



December 17, 2023

Ferguson Avenue Baptist Church

10050 Ferguson Avenue ♦ Savannah, Georgia 31406

Where Christ Is Exalted and the Fellowship Is Exciting

Announcements

Christmas Book Giveaway, *The Four Emotions of Christmas*

Many come to the Christmas season thinking it's the most wonderful time of the year. Others approach it just hoping to make it through December. The good news is that anyone can bring their emotions, whatever they are, to the heart of the real Christmas story. With care and compassion, Bob Lepine diagnoses the emotions one might be feeling and helps trace those back to the first Christmas. This is a wonderful, short guide to helping one face this season by pointing them back to the person at the center of it all, Jesus, and ultimately back to joy. Get this book for yourself, for your friends and for your family. "The Four Emotions" clearly communicates the message that because of Jesus' birth, joy has dawned upon the world.

Christmas Caroling

You have two opportunities to go Christmas Caroling this week! Meet at the church at 5:15 p.m. either Monday, **December 18**, or Wednesday, **December 20**, to board the bus and travel to sing to our Senior Saints and shut-ins. It is lots of fun! If you have any questions, talk to Shawn Champion.

Trip to Visit Shelma Lewis

Tom Keller is still working on the details for the Christmas party in Jesup with Shelma. The party is given by Jesup Health and Rehab and is for the residents and their family and friends. The date and time is Wednesday, **December 20**, at 11:00 am. The location is Empowerment City Church, 675 South 3rd Street, Jesup, GA 31545. If you have let Tome know you are coming, the bus will leave by 9:15 am. More details will follow as to what we will bring to support the facility and their residents. Shelma requested gift cards if you want to purchase a gift since her space is limited.

Christmas Eve Service

On Sunday, **December 24**, there is a communion service with lessons and carols beginning at 5:00 p.m. Please join us for this special service! Invite your family and friends!

Church Office Closed

The church office will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, **December 25 and 26** for the Christmas holidays.

Continued on p. 4

FABC Elders

Bob Dimmitt
Senior Pastor
912-398-4363
bob@fabchurch.com

Tom Keller
Assoc. Pastor/Senior Adults
912-308-3767
tom@fabchurch.com

Church Phone:
912-355-0949
office@fabchurch.com
www.fabchurch.com

December 17, 2023

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship
Matthew 1:20-23
Pew Bible p. 807

Hymn #85, bulletin p. 5
“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”

Prayer of General Confession
Tom Keller
Isaiah 43:24-25
Pew Bible p. 604

Hymn, bulletin pp. 6-7
“How Dark the Night”

Scripture Reading
Luke 2:21-35
Glen Martin
Pew Bible pp. 857-858

Hymn, bulletin pp. 8-9
“Sing We the Song of Emmanuel”

Message
Bob Dimmitt
Mary of Nazareth
Christmas 2023 #1
Luke 1:26-55, Pew Bible pp. 855-856

Hymn, bulletin p. 10
“Christmas Doxology”

Mary of Nazareth
Christmas 2023 #1
Luke 1:26-55

There is a cloud of confusion surrounding the subject of *Spirituality*. The means to spiritual growth advocated today include deep breathing, Mongolian chanting, seeking jolts of psychic energy from crystals, and even donning a magnetic helmet (called the God helmet)

True spirituality is grounded in the promises of God in Holy Scripture. It celebrates the glory of God, not the self-aggrandizement of the creature.

Luke 1:26-39: the Annunciation is clearly about Christ.
If the Annunciation is primarily about Christ, it is also secondarily about Mary.
Just as Jesus comes from God, so he also comes from humanity.

Luke stresses the fact that God's redemptive acts take place within a history of salvation.

Some argue that only Mary, Noah, and Moses are in the category of "*avored or highly favored ones*." (See box on page 4.)

The ground of the blessing pronounced upon Mary is not performance but acceptance. Mary is blessed because she is a person of faith. She is praised not because of any special quality in her but because of her trust in the action of God

Biblical spirituality then involves the intertwining of God's story and our personal story. The Christian faith finds its fundamental expression not in propositional truth but in personal relationship, so biblical spirituality is not to be defined in pedantic argument but in the ardent, living color of real life.

Continued from p. 1

New Year's Eve Chili Cookoff

Bring your favorite batch of chili and see how you match up with the competition! You are also welcome to bring side dishes. **December 31** from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

New Members' Class

Tom Keller will be teaching a New Members' Class during Sunday School beginning on Sunday, **January 7**. It will run for five weeks. Great for new members, prospective members, and anyone else interested in learning about the local church in general, and our particular local church specifically.

Women's Bible Study

Beginning the week of **January 7**, the women's Bible studies will begin using the book *The Well-Watered Woman*, by Gretchen Saffles. The class meets for nine weeks.

From the publisher: *In the chaos of our everyday, it can be difficult to live out and apply the truths of Scripture. We want more of Jesus, but we find ourselves looking to our own lives and accomplishments for our worth and identity. And while that may buoy us for a time, we're often left feeling dried up, discouraged, and longing for more. Gretchen Saffles knows what it's like to feel overwhelmed and unable to flourish.*

In The Well-Watered Woman, Gretchen leads us to the Well of fullness, the Word of freedom, and the Way of fruitfulness. She teaches that God's Word will satisfy us for all eternity. Using Scripture and her own personal story of surrender, Gretchen offers spiritually hungry women tangible tools to not only know Jesus more but to live a life that thoroughly enjoys Him, seeks Him, and follows Him into freedom.

Tuesday's class meets at 6:30 with Emily Wise, and Thursday's class meets at 6:15 with Jessica Dimmitt. Reach out to either of them if you are interested in joining!

Besides Mary, there were also many other people in the Bible who, due to their devotion to God, were greatly blessed by Him. Here's a list of some of those that the Bible specifically mentions found favor with God:

- Noah (Gen. 6:8-9)
- Abraham (Gen. 18:3-5)
- Joseph (Gen. 39:21, Acts 7:9-10)
- Moses (Ex. 33:12-14)
- The Israelites (Ps. 44:1-3)
- Gideon (Jdg. 6:16-18)
- Samuel (I Sam. 2:26)
- David (I Sam. 16:22, Acts 7:46)
- Esther (Esther 2:9 and 2:15)
- Daniel (Daniel 1:9)
- Zacharias & Elizabeth—parents of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-6)
- Jesus (Luke 2:52)

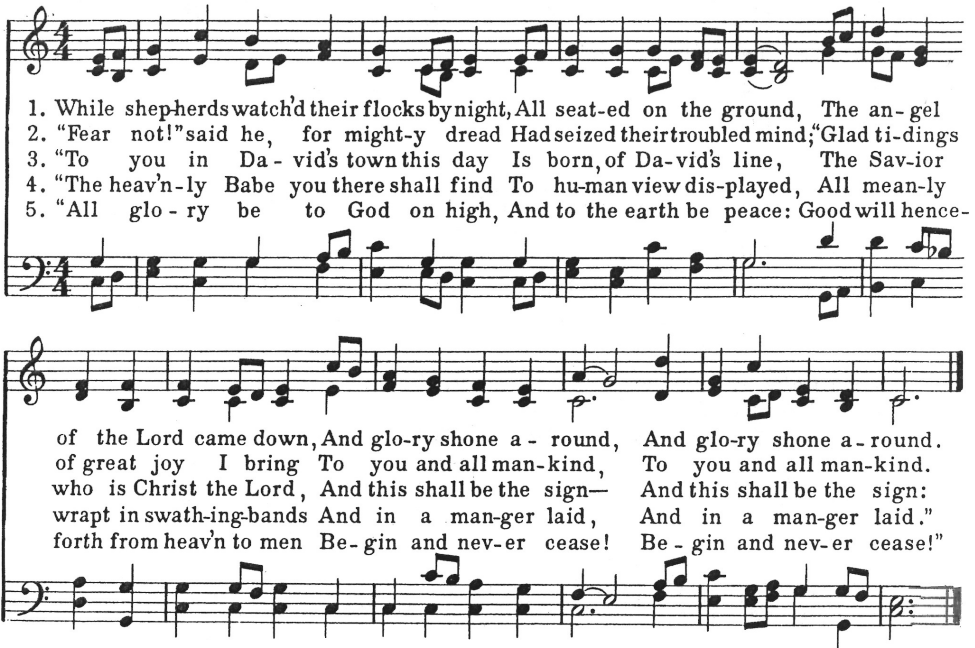
These biblical recipients of God's favor were shown exceptional kindness, blessed beyond measure, and shown grace (all definitions of the word "favor") because God was pleased with their faith, humility, and obedience (even in times of trials!).

95 While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

NAHUM TATE, 1652-1715

CHRISTMAS

Arr. from George F. Handel, 1685-1759
in Weyman's *Melodia Sacra*, 1815



1. While shep-herds watch'd their flocks by night, All seat-ed on the ground, The an-gel
 2. "Fear not!" said he, for might-y dread Had seized their troubled mind; Glad ti-dings
 3. "To you in Da-vid's town this day Is born, of Da-vid's line, The Sav-ior
 4. "The heav'n-ly Babe you there shall find To hu-man view dis-played, All mean-ly
 5. "All glo-ry be to God on high, And to the earth be peace: Good will hence-

of the Lord came down, And glo-ry shone a-round, And glo-ry shone a-round.
 of great joy I bring To you and all man-kind, To you and all man-kind.
 who is Christ the Lord, And this shall be the sign— And this shall be the sign:
 wrapt in swath-ing-bands And in a man-ger laid, And in a man-ger laid."
 forth from heav'n to men Be-gin and nev-er cease! Be-gin and nev-er cease!"



Important Upcoming Dates

December:

18, 20	Caroling	5:15 p.m.
24	Christmas Eve Service	5:00 p.m.
25	Christmas Day: Office Closed	
26	Day After Christmas: Office Closed	
31	Annual NYE Cookoff: Chili	7:00 p.m.

January:

1	New Year's Day: Office Closed	
9, 11	Women's Bible Study begins: The Well-Watered Woman (see p. 8)	
21	Quarterly Members' Meeting	TBA
21	After Church Fellowship	

How Dark the Night

Words: Chris Anderson

Music: Greg Habegger

Em Am/E Bm/D

1. How dark the night in Beth - le - hem Where
 2. How dark the night o'er pas - tures bleak Where
 3. How dark the night of fall - en souls, By
 4. How dark the night that shrouds the world Where

C Am7 B sus B Em Am/E

trav - 'lers sought for rest; How crude the cave they
 shep - herds kept their watch; How cold the wind which
 sin and guilt op - pressed; How hope - less our un -
 war an - guish reign; How fierce our swords, how

Bm/D C Bm7 Em

shel - tered in While sheep and ox - en slept.
 stole their sleep And stung their wea - ry flock.
 spok - en woe - Of God and good be - reft;
 sharp our words, How pierc - ing is our pain.

How Dark the Night

10 Em/D C maj7 Am 7 Dsus D/F#

Yet Light burst forth in - to the world, Dis -
But glo - ry pierced the mid - night sky And
Till Je - sus breaks our mor - al night And
O Christ, re - turn like blaz - ing dawn - The

13 C Am 7 Bsus B Em Am/E

pel - ling sin and strife. The Child born to a the -
turned - fa - tigue to fright; "The King is born!" the
melts the heart of stone; "All praise to God in
Morn - ing Star of Light! The Lord Him - self will

16 Bm/D C Bm 7 Em

vir - gin girl Was Christ, the Light of Life.
an - gel cried To hail the birth of Light.
heav - en's height, And peace day to men be - low."
be - our Sun, And day e - clipse the night!

OPTIONAL TURN

19 Em D Bm 7 C 2 Bm 7

Life. 2. How

Sing We The Song of Emmanuel



Verse 1st v. unison
2nd & 3rd v. harmony

5 D G D A G A

1. Sing we the song of Em - man - u - el; this, the Christ, who was long fore - told.
2. Come we to wel - come Em - man - u - el, King who came with no crown or throne.
3. Go spread the news of Em - man - u - el. Joy and peace for the wea - ry heart.

9 D G D A G D 3rd time to Coda

Lo, in the shad - ows of Beth - le - hem, prom - ise of dawn now our eyes be - hold.
Help - less, He lay, the In - vin - ci - ble. Mak - er of Mar - y, now Mar - y's son.
Lift up your heads for your King has come. Sing, for the Light o - ver - whelms the dark.

Chorus Add harmony

13 A G D A G D

God, Most High, in a man - ger laid. Lift your voic - es and now pro - claim,
O, what wis - dom to save us all. Shep - herds sag - es be - fore Him fall.

17 G D G D G Bm A

"Great and glo - ri - ous, Love has come to us." Join now with the hosts of heav -
Grace and maj - es - ty, what hu - mil - i - ty. Come on bend - ed knee, a - dore

Turn

20 D G2 Bm7 A G Repeat twice

en.
Him.

24 Coda D

Glo - ry shin - ing for all to see. Hope a - live, let the

28 G D G D G D G Bm

gos - pel ring. God has made a way. He will have the praise. Tell the world His name is

32 1. A D 2. A D

Je - sus. Je - sus.

Bridge

36 2nd x a capella ff D G2 D

Glo - ri - a Glo - ri - a

41 A Bm7 G2

ri - a Glo - ri - a Glo -

48 D A D

ri - a

piano only pp

Christmas Doxology

James Montgomery
Henry Smart

B \flat B \flat /F B \flat /D E \flat B \flat /D Gm

All Cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing, God the Fath - er,

F/A F7 B \flat B \flat B \flat Gm/D D

Spir - it, Son; Ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing

Gm D B \flat Gm F/C C7 F F

To th'e - ter - nal three in one: Come and wor - ship,

B \flat E \flat Cm B \flat /D Cm/E \flat Gm F F7 B \flat

come and wor - ship, Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

Articles

Bible Reading Plans

Rather than having a set Bible reading plan for 2024, Pastor Bob Dimmitt is sharing these thoughts again from last year. Perhaps you found your ideal plan for life, or would like to pick a new one. There are lots of choices!

Why You Should Read the Bible Regularly

What you read impacts you. Think about how you feel when you read your news feed. Reading the Bible on a regular and consistent basis has several benefits. **First**, the Bible shows us God's character and provides us God's revelation of himself to his people. In each section of the Bible, we see God's holy, unchanging, faithful, gracious and loving character.

Second, 2 Timothy 3:16–17 when discussing the topic of Scripture says that it is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.” The next verse goes on to say that this leads to the completeness and equipping “for every good work” (ESV).

Third, regularly reading God's word reorients our thinking so that we can grow in maturity, which is part of the Christian calling (Ephesians 4:14–16; Romans 12:1–2). Have you ever met a mature Christian who did not regularly read the Bible? These three things are really just the beginning, this list could include dozens of reasons why you should read the Bible on a regular basis.

Reading the Bible is a spiritual discipline and Bible reading plan can go a long way in helping us with that. Below is a link offering 14 different plans to choose from. The website states: Want to pick a Bible reading plan that you won't regret committing to for the next season? We have done all the work for you digging deep to find the top 14 ways to read the Bible. We not only have your traditional 1 year reading plans but have plans created from the early 1800's all the way to the present time. Each reading plan has a description that will help you identify what kind of commitment it will take and its pros and cons. The plans vary widely, and you will likely be surprised by all the different approaches people have to help you read the Bible.

<https://biblestudytogether.com/top-best-bible-reading-plans/>

If Christianity is true, then God exists, we owe him our obedience, we will face his judgment at death, and we have no hope for salvation apart from Jesus Christ. Yet it is not at all uncommon to hear people say, “Christianity might be true or it might not be, but it doesn't really matter to me.” **This stance is irrational.**

Neil Shenvi

Christianity does not start with “Jesus saves you from your sins.” It starts with “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

F. Schaeffer

Do Not Neglect Your Bible

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it.” **Amos 8:11-12**

This ominous promise given to Israel in the 8th Century BC was a warning of coming judgment from God—judgment not in the form of fire and brimstone from heaven but in a manner that is actually far worse. God promised to send a famine of “hearing the words of the Lord.”

It is the same thing that the Apostle Paul warned Timothy was coming in the perilous times in the NT era: *“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths”* (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Scripture clearly warns us that there will be times when people who are called by God’s Name will quit listening to the actual words of God and will instead seek guidance and affirmation from other sources—even myths—all the while thinking they are hearing from the Lord.

Such times are expressions of God’s judgment. Such people are deluded and under judgment. What makes this even more tragic and ominous is that Paul tells us there will be teachers aplenty who will serve this benighted passion by reassuring people that the way of error is actually the way of truth.

Such false teachers fill the earth. They are enemies of the cross and their end is destruction (Philippians 3:19-20). Those who follow them will likewise be destroyed.

So, how can God’s people guard against being led astray? How can we stand firm in the evil day?

The words of J.C. Ryle from the 19th century answer these questions in an insightful and straightforward way by calling us to give ourselves to a sincere devotion of the written Word of God. We need to heed this counsel as much today as did believers in his day. May the Lord grant us grace to do so.

You live in a world where your soul is in constant danger. Enemies are round you on every side. Your own heart is deceitful. Bad examples are numerous. Satan is always labouring to lead you astray. Above all false doctrine and false teachers of every kind abound. This is your great danger.

To be safe you must be well armed. You must provide yourself with the weapons which God has given you for your help. You must store your mind with Holy Scripture. This is to be well armed.

Arm yourself with a thorough knowledge of the written word of God. Read your Bible regularly. Become familiar with your Bible ... Neglect your Bible and nothing that I know of can prevent you from error if a plausible advocate of false teaching shall happen to meet you. Make it a rule to believe nothing except it can be proved from Scripture. The Bible alone is infallible ... Do you really use your Bible as much as you ought?

There are many today, who believe the Bible, yet read it very little. Does your conscience tell you that you are one of these persons?

If so, you are the man that is likely to get little help from the Bible in time of need. Trial is a sifting experience ... Your store of Bible consolations may one day run very low.

If so, you are the man that is unlikely to become established in the truth. I shall not be surprised to hear that you are troubled with doubts and questions about assurance, grace, faith, perseverance, etc. The devil is an old and cunning enemy. He can quote Scripture readily enough when he pleases. Now you are not sufficiently ready with your weapons to fight a good fight with him ... Your sword is held loosely in your hand.

If so, you are the man that is likely to make mistakes in life. I shall not wonder if I am told that you have problems in your marriage, problems with your children, problems about the conduct of your family and about the company you keep. The world you steer through is full of rocks, shoals and sandbanks. You are not sufficiently familiar either with lighthouses or charts.

If so, you are the man who is likely to be carried away by some false teacher for a time. It will not surprise me if I hear that one of these clever eloquent men who can make a convincing presentation is leading you into error. You are in need of ballast (truth); no wonder if you are tossed to and fro like a cork on the waves.

All these are uncomfortable situations. I want you to escape them all. Take the advice I offer you today. Do not merely read your Bible a little—but read it a great deal ... Remember your many enemies. Be armed! ♦

Featured Content from Right Now Media

This week, we are featuring two studies by George DeJong: Volumes 1 and 2 of *Everything Happens Somewhere*. From the website: *Trace any civilization and geography provides the stage; place plays a role in shaping life while at the same time giving us a glimpse into why God places us where we live today. The Bible contains so many stories of God placing his people in places and situations they'd never choose, and yet it is especially there and in those circumstances that he seeks to be known, trusted, and glorified. In a word: loved. This series explores God's intentionality by focusing on specific people in surprising and fascinating places where he pursues his loving purpose and conveys his great love. Join our teacher George DeJong as he explores various Biblical places and the stories that happened there to discover God's provision, protection, and providence in the lives of our faith ancestors. When we better understand their stories we will better appreciate God's provision, protection, and providence in ours.*

Log in, find our church page by clicking on Ferguson Avenue Baptist Church on the top right menu area, and click the link under our “Bible & Church History” channel. Enjoy!

rightnow
MEDIA.®

Missionary of the Week

John & Gail Conner
Avant - Tulsa, Oklahoma

*Do not be afraid;
for behold, I bring you **good news of great joy**
which will be for all the people;
for today in the city of David
there has been born for you
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
Luke 2:10,11 NASB*

These days our world again needs to hear this “**good news of great joy.**” We daily are surrounded and bombarded with fear filled news of personal, national, and global issues. We thus need this season of remembering Jesus’ birth to both comfort our hearts, and to open our mouths concerning God’s actions in Jesus. We need to take each opportunity to say, “Our LORD reigns and times are in His hands, and HE is working His purposes amidst the seeming chaos of our lives: personal, national, global!” May He give us voice this season to announce joyfully that Jesus is **good news of great joy** for all peoples because He is the Savior, the Messiah, the LORD! All who turn expectantly and openly to HIM will find joy and peace amidst the chaos.

God is still fulfilling His purposes through His church. People movements are opening new venues of outreach, His churches in the Latin Americas and in Asia are finding increasing desire and enthusiasm as God is calling many of them to the harvest fields. Yet this is a new and uncharted endeavor for these churches. Avant has launched an initiative, called Avant Español, to come alongside Latin churches to support, coach, train both individuals and churches in mission mobilization and financing. Fewer than 1% at this point of the Latin churches have sent a missionary, but our initiative is helping to change this.

In these recent five years the Lord has enabled us to participate in His appointing of sixteen missionaries to serve teams globally. Nine of these are already on the field and seven are currently raising their support to go. And we have several in the mentoring process looking to join the mission once completing this initial step. This mentoring step is where John is involved. Please pray for Jhojan and Nora Barionuevo and Chris and Blanca Fuentes as they are in this mentoring process. Ask our Lord to direct and provide for these young couples desiring to serve in India.

Gail is very busy as the Tulsa Public School are under intense pressure to raise student competency levels and that means high expectations and demands on teachers. Also, she serves with a weekly Good News Club, and they have joyfully seen at



least two kids profess faith in Christ. Thank you for praying for her health, and please continue, as she works in a “germ factory of kids.”

John has been asked to teach next year two courses on Psalms and Proverbs, and Job, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon at Tlapaneca Bible School in Mexico. Please pray for decisions on the best timing, for his preparation to be guided so as to best train the students there, and for all the arrangements for materials and travel. The local church ministry in Tulsa is ongoing with recent attendance growing and John continuing to teach a Bible study series on the Life of Christ.

We pray for you all that this Christmas season will be filled with fresh astonishment and wonder filled worship as you celebrate our God’s incomprehensible humility in becoming man for us and for our salvation in the birth of Jesus, the Messiah. We thank our Lord Jesus for each of you!

Yours – for Jesus’ sake,

John and Gail Conner

Question: could it be that for some, maybe many, that we are simply using Jesus as a means to assuage our consciences as we live for ourselves? We self-medicate on religion so we don’t feel quite so bad about our total self-centeredness, our unabashed obsession with ourselves, our things, our future, and our lives. Which seems to naturally lead to this: According to a LifeWay Research study, while 80% of churchgoing Christians believe it is necessary to tell others about Jesus, less than 40% have done so in the last 6 months.

Nursery December 17

Babies:

Eleanor Bowden, Mary Fowler,
Kay Stanford

Toddlers:

Deborah Focht, Tricia Morris

Preschoolers:

Brittany Hall, Elinor Morris

Nursery December 24

Babies:

Jay & Lisa Rowe

Toddlers:

Sona Bailey, Debra Denney

Preschoolers:

Jimmy & Tammy Kicklighter

Right Now Media

If you would like a free subscription to Right Now Media use this link:

<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/fabchurchga>

or scan this QR code:



If you have any questions concerning the message from today, or are interested in obtaining information about church membership, please see any of the pastors after the service, drop a note in the offering plate indicating your desire to talk with a pastor, or call the church office.



Video and audio recordings of the messages are available for listening or downloading from

www.fabchurch.com/sermons

This Week at FABC

Coffee Fellowship	9:00 a.m.
Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.

Monday

Christmas Caroling	5:15 p.m.
--------------------	-----------

Wednesday

Christmas Caroling	5:15 p.m.
Adult Bible Study	6:45 p.m.

Thursday

Senior Saints' Bible Study	10:00 a.m.
----------------------------	------------

Hearing assistance devices for services in the sanctuary are available on request at the sound booth.

Lockup Deacons for December

Jimmy Kicklighter, Napoleon Martin

Sunday School Classes and Descriptions

Adult

"Systematic Theology"	Fellowship Hall:	Bob Dimmitt
"Young Marrieds"	Gym Overhang:	Tom Keller
"How Do We View the Lord's Day?"	Youth House:	Steve Posner
"The First Songs of Christmas"	Organ Overflow:	Tamera Smith

Children and Students

Babies	Room 3:	Kay Stanford, Sandra Bridges
Toddlers	Room 24:	Susan Su, Deborah Focht
Pre-K	Room 25:	Emily Wise, Kamee Roberson
K, 1st and 2nd Grade	Room 28:	John and Pam Humphrey
3rd-6th Grade Boys	Room 202:	Ric Zittrouer, Richie Mills
3rd-6th Grade Girls	Room 204:	Mary Ann Fowler, Amy Horton
Youth Guys	Room 206:	Bobby DeLoach, Shawn Champion
Youth Girls	Room 206:	Jessica Dimmitt, Avalon DeLoach