



SYCAMORE HIGHLIGHTS

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Pastor
Rev. Tracey Pugh

Deacon of the Month
John Jenkins

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December 2022

THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

Season's Greetings,

For centuries, the church has observed the season of Advent. Advent is Latin and means "the arrival." It is a time of waiting and preparing for both the Nativity of Christ and the return of Christ at the Second Coming. While the location was unexpected, His birth was not.

I have often wondered what people who are not Christ followers are celebrating when they celebrate Christmas. Year after year, our culture encourages us to focus on the gifts under our tree, the out-of-the-ordinary meals and charcuterie boards we will prepare, the cookies and other confections we will bake, traveling near and far to see family and friends, hosting house guests, and spending time with those we love. Some of us even put a little energy into wishing for snow.

Many have embraced a commercialized understanding of Christmas, which has altered the heart of the season. Gifts, culinary creations, cookies, and travel all seem to be the top things contributing to this time of year, making it the most wonderful time of the year. The Bible tells us that Christmas is about so much more. We turn to the traditional themes of Advent, hope, peace, joy, and love to understand the heart of Christmas. We will consider the themes of Advent until Christmas as follows:

God's faithfulness from the past gives us **Hope** for the present and the future.

Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the presence of Christ.

The arrival of Jesus brings us **Joy** because he is the very presence of the divine.

Stop striving to gain God's approval. You are invited into His family by his grace and **Love**.

As we consider these themes each week, I hope you will consider what is at the heart of Christmas for you. I pray that we all will be moved in some way that will draw us closer to the heart of Christmas, which is Jesus Christ.

Wishing you and yours a blessed holiday season and a Merry Christmas.

Hope, peace, joy, and love,

Pastor Tracey

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

MISSIONS MAILBOX

The Missions Mailbox will open for the season Sunday, December 4. Bring your Christmas cards for **ACTIVE** and **HOMEBOUND** members **ONLY**. Include the price of a stamp (60 cents) for each card. Proceeds will go to the Global Missions Offering.



**OFFERING FOR
GLOBAL MISSIONS**
BECAUSE **PRESENCE MATTERS**

CBF GLOBAL MISSIONS OFFERING

December 4-11, 2022, is our Week of Prayer and offering for CBF Global Missions. The Global Missions Offering supports international missions through Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Help support these mission efforts through your prayers and giving. Thank you in advance for your gifts.

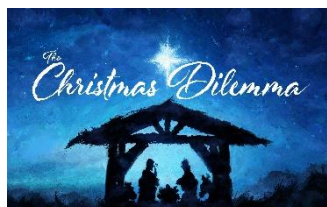
PRAYER WREATH MEETING



During the Christmas season, many deal with issues such as health concerns, grief, stress, and loss. In the midst of this, celebrating the joy of the season can be challenging. One of the most effective ways to help others is through prayer. We ask the entire church to join in a Prayer Wreath meeting Wednesday, December 7, at 6:45 pm. We will have a group devotion time, then fill premade evergreen wreaths with prayer to be delivered with cards to others to bring comfort and joy this season.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Join us on Sunday, December 18, at 5:00 pm for a presentation of "The Christmas Dilemma" followed by a special visitor and Christmas caroling.



CHRISTMAS CANTATA

The choir will present "Noel: Born is the King!" Sunday, December 18 at 10 am. With this musical, as we experience the wonders of the Savior's birth and celebrate His Kingship and sovereignty over all of us, we will be encouraged and inspired to let the peace of Christ reign in our hearts. Come worship with us as we celebrate the King of kings!



COMMUNITY LIVING NATIVITY

The Living Nativity, a free drive-through event for the community, is back this year at Barrett's Landing, and Sycamore is happy to be a part of it again for the third year. We need volunteers to set up our scene Wednesday, December 14, and to take our scene down Friday, December 16. We also need volunteers to be in the scenes for three nights, Dec. 14-16, from 5:30-7:00 each night. Don't wait; please sign up now outside the church office to be a part of this moving experience reaching out to our community.

CHRISTMAS AT SYCAMORE

Christmas Eve

Service of Candlelight & Communion
Will be held at 5 pm

Christmas Day

Service of Lessons & Carols
Will be held at 11:00 am.

There will be no Sunday School or nursery available for these services.

Come and celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We are moving into some of the busiest times in our church life. We have ongoing connections with our Backpack program through the Foodbank, cards, and Wednesday night meal deliveries.

Please give prayerfully to the Backpack ministry and watch for opportunities to pack the food or deliver it to Riverdale Elementary School. Our entire church body (family) can be involved in this ministry.

"Angel Tree"

Angels will be placed on the tree between November 30 and December 4:

1. Take an angel
2. Sign it out
3. Add an ornament to the tree
4. Return your gift(s) with the angel attached
*pay careful attention to due dates on your angel

Drive Thru Nativity

Bring your family, tell your friends and co-workers, and invite a neighbor. This is a great community event to share the beautiful story of our Savior's birth. See more info in the Living Nativity article.

Be the hands and feet of Jesus this beautiful season and beyond.

Community Connections Team

MISSIONS GIFT CERTIFICATES



Have you started your Christmas shopping? Are you having trouble finding a meaningful gift for each person on your list? How about a **CBF Global Missions Gift Certificate**? Give a gift to Global Missions and give your loved one a certificate stating that a gift has been made in their honor. Gift certificates are available by the church office or in the vestibule. What better way to celebrate Christmas than the gift of sharing the gospel!

YOUTH NEWS

Hello Friends!

It has been a season of changing weather, viruses, and Thanksgiving, hasn't it? We continue to thank Jesus for our breath of life through the changes of this season and our lives.

As the colder weather creeps up on us, the Youth has some fun things coming up. We WILL need your help with donations of magazines. If you have any, please drop them in the Youth room or see me on Sundays and/or Wednesday nights this month, as we will need them for a January project! We intend to venture to WinterFest for some Christmas lights and roller coasters, bake cookies to deliver to the community, create a "Joyful" Christmas tree and dive into the TRUE gift of Christmas.

December's theme is, appropriately, JOY. Luke 2:8-16 will be the basis of our lessons while we focus on verses 10-12:



And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

What a wonderful gift we were so generously blessed with that first Christmas! As we venture through this month practicing and studying joy, we hope that the joy of the Lord is with you as well!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!
Jessica Adcock
Youth Leader

APPETIZER EXCHANGE PARTY

Family Night Supper is getting in the holiday spirit with a Christmas Appetizer Exchange party! Bring your favorite Christmas appetizer to share Wed. December 7 at 5:45 pm, along with copies of the recipe. We will enjoy a night of good food, fun, and fellowship while getting some new ideas for tasty holiday treats to help celebrate the joy of the Christmas season.

FAMILY NIGHT SUPPER SCHEDULE

If the assigned dates are unsuitable for your class or group, please trade with another group and let Dianne Umphlett know about the change.

December 7	Appetizer Exchange
December 14	WOM
December 21	No Family Night
December 28	No Family Night

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Join me at the coffee houses listed below for a cup of coffee and some conversation. I will set up shop on Thursday mornings as follows:



December 8	Daily Dose	9-10:30
December 15	The Vine	10-11:30
December 22	Daily Dose	9-10:30
December 29	The Vine	10-11:30

Tracey Pugh



With your help, Sycamore's 2022 Thanksgiving Meal Ministry was a success. Meals were provided for 55 people in 15 families in our area. More importantly, God's love was shared with 55 people in 15 families. May we find more ways to reach out to our neighbors near and far and share Christ's love with each of them.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA



The Sycamore Baptist Church cookbook, Seasoned with Love, has 425 pages of tried-and-true recipes for all occasions and would be an excellent gift for someone

on your Christmas list. Contact Tricia Davis or any WOM member for your copy.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Thank you to everyone who helped with Operation Christmas Child this year, whether donating items, giving money, organizing items, or packing boxes! Sycamore sent 40 boxes this year, along with many items to be used as fillers for other boxes at processing centers. We couldn't have done it without you. The journey isn't over yet. Continue to pray for the child that will receive the box you helped to pack.



We would also like you to pray for the Operation Christmas Child journey next year. Pray about how our church can best help with this project. Do you think our church best serves by collecting items each month and having a packing party, or do you think we best serve by personally filling your own box or boxes throughout the year and turning them in when they're done?

Let us know by taking a survey here at this site: <https://forms.gle/fjCtAKyBomSOY7at8>, or you can scan the QR code below to get there. One more thing we would like everyone to pray about is volunteering at one of the processing centers next year. While we have finished packing the boxes here, the journey is not over. There are still many steps these boxes need to go through before they can be sent to the children for whom God has them planned. Thank you, everyone, for a wonderful year, and please, continue to pray and fill out our survey.

Erin and Janet



DEACON REPORT

The Deacon's meeting was held on November 7, 2022. The following was discussed:

- Noted plants were on order for the front flower beds.
- The outside doors are being rekeyed, and request forms will be available for members who need a new key.
- Noted Tracey will be attending classes Jan 4-11, 2023.

The next deacon meeting is scheduled for December 5.

The Deacon of the month for December is John Jenkins.

Deacon Ministry Team Leaders

- Bereavement – Ronnie Bulls
- Casserole- Patsy Falls
- Hospital/Homebound – Joey Francis
- Prayer – Tricia Davis
- Transportation – John Jenkins

SYCAMORE SUMMIT

Save the Date



Sycamore Summit intends to create a culture of working together across various ministry areas to assess if what we are doing and how we are doing things is meeting the church's mission. We will also look at lessons learned, efficiencies, financial burdens, and other factors of our ministries.

Everyone serving on a team or committee is strongly encouraged to attend this one-day workshop. Anyone in the church who is interested in the programs and ministries of the church is invited to attend.

Pastor Tracey

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

The church council met on November 20 with all members present.

- Holly Giles reported that Community Connections will be putting up the Angel Tree and will include seniors this year.
- George Giles reported that the Brotherhood will not have breakfast in November but will have their next one on the first Sunday in December.
- Charlie Harcum reported that the average Sunday School attendance is currently 39. This is an increase from last month.
- Tricia Davis, for WOM, reported the Hanging of the Greens will be on November 30. The December focus will be on Global Missions. The Family Night meal on December 7 will be Christmas Appetizer Exchange and Prayer Wreath gathering. There will be a Community Live Nativity on December 14 - 16 at Barrett's Landing. Sycamore needs three volunteers for each night. The Christmas cantata will be on December 18.
- Debbie Oliver reported that there would be a log sheet for the Church credit card. The log sheet will help her know who has used the card last and what bills to expect.
- Peggy reported Building and Grounds continue to work on their list of maintenance and repairs needed at the church.
- Tracey reported she had made a Key Request form that will need to be completed by everyone wanting a key to the outside doors of the church. The form will request name, contact info, and the reason a key is needed. The deacons will then discuss these at their December meeting. Baptism is set for Sunday, December 4. A Christmas program will be held on the evening of December 18. Tracey plans to be away for school from January 4-11, 2023.
- A Sycamore Summit will be held in January to discuss the church's future and how each committee will function.

Peggy D. Rush

DECEMBER 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Sunday Morning Schedule Communion and Baptism Sunday Brotherhood Breakfast 7:30	5 Deacons Meeting 7:00 pm.	6	7 Family Night Schedule Appetizer Exchange and Prayer Wreath Service	8 Coffee and Conversation Daily Dose 9-10:30 am.	9	10
11 Sunday Morning Schedule	12	13	14 Family Night Schedule Community Living Nativity 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm.	15 Coffee and Conversation The Vine 10-11:30 am. Community Living Nativity 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm.	16 Community Living Nativity 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm.	17
18 Sunday Morning Schedule Church Council 11:15 am Christmas Program and Caroling 5:00 pm	19	20 WOM 6:15 pm.	21 No Family Night	22 Coffee and Conversation Daily Dose 9-10:30 am.	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00 pm.
25 Christmas Worship at 11:00 am. No Sunday School	26	27	28 No Family Night	29 Coffee and Conversation The Vine 10-11:30 am.	30	31

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

(unless otherwise noted on the calendar)

Sunday School 9:00 am. | Worship 10:00 am.

*FAMILY NIGHT ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

(unless otherwise noted on the calendar)

Meal: 5:45

Adult Study II: 6:15

Men's Bible Study: 6:45

World Changers 6:30

Mission Friends and Children in Action: 6:45

Adult Choir: 7:45

CONTACT INFORMATION

Secretary's email: secretary@sycamorebaptist.org

Church website: www.sycamorebaptist.org

Church phone: 757-562-6749

Rev. Pugh's email: pastor@sycamorebaptist.org

Rev. Pugh's cell phone: 434-953-7930

Office Hours: 8:00-4:00 Monday-Thursday

As needed by appointment.

