:00 am Word and Table Service 9:00 am The Gathering at Bluff Park 10:30 am Traditional Worship Service	Monday, December 14 6:00 pm Missions Committee	6:00 pm The Gathering Christmas Eve Worship
Tuesday, December 8 8:30 am Maintenance 9:30 am Becky Walker Bible Study 6:00 pm Under the Bridge	Tuesday, December 15 9:30 am Becky Walker Bible Study 6:00 pm Under the Bridge	6:00 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
Wednesday, December 9 5:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal 5:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	Wednesday, December 16 5:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal 5:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	Friday, December 25—Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED
Saturday, December 12 3:00 pm Parent's Night Out 3:00 pm Children's Christmas Movie Night	Sunday, December 20 8:00 am Word and Table Service 9:00 am The Gathering at Bluff Park 10:30 am Traditional Worship Service	Sunday, December 27 7:30 am Red Cross Blood Drive 9:00 am The Gathering at Bluff Park 10:30 am Traditional Worship Service
Sunday, December 13 8:00 am Word and Table Service	Tuesday, December 22 9:30 am Becky Walker Bible Study	Tuesday, December 29 9:30 am Becky Walker Bible Study
	Wednesday, December 23 5:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal 5:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Eve Worship	6 Wednesday, December 30 5:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal 5:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
	Thursday, December 24—Christmas Eve OFFICE CLOSED	Thursday, December 31—New Year's Eve OFFICE CLOSED

How To Worship Online

On Sunday mornings the weekly worship Livestream can be found on our Facebook Pages. If you aren't a Facebook user, there is also a dedicated page on our website where you can tune in live each week. The link to the livestream page is on the upper right of the website homepage and will take you to the Livestream page.

If you are not able to tune in to the live broadcast, the full service recording is available immediately after the service on the Livestream page and on Facebook.

Even when we are able to return to our normal worship schedule, our Livestream is available every week. No matter what happens in the coming weeks, you can stay connected and worship with your church family here at Bluff Park.

Step 1: Visit www.bluffparkumc.org

Step 2: Click "Livestream" in the top ribbon



MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

In Memory of...

BUNDLES OF HOPE

Peggy Adams, by Heely-Brown Company

FESTIVAL OF THREE KINGS

Mike Barron, by Luanne Barron

FOOD PANTRY

Dr. Richard Morgan, by David and Jeannie Jenkins

Jack Phillips, by David and Celeste Cisco, Erney and Ann Edwards

MUSIC FUND

Jim Nichols, by David and Jeannie Jenkins

OPERATING FUND

Linda King, by Jim and Sandy Dollar, Gail Garner, Mary Mills, Jim and Betty Moon, Jack and Judy Stevens

Dr. Richard Morgan, by Terry and Ann Bice, Canterbury Class, Ron and Nancy Drummond

Jim Nichols, by Brookwood Medical Auxiliary
PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY

Maxie Carr, by J.B. and Frankie Thrasher

Linda King, by Curtis and Paula Thompson

Dr. Richard Morgan, by J.B. and Frankie Thrasher
UMCOR

Robin Martin, by Randy and Michele Patterson

In Honor of...

PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY

Pam Phagan, by Pat and Carol Westbrook

Note: Some Memorials and Honorariums are not listed by the request of the donors.



Bluff Park
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

— Rooted in Faith, Growing in Grace —

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

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follow us



Christmas Poinsettias

Reserve your beautiful poinsettia now to remember or honor a loved one at Christmas. The cost is \$15.00 per plant payable to the church.

Deadline for ordering is December 7th.

In Honor Of: _____ **by** _____

In Memory of: _____ **by** _____



Return order form and payment to the church office.

Check One: Will Pick Up / Donate To Flower Ministry