

December 2024

OAK GROVE CHURCH

A Global Methodist Church

The Old Is New News

KEEPING OUR CHURCH FAMILY CONNECTED AND INFORMED.

..... A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

Man!! What a time we have been through as a nation. I don't know about y'all, but I feel beaten up and worn down by all the negativity of a long and divisive election season. It brings to mind a proverb that goes something like this: "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." (Proverbs 19:21) That kind of goes to the heart of our struggles as God's people. We "think" we're in control. We "think" that so and so got elected because we participated in the election and made our voices heard. I suppose that's true to a certain extent, but in my book, we'll have more of an impact on the world if we do as the Chronicler wrote that God told us to do: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

In any case, I am taking a little personal time to go "Phew!" and breathe in a sigh of relief now that things are beginning to cool down a bit (I know, I know. That's not true across the board, but one can hope...). I knew way before the election was over that no matter who won we would collectively be in sore need of a distraction to help refocus our spirits on Jesus. And what better way to do that than by delving into the wonder of the Christmas season to try and recapture a little of the innocence of the Nativity of the Christ. It has felt in recent times as if we are losing the ability to experience the kind of awe embodied by the miraculous birth of Jesus.

Stop for a minute and think about some of the themes surrounding the birth narrative. The Messiah was born. Say that out loud. "The Messiah was born." If simply saying those words doesn't cause you to have chills, then you aren't really appreciating what they actually mean for humanity as a whole. "The" Savior. The one and only Messiah of God was birthed to do what nothing else in all creation could do. That fact all by itself should leave one awestruck and filled with wonder, though I suspect some of us (most of us?) struggle to have much more than a passing respect for what it really means. Don't sweat it. You're not alone.

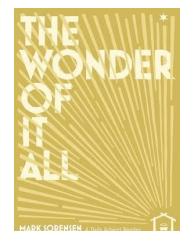
Then there's the whole Mary and Joseph thing. Some of you are too young to remember the shame an unwed pregnancy meant as little as 50 or 60 years ago. Society hasn't always been as tolerant of such things as it is these days (not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing), and even those days were nothing compared to what the young earthly parents of Jesus faced as a result of the virgin pregnancy. I mean, what a story, right? A virgin conceiving a child and naming Him "God with us". (Isaiah 7:13) Who, besides a long dead prophet would believe such a thing? What we pass off as marking just another year of celebration and revelry, is nothing short of an awe-inspiring miracle of epic proportions, and too often we fail to appreciate the wonder of it all.

What say we buck the trends this year? How about we strive to rediscover for ourselves the wonder we push on our kids year in and year out? What if every time we encountered the story of Jesus's birth between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we saw it with new eyes and a renewed innocence for a narrative we've stopped truly hearing amid the busyness of adult life? I am praying with the Apostle Paul, that God, the source of hope, will fill us all completely with joy and peace because we trust in him. May the Christmas season overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (from Romans 15:3) Indeed, may all of us recapture the awe of the Messiah's birth in the weeks to come and beyond. I don't know about anyone else, but I need that. My heart needs that. And I suspect at least some of y'all's hearts need that too.

Happy Thanksgiving and a Joy-filled Advent and Christmas to all!!

Pastor Ted

P.S. Don't forget to pick up your devotional "The Wonder of it All" and join us on the journey.





... IN THE KNOW ...

FIRST SUNDAY BREAKFAST

The Men's Club invites you to a complimentary breakfast in the Family Life Center from 8 am until 9:45 am on Sunday, December 1. Come and enjoy a delicious breakfast prepared by the men and share some early morning fellowship before Sunday School and Worship.

THE WONDER OF IT ALL

Pastor Ted will be leading a sermon series and devotional study through Advent called The Wonder of It All. He invites you to join our church family in the journey. The daily devotional is available in the foyer for \$12. We will begin reading on Sunday, December 1. He will be offering a time to discuss the daily readings following our Wednesday night meal from 6:30-7:30 pm.

CHURCH NIGHT OUT

On Thursday, December 5, the Men's Club invites you to Church Night Out at the Magnolia Grill in Columbia at 6 pm. This is a great night to enjoy some good food and great fellowship. We need to know how many are coming, so if you will sign up on the sheet in the foyer or contact the church office, we would greatly appreciate it. We will order from the menu, and each party is responsible for your own bill.

THE GROVE @ OGC MOMS GROUP

Ministry of Mothers Sharing (MoMS) is a ministry that offers friendship and support to all mothers through praying, faithsharing, wonderful conversations, and support. A MoMS group meets the first Friday of each month (December 6) at OGC from 9:30-11:00 am. Childcare will be provided. For more information, contact Tish Edwards or April Brewer.

MARCH OF ANGELS

All children are invited to bring an unwrapped child's gift to church on Sunday, December 8 to lay at the altar. These gifts will be given to needy families in our community this Christmas. Bring your gift and meet "Miss" Kaycee in the FLC hallway at 9:45 am to prepare for the march.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Join the Oak Grove Church Choir as they

present a Christmas Worship Musical, *Glory Touching Earth*, on Sunday, December 8 at 6 pm.

MES CIRCLE CHRISTMAS PARTY

All ladies are invited to the MES Circle Christmas Party on Monday, December 9 at 6 pm in the Family Life Center. Please bring a finger food to share. Prayer Partners will be revealed.

THE BLESSING TREE AND BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS

The Blessing Tree is in the foyer. On the tree are the names of the children of our Food Pantry recipients. If you would like to bless and be blessed, pick a child and their wish list from the tree to shop for Christmas gifts. The gifts will be given to the children at the Birthday Party for Jesus on Saturday, December 14 from 9-11:30 am in the Family Life Center. Further instructions for shoppers are available next to the Blessing Tree.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Join our Oak Grove Older Children as they present *Best Christmas Song Ever with Yancy* on Sunday, December 15 at 6 pm. Our younger children will present their version of a Christmas Bell Concert.

LAST WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEAL

Wednesday, December 18 will be the last Wednesday Night Meal for this year. Our Wednesday Night Meal and Activities will resume January 15, 2025.

NURSING HOME VISITATION

Congregational Care will be visiting the area nursing homes on Saturday, December 21. They invite you to join them at the church at 9:30 am to go.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT AND COMMUNION

Join us for our Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service at 5:30 pm.

GIFT TO JESUS

A tradition we practice is the annual "Gift to Jesus" offering taken up at our Christmas Eve service. The Gift originated as a capital fund campaign for the building of the Family Life Center. We set a goal of a \$100,000 offering to Jesus to glorify God. The giving was set for

the Christmas Eve service to honor Jesus' birth. We continue the giving today as a continuation of our faith.

The Finance Committee recommended and the Administrative Council approved for this year's Gift to Jesus to be used for debt reduction.

For the Christmas Eve Service, there will be an offering plate by the entrance to the sanctuary for your "Gift to Jesus." Also, please remember you may drop it off in the office, place in the offering plate on Sundays or give online at www.ogchurch.life.

WATCH NIGHT SERVICE AND GAME NIGHT

Let's ring in the New Year! Join us on New Year's Eve for a family game night in the FLC at 7 pm followed by a Watch Night Service at 9 pm. Bring a finger food to share. After the Watch Night Service, join us downtown for the Hub Drop.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

For Christmas, the church office will be closed Tuesday, December 24—Thursday, December 26. For New Year's, the church office will be closed Tuesday, December 31—Wednesday, January 1, 2025.

COAT DRIVE

Cooler weather will be here soon! To help our neighbors in the community in need of a coat, the annual coat drive has begun. You may bring a new or gently used coat of any size to the Family Life Center.

GUIDEBOOK 2025

The new 2025 Guidebook will be published in January. The Guidebook contains needed information for you such as contact information, birthdays and anniversaries, committees, classes for all ages, 2025 budget and ministry programs. There will be a table in the foyer with copies of the contact information and birthdays and anniversaries for you to check to make sure your information is correct. If your information has been unintentionally left out, please add it to the list. And, if you would, please write the year of your birthday by your name. Our system automatically goes to 1900 if the correct year is not added. So the majority of you are 124 years old in our system!

...CHILDREN...

You are all invited to join us on Sunday, December 15, at 6:00 p.m. for a night of fun with our children. Our older children will be presenting "The Best Christmas Song Ever with Yanzzy" and our youngest ones will be entertaining you with a Christmas Bell Concert. They have all been working so hard to get ready for their performance. So, mark your calendar and come out and support our kids. You will not want to miss it! It will warm your heart and put you in the best Christmas spirit!

Parents, please have your children here for the remaining practices which are as follows:

Sunday, December 1st Wednesday, December 4th Wednesday, December 11th

Saturday, December 14th @ 9:30 a.m. Dress rehearsal.

Sunday, December 15th, be here at 4:15 for final run through. Performance at 6:00 p.m.

On Wednesday, December 18th we will have special night for the kids. TBA at a later date.

Thanks so much for all of our church family support. Please be in prayer for our children and their upcoming performances.

In His Service,
Kaycee

**Don't forget to bring your gift for
"March of Angels" on Sunday, December 8!**

...YOUTH...

DECEMBER

- 1 Youth Meeting: 5:30-7 pm
- 4 Dinner: 5:30 pm
- Youth Meeting: 6:30-7:30 pm
- 8 Choir Cantata
- 11 Dinner: 5:30 pm
- Youth Meeting: 6:30-7:30 pm
- 14 Volunteer at Birthday Party for Jesus: 9-11:30 am
- 15 Children's Christmas Program
- 18 Dinner: 5:30 pm
- Youth Meeting: 6:30-7:30 pm
- 22 Youth Christmas Party (Details to come)
- 29 No Youth
- 31 Churchwide Watch Night Party 7-10 pm

Glory Touching Earth
A CHRISTMAS WORSHIP MUSICAL
PRESENTED BY
Oak Grove Church Choir
Sunday, December 8 @ 6 pm

The poster features a warm orange and red background with a silhouette of a nativity scene and a large firework exploding in the sky.

Oak Grove Church Children Present
BEST CHRISTMAS SONG EVER
WITH YANZZY
Sunday, December 15 // 6 pm

The poster has a yellow background with musical notes, Christmas trees, and a marquee sign.

...ANNIVERSARIES...

- 10 Garrett & Noel Dickerson
- 11 Jason & Toni Wesley
- 18 Alan & Melinda Lucas
- 19 Dempsey & Nancy Amacker
- 23 Mike & Susan McQueen
- 26 Joe & Gayle Shearer
- 29 Lon & Belinda Jo Mathias

...BIRTHDAYS...

- 1 Trista Boudreaux
- 5 Ted Fine
Toni Wesley
- 6 Donnie Barksdale
- 7 Kay Cook West
Jessie Mathias
- 8 Alice Cooper
- 9 David Bankston
- 10 Suzell Cain
- 12 Lori Terrill
- 13 Jane Aultman
Troy Parker
- 15 Sadie Busha
- 17 Jackson Lamar
Andrew O'Quinn
- 19 Cissy Burks
Kaden McCraney
- 20 Gayle Shearer
- 21 Danny McDaniel
- 28 Olivia Richardson
Jamie Standland
- 29 Gloria Harms
Lon Mathias
- 31 John Hojem
Lori Anne West

Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service
5:30 pm

The banner is blue with a lit candle on the left and a chalice and bread on the right.

Wednesday Night Fellowship Meal

5:30-6:15 pm

Adults: \$7 Children: \$3 Family Plan: \$20

December 4

Menu: Hamburger Steak w/Onions & Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Seasoned Green Beans, Tossed Salad, Rolls, Assorted Desserts

Children's Menu: Hamburgers/Tater Tots

Shoppers: Laura Baird/Peggy Woodruff

Class to Serve: Young at Heart

Desserts: Katherine Phillips, Adelia Powe, Eva Ratliff, Molly Reynolds, Heather Richardson, Gayle Shearer

December 11

Menu: Chicken and Wild Rice Casserole, Creamed Corn, Seasoned Green Beans, Garden Salad, Rolls, Assorted Desserts

Children's Menu: Chicken Nuggets/FF

Shoppers: Nancy Amacker/Pat Bennett/Susan McQueen

Class to Serve: Young at Heart

Desserts: Cindy Smith, Hagan Smith, Carol Standland, Shannon Sterling, Lori Terrill, Brenda Walker

December 18

Menu: Loaded Baked Potatoes, Chili, Garden Salad, French Bread, Assorted Desserts

Children's Menu: Pizza and Salad

Shoppers: Fred/Jane Boudreaux

Class to Serve: Young at Heart

Desserts: Gloria Watkins, Peggy Woodruff, Nancy Amacker, Esther Attkisson, Beth Bankston, Pat Bennett

Thank You!

Dear Oak Grove Church Family,
Thank you all for the outpouring of prayers, love and get well wishes following my recent knee surgery. Your visits, flowers, food, and caring messages touched my heart.

I thank God daily for my awesome Oak Grove Church Family!

In God's love and mine,

Dawn Nuss

OGC,

We want to say how our hearts are filled with all the calls, prayers, Angels in Aprons, food, and the daily visits by Chris Camacho while I was in the hospital. This church surely wrapped its arms around us during these challenging times, and we are truly blessed.

We hope to be back with you soon.

With heartfelt thanks,

John and Laura Hojem



Oak Grove Church Family,

Thank you for your faithful giving in 2024. As the end of the year approaches, below are a few reminders regarding year-end giving:

All contributions to Oak Grove Church are tax deductible. Contribution statements for 2024 will be distributed on or before January 31, 2025. Please check your final year-end statements before filing your 2024 taxes.

- Contributions received by **mail** must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service on or before December 31 to be applied to your 2024 contribution statement.
- For contributions made **online**, please note that our merchant provider requires a processing window for all online contributions – 3 business days for credit/debit card transactions. Because of the processing window, please be aware that your contribution will be posted on the settlement date (when deposit is made to church checking account,) not the date you scheduled the contribution. As with all banking transactions, online transactions are only processed on business days defined as a calendar day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a federal holiday.
- The Church Office will be closed for Christmas Tuesday, December 24—Thursday, December 26.
- The Church Office will be open on Monday, December 30 from 8 am until 2 pm to receive contributions.
- The Church Office will be closed on Tuesday, December 31—January 1, 2025.
- All contributions received on or after January 1, 2025 will be posted to 2025 even if the check is dated 2024.

You Can Give Five Ways to the Ministries of Oak Grove Church.

Sundays: Drop in the offering plate

Weekdays: Drop off in the Church Office:

Office Hours – Monday through Thursday 8 am – 2 pm

Mail: 4915 Old Hwy 11, Hattiesburg, MS 39402

Online: www.ogchurch.life – Giving

Text: 877-669-9414 : Text amount with \$

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:7-8

Contact Gloria in the church office, 601-264-8850 or office@ogchurch.life, if you have any questions.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Oak Grove Church

4915 Old Hwy 11 . Hattiesburg . MS . 39402

Phone: 601-264-8850

Email: office@ogchurch.life

Facebook: Oak Grove Church MS

Web: www.ogchurch.life

Youtube: Oak Grove Church MS Worship

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 8AM-2PM