

733 Valley Street Hoover, AL 35226 205.822.0910

Newsletter December 2, 2014 www.BluffParkUMC.org

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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The Gospel of Luke declares that God favors Mary, and that she has found favor with God. Gabriel, who had first visited Zechariah, now visits Mary and calls her: "favored one." What is interesting about this term "favor" is that in the Greek language, the word for favor is linked to the word "grace." You could almost stretch the angelic greeting to say: "Greetings, graced one." Mary is chosen by God's grace – not because of anything she achieved. There is no doubt in my mind that she is a devout woman, for Luke shows her acceptance of this divine mission as being more smooth than Zechariah's.

While Mary plays a special role in our faith and in human history, we must realize that each of us is not that far off from Mary. God could come to any of us and ask us to be a part of something new that He has in store for the world.

You see, Mary teaches us what it means to be ready for God's call. While she is still overwhelmed by Gabriel's presence and news, she understands that God's objectives and will are so much more important than our own. In order to be able to see and understand this, our hearts and minds must be prepared to receive this news.

As we read together through the first chapter of Luke's Gospel, and as we read the wonderful devotional written by our own church members, let us continue to make room in our hearts and in our lives for God's presence for both the small ways and the large ways in which He comes to us.

# **MEMORIALS**

PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND Rudy Schaeffer by Ann Gilliland Yevonne Bowman by Hubert and Mary Lindsey PERMANENT ENDOWMENT FUND Louise Sturdivant by Bob Sturdivant FOOD PANTRY Sula Parks by the Canterbury Class, Michael and All Veterans by Pony Thompson Sandra Miller UNDER THE BRIDGE MINISTRY Eleanor Walker by The Covenant Class, James and Becky McCrary Elizabeth Smith by the Canterbury Class

# HONORARIUM

BLUFF PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH John Irwin by James and Becky McCrary Becky Walker by the Wednesday Night Walker Bible Studv **Outgoing Officers** by the Opportunity Class FOOD PANTRY VICTOR HARBOR SCHOLARSHIP David and Penny Williamson by Curtis and Paula Thompson CHOĨR ROBE FUND Becky Walker by Fred K. Battle, Jimmie Faye McFadden, Stretch and Joan Dunn, Marvin and Diane Broome

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

# News of the Week

## THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT IS AT WORK

Our Advent sermon series this year is focusing on the Christmas Spirit. We've already had an opportunity to see that Spirit working in our midst. Over 400 hams were collected in November and distributed through the food pantry to families in our community. We have also had an overwhelming response to the cellphone collection project to help victims of domestic violence, and brought joy to the

children of Birmingham through donations to the Festival of the Three Kings.

### STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

To date, we have received 238 Financial Pledges for 2015. Your pledges help the church make responsible financial plans. If you haven't turned in a Pledge Card, they are available in the pews, at the Welcome Desk, through the office, or can be downloaded from the church website. As we come to the close of the year, we ask that you also take time to review your 2014 commitments.

## 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 to 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.

# ADVENT MORNING PRAYER

The holy season of Advent begins on November 30th. This year we will again have Advent Morning Prayer each Wednesday as a way of focusing our hearts and minds as we prepare for the coming of Jesus into the world. Advent Morning Prayer starts on Wednesday, December 3rd. The service begins at 7:30 am and will be held in the sanctuary. This is a service of Scripture, prayer and Holy Communion and lasts approximately 30 minutes.

# LESSONS, CAROLS, AND COMMUNION

One of the traditional worship services of the Advent season is A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. This service is a beautiful and inspiring way to hear the mes-

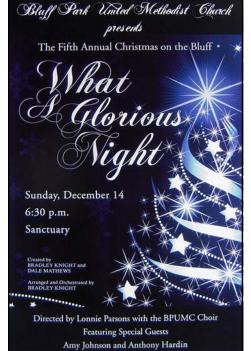
sage of this holy season. We will have A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 21st at 5 PM in the Sanctuary.

## UMW CHRISTMAS PARTY

United Methodist Women Christmas Party. Wednesday, December 10, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall. Reservations to Tina Hardy.

### **CHILE VOLUNTEERS FOR 2015**

The Chile Volunteers in Mission team has openings for additional team members. We will be traveling to Angol, Chile to support the work of John Elmore our Covenant Missionary Partner at El Vergel Methodist Agricultural School. The dates of the trip are March 13-27, 2015. If you are interested or have questions please contact Tom Duley.



# ADVENT DEVOTIONAL EMAILS

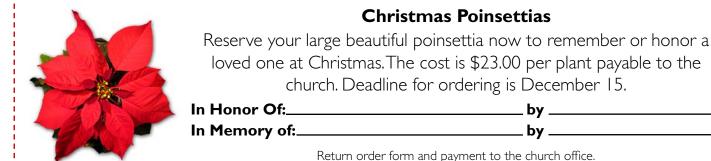
Every day during the Season of Advent we are sending out a devotional written by a member of the church. Print copies are available in the office and you can sign up for the email list and view previous devotionals online at the church website:

BluffParkUMC.org/advent-devotionals

# IN THE HOSPITAL...

Bernie Thompson–Princeton Nan Moore–Trinity Marshall Rogers-Brookwood

**CORRECTION:** Christmas Eve services are at 4pm&6pm. The second service was incorrectly listed as 7pm last week.



loved one at Christmas. The cost is \$23.00 per plant payable to the church. Deadline for ordering is December 15.

# **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

**THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** is Dec. 7 at 5p.m. in the sanctuary. All preschoolers through 5th graders are asked to participate. Our rehearsal is Dec. 7 at 2p.m. in the sanctuary. Speakers will rehearse during Sunday School that morning.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS-NEEDING 2 VOLUNTEERS starting in January, for Wednesday night programming (6:30-7:30p.m.,) Mrs. Carole needs someone to work with her while she teaches the Bible skills class to the 2nd and 3rd graders. We also need a volunteer to teach the K5-1st graders on Wednesday nights, 6:30-7:30p.m.

**ADVENT PREPARATIONS-** As Advent approaches, may you breathe in the love of God as you gather with the people who mean the most to you. Count your blessings and then be a blessing to someone else!

**THE 4th 5th FELLOWSHIP** will be going to Exit 456 at Camp Sumatanga on March 13-15. This is a 2 day event. It is a weekend designed to help children understand their Methodist heritage and to encourage their faith journey. It is a FABULOUS event sponsored by the North Alabama United Methodist conference. It can be a very important event for your 4th or 5th grader to attend!

# UPCOMING EVENTS

December 7 2:00pm-3:00pm December 7 5:00pm-5:30pm December 7 6:00pm-7:00pm December 14th Pageant Rehearsal in the Sanctuary Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary Church-wide Christmas Party in the Fellowship Hall Children's Choirs sing in both morning services

# **STUDENT MINISTRY**

HOLY GROUND WORSHIP IN DECEMBER. Our student worship service continues now that mid-week meals has ended. We'll have an Advent-themed series on Wednesdays, 10th and 17th. Since there won't be dinner upstairs, please bring \$5 for a light snack supper at 5:30pm on the 10th. Then on the 17th, we'll have a special FREE meal from New China as our college kids join us for a Holy Ground Homecoming! The worship service will continue to be 6:30-7:30pm.

**DISCOVERY WEEKEND - JANUARY 23-25, 2015.** Save the date for this incredible weekend of spiritual formation, when our high school students will lead our middle school students in worship, discussion, prayer and fellowship with the assistance of our college students and adults. High school students will begin meeting to prepare on Sunday afternoons as soon as we're back from Christmas break. We cannot wait to see what God has planned for our students! Online registration will be open very soon.

# THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 7, 10:00am	Sunday School in the Youth Wing
Sunday, December 7, 4:00pm	Holy Ground Team Rehearsal
Sunday, December 7, 5:00pm	Children's Christmas Pageant (afterwards we'll celebrate Leigh Delashaw's ministry in the Fellowship Hall at the Christmas Party)
Wednesday, December 10, 5:30pm	Snack Supper in Youth Wing (bring \$5 to eat or just come hang out before worship)
Wednesday, December 10, 6:30pm	Holy Ground Worship - Advent Conspiracy//Give More

# SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS** SUNDAY MORNING DECEMBER 7 CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS FOR OUR SICK/SHUT-INS: pick up a stocking at the Welcome Center, fill with goodies and surprises and deliver to one of our sick/shut-ins. Reap the rewards. **MONDAY DECEMBER 8** GOVERNOR'S MANSON - Christmas Tour, time to visit the 1st Lady's Gift Shop and Dinner. Traveling by tour bus. Cost: \$65.00pp call Betty. THURSDAY DECEMBER 11 SHEPHERD'S CENTER – Christmas program by Niki Sepsas. SHEPHERD'S CENTER CHRISTMAS PARTY The fun starts at **THURSDAY DECEMBER 18** 10:00am with special Christmas music and a visit from Santa. SATURDAY DECEMBER 20 **BPUMC RED HAT CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON** with Mary Jane Wesler – call Mary Jane for reservations. **Special Moment with Jesus**

"For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness." Psalm 33:4

### Bluff Park United Methodist Church

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

#### Address Service Requested

#### Pastors

Mike Holly, mholly@bpumc.org, ext. 104 Peter von Herrmann, petervh@bpumc.org, ext. 107 Tom Duley, tduley@bpumc.org, ext. 112 Director of Senior Ministries, ext. 103 Betty Hottenstein, bhottenstein@bpumc.org Director of Student Ministries, ext. 118 Bart Styes, barts@bpumc.org Director of Children's Ministries, ext. 121 Leigh Delashaw, Idelashaw@bpumc.org Director of Finance and Administration, ext. 117 Ben Sheets, bsheets@bpumc.org Financial Manager, ext. 101 Joe Pitard, jpitard@bpumc.org Director of Communications and Media, ext. 119 Andrew Seltz, aseltz@bpumc.org Secretary, ext. 111 Catherine Ward, cward@bpumc.org Director of Worship Music, Lonnie Parsons Organist, Jamie Davis Preschool Director, Tracy Estes, imaginations@bpumc.org



# The Week of December 7—December 13

#### Sunday, December 7

Sumary, December	1		
8:45 am	Morning Worship Service		
9:45 am	Sunday School		
11:00 am	Morning Worship Service		
1:00 pm	Canterbury Class Party		
2:00 pm	Christmas Pageant Rehearsal		
5:00 pm	Children's Christmas Pageant		
5:30 pm	Church Christmas Party		
Monday, December 8			
2:30 pm	Betty Day Trip		
6:00 pm	Choir Rehearsal		
Tuesday, December 9			
8:30 am	Maintenance		
6:00 pm	Choir Rehearsal		
Wednesday, December 10			
7:30 am	Advent Morning Prayer		
4:00 pm	UMW Christmas Party		
6:00 pm	Choir Rehearsal		
6:00 pm	Men's Chorus		
Thursday, December 11			
8:00 am	Shepherd's Center		
4:00 pm	Prayer Shawls Christmas Party		
6:00 pm	Choir Rehearsal		
6:30 pm	Handbell Choir		
Friday, December 12			
12:00 pm	Friendship Class Dinner		
6:00 pm	Choir Rehearsal		
Saturday, December 13			
9:00 am	Choir Rehearsal		

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2014 8:45am and 11:00am Morning Worship *"The Christmas Spirit: Wonder"* Scripture - Luke 1:26-28 Rev. Mike Holly

5:00pm Children's Christmas Pageant 6:00pm Church-wide Christmas Party In the Fellowship Hall

Lectionary Scripture Readings Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8

### SERVING SUNDAY

Ushers 8:45 Thompson 11:00 Vitality Cross 8:45 John David Shanlever 11:00 Logan Watts Acolytes 8:45 Clayton Marshall 11:00 Ruskin Gold Greeters: Opportunity Meals on Wheels December 10: Ken and Kay Adams Food Pantry January 7: TBA

# Last Week's Record

November 30, 2014		
Children/Youth	76/47	
Morning/Evening Worship	403/31	
Weekly Operating Needs	\$29,189.36	
Operating Receipts	\$12,469.50	
2014 Operating Budget	\$1,517,847.00	
Expected to Date	\$1,297,200.00	
Received to Date	\$1,133,944.34	
New Members in 2014	48	

### LIVING OUR LEGACY

January 1, 2013–December 31, 2015		
Amount Pledged	\$1,083,250.00	
Received Last Week	\$1,615.00	
Received to Date	\$578,554.86	

BLUFF PARK UNITED METHODIST COLUMBARIUM Information Sheets in Narthex and Church Office

> BPUMC FOOD PANTRY 1st Wednesday each month We are serving 200+ families a month. We appreciate all donations!

VALET PARKING Every Sunday morning! Drive to the covered entrance near the nursery and Fellowship Hall.