



*They Followed
The Star*

The LeFlore Baptist Association

December

106 Flanagan St, Ste. A, Poteau OK 74953

December 2021 Vol. 68 Issue 12

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How About a Stress-free Christmas?

"Every good and perfect gift is from above..." James 1:17

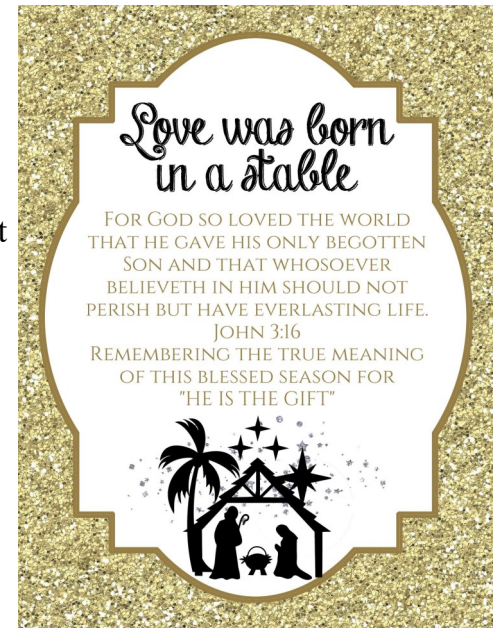
This time of year seems to bring about its own number of cares, worries and anxieties. At the first of December, people in the stores are jolly and friendly, but the closer we edge to December 25, the harder it becomes to find Christmas cheer. Have I gotten everyone taken care of gift-wise, and if I did, is it something they will like? Will there be enough food to feed the regulars and any unexpected guests? Will Uncle Bub tell that same corny joke? Suddenly, even the most laid-back individuals become relatives of the Scrooge as they desperately try to create the perfect Norman Rockwell Christmas. Because of self-induced anxiety over gifts, meals, and travel, sometimes we miss the joy of the moment.

Upcoming Events



4th	Christmas Parade Poteau
6th	Pastors' & Wives Christmas Party Poteau 1st @ 6:30 pm
14th	Brotherhood Talihina @ 7pm
23rd-31st	Closed for Christmas
Jan. 3rd	Pastors' Fellowship LBA @ 11am

How different this holiday might be if we paused to remember that the only perfect gift is Jesus. He is right for any occasion. The babe in the manger is always the centerpiece of Christmas. The material gifts will come and go, and the meals will be devoured in far less time that it took to prepare them. Of course, we want to make our loved ones feel special, but we mustn't let the hustle and bustle of the season cause us to miss those magical and miraculous moments of Christmas. Maybe, we can make this Christmas a little less stressful when we realize the only thing that is going to be perfect about this holiday, is the Gift that has already been given to all mankind. When our focus is on Him, even less-than-perfect turkeys, gifts, and Gatherings, won't quench our Christmas spirit.



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THE LEFLORE COUNTY BAPTIST

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Poteau, Oklahoma 74953



*Merry Christmas from all
of us at Choices!!!*

THE CHRISTMAS STORY BY LEANN GUENTHER

ONCE UPON A TIME,
A LONG, LONG TIME AGO
BEGINS THE STORY OF A BABY,
THAT MOST OF YOU SHOULD KNOW
HIS DADDY'S NAME WAS JOSEPH,
AND MARY WAS HIS MOM,
THE BABE WAS VERY SPECIAL
HE WAS GOD'S ONLY SON.
SOME ANGELS CAME FROM HEAVEN
AND THEY BEGIN TO SING.
TO THE SHEPHERDS IN THE FIELDS BELOW
"GLAD TIDINGS WE DO BRING!"
A BRIGHT STAR LIT THE HEAVENS,
TO LIGHT THE MAGI'S WAY
TO THE BABY IN THE MANGER
WHO WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY.
AND ALL WHO GATHER ROUND HIM,
REJOICE AND PRAISE HIS BIRTH,
FOR THE BABE, THE KING NAMED JESUS
IS OUR SAVIOR HERE ON EARTH!



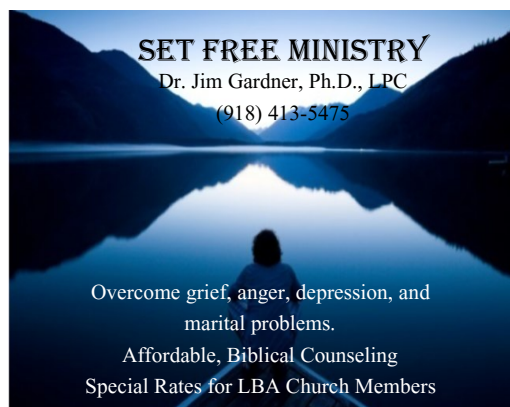
Poteau First Baptist Church collected Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes for children all over the world the week of November 15th-22nd. Thanks to the area churches and individuals, Poteau FBC collected 1,828 boxes. I believe this is the most, or at least one of the most, collected boxes in years past. Thank you to all that participated and a special thank you to the people of Poteau FBC for taking the time to collect and pray over every single box.

Meet the Pastor



My name is George Spears and I am the new guy at Pocola First Baptist. This fall, we celebrated our one year anniversary at the church (as well as the church's 140th birthday). My wife (Misty) and I have a daughter (Hope) in high school and a son (Justice) in college. We enjoy movies, games, motorcycles, and sports. I work as a high school English teacher at Arkoma and Misty teaches fourth grade. Our family has been working together in one capacity or another in ministry for over two decades. We have served in youth ministry, full-time vocational pastoring, and like our current status- bi-vocational pastoring. I had the additional honor of being a chaplain for the Fort Smith Police Department for a few years. Most of our ministry has taken place in southeastern Oklahoma and western Arkansas with a small stint recently in the wilds of Texas. It seems our calling is toward growth and outreach. While maintaining care for our members, our strongest desire is to find meaningful and relevant ways to minister outside the walls of the church. Community relations are very important to establish a testimony that is favorable to outsiders as the modern church has many stigmas to overcome today. We enjoy meeting and serving people of all backgrounds, races, and circumstances. Diversity has been a joy as we have worked along-side some amazing people which have broadened our vision, skills, and perspectives. We enjoy working with kids, taking youth to camp, working with our seniors, and of course welcoming families into our community of faith. It is nice to be back "home" and we look forward to working with our community and the association.





The Parable of the Sower

By Jim Gardner 11/23/21

Jesus spoke many parables to the multitudes of people who followed Him to hear His teachings, to witness His miraculous healings, or to get free food. He spoke in many parables so that the genuine believers would understand Him, but those who were false believers or critics would not understand Him. In Luke 8, he told the “Parable of the Sower,” which is also recorded for us in Matthew 13 and Mark 4.

The Seed Beside the Road

In Luke 8:5, He said that a “sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up.” In verse 12 He explained that “the seed is the word of God” and that some people hear the word of God, but the devil immediately “takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.” These are people who hear God’s Word but do not receive it and are not saved. They are unbelievers who hear the good news but never receive it.

The Seed on the Rocky Soil

Then Jesus spoke in Luke 8:6 and said, “Other seed fell on rocky soil and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.” Jesus explained in verse 13 that these seeds represent those who “when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.” In Mark 4:17 Jesus also says that “when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.” These are genuine believers who “believe” and are saved, but experience affliction or persecution and who then fall away. They never produce any fruit in their lives because they struggle with personal problems in their lives that sidetracks them.

The Seed in the Thorny Soil

In Luke 8:7, Jesus said that “Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out.” In verse 14, He explained that these seeds represent “the ones who have heard, and as they go their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” These are believers who get saved but become consumed with pleasures, money-seeking, and entertainment and they never produce any fruit in their lives. Pleasures become their god, rather than Jesus.

The Seed in the Good Soil

Finally, in Luke 8:8 Jesus said, “other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great.” In Mark 4:20 He said, “they hear the word, and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.” This is the desired goal that the Lord has for each of us, that we bear much fruit for Him in our lives and lead many others to Him, and demonstrate the “fruit of the Spirit” in our lives.

What prevents us from bearing much fruit? The afflictions and persecutions we experience, or the pursuit of pleasures and money. The Lord wants us to experience His peace, but when we do not release our anger and grief to Him, our past afflictions will weigh us down and rob us of joy and peace. One of the most important tasks of discipling others is to teach them how to release their anger and grief to the Lord, so that they will not be bound to the past, and so that they will be fruitful in their lives.

May we each teach others how to find freedom from anger and grief by casting all our cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7). Those who recognize that they are being unfruitful because of past injuries and losses, are encouraged to attend our weekly Set Free meetings on Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 at the LBA office to learn how to find true freedom in Christ.



The Parable of the Sower

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LBA OFFICE HOURS:
8 am-5 pm, Monday-Thursday

**Budget Summary
For October 2021**

Requirements	\$ 14,238
Undesignated	\$ 13,830
Under	\$ 408

Pastorless Churches

Big Creek
Howe Faith
Pilgrim Rest
Whitesboro

Please pray the Lord brings the
right man and family for these
churches.

**Interested in Serving?
These churches could use some help.**

- * Hodgen Baptist is looking for a youth leader. Please email John McAlester at jmcalester@heavenerschools.org
- * Arkoma FBC is in need of a music leader and piano player. Please contact Chuck Karch @ (918)448-0336 or email karch78@yahoo.com

Building Fund and General Fund Receipts October 2021			
(received as of Oct. 31, 2021)			
	%	Oct	YTD
Albion	3.0%	\$ 190.75	\$ 190.75
Arkoma	6.0%	\$ 664.44	\$ 664.44
Big Creek	4.5%	\$ 635.09	\$ 635.09
Big Creek, Hispanic		\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00
Bokoshe	6.0%	\$ 353.40	\$ 353.40
Buffalo Valley	4.0%	\$ 192.70	\$ 192.70
Calhoun	4.0%	\$ 235.88	\$ 235.88
Cameron	4.5%	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00
Cowlington	5.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Double Branch	3.0%	\$ 289.86	\$ 289.86
Falfa	3.0%	\$ 106.73	\$ 106.73
Forrester	3.0%	\$ 191.40	\$ 191.40
Friendship	3.0%	\$ 127.86	\$ 127.86
God's Ctry. Cowboy		\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Heart O' The Hills	2.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Heavener, First	1.5%	\$ 944.00	\$ 944.00
Heavener, Trinity	Flat	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Hodgen	3.0%	\$ 151.77	\$ 151.77
Hontubby	3.3%	\$ 136.00	\$ 136.00
Howe, Faith	5.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Howe, First	2.0%	\$ 137.00	\$ 137.00
Independence	3.0%	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
LeFlore	7.0%	\$ 61.56	\$ 61.56
Liberty Hill	6.0%	\$ 400.82	\$ 400.82
Loving	3.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Monroe	2.5%	\$ 217.00	\$ 217.00
Mt. View	5.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Muse	2.0%	\$ 63.00	\$ 63.00
Nueva Nacimiento En Cristo	4.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Octavia	4.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Page	Flat	\$ -	\$ -
Panama, First	3.0%	\$ 78.89	\$ 78.89
Perry Chapel	3.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Pilgrims Rest	1.0%	\$ 34.20	\$ 34.20
Pocola, First	3.0%	\$ 608.66	\$ 608.66
Pocola, Trinity	2.0%	\$ 164.95	\$ 164.95
Poteau, First	4.0%	\$ 482.87	\$ 482.87
Poteau, Hispanic		\$ -	\$ -
Poteau, Cross Comm. Imm	1.0%	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Poteau, Southside	4.0%	\$ 1,908.63	\$ 1,908.63
Poteau, Trinity	5.0%	\$ 130.00	\$ 130.00
Prairie Grove	7.5%	\$ 262.13	\$ 262.13
Shady Point	4.0%	\$ 228.00	\$ 228.00
Spiro, Calvary	3.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Spiro, First	3.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Springhill	4.0%	\$ 1,256.18	\$ 1,256.18
Stapp-Zoe	5.0%	\$ 168.48	\$ 168.48
Summerfield	5.0%	\$ 191.00	\$ 191.00
Talihina	4.0%	\$ 1,136.14	\$ 1,136.14
Victory	5.0%	\$ -	\$ -
Whitesboro	2.0%	\$ 193.00	\$ 193.00
Wister, Bethel	4.0%	\$ 657.70	\$ 657.70
Wister, First	2.5%	\$ 98.84	\$ 98.84
Total		\$ 13,443.93	\$ 13,443.93

