

Belmont Beacon

December 2015

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Belmont Baptist Church ♦ 830 Monticello Avenue ♦ Charlottesville, VA 22902

Tel: 434-296-7111 Fax: 434-296-0509

e-mail: mail@belmontbaptistville.org or gma2anderson@gmail.com

www.belmontbaptistville.org

Are you ready for Christmas? Seemingly, preparations for December 25 are beginning earlier each year. Two weeks before Thanksgiving, I noticed Christmas trees in front of the *Food Lion* on Avon Street. I imagine that they are at other stores as well. Around the same time in November, I received an email that surprised me. The email's purpose was to announce that one of the radio stations in Richmond would be exclusively playing Christmas music from then until Christmas Day. I am familiar with this practice from Thanksgiving Day forward, but have never noticed this one.

These preparations for Christmas are apparently beginning earlier each year. What about your preparations for Christmas? The radio stations and stores are usually alerting us to the commercialized focus of this special day. They want us to know about their sales that will make or break their bottom line for the financial year. What about your preparations for the birth of Christ? Christmas is the church's celebration that God has joined our world and everything involved in this. Our predicament is not something that keeps God at a distance. God becomes one of us in the person of Jesus Christ and joins us so that we might fully turn our lives to God.

Christmas is about remembering what has happened in the birth of Christ, and this does require preparation. Thankfully, if you are unsure how to respond about your preparations for the birth of Christ, the church has an answer. The season of Advent is the church's special time of preparation set

aside so that we will prepare for the birth of Christ and also for Christ's promised return.

Efforts to get ourselves ready for this important work are best practiced together. Our Advent focus this year will be centered on the theme of "Finding Bethlehem in the Midst of the Bedlam." I will draw from Pastor James Moore's study to guide our worship during this holy season.

The season of Christmas that should bring us hope like no other often induces stress because of all the things associated with it: buying gifts, financial stress, limited time constraints, etc... Bedlam is a description that works for what many of us experience for much of the year or at least for the day after Thanksgiving leading up to Christmas Day.

The good news found in Bethlehem's stable is something that we all need to find each day of the year and especially during this special season. I look forward to making these preparations together with you. I always look forward to that special time of worship that we share together on Christmas Eve. My hope is that we will all make the necessary preparations to experience the joy and hope of Christ being born within us in the coming days. These kind of commitments enable us to face any bedlam we will encounter throughout the coming year.

Blessings,

Greg



From the Personnel Committee:

Since the first of September we have enjoyed hearing the music ministry of two fine local musicians - Susan Nothnagle on the organ and piano on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month and Phyllis Fagin at the piano on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. Originally these two ladies agreed to play for the services through the end of October only.

However, they have enjoyed being at Belmont so much they have decided to stay on. The Personnel Committee and appointed ad hoc committee met recently and interviewed them both and are prepared to present them to the church body for approval at the December business meeting.

Both Susan and Phyllis and their families are active members of other congregations in the area and at this time they plan to remain so. They are committed to Belmont, however, and to using their talents for God's glory in our worship services.

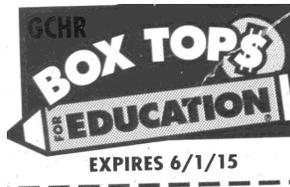
Space does not permit our sharing too much information about their backgrounds here, but we will be glad to answer any questions you might have about them. We encourage you to contact us if we can answer any questions for you.

Respectfully,
Randy Melton
Melanie Anderson
Peggy Haluska
Linda Breeden
Gladys Bryant
Mary Buckner, Chair

**Comcast Channel 13
will Rebroadcast
the Worship Service
Sunday at 7:00 pm.**



If you use products with Box Tops for Education, please bring them by the church office. They will benefit Clark School.



Dear Friends,

What a great time of year. If you remember fall is one of my favorite times of year. If I could get the rest of the family to agree, my entire house would be decorated in fall colors. God created this time of year just to give us the beauty of the earth and the calming feeling it brings. (At least to me.)

⁸ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. Isaiah 40:8 (KJV)

This word stands strong but also as you read in James 5:7-8 the text talks about waiting and patience. I am not always good about waiting. That said, many of us may find as we get older that gets easier. That, meaning to have patience and to wait patiently.

One of the skills I am trying to teach in middle school is to wait. With today's instant gratification at their fingertips, the skill to wait is lost. Wait your turn, wait in the hall for me to join you, wait for the bell, and so on. If you never learn the easy ones how do you wait for the big ones in life?

So take a second before all the beauty that God put into this wonderful season disappears and embrace it. Stop and wait. Take time to be patient and thank God for everything He has done. This small step for me is so rejuvenating. Let me know if it works for you too.

Please remember I would love to hear all with your ideas for music and hymn selections. As well, consider joining the choir and the hand bells. There is an empty chair just "waiting" for you.

Blessing,
Peggy

**WMU
Clark Elementary School
Christmas Mitten Tree**

The WMU will collect mittens, gloves, scarves, hats, socks and underclothes (boys and girls) for Christmas for the children of Clark School.

Thank you for considering a donation to 2015 Mitten Tree! Please bring donations November 29 through December 27 for delivery to the school after their Winter Break.





Wow !!! My final article for the Beacon as your Deacon Chair.

I have been on a journey this past year. It has been a spiritual journey that has so enriched my life. And a journey that has given me the opportunity to develop relationships and friendships with all of you. It has been a privilege to serve you and I love each and every one of you.

The Lord is so good to us, and he has blessed us with so much. Over the years I have been labeled an optimist, been called "Susie Sunshine and Pollyanna". I see the glass half full, and been accused of wearing rose colored glasses. But I believe this is the way the Lord wants us to face life. God is Good. He has been so good to me and I thank him every day for my church, my home, my family and the gift of his son, Jesus Christ.

Life has its ups and downs, but I believe God refreshes us with the good times to give us the strength to get through the hard times.

I look forward to what God has in store for Belmont Baptist this coming year and I look forward to serving you as a Deacon, and working with you as we seek God's plan for our church.

I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you.

Cheryl



To the Belmont Baptist Church Family,

Thank you very much for allowing us to use the building on October 25 to celebrate the wedding of a couple of our members. You all are wonderful people. One of them is Tina, who helped us from the beginning to the end of the party. May God continue to bless you.

With our deep gratitude to each one of you.
Hispanic SDA Church

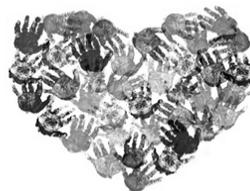
Thank you so much for the thoughtful and generous way that you surprised me with the celebration of our ten years of ministry together. You caught me off guard with the surprise. I was humbled by the generous gifts that you shared with me. I struggle to find adequate words to express what it means to be your pastor and for the opportunity to serve Christ with you. I am grateful for how you minister to me and to Melanie, Abigail, and Amelia. I continue to pray God's blessings on you as we serve together.

Love, Greg

Upcoming missional opportunities

- Collect deodorants for selected students at Clark School
- Provide a meal for the guests of the Ronald McDonald House, the way it works now is that anything prepared must be cooked at their site. They put out the meal around 6 each evening and their staff will put it away around 8..
- Host a Christmas meal for the Foster Care Families of Central Virginia Thursday December 10. If you can help us by providing a cake, pie, brownies, candies, cookies we would appreciate it. that We will also need some help serving the meal.
- Make donations for food bags for 23 families at Clark School designated fund during October.
- Remember our shut-ins this holiday season with gift bags. Recommended items are hand creams, lotions, lip balm, nail files, small tissue bags, hard candy both regular and sugar free, writing pins, bracelets, Christmas jewelry..
- Host PACEM January 3-10. Help set up the cots Saturday morning. stay overnight as a chaperone along with the PACEM staff, and provide and serve a meal during the week.

You may call Barbara at 989-3458 after 5pm during the week or anytime during the weekends if you have any questions or would like additional information.



DOING GOD'S WORK
with our hands

BELMONT BAPTIST CHURCH
830 Monticello Avenue
Charlottesville, VA 22902

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and
suddenly
there was with
the
angel
a multitude of
the heavenly host
praising God
and saying
Glory to God
in the highest, and on earth,
peace, goodwill towards
men
Luke 2
13-14

Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year

Greg

Peggy

Mary

Janet

Phyllis

Susan

Dawud