



BLUFF PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Worship In December

The Advent and Christmas season is an important and cherished time in the life of the church. We prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child throughout the season of Advent with a special Advent sermon series in Traditional Worship and The Gathering, a special Choral Traditional Worship service, and Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship.

December 4

- 10:00 am in the Sanctuary - Traditional Worship
- 10:00 am in the Chapel - The Gathering

December 11

- 10:00 am in the Sanctuary - Choral Worship Service "Christmas Oratorio"
- 10:00 am in the Chapel - The Gathering

December 18

- 10:00 am in the Sanctuary - Traditional Worship
- 10:00 am in the Chapel - The Gathering

Christmas Eve Worship Services

- December 24 at 3:00 and 5:00 pm - Traditional Worship Christmas Eve Candlelight and Holy Communion in the Sanctuary
- December 24 at 5:00 pm - The Gathering Christmas Eve Candlelight and Holy Communion 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 - Traditional Worship
- 5:00 pm - The Gathering Christmas Eve

Recorded replays of the online services are available immediately following the conclusion of each service on our website and YouTube channel.

December 25

- 10:00 am in the Sanctuary - Traditional Worship Lessons & Carols Service
- 10:00 am in the Chapel - The Gathering

BLUFF PARK SANCTUARY CHOIR CHRISTMAS 2022

SAVE THE DATE!!

Sunday Morning December 11th @ 10:00am

Bluff Park UMC Chancel Choir will be presenting The Oratorio de Noël, Op. 12, by Camille Saint-Saëns, also known as his Christmas Oratorio. This major work is a cantata-like work scored for soloists, chorus, organ, strings and harp. While an organist at La Madeleine, Saint-Saëns wrote the Christmas Oratorio in less than two weeks in 1858, completing it ten days before its premiere on Christmas 1858.

The work will feature five professional soloists, three of whom are Mr. DeWeese's former students now singing professionally, Emily Yocum Black, soprano, Natalie Krumpansky, contralto, and Jacob Waid, baritone. The mezzo-soprano role will be sung by Dr. Emily Jaworski Koriath, voice faculty member at UAB, and Caleb Clark, local professional tenor from the Birmingham area. The work is scored in ten movements where the Chancel Choir will be singing on six of the movements. The work will be sung in English and will tell the story of the coming of the Christ Child from the account in the gospel of Luke. The soloist and choir will be accompanied by a professional string orchestra, harp and organ.

This is an excellent time to invite your family and friends to attend our Sunday morning worship service on December 11th @ 10:00am, to experience this magnificent musical presentation by our music ministry.

Rooted in Faith, Growing in Grace

www.BluffParkUMC.org

Sunday Morning

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP 10:00 am

THE GATHERING AT BLUFF PARK: 10:00 am

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 am

Nursery care available all morning!

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Published monthly by

Bluff Park United Methodist Church

733 Valley Street, Hoover, AL 35226

Article deadline 2nd Tuesday monthly

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

Hello Bluff Park Family!

Our word, "advent" comes to us from the Latin "adventus" which means, "coming." It is during advent that we celebrate the advents of the Christ: remembering his first advent as the Child of the Manger, and the promise of his second advent as the King of Kings. We are preparing our hearts and lives to both receive anew the coming of the Christ as the Child of Bethlehem, as well as preparing for the return of the King of Kings.

We want to be doers of the Word, as well as hearers. We are taking this advent journey together. During this season we will share in special worship celebrations, times for fellowship, and mission opportunities. More information about these can be found throughout our newsletter.

I hope you enjoy this season, but more than enjoyment, it is my prayer that we will take an advent journey together. I hope, together, we will grow in the grace, love, and knowledge of God revealed to us through the Son... and I hope it will speak to us through the Holy Spirit that we will dare to put lessons we learn into practice and live it out. For unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given!

May you have a blessed Advent and see the glory of Christmas anew!

In grace and love,

Pastor Kevin





BPUMC Women's Retreat

It's time to register for the BPUMC Women's Retreat on January 21-22, 2023, at Camp Sumatanga! All women of BPUMC are invited and we hope you feel welcome to come and bring a friend or two if you would like. This year's theme is:

"The Well - Come. Surrender. Proclaim!"

Registration closes on Sunday, December 11, 2022. Cost ranges from \$135 to \$175 and all the details and registration links are on the event page of the church website. Not familiar with online registration and need assistance? Contact Amy Baird amycbaird@yahoo.com or Julie Adams juliead40@gmail.com.

Altar Flower Update

Beginning in January the cost of placing flowers in the Sanctuary will increase to \$120. The increase is because the cost increased from our florist. Thank you to every-

one who places flowers! They not only add beauty to our worship celebrations, but are also given to others by our flower ministry to help brighten their day!

Pickle Ball is Coming!

We will be marking—off a section of the old gym for members to begin playing pickleball. Play time can be scheduled by calling the church office once enough interest has been established. Please contact Mark Hearn (markhearn59@gmail.com) or Patti Fore (pfore31@gmail.com) if you have any questions about this sport.

Operational/Capital Campaign

Thank you to all of you who have made a commitment to the financial needs of our congregation. Funding is a real need, both for our ongoing ministries and programs as well as to retire our debt. We are daring to dream and are beginning to work to put our dreams into reality in the coming months as God leads! There is still time for you to make a pledge for our 2023 Operational Budget and to our 2023-2025 Capital Campaign to retire our debt. Commitment Cards are available in the Narthex on Sunday mornings and in the church office. You can also make your pledge online. May we all join together as we are blessed to be found faithful as God leads.

Church Office Holiday Schedule

The church office will be closed the day before Christmas Eve on Friday, December 23rd and Monday, December 26th. The church office will also be closed the day before New Year's Eve on Friday, December 30th and Monday, January 2nd.



CELEBRATING GIFTS AND YEAR-END GIVING

Churches typically receive as much as 25% of their gifts in the last two months of the year. Changing tax laws may impact your giving options. As you make your plans to complete your 2022 financial commitment, here is some additional information to help you with your giving decisions. Please note that this information is listed for educational purposes. Please consult your personal financial advisor to know what is best for their circumstances.

RETIREMENT PLANS – IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

Donors who are 70 1/2 or older can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from their IRA of up to \$100,000 annually. Donating from a retirement account offers the donor the opportunity to make a donation without experiencing capital gains taxation. The QCD should be donated directly to your organization and is exempt from income tax to the donor. As always, encourage your members to seek advice from their personal financial advisors.

GIFTS OF APPRECIATED STOCKS OR BONDS

As in prior years, donors may be able to decrease their tax liabilities by contributing stocks, bonds, or mutual funds that have experienced capital gains. Donors receive an income tax charitable deduction for the value of the security when they make the donation to their church or non-profit. The donor is able to avoid paying taxes on the capital gains they would have paid if they had sold the security rather than donated it. 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

As Thanksgiving has recently passed and Christmas is fast approaching, it seems a great time to reflect on and celebrate the ways God has blessed the Children's Ministry at Bluff Park UMC in 2022. In the past year:

- The number of children in our church and our community who attend our Midweek Meetup Program on Wednesday nights grew significantly over the past year!
- The number of children in our nursery tripled in size this year compared to last year!
- The number of children who attended Children's Church almost doubled in size this year as compared to last year!
- We provided age appropriate Bibles to the children of our church at special milestones in their lives (Baptism, Kindergarten, 3rd Grade)!
- We offered in person Camp on the Bluff and Vacation Bible School during the summer, which was attended by 200 children from our church and community!
- The children of our church packed school supply starter kits for 150 children in Bluff

Park, and the children of our church and community also collected over \$800 for Room 35226+ at VBS this year!

- We offered our Community Wide Easter Egg Hunt and Halloween Carnival in person this year, and developed relationships with many families in our community!
- In all of our ministries, we continue to teach the children of our church and our community how much God loves them, how they can have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, how they can grow in that relationship, and how they can share the love of God with others!

God has truly blessed the Children's Ministry in 2022, and we could not have accomplished everything above without the help of such a loving and caring congregation. Whether you prayed for us, volunteered with us, contributed you tithes and offerings, or loved on the children of our church in any way, we could not have done it without you! Thank you for investing in the lives of the children of our church and our community, and thank you for helping us have such a great year! ***Merry Christmas!***

STUDENT MINISTRY

With our students winding down their year we are winding down our programming for the year, but the few events we do have are going to be amazing! We have been so thankful for the incredible year of ministry and we are so excited about what is coming next for this ministry in the new year!

Events for December

Student Ministry Christmas Party

On December 7th the Student Ministry will be having our annual Christmas party from 5:30-7:30! We will have dinner, karaoke, and we will be playing white ele-

phant! All students who wish to play white elephant will need to bring a gift (no more than \$5 in value). It can be new or they can bring something from their home they are willing to give away!

Sr. High Discovery

From January 6th-7th we will be having our second annual Sr. High Discovery! This will be a two-day event just for our High School students! They will be experiencing some leadership training and they will be planning Discovery 2023 which will take place later this year in March! Registration is open right now!



ADULT MINISTRY

Wednesday with Friends – Niki Sepsis presents Hellenic Heartbeat in the Deep South

Join us on December 14th at 10:00am as Niki Sepsis presents *Hellenic Heartbeat in the Deep South: A History of the Greek Community in Birmingham, Alabama*. This program recounts the "Journey of Faith" of the earliest immigrants from Greece who settled in Birmingham, Alabama and the tiny church they founded which would a century later become the only Greek Orthodox Church in the state to achieve cathedral status. The program also highlights the impact the Greek immigrants made and continue to make on the culinary landscape of the Magic City with some of the area's most iconic restaurants that personify the Greek tradition of "filoxenia" or welcoming visitors into their homes. A lunch featuring Christmas favorites will be available following the program. Reserve your \$11.00 lunch on the BPUMC.org website, on Realm or call the church office.

Christmas Lunch at Classic on Noble

All Adults! Join us on Tuesday, December 20th for lunch at the Classic on Noble Restaurant in Anniston, AL. Buses will depart the church at 9:45am and return by 2:30pm. Donations will be requested to cover the cost of gas. Each person will order from the menu and pay for their own meal.

Register on the BPUMC.org website, on Realm or call the church office. Space is limited to the first 30 people who sign-up. Questions? email adultministry@bpumc.org.

Or call Sylvia Sumners 205-482-5680. RSVP by December 14th

Manhattan Transfer @ Hoover Library Theatre

Join us on Sunday, January 8th as we enjoy the 7:30pm performance of the singing group Manhattan Transfer at the Hoover Library Theater. We will travel together on the church bus. Bus will leave the church at 6:45pm.

Tickets to the show are \$35 per person and will only be available for the first 14 people who register and pay. Register on the BPUMC.org website, on Realm or call the church office.



LOCAL, U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

SERVING OUR CHURCH

Thank you to the 42 folks that helped clean up the outside of our church in October and November. Some much needed pruning was completed in front of the Chapel and several dead trees were cut down on the backside of the church.

We are looking to make "Serve Day" and/or "Clean Up Day" a quarterly event. If you and your family are interested in helping at the church with these types of events please contact Julie Adams at juliead40@gmail.com.





Each Advent, our church takes up the ‘White Christmas Offering’ in support of Embrace Alabama Kids. This ministry began over 130 years ago as an orphanage. Today, it is one of the state’s most comprehensive and vital resources serving babies, children, youth, teen mothers, college students, and families.

Your gift will provide them with homes for the holidays—and every day—embracing them in the powerful and unconditional love of God. Join our congregation in being the light of God’s love this Christmas. Consider giving the gift of homes, healing, and hope.

Assign checks or envelopes to "White Christmas Offering" in morning worship throughout Advent, or drop off your gift in our Financial Office. The White Christmas Offering is sponsored by the Bluff Park United Appeal Fund.



Year End Blood Drive

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive in the Bluff Park UMC gym on Sunday, December 18th, 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.



LIFETRACK by Email

You can sign up to have more daily devotional tools to enrich your LifeTrack Spiritual Formation Journey delivered to your e-mail inbox everyday!

To subscribe to the daily email distribution use your smart phone and follow the QR code or visit the web

@ bluffparkumc.org/lifetrack-daily

LIFETRACK

December 1

Isaiah 9:1-7 | Isaiah 60:2-3

December 2

John 1:6-23 | Isaiah 60:2-3

December 3

Galatians 4:4-5 | Isaiah 60:2-3

December 4

Luke 2:1-7 | Isaiah 7:10-17

December 5

Luke 1:5-20, 57-64 | Isaiah 7:10-17

December 6

Luke 1:26-38 | Isaiah 7:10-17

December 7

Matthew 1:18-25 | Isaiah 7:10-17

December 8

Genesis 12:1-4 | Isaiah 7:10-17

December 9

1 Kings 19:4-9 | Isaiah 7:10-17

December 10

James 1:22-25 | Isaiah 7:10-17

December 11

Luke 1:39-56 | Micah 5:2-5

December 12

Acts 27:13-29 | Micah 5:2-5

December 13

Luke 2:1-5 | Micah 5:2-5

December 14

Genesis 18:1-8 | Micah 5:2-5

December 15

Hebrews 10:19-25 | Micah 5:2-5

December 16

Matthew 6:7-14 | Micah 5:2-5

December 17

James 1:22-25 | Micah 5:2-5

December 18

Luke 2:8-20 | Isaiah 9:6-7

December 19

Mark 1:6-8 | Isaiah 9:6-7

December 20

Isaiah 61:1-2 | Isaiah 9:6-7

December 21

Luke 4:16-21 | Isaiah 9:6-7

December 22

Matthew 10:34-36 | Isaiah 9:6-7

December 23

John 1:1-5, 10-18 | Isaiah 9:6-7

December 24

Luke 2:1-20 | Isaiah 9:6-7

December 25

Psalms 98 | Isaiah 35:10

December 26

Matthew 6:25-34 | Isaiah 35:10

December 27

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

December 28

Isaiah 35:10

December 29

John 3:16-17 | Isaiah 35:10

December 30

John 1:14 | Isaiah 35:10

December 31

James 1:22-25 | Isaiah 35:10

Monthly Calendar for December 2022

Thursday, December 1

9:30 am Quilting Group
5:30 pm Adult Ministry Trip - Santa's Circus

Sunday, December 4

8:45 am Women's Bible Study
9:00 am Sunday School
10:00 am Traditional Worship Service
10:00 am The Gathering at Bluff Park
5:00 pm Christmas Pageant

Monday, December 5

10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Tuesday, December 6

9:30 am Becky Walker Bible Study

Wednesday, December 7

7:00 am Food Pantry
5:30 pm Adult Handbells
5:30 pm Youth Christmas Party
6:00 pm Men's Chorus
6:30 pm Choir

Thursday, December 8

9:30 am Quilting Group

Saturday, December 10

3:00 am Parent's Night Out
Christmas Event

Sunday, December 11

8:45 am Women's Bible Study
9:00 am Sunday School
10:00 am Traditional Worship Service
Sanctuary Choir Christmas Oratorio
10:00 am The Gathering at Bluff Park

Monday, December 12

10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry
10:00 am UWIF Joy Circle Christmas
6:00 pm Mission Committee

Tuesday, December 13

6:00 pm Under the Bridge

Wednesday, December 14

10:00 am Wednesday with Friends - Niki Sepsis
5:30 pm Adult Handbells
6:00 pm The Gathering Worship Night @ Wild Roast
6:00 pm Men's Chorus
6:30 pm Choir

Thursday, December 15

9:30 am Quilting Group
7:00 pm Book Club

Sunday, December 18

7:30 am Blood Drive
8:45 am Women's Bible Study
9:00 am Sunday School
10:00 am Traditional Worship Service
10:00 am The Gathering at Bluff Park

Monday, December 19

10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Tuesday, December 20

11:00 am Adult Ministry Trip - Classic on Noble
6:00 pm Under the Bridge

Wednesday, December 21

5:30 pm Adult Handbells
6:00 pm Men's Chorus
6:30 pm Choir

Thursday, December 22

9:30 am Quilting Group
6:30 pm Finance Committee

Friday, December 23

Office Closed

Saturday, December 24—Christmas Eve

3:00 pm Traditional Christmas Eve
Candlelight Worship
5:00 pm The Gathering Christmas Eve Worship
5:00 pm Traditional Christmas Eve
Candlelight Worship

Sunday, December 25—Christmas Day

9:00 am Sunday School
10:00 am Traditional Worship Service
10:00 am The Gathering at Bluff Park

Monday, December 26

Office Closed

Wednesday, December 28

5:30 pm Adult Handbells
6:00 pm Men's Chorus
6:30 pm Choir

Thursday, December 29

9:30 am Quilting Group

Friday, December 30

Office Closed



MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

In Memory of...

BUILDING FUND

Frances Bellows, by Marshall and Joan Mezzell

Pat Westbrook, by Marshall and Joan Mezell

OPERATING FUND

Frances Bellows, by Deborah Beavers, Steve and Evelyn Bradley, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Goodwin, Tom and Judy Novack, Rusty and Larry Vinson, Women of the Wall Bible Study

Nell Smith, by Mr. and Mrs. James Smith

PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Diane Broome, by Tim and Ellen Finley

Stokley Morgan, by Tim and Ellen Finley

Grizelda Thrasher Robertson, by J.B. and Frankie Thrasher

Pat Westbrook, by Curtis and Paula Thompson

UNDER THE BRIDGE

Pat Westbrook, by Tim and Ellen Finley

YOUTH FUND

Diane Broome, by Jo Ann Huddleston

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

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Bluff Park
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
—Rooted in Faith, Growing in Grace—

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follow us



X



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 12th.



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