

## **From the Pastor.....**

With the reception of this newsletter the season of **Advent** will have just begun. Sometimes we get so caught up in the "Christmas Palooza" that we miss the significance of the season of **Advent**. This is a time of worship-filled, prayerful preparation for the coming celebration of Jesus' birth. The Christmas season is filled with many pursuits. There is the somewhat obligatory, sometimes frustrating search for Christmas presents that consume hours and efforts and dollars (thank God for Amazon). There are the traditional parties and festivities, special concerts and events, oft-times filled with the meaningless ritual and vain attempts at "Christmas Cheer." There are the countless sensory evidences of holiday surrounding us – bright lights and decorations, gaily festooned trees and doors and houses, possibly hiding as "window dressing" empty lives and shattered dreams. Advent focuses our attention on Holy Days not holidays. This seasonal preparation sets aside time, purposely filling our hours and hearts with worship. My prayer is that this Christmas will not be another fruitless search for "something," but a satisfying relationship with "Someone" – the Christ of Christmas.

The Season of **Advent** begins on Sunday, December 1 and continues for the next three Sundays: December 8<sup>th</sup>, December 15<sup>th</sup> and December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Each of those Sundays will bring opportunities for worship, prayer, reflection, preaching, teaching, and much more. In this newsletter and in each Sunday bulletin you'll find a schedule of events, programs and worship that will hopefully point you not only to the importance of that day, but the reason for the season – the hope and joy that comes from the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

There are many more things that are happening in the life of our Church. Here are a few that may be of interest to you:

### **Giving and Genorosity...**

In January 2020 we begin a new year. There are many "new beginnings." One is our new church budget kicks in. My prayer, and the prayer of our church leaders, is that as a church we will strive to give generously, consistently and enthusiastically in order that the ministry of Jesus Christ is not hindered. We are trying to "get smarter" in how we give. So one of the new initiatives is the establishment of E-giving, which commonly means "electronic-giving" but I refer to as "**enthusiastic giving.**"

### **E-Giving...**

One of the questions often posed by congregations when introduced to "E-Giving" is whether "E-Giving" is growing the donation plate or just replacing cash and check donations that would come in anyway. It's a good question but there are numerous studies that have shown this:

- Recurring donors give substantially more per year than *one-time or one at a time donors*.  
Recurring donors can easily schedule payments even when they are away.

The simple fact is if we are dependent only on what is placed in the plate or basket on any given Sunday then we are limiting what can be donated and therefore impacting ministries of the church. Our congregation, like most congregations, are people who are mobile and live busy lives. Families often have other commitments on Sundays that take them away from church services. Things like: sports teams, visiting family members, vacations, etc.; and while many try to "catch up" on their giving, most do not. I think our budget deficit is indicative of that.

So, for the sake of God's church, let me encourage you to sign up for "E-Giving" and make recurring donations. And oh by the way, you can still make cash or check donations on any given Sunday!

We've already seen many in our congregation take advantage of this superb technology, and I am very grateful for that. I am trusting God for at least 25 individuals or families to sign up for E-giving. We are not there yet but we are close. Won't you pray about making this switch and help your church accomplish the mission that has been given to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### **The "Giving Corner" ....**

Also, we'll be changing how we will be taking up the offering in the FMC service. Thanks to Buddy Thomas we have a beautiful box he lovingly created which we will be using as a repository of our offerings during the service. Instead of taking time during the service to take up the offering, we'll be depositing our offering in that box at the "*giving corner*" near the front doors. However, we still plan to pray and dedicate our tithes and offerings. Consequently, we will transition from taking up the offering by passing the "baskets" to asking you to deposit your gift in the offering box at the FMC entrance beginning on **December 29<sup>th</sup>**. And here's another reason why we are doing this....

Our FMC service is attracting a fair number of first-time visitors and others who have attended just a few times. Making your donation at the "Giving Corner" by placing it in the offering box allows our visitors and others to give their gifts more personally and privately. We don't want anyone to feel "the pressure" to give as the offering basket is passed in front of them. If you choose to place your gift in the offering box don't just make it a "drive by" deposit (like an ATM machine). Instead pause and say a little prayer thanking God for His generosity and blessings to you and ask that He use your gift to **reach people for Christ** which is our mandate and vision for BGBC.

### **Year end giving...**

Finally, and I promise this is the last thing I'm going to say on this subject of giving! Would you prayerfully consider giving a little extra in order to help us "catch up" on our budget. As of November 24<sup>th</sup> we are about \$22,000 below our budget. Church budget experts tell us that:

- 30 percent of charitable giving happens in December
- December 31<sup>st</sup> is the biggest giving day

So, with December historically being the biggest giving month in all the year won't you prayerfully consider giving a little more in order to advance the Kingdom of God a little more.

### **Feasibility Study on the Sunday Morning Schedule Change....**

I met recently with Priscilla Shuler who has agreed to chair our "task force" (TF) on studying the feasibility of this important proposal. We are just beginning but we have identified an additional seven individuals as potential members. I'm not going to share their names at this time because we are still in the process of confirming their willingness to serve, but we will publish their names asap. The essential charter of the TF is to study the feasibility of any changes to the Sunday morning schedule by engaging with the congregation in order to receive feedback. We want every member and attender in our congregation to understand what this proposal is by providing "town hall" meetings, focus groups, power-point presentations, and other means in order to answer all relevant questions. **Our goal is for every person to understand what this proposal is so that they can make an informed decision and vote according to the light that God gives them.** We are hoping to finalize a report and prepare a motion for a congregational vote sometime in the Spring of 2020.

### **A Word of Thanks...**

Finally, let me close by simply saying thank you. Last month, as part of “Clergy appreciation month” I received numerous cards and gifts thanking me for my service as your pastor. I also received a beautiful leather-bound Bible from the congregation that I much needed as my old Bible was literally falling apart. All I have to do now is somehow transfer all my notes in the margins, highlighted passages and underlined verses from my old Bible to my new Bible! I’m already well on my way by making new marks and notes and just generally “breaking in” my new Bible. Simply put, I can’t think of anything I would rather do or be than your Pastor and leading this flock known as BOWLING GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH!

*I love you all....*

Pastor Frank





## Bible Study News

The **adult small group** that meets at Lisa and Pat Shields' house on Tuesday evenings has just finished up 2 Timothy and will start a study on Obadiah and Malachi entitled *Burning Desire*. *This study will start November 12<sup>th</sup>*

*The smallest charges can be the most explosive. The books of Obadiah and Malachi are among the briefest in the Bible, but their contents are pure dynamite. Both prophets provide us with portraits of a God who can be passionate, weary with displeasure, possessive and angry; a God who can even hate. And yet this same God keeps his promises, does not change, and throws open the windows of heaven to those who turn to him. In the light of the gospel, Burning Desire explores the different fates of the descendants of Jacob and Esau – one of whom will be a savior who will rise from the ashes of judgement with “healing in his wings.”*

*From back cover of study guide*

The **ladies bible study** that meets on Wednesday mornings at Lisa Shields' house has just finished a study on prayer and will start a new study on Titus entitled *The Path to Godliness*.

*Down the centuries, Christians have suffered from the effects of two damaging problems. On the one hand, there always seem to be people wanting to impose rules and regulations for Christians to follow. On the other hand, there have always been Christians who seem not to care about how they live, and who regard God's forgiveness as a blank cheque. How can we avoid these problems and be motivated to live a life pleasing to God? In Paul's short letter to Titus, God reveals the path to true godliness. We are warned about false trails and given stirring encouragement about the source of true godliness, its motivation and the shape it will take.*

*From back cover of study guide*

If you are interested in joining or learning more about either of these studies please don't hesitate to contact me at 240.434.2938 or [shieldsp@md.metrocast.net](mailto:shieldsp@md.metrocast.net). All are welcome!



Thank you to all the teachers who give of their time at Bowling Green Baptist Church! We could not have a thriving Sunday School Department without all of your efforts.

Thank a teacher today!

Tracey Mallory

Heather Smith

Shelby Foltz

Paige Carter

Lisa Shields

Debbie Thomas

Pat Shields

Glen McDearmon

Sabrina Farris

Kristin Bissoon

Amy & Jake Phelix

Jenn & Brad Thomas

Sherry Brillhart

Ella Niles

Angie Fines

Sandra Stevens

Theresa Storke

Kathy Burchell

Heather Diritto

Meredith Pack

Charles Cushing

Beth Curran

Sarah Collie

Ruth Judd

Jack Shuler

Doug Farris

**A special Thank You to Haley Kennedy, Jamie Schumer and Karen Covington** for all they have done to teach our children. They are stepping down from teaching Sunday School to pursue other ministries.

**Thank You!**



## Steel Magnolias The Women's Ministry



*Steel Magnolias*, a ministry for women, debuted in October 2019. I thought the men had something good going with their Ironmen ministry and I thought it would be great to do something similar for the women. I sure wish I could claim the name, Steel Magnolias, but Nancy Markham came up with that name and I think it is perfect! So, check out our table, the pretty little chalk painted table, next to the metal Ironman table for any information coming up! There is a Bible Reading Plan available for you – pick one up if you are interested in reading the Bible through in 1 or 2 years.

Our first Steel Magnolias initiative is *Steel Magnolia Prayer Warriors*. The prayer warriors pray for the youth of our church. Each prayer Warrior (we have 10!) got a list of kids to pray for, encourage, and send notes to. It is so difficult to be a teenager these days, much less a Christian teenager, when all they see to aspire to are narcissistic and materialistic people whose lifestyles couldn't be further from a God honoring one. We want to hold these kids up to our heavenly father and pray a hedge of protection around them.

We had a Ladies Craft Night during which we had Kelly from Painting the Town Red, come and bringing all the supplies, helped us create some beautiful décor for our homes. When I say you don't need to have any artistic ability to do these craft nights, I mean **YOU DON'T NEED ANY ARTISTIC ABILITY TO DO THESE CRAFT NIGHTS!** We are shown step by step how to make the project so don't let your lack of skill keep you from the next one. I have another one in the works for the spring. They are a lot of fun!



We have other things planned for you during the coming year. If you would like to get involved with Steel Magnolias, please contact Lisa Shields, 240.434.2938 or [shieldsp@md.metrocast.net](mailto:shieldsp@md.metrocast.net).

# Advent and Christmas Schedule

December 1-December 29  
2019

## *A Season of Peace and Joy*

The holiday season is one of the most frenetic and stressful periods of the year. So, come along with us for moments of celebration, fellowship, and worship that transcend the noise and the chaos of the season. We hope you can join us as we turn our hearts and minds toward the reason for the season.

December 1st (first Sunday in Advent), December 8th (second Sunday in Advent), December 15th (third Sunday in Advent) and December 22<sup>nd</sup> (fourth Sunday in Advent)

## *The Lighting of the Advent Candle*



The Advent Wreath is a ring of evergreens with four candles, one for each week of Advent. It also includes a center candle which is called the "Christ Candle." The light that the candles give reminds us of Jesus, the Light of the World. The light coming from the candles increases throughout Advent as each week one more candle is lit. The weeks of waiting for the candles full light help us recall the world's long years of waiting for Jesus, the Light. Each Sunday in each service, one of our church families will light the Advent candle and read scripture, share a short message and lead us in prayer.

## *Christmas Choir Musical Service*

Christmas music lies at the heart of the holiday season. You hear it all around you... grocery stores, shopping malls, and on the radio. Our favorite holiday carols accomplish something miraculous in this day and age – they send a blatantly sacred message to an increasingly distant and disillusioned world.

On Sunday, December 15, we'll kick off the day with our *Bowling Green Café* in the FMC at 9:15 a.m. This is a great opportunity for the entire church to gather for food and fellowship. Sunday School follows at 10 a.m. Then at 11 a.m. we'll come together as one congregation for a combined worship service in the Sanctuary where the Sanctuary Choir will present "*One Small Child*" with beautiful songs and familiar carols that tell the story of Christ's birth from the announcement of Christ's birth to the stable and beyond.



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There is nothing like a children's Christmas special to put you into the holiday spirit. So, on Sunday, December 22, at 8:45 a.m., in the sanctuary, the Children's Ministry Team along with our precious children will present a montage Christmas program that will be a must see for our Church family.



Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service is a gathering that captures the quiet joy and anticipation of Christmas Eve. Carols are sung, the Christ story is told, candles are lit, and sweet fellowship is shared. Join us at 6 p.m for this special service for all ages. Child care is available up to age 3 years.

### *New Year's Sunday*

This year on Sunday, December 29, our regular Sunday morning schedule will change slightly. We will have a combined worship service in the FMC at 10:30 a.m. There will be no Café or Sunday School.

