

### THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

#### A Christmas Oldie

St. Luke records four Christmas classics in his gospel. Let's take a lyric from the first one to meditate on this Christmas season.

"Magnificat" (sung by Mary, Luke 1:46-55)

*His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty (50-53).*

Mary was a young lady of modest means betrothed to Joseph, a simple craftsman in Israel. They lived in the region of Galilee in a city called Nazareth. Israel was ruled by Rome at this time under Caesar Augustus. A virgin and a pious Jew of her day, Mary had been visited by an angel and told she would carry the promised Savior—the son of God. How? By the power of the Holy Spirit. It happened just as she was told. Yet even before this, the angel had visited her older cousin's husband, Zechariah, and told him that his barren wife would give birth to the Messiah's forerunner. It happened. We are even told that the elderly lady "for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, 'Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people'" (Lk. 1:24b-25). Reproach? She was barren, childless. But not anymore! He opened her womb. God had visited her and also her young cousin.

So, Mary, having been told by the angel that Elizabeth was in the sixth month of her miraculous pregnancy "arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, '... Behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord'" (Lk. 1:39-45). Mary responded with a song of praise.

What a story! Two obscure women of rural first century Israel. Both visited by the Lord of heaven and earth. One barren, the other a virgin. The older woman carrying the one prophesied by Isaiah and Malachi to come in the spirit of Elijah and blaze the trail of the coming kingdom of God (see Is. 40 and Mal. 3-4). The young lady carrying the promised Suffering Servant, a light to the Gentiles, a faithful disciple, and a perfect substitute for the sins of his people (see Is. 42, 49, 50, 52-53). What else could Mary do but sing!

Let's consider three important themes in the excerpt above: the fear of the Lord, humility, and divine provision. *His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.* Mary sings of the mercy of the Lord that comes to those who fear him. The wise man told us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And the psalmists add that the friendship of the LORD, compassion, and steadfast love are for those who fear him (see Pr. 9:10; Ps. 25:14; 103:11, 13). Mary knew her Bible and she knew her God. Let us approach our great God with reverence, awe, and wonder. Receive mercy, wisdom, friendship, and love—from the Lord!

*He has scattered the proud ... he has brought down the mighty.* If there is one pair contrasting traits we see from the beginning of the Scripture to its end, it is pride and humility. God hates one and loves the other (cf. Pr. 6:16-19). Mary knew this and she sings about it. Two proverbs prove her point clearly. "It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud." "Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin." (Pr. 16:19; 21:4) Mary knew this truth in her youth and would experience it throughout her life. Let us take her words to heart—to both humble us and give us hope for the present and the future!

*He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.* She anticipates the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus' "upside down kingdom." The first will be last and the last first. The sad will be comforted. The meek will inherit the earth. The Shepherd will indeed provide for his needy flock. We pray, give us this day our daily bread. The Good Shepherd would not only fill us with good things, but would know our names and would lay down his life for the sheep. Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness? If you do, Jesus said you will be filled.

Mary's hit tune is just what we need this Christmas. In a world and nation that is forsaking the God who brought us into existence, she reminds us—exhorts us—to *fear the Lord*. In a culture that is fueled by the highest octane of pride on the market, we are extolled to seek the gift of humility. After all, Jesus said of himself that he was gentle and humble in heart and that in him we could find rest for our souls (see Mt. 11:28-30). Finally, as you may perhaps struggle to afford the Christmas gifts you would like to give to your loved ones this Christmas, we have a promise stated in the present tense: *he has filled the hungry with good things.* And what is the best thing? Jesus prayed it for us the night before he died for sinners. *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3).*

Merry Christmas!  
Pastor Josh

# DECEMBER 2023



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3 <b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Sunday School:</b> 9:30am <b>Worship:</b> 11am <b>B-day:</b> Nadine Coddington	4 <b>Game/Fellowship</b> <b>Time:</b> 9:30am	5 <b>WM Circle Study:</b> 9:30am and 6:45pm <b>B-day:</b> Beth Lashley	6 <b>Fellowship:</b> 6pm <b>Study/Prayer:</b> 6:15pm <b>B-day:</b> Jimmy Dukes	7 <b>B-day:</b> Dennis Davidson	8	9
10 <b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Sunday School:</b> 9:30am <b>Worship:</b> 11am <b>Deacon Meeting</b> <b>Women's Christmas Party:</b> 2pm <b>Anniv:</b> Rodney & Lydia Buroker	11 <b>Game/Fellowship</b> <b>Time:</b> 9:30am <b>B-day:</b> Laura Katherine Morgan <b>B-day:</b> Thomas Johnson	12	13 <b>Family Christmas Potluck Party:</b> 6pm <b>Angel Tree:</b> Deadline to submit gifts	14 <b>B-day:</b> Fulton Carmichael	15	16 <b>B-day:</b> Rodney Buroker
17 <b>4th Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Sunday School:</b> 9:30am <b>Worship:</b> 11am <b>Candlelight Communion Service:</b> 6pm <b>B-day:</b> Alice Symon	18 <b>Game/Fellowship</b> <b>Time:</b> 9:30am	19	20	21 <b>B-day:</b> Austin Griffith	22	23
24 <b>Christmas Eve</b> <b>Sunday School:</b> 9:30am <b>Worship:</b> 11am <b>B-day:</b> Thelma Brown	25 <b>Christmas Day</b> <b>Christmas Morning Informal Worship Service:</b> 10am	26	27	28	29	30 <b>B-day:</b> Nick Symon <b>B-day:</b> Trey Griffith
31 <b>Sunday School:</b> 9:30am <b>Worship:</b> 11am <b>Deacons Fund Offering</b>						

# UPCOMING EVENTS FOR DECEMBER

**DEACONS OF THE MONTH:** David Coddington and Ray Evans

**FOOD MINISTRY LEADER OF THE MONTH:** Ruth Symon

**RECURRING WEEKLY EVENTS:**

- Sunday School at 9:30 am.
- Sunday Worship at 11:00 am.
- Monday, Game/Fellowship Time, 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall.

**DEACONS:** Glenn Basinger, David Coddington, Mike Cork, and Ray Evans

**OCTOBER AVERAGE ATTENDANCE:** 41

<u>2023</u>	<u>OCTOBER</u>	<u>2023 YTD</u>
Gen. Fund Contributions	\$ 11,632.50	\$ 99,007.04
Gen. Fund Expenses	\$ 10,589.72	\$ 93,997.06
Net Gain (Loss)	\$ 1,042.78	\$ 5,009.98
<u>2022</u>	<u>OCTOBER</u>	<u>2022 YTD</u>
Gen. Fund Contributions	\$ 10,272.70	\$ 85,688.17
Gen. Fund Expenses	\$ 7,061.25	\$ 78,544.81
Net Gain (Loss)	\$ 3,211.45	\$ 7,143.36

## DECEMBER EVENTS

**December 3:** Second Sunday of Advent

**December 6:** Fellowship, Study and Prayer time. This will be our last meeting of 2023. Wednesday evening events will resume January 3, 2024.

**December 10:**

- Third Sunday of Advent
- Deacon Meeting
- Women’s Christmas Party, 2:00-4:00 pm at Candace Colgrove’s home. All ladies are invited; please bring a finger-food appetizer, snack or dessert and a Christmas ornament to exchange.

**December 13:**

- Family Christmas Potluck Party, 6:00 pm. Setup/Cleanup Committee: Lashley, Cork, Mackin families and Thelma Brown.
- Angel Tree deadline to submit gifts.

**December 17:**

- Fourth Sunday of Advent
- Candlelight Communion Service, 6:00 pm.

**December 25:** Christmas morning informal worship service, 10:00 am.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Fulton Carmichael for his recent graduation from Auburn University.

## HELP NEEDED

The Demopolis Food Pantry has an on-going need specifically for 15-ounce cans of vegetables and fruit. We will maintain a collection box in the Fellowship Hall for donations to support the Food Pantry. Thanks for your support to help this vital community ministry!



## 2024 POTLUCK COMMITTEES

- Jan. Coddington, Ward, Buroker
- Feb. Weltin, Symon, Colgrove
- Mar. Davidson, Kirkpatrick, Harbin
- Apr. Lashley, Cannon, Carmichael, and Thelma Brown
- May Coddington, Evans, Lessmann
- Jun. Mackin, Basinger, Buroker
- Jul. Cork, Resto, Lashley
- Aug. Ward, Weltin, Carmichael
- Sep. Symon, Davidson, Harbin
- Oct. Kirkpatrick, Resto, Evans
- Nov. Cannon, Basinger, Lessmann
- Dec. Colgrove, Cork, Mackin, and Thelma Brown

## 2024 FOOD MINISTRY LEADERS

- Jan. Joy Mackin
- Feb. Bernice Cork
- Mar. Karen Davidson
- Apr. Katy Basinger
- May Melissa Weltin
- Jun. Melanie Evans
- Jul. Patty Kirkpatrick
- Aug. Lydia Buroker
- Sep. Betsy Carmichael
- Oct. Andrea Ward
- Nov. Ann Resto
- Dec. Ruth Symon

**Christmas Cards for the Troops:** Thank you to all who participated and supplied Christmas Cards for the Troops.

**Angel Tree Giving:** The recipients for this year’s Angel Tree will be the seven children of Rev. Mitch and Amy Haubert. Mitch is the Pastor at Brent Missionary PCA, Chaplain of the Bibb County Correctional Facility, and Director of UnBound216 (formerly known as Jumpstart Alabama) prison ministry. The deadline to deliver gifts to the church will be Wednesday, December 13th. For more information, please contact Patty Kirkpatrick.

# HAVE YOU TALKED TO GOD TODAY?

DECEMBER 2023

## PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR FAITH PROMISE MISSIONARIES

Robert & Lisa Stewart	Mission to the World — Japan
Andy & Bev Warren	Mission to the World — Ethiopia
Doug McNutt	Trinity Center for World Missions — Central Africa
Jimmy & Nadia Dukes	Reformed Evangelistic Fellowship — Peru
Joy Ayabe	Wycliffe Bible Translators — Papua New Guinea
Clete Hux	Apologetics Resource Center — Birmingham, AL
Jonah	Frontiers — Undisclosed Muslim Country
General Support	The Lighthouse Women's Center — Demopolis, AL
General Support	Palmer Home for Children — Hernando, MS
Chaplain Ministry	Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC)

## HOOKED ON PRAYER (HOP):

Abrams, Riddell	Lawrence, Lisa
Acton, Beth	Lessmann, Linus
Allinder, Kate	Ligon, Brandon
Bazuin, Caiden	Mackin, Jimmy
Beale, Amy	Mader, Rebecca
Beeler, Peggy	Margo, Chrissy
Belcher, Samuel	McIntier, Jodie
Brantley, Maggie	Miles, Connie
Bridges, Ida Lee	Morgan, Laura
Brooker, Chrissy	Morris, Seth
Brooker, Jan	Ndunge, Cecilia
Brown, Walt	Parr, Higley
Busby, Rhae	Phillips, Ronnie
Bynum, Linda	Ramey, Carrie
Cooper, Darlene	Renner, Andy
Davidson, Karen	Renner, Elizabeth
DeWitt, Robert	Reynolds, Christy
Duncan, Conner	Sharp, Chris
Dyer, Doug	Sims, Anna Katherine
Finley, Betty	Stewart, Lee
Gardner, Greg	Thornton, Alaina
Graffeo, Anthony (A.J.)	Tipton, Carolyn
Hall, Jimmy	Townsend, Laura
Hart, Sarah Elizabeth	Tulipan, Amelia
Haubert, Chloe Belle	Tulipan, Hansen
Headley, David	Turner, Becky
Hocker, Jeannie	Twist, Ty
Hoggie, Judy	VanderMolen, Popko
Huizenga, Fran	Wilder, Emily (Espy)
Hux, Karen	Womble, Caleb
Lane, Barbara	Zimmerman, Steve

**If you have a heart to pray for the critically, chronically or terminally ill, HOP needs you.**

**Can you pray?  
WE NEED YOU!**

**Can you knit or crochet?  
WE NEED YOU!**

**Can you write note cards?  
WE NEED YOU!**

HOP is a prayer shawl ministry. We give shawls, throws, or blankets to the critically, chronically, or terminally ill to let them know we are praying for them. You do not need to know how to knit or crochet to be involved.

Any monetary gifts or donations of supplies, yarn, note cards and/or postage is greatly appreciated.

Please contact Eloise Harris or Joy Mackin for more information on how you can get involved.



### OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS

#### Cancer:

Luke (Jonah's son)  
Scott Kirkpatrick  
Jimmy Mackin  
Rick Wilson  
Jimmy Hall

#### Illness:

Laura Morgan  
Neal Bules  
David Headley  
Linda Dunning

#### Special Needs:

The Hutton Family

#### Other Needs:

Christina & Danny Addison  
Abigail Kircharr  
Harry Jeong

#### Military Personnel:

Chaplain William Broderick  
Sam Brasfield  
Steven Mackin  
Victor Resto  
Josh Tyson  
Blake Ivy  
Austin Griffith  
Kaleb Brown  
Nathan McCaskill

#### In the Mission Field:

Lucy Lessmann — Costa Rica

If you know anyone who needs to be added or taken off any of these lists, please provide Ann Resto with the information to keep the prayer lists current.