

First Christian Visitor

“Where the Grace of God Awaits You.”

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A WORD FROM YOUR PASTORS

The sanctuary is beautiful with all the red poinsettias. It is truly the Christmas flower, and there is a legend of how this flower came to be.

In Mexico, it was the custom in every church for everyone to bring a gift for Jesus and place it in the manger near the altar on Christmas Eve. There was a little boy who was so poor that he didn't have a gift to bring for Baby Jesus. He was sad and prayed for a way that he could show his love.

As he came to church, he saw some dried weeds that he thought looked pretty. He heard an angel voice saying, "Pick the weeds and place them on the altar tonight as your gift."

The little boy entered the church and knelt down by the altar to pray. He looked at the face of the Baby Jesus with all the love in his heart and then he laid his bunch of dried weeds beside the other gifts.

Then the miracle happened. The bunch of dried weeds turned into a beautiful flower! The weeds were not dead, but alive as a beautiful flower, shaped like a star and was bright red.

This Christmas may we all remember that the miracle continues. We bring the dead weeds of our lives to the altar. Then, the power of God through Jesus gives us new life. We are no longer dead, but alive and magnificent! Praise be to God!

*Merry Christmas and God Bless you,
Edd & Mary Pat*

CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Our Cantata this year is a beautiful mixture of music and drama. The cantata "O Holy Night" will be the message at our 10:15 worship service on December 12. We will hear the story of the Christ Child's birth through the perspectives of a number of different biblical characters: Isaiah, Jeremiah, the angel Gabriel, Mary and Joseph, a lowly shepherd, and a very wise man. The choir will be singing both old favorites and new songs of this most wonderful season. We are excited about our message this year and hope that you will be able to join us as we praise God with the gifts that He has given us. Our joy in our Savior will surely shine through as we worship Him in music, song, and drama. Come be a part of this inspiring worship service on December 12th. I pray that this Christmas season will be full of joy, hope, and love for all.

In Christ, Jan

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

The Christmas Poinsettia list is now in the narthex. The cost of the poinsettias this year is \$17.00. Please sign up and select a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one. Checks may be placed in the offering marked for "Poinsettias."

CHRISTMAS FOR THE STAFF

Christmas time is the time for gifts of appreciation and love. We will have a decorated Christmas box in the narthex for you to place your gift for the staff. Please note on your check that it is a gift for the church staff. You may also mail your gift to the church in care of Steve Pasky. Please remember our staff and all the many extras that they have done for us this year. We are fortunate to have them and appreciate their ministry to us. *Thank you, Steve Pasky, Chair of the Personnel Committee*

NATIVITY SET

As part of our Christmas celebration, the CYF youth will begin selling raffle tickets for the opportunity to win a large hand-carved Nativity Set from Bethlehem, which may be viewed in the narthex. The tickets will be \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. The drawing will be on December 12, at 10:00. All proceeds will go towards the youth's mission trip next summer to the Holy Land.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICES

On Christmas Eve we will have two worship services to celebrate the birth of Christ.

The first service is at 7:00 pm. It will be a contemporary service that will be family and child friendly.

Kids' Praise would like to invite you to join them on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2010, at the 7pm service for a cute children's Christmas musical entitled "Aaron, The Allergic Shepherd". We are excited to be able to present this as the Christmas Eve meditation this year. It tells the story of a little shepherd boy allergic to sheep and the lesson he learned on that special night so long ago when Emmanuel came to dwell among us. The kids are having a fun time getting ready for this Christmas Eve service; so come out and support them as we all worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on the eve of His birth.

The second service will be a traditional service at 11:00 pm. This service will be more formal with a sermon and will be by candlelight.

Both services will have the worshippers walking forward to receive Communion. Also, they will both end with the congregation singing "Silent Night" by candlelight. The nursery will be open for both services.

THE LAST VISITOR OF THE YEAR

Please mark your calendar and remember we will not publish/mail-out a Visitor the last week in December, the week of 27th – 31st in accordance with our bulk mail permit. The last Visitor for 2010 will be mailed December 21st. *The Church Office*

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Life In Our Community

Sunday, December 12

- 9:00 Sunday School
- 9:45 -10:15 Fellowship Moments
- 10:15 Worship Service
- 10:30 Worship & Wonder
- 11:15 Chi Rho & CYF Shopping
- 11:30 Ona/Ruth at Carole Rudd's
- 3:00 Pastor's Class
- 3:30 Children's Musical
- 5:00 Younger Youth Groups Only
- 6:15 Snack Suppers

Monday, December 13

- 7:00 Men's Bible Study
- 10:00 Staff Meeting
- 6:30 Elders' Christmas Party at Clarissa Harms

Tuesday, December 14

- 9:45 Chapel
- 10:00 Women's Bible Study
- 7:00 Finance Council

Wednesday, December 15

- 6:30 Music Dept. Christmas Party At Jan Watts'

Thursday, December 16

- 7:00 Women's Bible Study
- 7:00 Men's Bible Study

Friday, December 17

- 6:30 Busy Believers Christmas Party At the Williamsons'

GRACE NOTES

- † Our prayers are with Connie Tabb, who is at Brookwood with an infection.
- † We celebrate with Earl Strickland, who received great news from his heart tests. He is fine and will require no surgery.
- † All of our shut-ins are receiving a beautiful candle from the church for Christmas.
- † If the Lord has blessed you financially, please consider sharing a special end-of-the-year gift of stock, property or extra financial gift. Contact Cece
- † Please return your commitment card for 2011 to the church office by Sunday, Dec. 12th. Together, we can make a difference.

CHURCH HISTORY CONTINUED

In June, 1991, a weekly College and Career Group began as a branch of the Singles Adult Ministry. The group quickly outgrew the office conference room where it met during the Sunday School hour. These young adults also participated in weekly SAM activities. An FCC Reader's Club was also formed in June and met in the library on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of the month. The first two books to be discussed were Frank E. Peretti's "This Present Darkness" and C.S. Lewis' "Screwtape Letters".

Church History Continued

Camp High Hopes VI was held at the Retreat on June 15 and 16 with 40 campers and 56 volunteers helping with horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, bingo, surprise guests, worship and fellowship. The theme of the June Vacation Bible School was Palestine Marketplace, 30 A.D. A village was created in the Family Life Center to look as it might have in the time of Jesus. Those attending became members of tribes and shared in the rituals of daily life in the village. This was an experience enjoyed by the whole family on Thursday and Friday evenings and Saturday and Sunday mornings. An All-Church Picnic on June 30 ended this busy month. It was also a patriotic celebration for the upcoming Fourth of July holiday, a potluck lunch with barbecue provided by the Retreat.

Tim Tingle resigned as Minister of Music effective July 14 and a Search Committee was formed to seek a replacement. July was once again proclaimed "No Administration Month," as it had been for the past three years. Board meetings, cabinet and department meetings and other administrative activities were cancelled in order to promote time off for worship, fellowship and fun.

A Big Bash Pep Rally for Andros Mission trip participants took place in the FCC parking lot to let this group know how much we appreciated their time and sacrifice for this special ministry to the Andros children. Popcorn and other treats were enjoyed at the event hosted by World Outreach. Jim Brooks led 11 from our church and 19 from other Disciples congregations who would be sponsoring a week long Vacation Bible School for 250 island children.

Andy Cooley was welcomed as our new Director of Music in September. Andy had studied voice with Andrew Gainey at Birmingham-Southern, had been a member of Town and Gown Theatre since 1963 and had been in several Summerfest productions. He had also served as music director at several area churches.

During October the Retreat once again hosted more than 5,000 children and adults for Pumpkin Patch. Kindergarten, first and second graders had an opportunity to experience nature, enjoy a cookout, choose a pumpkin and go on a hayride. The final Fall '91 CARE session was held at Hargis on October 26, and participants rode horses, painted pumpkins, enjoyed a hayride and petted a variety of visiting animals (including a pig, rabbit, ferret, snake and rooster).

SUNDAY'S ATTENDANCE	
SUNDAY SCHOOL	80
WORSHIP	174

CHRISTIAN COMRADES SUNDAY LESSON
<u>Sunday, December 12th</u>
"Christian Apologetics"
Seventh-day Adventists

CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTIES

Our church is blessed with special opportunities during the holy season to celebrate joy and fellowship. Already the church has celebrated the All – Church Christmas Dinner and a Men’s Christmas Breakfast. The following are Christmas parties planned for the rest of December:

Wednesday, December 8 at 12:00 pm – Young At Heart Christmas Party at the Spencers’

Thursday, December 9 at 11:00 am – Staff Christmas Party at the Spencers’

Thursday, December 9 at 7:00 pm – Men’s Bible Study Christmas Dinner

Saturday, December 11 at 6:30 pm - Seekers Christmas Party at the Lambs’

Monday, December 13 at 6:30 pm – Elder Christmas Party at Clarissa Harms

Wednesday, December 15 at 6:30 pm – Music Department Christmas Party at Jan Watts

Friday, December 17 at 6:30 pm – Busy Believers Christmas Party at Darren & Julia Williamson’s

Sunday, December 19 at 1:30 pm – Comrades Christian Party at David Hamilton’s

Sunday, December 19 at 5:00 pm – Chi Rho and CYF Christmas Party

Monday, December 20 at 6:30 pm – Mission Council Christmas Party at Gary & Annie Franklin’s.