My prayer for each of us this new year is that each of us can grow to be more like Jesus. One of the ways we do that is by praying more. But as we pray, we should be careful how we pray and what we pray for. We certainly don’t want to be like Little Leroy.

Little Leroy came into the kitchen where his mother was making dinner. His birthday was coming up and he thought this was a good time to tell his mother what he wanted. “Mom, I want a bike for my birthday.” Little Leroy was a bit of a troublemaker. He had gotten into trouble at school and at home. Leroy’s mother asked him if he thought he deserved to get a bike for his birthday. Little Leroy, of course, thought he did. Leroy’s mother, being a Christian woman, wanted Leroy to reflect on his behavior over the last year. “Go to your room, Leroy, and think about how you have behaved this year. Then write a letter to God and tell him why you deserve a bike for your birthday.” Little Leroy stomped up the steps to his room and sat down to write God a letter.

Letter 1: Dear God, I have been a very good boy this year and I would like a bike for my birthday. I would like a red one. Your friend, Leroy

Leroy knew that wasn’t true. He had not been a very good boy this year, so he tore up the letter and started over.

Letter 2: God, I have been an “OK” boy this year. I still would really like a bike for my birthday. Leroy

Leroy knew he could not send this letter to God either. So he wrote a third letter.

Letter 3: Dear God: I know I haven’t been a good boy this year. I am very sorry. I will be a good boy if you just send me a bike for my birthday. Please! Thank you, Leroy

Leroy knew, even if it was true, this letter was not going to get him a bike. By now Leroy was very upset, and desperate. He went downstairs and told his Mom that he wanted to go to church. Leroy’s mother thought her plan had worked as Leroy looked very sad. “Just be home in time for dinner,” Leroy’s mother told him. Leroy walked down the street to the church on the corner. Little Leroy went into the church and up to the altar. He looked around to see if anyone was there. Leroy bent down and picked up a statue of the Virgin Mary. He slipped it under his shirt and ran out of the church, down the street, into the house, and up to his room and sat down with a piece of paper and a pen. Leroy began to write his letter to God.

Letter 4: Dear God: I’VE GOT YOUR MAMA. IF YOU WANT TO SEE HER AGAIN, SEND THE BIKE. Signed, You Know Who!!

In this new year, 2018, we need to pray more, but as we pray we need to pray as Jesus did when he prayed, “Not my will, but your will be done.” The Father always knows best. Sometimes we tend to try to bargain with God. Other times we can be quite demanding thinking we know best. Let’s try asking God what He wants for our church, our families, and for us personally. I guarantee what God wants for us is a lot better than what we think we need. Let’s grow more like Jesus this year as we pray.
As we start a new year, we have the chance to welcome 4 new deacons as they begin a term of service to the church. Service being the key word in that sentence, makes this a good opportunity to review what it is deacons really do. The description below comes from the website: https://classroom.synonym.com

The term "deacon" means to minister or serve. Within each Baptist church is a group of deacons chosen for devout attributes who assist the pastor, preach to the congregation and reach out to the community.

Qualifications: Qualifications for Baptist deacons differ between churches. Some churches require that deacons be ordained and trained similar to pastors. Some churches permit only men to become deacons, while others allow men and women. The Bible passages Acts 6 and Timothy 3:8-13 address spiritual and moral qualifications for deacons, which include wisdom, faith, honesty and sincerity. The Bible also states that a deacon must manage a household well and drink alcohol sparingly.

Congregational Duties: Within the church organizational structure, Baptist deacons perform duties to support the pastor. In some churches, deacons administer communion and collect financial offerings. While it is the pastor’s job to pray for the needs of the church and oversee internal ministry, deacons make themselves available to members for prayer and guidance to alleviate the workload of the pastor.

Financial Duties: Because church organizations in the U.S. are tax-exempt, the law requires that they establish boards and committees for budgeting, government reporting and decision-making. This is intended to create a checks and balances system within each church. Baptist deacons serve on these boards and committees to guide the congregation and act as financial advisers and counsel to pastors and elders.

Outreach: Deacons assist pastors in community outreach by ministering the gospel outside the church, visiting the sick and homebound, recruiting and receiving new members and traveling on missionary trips. Within a congregation, deacons set examples of compassion and stewardship. The deacons also help with educating and nurturing youth within and outside of the church.

Be sure to welcome your new deacons, especially the two being ordained. Pray for them the same as you do for your pastor and remember “God doesn’t call the qualified, he qualifies the called”. Be patient as they learn the best way to serve their church and its members.

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**Sunday School Tidbits**

- Our average Sunday School attendance from December 10 to December 24 was 96.50.
- Our present enrollment is 213.
- During December we had a total of 5 visitors
- We had 1 visitor in our Adult division and 4 visitors in our Children/Youth Division.

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**WELCOME TO OUR RBC CHURCH FAMILY**

Brandon and Stephanie Barts
Tagan Edwards
Tommy Roland

We will observe the ordinance of baptism during the morning worship service on January 21 as we baptize Tagan Edwards and Tommy Roland.

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**RBC Kids**

For the month of January we will be learning about Commitment! We will define commitment as "making a plan and putting it into practice"
A special Thank You to our Ringgold Baptist Church family for the Christmas cards & gifts.

The RBC Ministry staff ~ Pastor Duane, Dan, Madison, Ginger, Leslie, Cheryl, Doug & Curtis.

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you have extended to me since I joined the church staff as Administrative Secretary in mid-November. I'm so very happy to be here and look forward to meeting each of you in the months ahead, if I haven't already. I know that God leads us to the places where we need to be and I felt strongly from the moment I interviewed here that this was my place. I already love being a part of the RBC family!

Cheryl

Our deepest Christian sympathy to:

The family & friends of Evelyn Andrews in her passing.
The family & friends of Sheila Gravitt in her passing.
The family & friends of Kenny Craig in his passing.
The family & friends of Brittany Scott in her passing.
The family & friends of Ruthie Wright in her passing.
The family & friends of Gene Moorefield in his passing.
The family and friends of James Terry in his passing.
The family and friends of John Sparks in his passing.
The family and friends of Mary Faw in her passing.

J.O.Y. Club News

Thanks to all who have been a part of the JOY Club.
Thanks also for the ones who have helped each month with food, cleaning, cooking and other duties.

Hope 2018 brings many blessings and good health to each of you.
We will NOT meet in January. Will decide about February based on weather.

Harriett

Friends in Christ,

I trust you all had a very Merry Christmas and are enjoying a peaceful and fulfilling New Year. The Music Ministry here at RBC is blessed with some very fine talents.

I couldn't have a more wonderful group of people to work with than this RBC Choir - a great group of people. We work together, laugh together, pray together… all in communal joy with the Grace of God.

We had an outstanding performance for the Christmas Cantata – “Celebrate the Season”. Thank you choir, for the great job you did. I’m sure the Lord was smiling that morning.

The children that evening were just outstanding. The play, “For God So Loved”, was a fine depiction of the birth of Christ - a nice blend of story-telling, song and choreography. Hats off to Madison, Leslie and Ginger, and most of all, to the youngsters who participated.

In the words of J. S. Bach – “It is the special province of music to move the heart.”

And you, this congregation, have moved my heart. It is a special privilege to work for you. I appreciate all the wonderful cards and gifts and compliments. But I must say, as Bach did, “I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music.”

Peace…

Dan
Announcements, Events & Reminders

Committee Organizational Meetings
All church committees will meet Sunday, January 14, 2018 at 5:00 pm in the Family Life Center. A light dinner will be served and each committee will meet to elect a chairperson, vice-chair, and secretary. Each committee will also review the duties/responsibilities and forms used by that committee. If you served as a committee chair in 2017, please also plan to briefly meet with that committee to finalize any old business. Copies of the 2018 Officers and Committees are available in the Family Life Center foyer. Members of the Constitution Committee will be available during the Committee Organization Meeting to assist and answer any questions.

BAPTIST MEN’S DAY
January 28 will be Baptist Men’s Day at RBC. The day will begin with a breakfast for all the men and boys of the church. During the morning worship service, our men and boys will fill the choir for the special music followed by testimonies from some of our men. This will be a Sunday you will not want to miss.

2018 FAMILY NIGHT DINNER & DEVOTIONS SCHEDULE
Wednesday, January 17 Host to be Announced
Wednesday, March 21 Host to be Announced
Wednesday, May 16 Host to be Announced
Wednesday, July 18 Host to be Announced
Wednesday, September 19 Host to be Announced
Wednesday, November 21 Host to be Announced
Our bi-monthly Family Dinner & Devotions are church-wide covered dish meals hosted by the Sunday School classes. The dinner begins at 6:30 pm followed by a devotional.

INCLEMENT WINTER WEATHER
In case of snow, ice, or sleet we will use our One Call Now message system.
NO announcement will be made if we are having services as scheduled. Please remember to use your own judgment; we do not want you to risk your safety.

2017 Contribution Statements
The 2017 Contribution statements will be mailed within the next few weeks.
From the fullness of His grace, we have all received one blessing after another.
- John 1:16

2018 Offering Envelopes
Are located in the Sunday School office.
If you did not receive envelopes last year and would like to have them for this coming year, please notify the church office at 822-5059 or e-mail: office@ringgoldbaptist.org

WMU Highlights of 2017
Thank you for your prayers, participation and financial support for all of the WMU mission projects and activities of Ringgold Baptist Church during 2017. Hopefully, a strong commitment to missions at the local, state, national and international levels will continue during 2018 at RBC.

Review of 2017:
- Received $2743.00 (goal of $2500) for Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.
- Received $1929.00 (goal of $2000) for Alma Hunt State Mission Offering.
- Received to date $3697.00 (goal of $4000) for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.
- Supported the Youth Pancake Breakfast for Puerto Rico Mission Trip on Sunday, March 5.
- Supported the Easter Egg Hunt for RBC children and community with candy.
- Filled and donated (50) Blessing Buckets to God’s Pit Crew.
- Provided lunch on March 23 for the Christian Student Fellowship at Averett University.
- Sponsored spaghetti lunch to support Youth Mission Trip to Puerto Rico on Sunday, April 23.
- Donated 1050 Gospel Booklets to Samaritan’s Purse in honor of Paula and Allen Ruis.
- Honored Paula and Allen Ruis for fifteen years of coordinating and working with the Operation Christmas Child Ministry at RBC.
- Honored Hazel Newton for twenty-nine (29) years of WMU leadership at RBC on Sunday, April 23.
- Donated $952.93 to Transition Pregnancy Solutions from Mother’s Day – Father’s Day for the Baby Bottle Boomerang Ministry.
- Collected and donated Back-to-School supplies to KES, DRMS and DRHS.
- Twenty-six volunteers are packing bags for the Backpack Buddies Ministry which serves KES and DRMS on a weekly basis during the school year 2017-18.
- Eight volunteers are helping with the breakfast and lunch programs at KES on a weekly basis during 2017-18.
- Thirty-nine (39) Blessing Bags were donated to God’s Pit Crew.
- Approximately sixty-six volunteers participated in OPERATION INASMUCH on Saturday, October 14, at Food Lion, Piggly Wiggly, Laundry Land, and Community Fall Fest at RBC.
- Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer was held on Monday, Nov. 6 with a breakfast and dinner.
- Two hundred and forty-five (245) OCC boxes were filled at RBC this year.
- RBC served as a drop-off site for other churches and community people to bring their boxes to be carried to the Danville-Pittsylvania Associational Office to be sent to the Processing Centers in Charlotte and Boone, NC.

THANK YOU!