



## BLUFF PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### Christmas @ Bluff Park

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 prayer services, a special Advent Sunday sermon series, and special holiday worship services.

### Christmas Schedule

Sunday Morning Worship  
10:30am

Sanctuary Choir Christmas Concert  
Sunday, December 8th @ 6:00pm

Lessons and Carols  
Sunday, December 22nd @ 10:30am

Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship  
December 24th @ 3:00pm and 5:00pm

The Gathering Christmas Eve Service  
December 24th @ 5:00pm

### Advent Morning Prayer

Advent Morning Prayer will begin on Thursday, December 5th at 7:30am. This is a service of Prayer, Scripture and Holy Communion. The service will be held on each Thursday morning of Advent (December 5, 12 and 19). The service lasts approximately 30 minutes.

### Sanctuary Choir Christmas Events in December

This year the Sanctuary Choir will be joined by a professional orchestra and our Children's Choir as we present "*Small, Dancing Light*." This is a wonderful work that focuses on the themes of "anticipation" and "revelation." The author of this new work, Terry York, creates images of these themes in each of the texts, pointing toward the small dancing light in the manger.

The choir has been working extremely hard on this music since September, and I know you will want to be in attendance for this special time of worship. This is an excellent time to invite your friends, family and neighbors to this special musical event that I know will touch your heart, as the music and text points us to the coming of the Christ Child. **MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW,** Sunday Evening, December 8th, 6:00pm! Please keep the Sanctuary Choir in your prayers as we continue to prepare for the entire season of Advent. We hope that each of you will help us fill our sanctuary for this very special presentation of "*Small, Dancing Light*."

*Seek God, Lose Yourself, Find Life*

[www.BluffParkUMC.org](http://www.BluffParkUMC.org)

# Sunday Morning

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP 10:30 am

THE GATHERING AT BLUFF PARK: 10:30 am

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:15 am

Nursery care available all morning!

Care Contact Information  
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## Our Staff

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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

During the season of Advent and Christmas, we celebrate that Christ our Savior was born. In order to understand what he means to us and to the world, we take the time to explore what he has done for us as well as how his birth changed everything. Many of my favorite events



happen during the month of December, including several important events here at Bluff Park UMC. Many of these events are perfect for inviting friends, family, and neighbors to attend such as the Choir's Christmas offering on December 8, the service of Lessons and Carols on December 22, and the Christmas Eve services in Traditional Worship and in The Gathering on December 24.

December is also a season for faithfully finishing our annual commitments. Some businesses focus on end of the year reporting or employee evaluations. In the church, we focus on faithfully giving what we have pledged to give to God. Please remember to faithfully finish your 2019 Ministry Budget giving as well as your 10,000 Reasons Capital Campaign giving before the end of this year. Our financial office is willing to work with you to make sure you can get your gifts to the church in a timely manner. Hopefully, you will also make every effort to turn in your 2020 Ministry Budget Pledge Card as well!

During these holy seasons of Advent and Christmas, may God bless you and your family. May God allow His heavenly light to shine upon you and grant you warmth and peace. And may God allow you to share that light with all that you meet so that when we all sing "Joy to the World," we will be singing with joy in our hearts.



## UMW Christmas Party

All women of the church are invited to attend the UMW Christmas Party on 12/3. We will gather at 5:45pm and dinner at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Dinner is \$5 per person. Please RSVP to Carole Armistead at [ccadence@hotmail.com](mailto:ccadence@hotmail.com).

## Invite a Friend or Neighbor...

Christmas is a time of year when people are often receptive to an invitation to church. In December we will have a color postcard prepared with an invitation to our Christmas Eve worship that you can use to invite someone to church. The cards are available at the Welcome desk in the Narthex, and also in the church office. One fun idea is to tape a mini candy cane to each card before sharing them.

## Church Office Holiday Schedule

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

## Year End Blood Drive

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive in the Bluff Park UMC gym on Sunday, December 29th, 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 [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.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 2019 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

## 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 2019. In the past year:

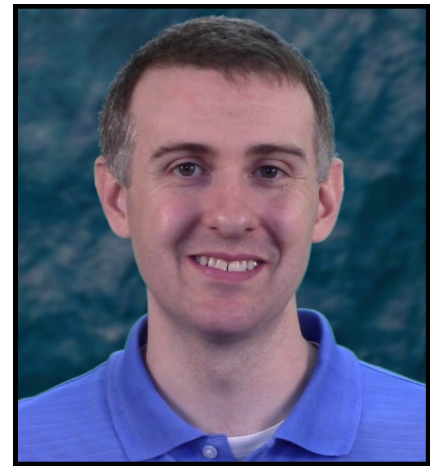
We offered 4 mission trip/field trips to teach the children of our church and community the importance of sharing the love of Christ with their friends, their family, their community, and the world. The 26 children who attended each field trip have shopped for and packed/delivered school supplies, Christmas gifts, food, etc. for people in our community and around the world who were in need of these things.

We offered our third year of Camp on the Bluff, a free skills-based summer camp geared towards children in our community who may not be able to afford to attend summer camp, as well as the children of our church. 60 children attended our first year (2017), 100 children attended our second year (2018), and 120 children attended this year (2019).

272 children attended Vacation Bible School this year!

The children of our church and community raised over \$1200 dollars at VBS to benefit Room 35226.

We continued to provide age appropriate Bibles to the children of our church at three key points throughout their spiritual journey: when they are baptized, when they enter Kindergarten, and when they enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. 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 form 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 2019, 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

Christmas time is upon us! We are very excited about celebrating the birth of our savior and all that God has done in our lives this year! We were blessed with both a great fall retreat and a great One Night for the Homeless. In this season of thanks, I just wanted to say how thankful I am to be the Director of Student Ministries at Bluff Park UMC and I am looking forward to a great 2020!

One December 11th the youth group will be having a Christmas party and we are asking everyone to bring a gift so we can play white elephant (a.k.a dirty santa). I'd encourage all students to find things around their house that they would be okay giving to someone (with their parents' permission of course) to bring as their gift. If you feel the need to buy something new, the MAX for bought gifts are \$5.

Registration for Discovery Weekend (January 31st- Feb 2) is open now at the early bird pricing! Sign-up before the price increases!

[bluffparkumc.org/students/discoveryweekend2020/](http://bluffparkumc.org/students/discoveryweekend2020/)



### Upcoming Events

December 4th  
Last Holy Ground of 2019

December 11th  
Student Ministry Christmas Party



## ADULT MINISTRY

### OPEN DOOR CAFÉ SPECIAL DECEMBER PROGRAMS

December 12

**Christmas: A World of Traditions**

Have you ever wondered how and when we came to accept a certain spot in Bethlehem as the place where Jesus Christ was born? And why is that birth celebrated in December? And on December 25? When did we begin decorating a tree for Christmas? Who sent the first Christmas card? Join us for the answers to these and other Christmas questions as we celebrate the holiday season with a visual presentation by tour guide and freelance writer Niki Sepsas who takes us on a round-the-world trip that highlights the origin of some of our most cherished traditions of Christmas. The journey begins in the Holy Land and continues on through Europe, Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific to see how people around the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

December 19

**A Holiday Musical Program**

Join us as vocalist Jerome Lewis performs our favorite holiday classics and leads us as we sing our favorite songs. We might possibly have a visit from our own Santa with his sidekick Mrs. Santa.

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#### 2019 Concert Series

Our concert series closes out with Taylor Hicks at the Lyric Theatre on December 6th and with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra playing "Home for the Holidays" on December 21. Both events are full.

**Bluff Park UMC presents**

**Washington, DC - Our Nation's Capital**

7 days and 6 nights. March 26 - April 1, 2020. Motorcoach transportation. 6 nights lodging including 4 consecutive nights in the Washington, DC, area. Two guided tours of Washington, DC, including the WWII Memorial, Capitol Hill, Embassy Rose, the Smithsonian, the Lincoln Memorial. The New Museum of the Bible. Tram Ride through Arlington National Cemetery. Admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens. \$695 per person. Contact Ida Carroll for more information. 205-329-3948 Flyers at the Narthex Information Desk.



### The Open Door Café

Exercise—9:30 AM—Meet & Greet—  
10 AM—Programs - 10:30 AM -  
Lunch—11:30 AM—Games & Movies—12:30pm

Thursdays In The Fellowship Hall  
All are Welcome!

**December 5**

*Mac Chandler*

LTC, IN, U.S. Army (Ret)

**December 12**

*Christmas: A World of Traditions*

**December 19**

*A Holiday Musical Program*

**December 26th**

*Closed*

**January 2nd**

*Closed*



## The Festival of Three Kings

Each year we help others experience the joy of Christmas by providing gifts to children. Individuals, families, Sunday School classes and others sponsor a child, receive a "wish list" and head out to the stores. These gifts are brought to the church and gathered together to be delivered to the families in early December. The Festival of Three Kings is sponsored by the Bluff Park United Appeal Fund. Thank you to everyone who participated 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.



## Advent Morning Prayer

Advent Morning Prayer will begin on Thursday, December 5th at 7:30am. This is a service of Prayer, Scripture and Holy Communion. The service will be held on each Thursday morning of Advent (December 5, 12 and 19). The service lasts approximately 30 minutes.

## Member Updates

### NEW MEMBERS

- Jessica and Drew Hall, Lily, and Colton - 11/3/19

### CONGRATULATIONS...

Congratulations to Megan and Brian Bohanan on the birth of a daughter, Libby Grace on October 26.

### SYMPATHY OF THE CONGREGATION...

The sympathy of the congregation goes out to Ron Jones on the passing of his wife Loy on October 27th. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family in their time of loss.

### SYMPATHY OF THE CONGREGATION...

The sympathy of the congregation goes out to J.B Dover on the passing of his wife Margaret on November 2nd. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family in their time of loss.

## LIFETRACK

### December 1

Isaiah 2:1-5 | Psalm 111

### December 2

Romans 6:1-11 | Psalm 1

### December 3

Hebrews 11:32-40 | Psalm 6

### December 4

Matthew 24:23-35 | Psalm 12

### December 5

Matthew 24:36-44 | Psalm 18:1-20

### December 6

Acts 13:16-25 | Psalm 17

### December 7

John 1:19-25 | Psalm 116

### December 8

Isaiah 11:1-10 | Psalm 150

### December 9

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 | Psalm 25

### December 10

Romans 15:14-21 | Psalm 39

### December 11

Matthew 12:33-37 | Psalm 38

### December 12

Ruth 1:6-18 | Psalm 37:1-18

### December 13

2 Peter 3:11-18 | Psalm 35

### December 14

Luke 3:1-18 | Psalm 32

### December 15

Matthew 11:2-11 | Psalm 98

### December 16

Acts 5:12-16 | Psalm 52

### December 17

Jude 1:17-25 | Psalm 45

### December 18

Zechariah 8:1-17 | Psalm 49

### December 19

Galatians 3:23-29 | Psalm 60

### December 20

Galatians 4:1-7 | Psalm 54

### December 21

John 3:31-36 | Psalm 23

### December 22

Matthew 1:18-25 | Psalm 24

### December 23

Luke 1:46b-55 | Psalm 62

### December 24

Luke 2:1-20 | Psalm 89

### December 25

John 1:1-14 | Psalm 85

### December 26

Acts 7:59-8:8 | Psalm 28

### December 27

1 John 5:1-12 | Psalm 98

### December 28

Matthew 18:1-14 | Psalm 2

### December 29

Matthew 2:13-23 | Psalm 96

### December 30

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 | Psalm 21

### December 31

John 8:12-19 | Psalm 90



# Monthly Calendar for December 2019

## Sunday, December 1

9:15 am Sunday School  
10:30 am The Gathering at Bluff Park  
10:30 am Traditional Worship Service  
3:00 pm Pageant Rehearsal  
5:00 pm Christmas Pageant  
5:30 pm Church-Wide Christmas Party

## Monday, December 2

10:00 am Prayer Shawl

## Tuesday, December 3

6:00 pm UMW Christmas Party

## Wednesday, December 4

7:30 am Food Pantry  
6:00 pm Advent Wreath Workshop  
6:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal  
6:30 pm Choir

## Thursday, December 5

7:30 am Advent Morning Prayer  
9:30 am Sewing Group  
10:00 am The Open Door Café  
6:00 pm Senior High Boys Small Group

## Friday, December 6

6:00 pm Preschool Christmas PJ Party

## Saturday, December 7

9:00 am Bluff Park Christmas Parade

## Sunday, December 8

9:15 am Sunday School  
10:30 am The Gathering at Bluff Park  
10:30 am Traditional Worship Service  
6:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Christmas Program

## Monday, December 9

10:00 am Prayer Shawl

## Tuesday, December 10

8:30 am Maintenance  
6:00 pm Under the Bridge

## Wednesday, December 11

6:00 pm Reconciler Group  
6:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal  
6:30 pm Choir

## Thursday, December 12

7:30 am Advent Morning Prayer

9:30 am

10:00 am Sewing Group  
6:00 pm The Open Door Café  
Senior High Boys Small Group

## Friday, December 13

12:00 am Friendship Class Luncheon

## Saturday, December 14

3:00 pm Parents Night Out

## Sunday, December 15

9:15 am Sunday School  
10:30 am The Gathering at Bluff Park  
10:30 am Traditional Worship Service

## Monday, December 16

10:00 am Prayer Shawl

## Tuesday, December 17

6:00 pm Under the Bridge

## Wednesday, December 18

5:30 pm Student Ministry  
5:30 pm Men's Chorus  
6:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal  
6:30 pm Choir

## Thursday, December 19

7:30 am Advent Morning Prayer  
9:30 am Sewing Group  
10:00 am The Open Door Café  
6:00 pm Senior High Boys Small Group

## Sunday, December 22

9:15 am Children's Sunday School  
Breakfast  
10:30 am Sunday School  
10:30 am The Gathering at Bluff Park  
10:30 am Traditional Worship Service

## Monday, December 23

10:00 am Prayer Shawl

## Tuesday, December 24—Christmas Eve

3:00 pm Church Office Closed  
Christmas Eve Candlelight  
Traditional Services  
5:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight  
Traditional Services  
5:00 pm The Gathering Christmas  
Eve Candlelight Services

## Wednesday, December 25—Christmas Day

Office Closed

## Thursday, December 26

9:30 am Sewing Group  
10:00 am The Open Door Café  
6:00 pm Senior High Boys Small Group  
6:30 pm Finance Committee

## Sunday, December 29

7:30 am Blood Drive  
9:15 am Sunday School  
10:30 am The Gathering at Bluff Park  
10:30 am Traditional Worship Service

## Monday, December 30

10:00 am Prayer Shawl

## Tuesday, December 31—New Year's Eve



## MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

### In Memory of...

#### GENERAL OPERATING FUND

**Loy Jones**, by Ronald and Carole Roegner, J.B. and Frankie Thrasher

**Mike Naumann**, by Xanthi Hahamis

#### PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY

**Billy Fountain**, by J.B. and Frankie Thrasher

#### MUSIC PROGRAM

**Loy Jones**, by Jack and Carole Armistead

#### BELL CHOIR FUND

**Betty Sinclair**, by Kathy Geesey

#### GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP

**Loy Jones**, by Dyer and Ronda Carlisle

#### FOOD PANTRY

**Loy Jones**, by Kay Adams, John and Sue Irwin, David and Jeannie Jenkins

#### BUILDING FUND

**Loy Jones**, by Alice Chase

### YOUTH

**Margaret Dover**, by Clifton and Jean Meador Brown, Dyer and Ronda Carlisle, Roy and Marjorie Duhon, First United Methodist Church Georgetown Texas, Julia Dunne, Patricia Reeder, John and Sylvia Sumners

### UNDER THE BRIDGE

**Loy Jones**, by Canterbury Class, Ed and Nan Thomas

### In Honor of...

#### NEVERTHIRST

**Jim and Sara Perry**, by Pony Green

#### MUSIC PROGRAM

**Bill Pearson**, by Shirley Kincaid

#### PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY

**Covenant Class Leaders**, by Pam McDonald

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

X



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# CHRISTMAS EVE

## CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

Traditional Worship  
3:00pm and 5:00pm  
The Gathering  
5:00pm



### 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 9th.

In Honor Of: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_  
In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Return order form and payment to the church office.