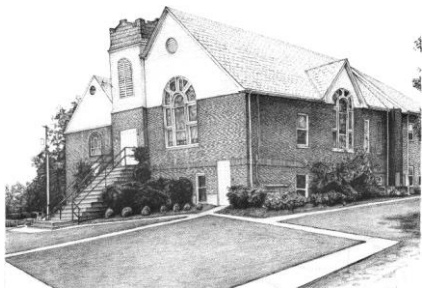


SYCAMORE HIGHLIGHTS



31120 Sycamore Church Road
Franklin, VA 23851
(757) 562-6749

Pastor
Rev. Tracey Pugh
Vol. XLX, No. 12

Deacon of the Month
Charlie Daughtrey
December 2024

Christmas Greetings,

I have always loved Christmas. It used to be because my grandmother loved the holiday season. She would go to great lengths to ensure the house was beautifully decorated, gifts were bought and wrapped perfectly, and there were way more cookies and treats than one family needed or could consume in a few weeks. She did it all for her family, and we loved it. We loved going “home” for the holidays; no one ever imagined not going.

Since her passing, the holidays have taken on new meaning for me. While I will always cherish the memories, I have come to appreciate the experience of Christmas differently as I couple my faith with tradition. It allows me to experience the gifts of Christmas better: hope, love, joy, and peace. With my attention on God with us, I find peace in the stillness of the lights and nativity, and heartfelt joy in baking and cooking. I find hope and love in going “home” to my church family to worship.

The prophet Isaiah writes:

“14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.”
-Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)

A New Testament reference to this prophecy is found in Matthew 1:23, which shares the meaning of the name “Immanuel,” which means “God with us.” If there is ever a day we need the assurance of God's presence, it is today, and we know God's presence still abides with us through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus came to earth over 2,000 years ago in the form of a little child, it fulfilled many prophecies declaring it would happen and began the revelation of God the Father to a lost and dying world. God was declaring who He was through the life of His Son. In John 14, we read,

7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” 8 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” 9 Jesus answered: “Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”
-John 14:7-9 (NIV)

Too often, we can become so enthralled with the trappings of or embedded in our traditions of Christmas that we fail to realize it was ALL about God coming to earth to reveal His unconditional love and continually reaching out to humanity in mercy and grace. As we again celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I pray you would take time to appreciate this wonderful God who is still “with us.” He is STILL Immanuel! He is a personal God who loves you beyond anything or anyone and will be there for you when others turn and walk the other way.

Take time to reflect and appreciate “God with us” during this season, and I promise you will truly experience the gifts of Christmas: hope, love, joy, and peace. All it takes is a shift in our focus and some intentional preparations; we can bridge that gap. I believe that a backdrop of drawing closer to God will alter all other aspects of the season, enriching and bringing them into proper light. A heart focused on Christ, thanking God for sending him and expecting his return will deepen our celebration of Christmas in all its facets.

I invite you to join me in preparing your hearts this holiday season for the greatest gift this world has ever known: Jesus Christ. Mark and I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas.

In His hope, peace, joy, and love,

Pastor Tracey



WELL DONE SYCAMORE

FLOOD BUCKETS



Flood bucket donations totaled \$1950.00. Thanks to Lowe's for a generous discount, we spent \$1020.88 to complete **30** buckets. The monies that were not spent will be sent to the BGAV disaster relief team and earmarked for flood buckets. Thank you, Sycamore!



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Thank you to everyone who donated items, money, or packed shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child this year. Sycamore, we were able to send 41 boxes to children in need! Great job, everyone. Thank you so much for all you have done.



Erin Harcum & Janet Bulls



With your help, Sycamore's 2024 Thanksgiving Meal Ministry was a success. **Twenty-two bags** were prepared, which provided meals for over **50 people in 20 families** in our area. More importantly, God's love was shared with over 50 people in 20 families. May we continue to find more ways to reach out to our neighbors near and far and share Christ's love with each of them.



MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

MISSIONS MAILBOX

The Missions Mailbox is open for the season. Bring your Christmas cards for **ACTIVE** and **HOMEBOUND** members **ONLY**. Include the price of a stamp (73 cents) for each card. Proceeds will go to the Global Missions Offering.



CBF GLOBAL MISSIONS OFFERING



December 8-15, 2024, is our Week of Prayer and Offering for CBF Global Missions. The Global Missions Offering supports international missions through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Please help support these mission efforts through your prayers and giving. Thank you in advance for your gifts.

PRAYER WREATH MEETING



During this Christmas season, there are many dealing 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 on Wednesday, December 11, 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.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Angel Tree

This year, we have angels for Senior adults and children. Please take an Angel and return the gifts by the due date. Children's angel gifts (new items, please) may be wrapped and must be returned by the due date. Senior Angel gifts should all be in one bag.

Together, we are hands and feet in our community.

SPECIAL EVENTS

HANGING OF THE GREENS



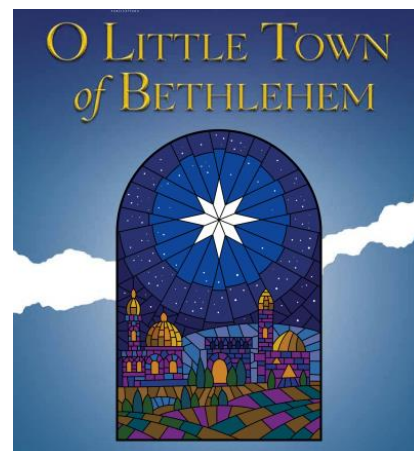
We will decorate the church for the Christmas Season at the Hanging of the Greens on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. If you have never participated in decorating the church for the Christmas Season, join us, and you will get into the Spirit of Christmas.

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 on Wednesday, December 11, at 5:45 p.m., along with recipe copies. 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.



CHRISTMAS CANTATA



On a quiet, calm night in Bethlehem, heaven's light broke through the darkness with the birth of Christ. Shepherds and wise men joined a host of angels to rejoice in this divine arrival on earth.

The choir will present "O Little Town of Bethlehem" on Sunday, December 15 at 10 am.

With this musical, we reflect on how this single event in a humble stable would change the rest of history.

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 5th year. We need folks to set up our scene on Wednesday, Dec. 11, and to take our scene down on Friday, Dec. 13. We also need volunteers to be in the scenes for 3 nights, Dec. 11-13, from 5:30-7:00 each night. Don't wait; please sign up now in the Fellowship Hall to be a part of this moving experience that reaches out to our community.



THREE Cs OF CHRISTMAS EVENT
CHILI – COOKIES - CAROLS



The three “Cs” event will be held on Wednesday, December 18 at 5:45 p.m.

C is for **chili**. If you have a favorite chili recipe, enter it into the chili cookoff at 5:45 p.m. for a chance to win the Golden Ladle award! The chilis will be our supper.

C is for **cookies**. Bring your favorite homemade cookie for the cookie bake-off. If you win, you'll receive a golden spatula award! The cookies will be our dessert.

C for **Christmas carols**. After eating and fellowship, we will gather around the piano and sing our favorite Christmas songs.

Bring a friend to join in the fun!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE



Join us on Tuesday, December 24, at 5:00 p.m. for our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service. It is always a moving service as we celebrate the birth of our King.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS



Have you started your Christmas shopping? Do you need help finding a meaningful gift for each person on your list? May we suggest the following:

- **Seasoned with Love**, the Sycamore Baptist Church cookbook: It has 425 pages of tried-and-true recipes for all occasions and would be a great gift for someone on your Christmas list. There are only a few copies left for \$20. Contact Tricia Davis or any WOM member for your copy.
- **CBF Global Missions Gift Certificate**: Give a gift to Global Missions and give your loved one a gift certificate stating that a gift has been made in their honor. Gift certificates are available by the elevator or in the vestibule. What better way to celebrate Christmas than the gift of sharing the gospel!

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 4	Up & Coming/Discussion
December 11	Appetizer Sharing
December 18	Chili & Cookie Cookoff
December 25	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 Tuesday mornings as follows:



December 3	Daily Dose	9-10:30
December 10	The Vine	10-11:30
December 17	Daily Dose	9-10:30
December 24	No C&C	
December 31	Storehouse	9-10:30

Pastor Tracey

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

The Church Council met on November 17. In that meeting, the council:

- Learned the average Sunday School attendance for October was 34.
- Community Connections informed us that we will have an Angel Tree again this year, and both children and senior citizens will receive gifts.
- Made plans for a chili cook-off and cookie bake-off event on Dec. 18 at 5:45 p.m.

Patsy Falls

DIRECTORY UPDATES

The church phone number at the top of page two should be 757-562-6749.

Tom and Nita Moore are now in the Village at Woods Edge's memory care unit. Tom is in room 16, and Nita is in room 2.

DEACON REPORT

The Deacon's meeting was held on November 5, 2024. In that meeting, the following was noted:

- An assembly line was set up to pack 30 flood buckets on Wednesday.
- Sycamore is a collection site for other churches and individuals.
- Safety issues were discussed, and plans are being made to install cameras and monitor the parking lot during church activities.

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec 2.

The deacon of the month is Charlie Daughtrey.

CHURCH CONFERENCE

On November 3, the church met for its regular quarterly conference. The following information was shared in that meeting.

- Written financial reports were received and accepted.
- Received a report that the average Sunday School attendance for the quarter was 33.
- Mission activities included collecting Bingo prizes for EP residents, collecting school supplies for Riverdale Elementary, collecting items for the Thanksgiving meal ministry, and receiving \$950.00 for the Alma Hunt Offering.
- Learned that Community Connections had participated in a back-to-school event and distributed 48 backpacks.
- It was noted that 22 people had attended the Sycamore Summit.
- Heard a deacon report regarding the church supplying flood buckets to the BGAV for flood relief.
- Voted to replace the windows at the parsonage.

Patsy Falls



*Angels with
Anne craft
mission
project.*



DECEMBER 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday Morning Communion Bldg & Grds 11:15 a.m.	2 Deacons Meeting 7:00 p.m.	3 Coffee and Conversation Daily Dose 9-10:30 a.m.	4 Family Night Supper Hanging of the Greens 7:00 p.m.	5	6	7
8 Sunday Morning Schedule Community Connections 11:15 a.m.	9	10 Coffee and Conversation The Vine 10-11:30 a.m.	11 Family Night Schedule Appetizer Sharing Prayer Wreath Mtg Living Nativity 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	12 Community Living Nativity 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	20 Community Living Nativity 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	14
15 Sunday Morning Schedule Cantata Church Council 11:15 am	16	17 Coffee and Conversation Daily Dose 9-10:30 a.m.	18 Chili Cook-Off & Cookie Bake-Off 5:45 p.m. No choir	19		21
22 Sunday Morning Schedule	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00 p.m.	25 Merry Christmas No Family Night	26	27	28
29 No Sunday School Worship at 10:00 a.m.	30	31 Coffee and Conversation Storehouse 9-10:30 a.m.	January 1 Happy New Year No Family Night	2	3	4

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: 1 (434) 9537930
Office Hours: 8:00-4:00 Monday-Thursday and
as needed by appointment



On the altar:
Top – Christ the King Sunday
Bottom: Thanksgiving Service

