

Hardeetown Baptist Church

*From the Crossroads of Levy County to
the Crossroads of the Mission Field*

- Our church is a prayer and ministry partner with journeyman missionary, Abbey Irwin, of Jackson, Mississippi. She will be in Tokyo for one more year. Please pray for her, and help the ladies send her care packages. Her parents would love to hear from you also. See the pastor for their contact information.

- Our children's ministry will be hosting a family Christmas party this month. Invite your friends with children to attend. See details on the calendar.

- The senior adults have resumed their monthly luncheons on the fourth Thursday of each month but we have a special outing planned for December 17 at Kirby Farms. See the calendar or call the church for details.

- Check out our website at www.hardeetownbc.com. You can also view previous services by clicking on the link to sermons.

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The Pulpit and Pen



Christmas or Xmas?

This month we celebrate Christmas, which is probably the favorite day of the year for most Americans regardless of whether or not they are Christians. Most people understand the significance of the day but choose to ignore it. That includes many Christians that give lip service to the day but then barely acknowledge God's role in the holiday as they become overwhelmed by the festivities of the day.

The celebration of Christmas on December 25 actually began due to numerous pagan holy days that were celebrated in Europe. Scandinavians celebrated Yule, a time of feasting, on the winter solstice. Germans honored the god Oden, who would fly over in winter and decide who would prosper during the following year. Romans celebrated Juvenalia and the birthday of the god Mithra on December 25. Even after being converted to Christianity, many Europeans continued their pagan celebrations on or near the winter solstice. Finally, in an effort to convince those former pagans to stop celebrating pagan holy days, Pope Julius I declared that Christians would celebrate the birth of Christ on December 25 instead of the birth of Mithra. It was a classic example of the attitude "if you can't beat them, join them."

Many of today's Christmas traditions have their origins in pagan celebrations. Santa Claus' annual flight had its origins in the German festival for the god Oden. The Christmas tree was introduced from an earlier tradition of celebrating the new crops that spring would soon bring.

The birth of Christ actually occurred during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, which was a celebration honoring the time that God led and tabernacled with His people. That festival would have occurred on or about what in our calendar is September 16.

However, in the early years of Christianity the exact date of Christ's birth was not viewed as important. Birthdays were not celebrated. The church viewed the dates of death as more important. That is why it is far easier today to calculate the dates of Jesus' death and resurrection than the date of His birth.

In the meantime, cultures change, and our modern society views birthdays as important days of celebration, especially that of Christ. It is not really critical that we celebrate the birth of Christ on the correct day, nor is it important that all the traditions associated with Christmas have their origins in scripture. What is important is that we give Christ the

position of preeminence in our worship and lives that He deserves and demands.

Today's modern Christmas celebration is a mix of Christianity and humanism. Nativity scenes, Christmas carols, and Bible stories remind us what we are celebrating. On the other hand, commercialism and spiritual neglect have tipped the scales of Christmas to being a purely humanistic, secular holiday.

As Christians we should never allow the busy commercialism of the season to overwhelm our focus on what Christmas is about. We celebrate God's having kept His promise by sending the Messiah. It really does not matter when Jesus was born. What matters is that He was indeed born. God became a man so He could reconcile the world to Himself.

I have encountered many Christians who criticize others for their use of the term Xmas instead of writing out the longer Christmas. However, if we allow ourselves to forget what Christmas is really about and get caught up in the secular commercialism that is so prevalent today, we will be guilty of doing in our hearts what others do with paper and pen. We will be celebrating Xmas instead of Christmas by stripping Christ of His rightful place in our hearts. Without Jesus, Christmas is just another secular holiday.

Hardeetown Student Ministries



A great big thank-you goes out to the students and chaperones who stepped up and went to the OCC processing center November 24! The students and chaperones did an OUTSTANDING job. All I heard was, "Can we stay longer; can we come back tomorrow; and can we do this longer next year?" The last time I saw the tote board, our team, along with others from around the Southeast, helped process over 170,000 shoe boxes that day. Thank you to all those at Hardeetown that helped send us and that participated in Operation Christmas Child.

Our Bible study for the month of December will be "Jesus Changes Everything." If you are not able to attend, you can keep up-to-date through RightNow Media.

Students will have the opportunity this summer to go to camp and be a part of a mission project. We are going to camp in Panama City Beach! Get ready for a week of impactful Bible study, worship, games, and fellowship! Then, we will take that knowledge and apply it on the mission field at First Baptist Church Bayou George in Panama City. The dates for the trip are June 14-21. The cost of the trip is \$385, and the deposit is \$60. Fundraisers will be done in the spring to help with the cost. Forms and deposit are due January 18. Permission and medical release forms for all events are located on the wall in the youth room. All students must have a signed and notarized permission form, and medical release forms are good for one year.

In the meantime, the HSM Christmas Party has been changed to Sunday night, December 6, 5:30-7:00. We have also been invited to go to First Baptist Chiefland for a Christmas party on Wednesday, December 16, 5:30-8:00. Please bring a \$5 gift for the gift exchange. A hot dog supper will be provided.



Champions for Christ Kids

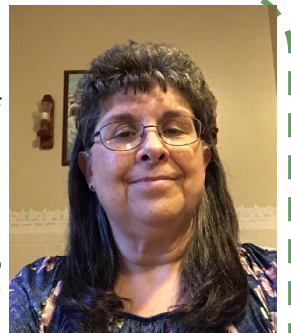


Hello friends, and happy December! Does anyone else just kind of feel like you blinked and November was gone, almost like it did not happen. I hope everyone had a wonderful time celebrating Thanksgiving. During the strangeness of November with self-quarantine and having to cancel events and move things around, I had a lot of time to reflect on what it means to be thankful. One thing I've discovered is that even in the midst of chaos and unknowns there is still a faithful God who is present, and for that I am thankful. I'm also looking forward to the next few weeks in December. As of now we will still celebrate with the church-wide Christmas party on December 9 and Christmas caroling on December 16. The Christmas party will be from 5:30 until 7:00, and there will be games, food, sugar cookies, and a long-awaited newspaper party. The kids and I are looking forward to some Christmas-themed fellowship! Have a great month, and happy December.

HBC Women's Ministry

The year 2020 has certainly been complicated in so many ways. As we come to the last month of the year, many of us just want to fast forward to 2021. I encourage you to take time this month to focus on the gift God gave us, Jesus Christ!

COVID-19 has certainly caused many adjustments for us all, but ministries are still alive and active at Hardeetown allowing us to share Christ. One ministry actually was developed in response to the pandemic as we have produced and distributed over 5,000 hand-made masks. These masks went to hospitals, prisons, businesses, schools, and individuals wherever we heard about a need. We definitely followed Acts 1:8 with masks being shared in Levy County and surrounding areas, all across the USA, and as far away as Japan!



We also dropped off 100 blankets and heart sets to Cindy at the Shands neonatal intensive care unit on November 13. Thanks to all who helped do the work or support this effort financially and in prayer! Our next drop will be during December as we take festive Christmas print items to minister to the families with these tiny precious little babies.

We also were thrilled to have two people volunteer to take hand-made hats to two cancer centers. We have some dedicated ladies crocheting and knitting hats year round, and we are happy to be able finally to get these distributed. Also, 150 were sent in the Operation Christmas Child boxes.

I want to extend my sincere thank-you to all who have been involved with Women's Ministries this year. Each one of us plays an important part whether it be through prayer, financial support, or direct involvement with carrying out the various ministries. Together we can make a difference and give God the glory. Have a blessed Christmas and a wonderful year in 2021!

DECEMBER Birthdays

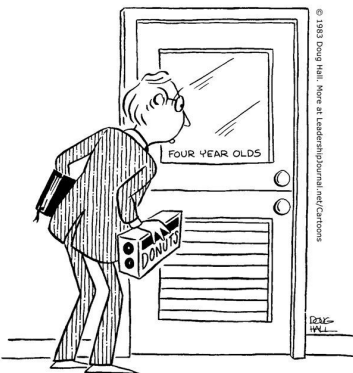


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December birthdays:

- Ron Jackson 12/07
- Karen MacFeggan 12/08
- Frances Hardee 12/10
- Celeste Green 12/12
- Daniel Ivey 12/12
- Jenevieve Hannah 12/13
- Fred Leitner 12/15
- Lesa Ward 12/15
- Mac MacFeggan 12/16
- Stan Collins 12/17
- Regina Goss 12/18
- Billie Sharp 12/18
- Wanda Jones 12/21
- Frank Martorana 12/21
- Dean Chesser 12/22
- John Fisher 12/22
- JoAnn Hardee 12/22
- Kelly Ivey 12/28

Happy Birthday to All!



Armed to the teeth, Sunday school teacher Nat Willowby prepares to do battle with the forces of darkness.

This month's church council will meet at 5:00, December 6, followed by the business meeting at 6:00. Anyone wanting to help plan church activities is invited to attend.

The children's ministry will be visiting our shut-ins on Wednesday, December 16, at 5:30 to sing Christmas carols. All kids and interested adults are invited.

All ordained men are invited to a monthly deacons' dinner at 6:00 on the first Tuesday night of each month at Bett's Big T Restaurant. There is no agenda except fellowship together. The next dinner will be January 5.

Our next senior adult outing is scheduled for Thursday

Announcements

evening, December 17 at 5:30. We will be traveling to Kirby Farm in Williston for the annual Christmas lights festival. We will board a train that will take us around the park to enjoy the Christmas lights and decorations. Tickets are \$16 in advance, which includes the train ride, and anyone may participate.

There will not be a monthly HBC Women's Ministries breakfast in December.

There will be a church-wide family Christmas party sponsored by the children's ministry on Wednesday, December 9. Everyone is invited. This will be a great opportunity to witness to the families of our Wednes-

day night kids.

Plan now for the youth/student ministry chili bowl at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 6. Enter your favorite chili recipe in the cook-off.

The next men's breakfast is January 3 at 8:00. All men are invited.

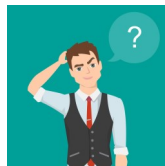
The church needs more willing volunteers to help in the sound booth or with music. If you are willing to learn how to operate the video camera, sound board, or computer, please see Mac MacFeggan or the pastor. You do not have to commit to every Sunday.

December Calendar

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		01	02	03	04	05
		Lottie Moon Offering Month	Staff Meeting 5:00-5:30PM			
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
Men's Break 8AM Lord's Supper Council Mtg 5PM Bus Mtg 6PM	HBA Exec Mtg. 5:30PM TBA		HBC church-wide Christmas party 5:30			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
			Children's Christmas caroling 5:30	Christmas train at Kirby Farm, Williston 5:30		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			No evening svc	Office Closed Christmas Eve	Office Closed Christmas Day	
27	28	29	30	31		
No HBC Women's B'fast						

Bible Trivia

Which two men never died?
Last month's answer: Goliath had at least four relatives (2 Samuel 21:22).



December Memory Verse

Romans 10:9

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

(NASB)



1716 NW 14th ST
Chiefland, FL 32626

A cooperating Baptist church affiliated with the Harmony Baptist Association, Florida Baptist State Convention, and Southern Baptist Convention.

Hardeetown Baptist Church exists for the purpose of bringing glory to God by worshipping Christ, making disciples, fellowshiping with believers, and ministering to those in need. Our goal is to reach Chiefland and the northwestern Levy County community for Christ by evangelizing the lost and producing growing disciples of Christ through relationship-building and intentional evangelism. We are an autonomous body of believers that voluntarily cooperates with the Southern Baptist Convention and Florida Baptist Convention in order to support local, regional, national, and international missions through the Cooperative Program and with the Harmony Baptist Association for the support of local and area missions.

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