

DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

SWIFT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Church That Practices Fruitful Living

PASSIONATE WORSHIP

Worship in December

Advent November 29-December 20

Advent begins November 29th. In worship during this season leading up to Christmas, we will look at some characters in Jesus' ancestral tree.

November 29th We will dedicate new panels of our window paintings by Derek Capsis.

December 6th The Lord's Supper

Christmas Eve Worship at 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary

We are returning to the more traditional service. Since this service is not as child-friendly as what we have offered in the past few years, please note: we will have worship bags for young children. For the youngest children we will need a nursery. If you (2 people) will offer to serve in the nursery for this service, please contact the church office.

December 27th

First Sunday after Christmas Day. We will sing Christmas carols, hear the good news of birth and celebrate the childhood of Jesus. This will be an informal service. Please encourage family in town for the holidays to worship with you.

Swift Church welcomes new members

Following worship on November 15th three people met with session for membership at Swift Church. Chris Rogers on transfer from First Presbyterian Church, Carthage, IL. Mary and Greg McNair on transfer from First Presbyterian Church, Foley, AL.

When you see these folks welcome them. If you don't know them, seek them out and celebrate their commitment to Swift Church.

Session highlights

Swift Session met on November 16th. We celebrated the service of four elders who are rotating off session: Susan Pichoff, Devery Thomas, Lynn Barnwell, and Diane King.

In business:

- Received reports from committees and staff
- Approved a "Safe Conduct" policy for the church and preschool
- Heard from B&G on repairs of fellowship hall flooding
- Approved 2016 budget
- Called meeting of congregation to approve changes in Pastor Keith's terms of call. That meeting will be December 6th at 9:50 in the sanctuary. (see below for changes)
- Transferred membership and/or removed folks from the church active membership roll
- Accepted the resignation of Karleigh Neese from Session because of school
- Approved use of church property for two weddings in 2016

Congregational Meeting December 6th

The congregation is authorized by the Book of Order to approve any changes to Pastor Keith's salary. We will meet at 9:50 on December 6th in the sanctuary to vote on the following package. Pastor Jody Beth will moderate the meeting.

Changes in terms of Call for Pastor Keith

MUSIC NOTES

Submitted by Lisa Cardwell

Please join us on Sunday, December 13th at 3:00 pm for our joint Christmas program with Foley First Presbyterian. This year, the program will be at First Presbyterian of Foley. The music directors of both churches, Laura Mixon of First and Lisa Cardwell of Swift, are working together in developing our own Christmas program. Both choirs are combining to perform choral Advent and Christmas anthems. Our handbell choirs will be joining to play an anthem as well as accompanying the congregation in singing Christmas carols.

Adult Tone Chime Choir! No music reading skills are necessary for this group. We will be reading the words to familiar Christmas Carols and playing when the words are circled. It is easy and fun, and a great opportunity to meet people in the congregation with whom you are not acquainted. It's not too late to join us. We would like a few more people to fill out our choir. We will rehearse on Nov. 29th and Dec. 6th right after the 10:00 worship services in the choir room. We will rehearse on Dec 13th with the time to be determined. We will play on Dec 20th for the 10:00 service.

Chancel and Handbell choirs will both be leading the congregation during our **Christmas Eve service.** Music is such an important part of Advent and Christmas. Please join us for our service.

Children's Christmas Play **Sunday, December 6 at 4:30**

The Christmas play is "Wrapping All The Way" and it will be Sunday December 6th at 4:30pm in our main sanctuary. We will have a cookie social afterward. Jane King will be in charge of putting that together. Please call her if you can bring cookies, etc. Thanks Lynn Barnwell

RADICAL HOSPITALITY

Last "Lunch with Two or More" Lunch of the Year

"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20

Please join us for the December lunch gathering on **Thursday, Dec. 3rd**, and invite friends and family.

Meet at 11:30am, at the Captain's Choice Restaurant at the Gulf Bowl on Juniper Street in Foley.

This month we will decide if we would like to change restaurants beginning in the New Year, or continue at the bowling alley. If you cannot attend, please let me know your preference in advance.

Please RSVP to Pastor Jody Beth at 213-6625 to make a reservation so we can let the restaurant know how many to prepare for and how many tables to set aside for us.

Butterfly Girls and Guys Night Out
Thursday, January 21st, 6:30pm

Butterfly Girls and Guys Night Out are opportunities for us to gather for a meal and fellowship, with *no* agenda and *no* commitments.

ALL ladies are invited to Butterfly Girls, and ALL men are invited to Guys Night Out.

We have met the 3rd Thursday of each month for over 7 years! We have gone to restaurants mostly in Foley and Gulf Shores, but also in Orange Beach, Robertsdale, Malbis and even Pensacola once.

In November, we ate at Olive Garden, and we will not be meeting in December.

**Our next gathering is Thursday, January 21st at 6:30pm...and...
...we have not yet decided where to eat! Do you have a suggestion???**

Contact Pastor Jody Beth, 213-6625.

I LOVE MY CHURCH POTATO BAR

Susan Pichoff, Fellowship Elder

Thanks to everyone who joined us on Sunday 11/15/15 for the Potato Bar to celebrate our Stewardship Season. It was wonderful to see everyone and spend some time visiting. Thanks to those who brought desserts and to those who magically appeared to help.



INTENTIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT

You're Invited to the Thursday Morning Bible Study for Men and Ladies

“Ecclesiastes: Looking for the Answer to the Meaning of Life” Bible Study meets on Thursdays from 9:30-11:00am in the Swift Church Library using the Bible, study books by Dr. Warren Wiersbe, and lots of discussion. There are 8-10 people each week.

Prayerfully consider if God is leading you to join us.

We will meet Dec. 3rd and 10th, and take off Dec. 17th, 24th, and 31st for 2015.

Weekly study will begin again Jan. 7th, 2016.

Contact Pastor Jody Beth for more information, 213-6625.

College and Adult Education Students

Several adult members of our congregation are furthering their education through college and other adult education studies. We can support them with our prayers, and perhaps you feel called to do something special for one or more of them. Maybe sending an encouraging card? Or a care package? Making a meal for a family whose mom or dad is studying? Providing restaurant gift cards for students living away from home? Or gas cards for a student traveling back and forth to classes frequently? How about offering child care during exam time?

Here is a list of those who we know are students. If you know of someone else, or if you are one of the ones taking classes, please let us know so we can include all students in our prayers.

Laura Akins, Auburn University
--277 S Gay St., Apt 302, Auburn, AL 36830

Pate Cardwell, Columbia Southern University, BAS in Fire Administration
--20050 Oak Rd East, Gulf Shores AL 36542

Rene Guidroz, University of South Alabama, finals December 3-7
--9650 EA Wallace Lane, Elberta, AL 36530

Tess Helton-Carrel, Faulkner State Community College, Culinary Arts Program
--8534 Escambia Ave., Perdido Beach, AL 36533

Karely Kleinschmidt, Faulkner State Community College
--P.O. Box 191, Elberta, AL 36530

Tara Morrow, Pensacola State College, Physical Therapist Assistant program to earn Associates Degree in Applied Science. Final exams week of December 7th
--25063 Oak Street, Elberta, AL 36530

Philip Melton, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Christian Leadership Program. Introduction to Preaching final projects 12/7-14
--20376 Mifflin Road, Foley, AL 36535

Zach Melton, Central Alabama Community College
--643 Airport Drive, Alexander City, AL 35010

Karleigh Neese, University of South Alabama Biomedical Sciences Degree/Pharmacy School prerequisites, finals Dec 7th-9th
--U1484, University of South Alabama, 307 N. University Blvd, Mobile, AL 36688

Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God

A Small Group Study

“**Experiencing God**” is a 13-week course in which participants will learn how to have a meaningful and personal relationship with God and to know His will in their lives.

The essence of this study is for you to know God and to know Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. Through examination of biblical and contemporary illustrations, participants will understand and apply seven realities of experiencing God. Churches will be helped to better function as the body of Christ as members understand how to experience God. God is at work around you. Will you join Him?

Kathy Menk will facilitate this course at Swift Church beginning Tuesday, February 23rd from 2:45-4:30. The class will continue to meet on Tuesdays, 2:45-4:30, through May 17th. Cost is \$20 for the workbook. Scholarships are available. This course requires a significant time commitment on the part of the class members, but the rewards are potentially eternal. For more information or to register, please contact Kathy Menk at 971-6509.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Adult Sunday School Classes

Our Adult Sunday School classes meet on Sunday mornings 9:00-9:45 in the Annex.

“Coffee With Keith” meets in the Library. They enjoy diverse, interesting, and lively conversations on various topics of interest are discussed.

“Live With Anthony and Norman” meets in the Andy Lay room and is studying the book of Daniel.

Christian Education in December

Children’s & Youth Sunday School classes **will not be held** Dec. 20, Dec. 27 nor January 3.

“Coffee with Keith” **will not meet** December 27th or January 3rd.

Youth (GϕG) Events

GϕG will have a Sunday night meeting on December 6th at 4 pm. Two of our youth are in the Christmas Play that evening which begins at 4:30. We will still meet in the youth room at 4 and then proceed to sanctuary to watch the play! Good luck Ella and Olivia! And all the other children!

Swift Youth Christmas Party is on December 12th beginning at 5 pm. Place is still to be decided and will be announced at a later date.

During the Christmas holidays the youth will be working on their youth room. We plan to paint and decorate. The large entertainment center located in the youth room will be replaced. If you are interested please make us an offer! The youth will also be working on an outside fire pit. Contact me if you would be interested in working with the youth to accomplish these improvements.

The High School Montreat Conference will be June 4th through June 11th, 2016. Please be prayerfully thinking of your youth attending this week of spiritual beginnings, spiritual renewals and spiritual fellowships that truly changes their lives and connects them with likeminded Christian youths from all over the United States. Beginning in December we will be having meetings to set our deadline dates and make final plans. Montreat Conference Center gives an option of making a \$100.00 deposit by December 1st for all attendees and paying balance by April 1st. The conference fee is \$255.00 per attendee. So we would like to have that completed. We are able to add more at a later date but the fee increases by \$10.00 every month until April when they close registration.

MISSION AND SERVICE

Submitted by Philip Melton, Missions Elder

As we enter into the season of Advent there are many programs going on in the mission of Swift Church. This year we will be focusing our mission efforts in three areas: The Santa Foundation, The Presbyterian Home for Children and the Christmas Joy Offering.

We will support the Santa foundation by collecting donations for this local program. For every \$10.00 donation we will hang a decorative ornament on a Christmas tree in the back of the sanctuary. If you wish to make a donation to this program please make your check or cash donations to the church and mark those donations, “Santa Foundation.” The Santa Foundation is a local charity that helps provide Christmas to the less fortunate.

Additionally the mission focus will include the Presbyterian Home for Children. There will be a bulletin insert added the first week of advent. The insert tells of the mission and needs of the Children’s Home and will include an envelope to send donations directly to the home. Also we will take half of the Christmas Joy offering and send it to the Home for its continued work. The PHC has been around since the end of the Civil War and continues to provide services to the community today. So please consider making a generous donation today so the Home will be able to be here tomorrow.

In recent years Swift has been a collection point for Toys for Tots but this year we have decided to just focus on the two missions for the advent season. “Toys for Tots” is a wonderful program working in our community. If you wish to continue to support this program there are many collection points throughout the greater Foley area, so please give as God calls you to give.

In recent weeks the demand for the food pantry has been great and as a church we have been able to provide food for many people in need, thanks to the generous donations from everyone in the congregation. Thank you for the support in helping replenish the shelves following such great need in the community. And please keep donating. I would also like to thank Peggy Peterson who is the Volunteer Coordinator for Catholic Social Services for her assistance in providing food to the pantry. The recent donation was much needed and appreciated and today we are ready to continue to serve the public need. Thanks Peggy!

Mission Committee needs volunteers to work the food pantry in the coming year. We ask that you prayerfully consider signing up for the following dates in 2016: January 13, January 27, February 10, February 24, March 9, March 23, April 13, and April 27. If you are able to serve God on any of these dates contact Philip Melton or Cathy Rogers or the church secretary.

From the Missions Committee we wish everyone in the church a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we look forward to serving Swift in the coming year.

Food Pantry volunteers:

DECEMBER 9, 2015-Janelle Armbruster-Marci Larson, & Georgette Haupt

DECEMBER 23, 2015- Mike Barnwell & Jim Runtz

YOUTH MISSION SATURDAY

Submitted by Ginny Kleinschmidt, Christian Ed Elder

On Saturday, Nov. 21st, we had nine youth participate with 3 adults driving and supervising. Mission gave us \$300.00 to purchase food for the 10 Thanksgiving food baskets for families. It included cornbread stuffing mix, green beans, all-purpose flour, cranberry sauce, large can of yams, can of chicken stock, box of instant potatoes and cream of mushroom soup. The youth were divided into 3 teams and given \$100.00 budget each, a time limit and a list for their shopping challenge. After they had purchased what was needed for the 10 baskets they had a list of other nonperishable foods to provide for the pantry. We arrived at Wal-Mart with our Shopping Challenge list, teams made and they had 45 minutes to complete the task! The race was on. They had several criteria to fulfill to complete the Shopping Challenge. They were up to it!!! A grand time was had by all and the food pantry was the WINNER! We all went back to the fellowship hall, unloaded the groceries and feasted on pizza! I would like a special thanks to go out to Bridgit Gosa and Kim Vanbrimmer for driving and being team leaders!!

Our youth who were available to attend: Jessica Gosa, William Vanbrimmer, Logan Curry, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Hailey Vanbrimmer, Shane Zook, Ethan Zook, Olivia Akins and Ella Thomas. I also drove and was a team leader. We talked about how our food pantry had helped 16 families two weeks ago and with our shopping we would be able to help families for Thanksgiving!

Phil Melton, Missions Elder, had asked for 10 three-pound canned hams also for baskets. I had tried several grocery stores and that item is hard to find. After youth had completed their mission, I went to Piggly Wiggly and bought the only 10 three-pound canned hams they had. Members of the church had donated money for the youth mission and it went to buy the hams. Thanks to all who donated!!!

We completed the 10 bags and stocked the pantry with pasta, pasta sauce, canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned meat, peanut butter, jelly, rice and boxed potatoes. I am very proud of our kids!

COOKIES FOR SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN, ETC.

A group of ladies is interested in bagging and sending cookies to our overseas military family and friends on Thursday, Dec. 3rd. We could use your help in the following ways:

- ❖ Baking and freezing cookies
- ❖ Writing encouraging notes or Christmas cards that will be included in the boxes
- ❖ Providing names and addresses of people you know who are serving our country on foreign soil
 - ❖ Donating \$\$ toward the cost of Food Saver bags and postage.

Thank you for any help you can provide, Kathy Menk

“THE LONGEST NIGHT”
Submitted by Paula Brewer

For many people this time of year brings a sense of melancholy because there is a lot of focus on giving, joy and family being together. Many will face the first holiday without a loved one. When you lose someone you love, the famous words of an Elvis Presley hit, "I'll Have a Blue Christmas Without You" is a very accurate description of how you feel. This year the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, will fall on December 21st. A special worship service will be held that night in the Historical Chapel at 6pm and all are welcome. The "Longest Night" service is a gift to the community, designed to bring comfort to those who are experiencing grief due to a loss. The service will have special music, scriptures of comfort, and prayers for strength. As a gathered community we will draw from the season's offer for healing and hope, and bring support to and share support with those who struggle to find comfort during this season. All are welcome and encouraged to bring a friend or neighbor that may be experiencing grief. On this longest night of the year, hope and comfort are available.

“Comfort, oh comfort my people,” says your God. “Speak softly and tenderly to Jerusalem, but also make it very clear that she has served her sentence that her sin is taken care of—forgiven! She’s been punished enough and more than enough and now it’s over and done with.” Thunder in the desert “Prepare for God’s arrival! Make the road straight and smooth, a highway fit for our God. Fill in the valleys, level off the hills, Smooth out the ruts, clear out the rocks. Then God’s bright glory will shine and everyone will see it. Yes, just as God has said.” *Isaiah 40:1-5*

IN THE COMMUNITY

The Choral Society of Pensacola continues its 80th Season with Handel’s “Messiah”

Experience the beauty and majesty of Handel’s beloved oratorio *Messiah* as the Choral Society of Pensacola continues its 80th season with a performance in the Saenger Theatre on Saturday, December 5, beginning at 7 PM. Soloists Carla Connors, Monika Cosson, Thomas Rowell and Patrick Jacobs join the sixty-voice choir and an orchestra comprising some of the area’s finest musicians, all under the direction of Xiaolun Chen. Tickets are \$30 and \$25 and are available through Ticketmaster or at the Saenger box office. Audience members are invited to enjoy refreshments after the performance, as they mix and mingle with soloists, chorus and orchestra musicians on the mezzanine. After-party tickets are \$20 and may be purchased online at www.BrownPaperTickets.com.

DIRECTORY UPDATE 02 FOR SEPTEMBER 2015 DIRECTORY

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Swift Church Preschool

December Newsletter

It is beginning to look a lot like Christmas! This is my personal favorite time of the year, I love everything about it! There are so many opportunities to be Christ-like as we prepare for His birth. As a school we are going to raise money for USA Women and Children's hospital by having a Trike-A-Thon. The children have been raising money and 100% of all donations go directly to the hospital to support the patients they serve. If you would like to add to our donations, please contact Shawn.

Christmas is celebrated in many different ways. Every family has their own traditions that are carried on from year to year. In my family we make Fondue for Christmas Eve dinner, pop our English Crackers and open one gift before we go to bed. Some customs are unique to a specific country. For example in Japan it is widely practiced to eat KFC on Christmas Eve. In 1974 some western tourists could not find any turkey in Japan for their Christmas Eve dinner so they did the next best thing, KFC. After that year KFC launched their Christmas campaign and lines today will stretch out the door to pick up the fried treat for Christmas dinner. Our teachers will be talking about different customs with the children during our first week and I am very excited to see what they have found to share with the classes.

With Christmas break coming soon, it will be easy to get all caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holiday and become overwhelmed and stressed out. Do not despair, holiday stress can be easily managed with a few easy tips. Remembering to stick to your routine (especially meal and bedtimes), making sure children get their down time, and not over scheduling are easy ways to keep stress at bay. You know I like giving you an article to read if you want more info and I found another good one for you to enjoy!

<http://childparenting.about.com/od/healthsafety/a/holidaystresskids.htm>

Important dates:

- ♥ 12/4 Trike-a-Thon
- ♥ 12/5 Foley Christmas Parade
- ♥ 12/9 Spirit Day
- ♥ 12/18 Santa visit and PJ Day
- ♥ 12/21-12/25 Closed for Christmas Break
- ♥ 12/28 School re-opens
- ♥ 1/1/2017 NO SCHOOL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL! From Mrs. Megan, Ms. Brittany, Mrs. Becky, Ms. Lelia, Ms. Chelsea, Mrs. Carol, Mrs. Teresa, Mrs. Kristen and Mrs. Shawn

"Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmas-time"
- Laura Ingalls Wilder

Reminders:

- ✓ Tennis Shoes and socks every day
- ✓ LABEL EVERYTHING THAT COMES TO SCHOOL
- ✓ Drop off your child no later than 9am please
- ✓ SIGN IN AND OUT YOUR CHILD IN THE KITCHEN