



MESSENGER

No. 50, December 16, 2019

"The Spiritual Gift of Song"

"I will sing of your love and justice; to you, LORD, I will sing praise." - Psalm 101:1

Our Saint Mark family does a lot of things well. Near the top of the heap is, you guessed it, *singing*. Singing weekly allows our children to learn scripture and the character of God. Youth choir and choir tour is integral to student ministry. Our chancel choir gives time and talent around the year to glorify God in song. Each Wednesday night, Music Ruth teaches me a new variation of a sung table blessing. Singing. It's vital to who we are!

This week, I sat with a church member whose eyes welled up with tears. They were tears of gratitude for when our Student Ministry came to the recovery room and sang Christmas carols.

At other times, I proudly watch Joanna sing over our kids as she rocks them to sleep. Holy moments!

Even if you're like me and struggle to carry a tune, there's something cathartic about singing. Our scripture tells us to make a *joyful* noise to the Lord. Note that it doesn't say anything about pitch or vibrato!

Did you know that John Wesley gave instructions for how the church should sing? Not surprising, really. John had opinions regarding just about everything. At the beginning of our UMC hymnal, you'll find these words among others: "Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan."

Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your Heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Sunday we have the Cantata that the choir has worked for weeks to prepare. It's woven with scripture and exaltation of Jesus as we approach Christmas. Note that Modern Worship will not meet this week in an effort to allow all to hear and sing with the choir. Also note the special service on Dec 29 where we will sing Christmas hymns and tell the stories behind the hymns. Please join us as we lift every voice and sing together of the great things God has done, and continues to do!

Worship Schedule

Dec 22 Cantata (9 AM & 11 AM TW)
Dec 24 Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelight Service - MW 4 PM & TW 530 PM & 11 PM
Dec 29 Singalong Service + Story of Hymns Combined Service 11 AM (Sanctuary)
Dec 31 New Year's Eve Prayer Vigil 4 PM - 6 PM (Sanctuary)

MW = Modern Worship TW = Traditional Worship

OUR CHURCH FAMILY... NEWS AND NOTES

Thank You!

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for your prayers, your visits, and your gifts of food and time and encouragement during the illness and death of Mary Ann Knotts. The love and support of the Saint Mark Family reached far beyond those who cared for her daily; you ministered also to the staff members in the hospitals and the assisted living facility as you showed by example that "Love Lives Here."

Dot Mueller



Congratulations!

Ann Holsonback (Mimi) is thrilled to announce the arrival of her 4th granddaughter! Marley Jack Baker was born on December 7th, weighing 8 lbs. 4 oz and 20.5 inches long. Mom and Dad, Tillery and Yance Baker, are rejoicing in the gift God has entrusted to them.

Registration Has Begun!

Registration for the 2020 Saint Mark Church Family Life Retreat (Jan 31-Feb 2) has begun! You can register in the Upper Room on Sundays or at the church office during the week.

This year we are holding the retreat at Shocco Springs (while Sumatanga is completing renovations). Shocco Springs, near Talladega, is close-by, and we have a lot of new activities planned! This retreat is for our entire church family. Please contact Brian Parker if you have any questions.

Calling All College Kids!

Come join the fun at the Saint Mark UMC College Christmas Party on December 22nd! Bring a Dirty Santa Gift. The party will be held at the home of Steve, Rebecca and Hannah Jones at 6:30 pm:
105 Maple Trace, Hoover AL 35244



PRAYERS
of the
CHURCH

Come Join Us!

Please plan to attend the Saint Mark New Year's Eve Prayer Vigil on Tuesday, December 31st, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. It is a Come and Go service as your plans dictate. Come pray for our Church, as well as our government leaders, family and friends, for the New Year, 2020. May God richly bless you in the coming year.

Mary Linda Smith

Altar Flower Calendar Posted

Thanks to everyone who provided the beautiful altar flowers this past year. Some of you are eager to sign up for special dates in 2020. The new calendar has been posted on the bulletin board just outside the church office. We are especially in need of filling the January dates.

Newsletter Schedule

The next newsletter will be published on January 6th, after the new year begins! Remember that information for the newsletter is due by noon on Mondays. You can email your info or drop it off in the plexi-box located just outside the church office.

Preparing for 2020

The new committees for 2020 have been set up in the church's database. If you are chairing a committee in 2020, please check with the office to make sure your regular meeting dates are in place on the church calendar. Reminder emails are sent out about a week in advance, so if you're serving on a committee, please make sure the office has your correct email address (or preferred one, since some folks have multiple emails!).

As new schedules are sent out for 2020 (counting schedule, Children's Church, Visitation, etc.) please keep a copy on hand and watch the weekly assignments in the newsletter.

Matthew Toone in Concert

This Wednesday, December 18th, Matthew Toone will present a concert in the Sanctuary at 6:30 pm. For those who have reservations, a special Christmas dinner (pork tenderloin) will be served in the Fellowship Hall from 5 pm to 6 pm. The cost is \$6 per person.



Student Ministry

Thank you all so much for your help in our Angel Tree missions project. Remember that Angel Tree gifts need to be delivered to the church in a garbage bag labeled with the child's name by this Wednesday. This Saturday afternoon at 1:30 our youth will be shopping for angels using the donations received.

We ended our semester of youth with our Christmas Party last night. Our full programming will start back January 5th with a parent meeting and our first UMYF of 2020. This Sunday morning for Sunday School we are having our special Andy Griffith Christmas Special.

The College Christmas Party is this Sunday at 6:00 at the Jones' house (105 Maple Trace Hoover, AL). *Joshua London*

Quest, 4th-6th grades student ministry, had their annual Christmas Sock Swap Party! Everyone brought a new pair of socks filled with little treats. We played the swap game and everyone ended up with a new pair of socks and lots of treats! We had a blast!

Thank you to our Quest leaders, Jordan Sterley, DeAnna Ryan and Susan Lee for always making our time at Quest so much fun!

Merry Christmas! I hope everyone enjoys the Christmas season. Whether spent at Grandma's, on vacation, or at home, I hope everyone enjoys the time spent together! It truly is the most wonderful time of year! Merry Christmas! *Liz Benninger*



Music Notes

We are getting closer! It has been a busy season for celebrating with friends, family and beautiful music! There are so many songs of Advent and Christmas to be learning and enjoying! I hope you are expanding your repertoire as we sing old and new songs in worship!

When we sing a carol composed in the 15th century and one written in this century for worship, I am reminded that God has inspired musicians to tell his Good News for centuries!

This Wednesday night, December 18, at 6:30, Matthew Toone will be in concert at the organ. Please come and receive a blessing! Next Sunday, the Chancel Choir, Matthew, Lisa West and BJ Hamner(narrating) will present a service of Lessons and Carols in Cantata format. The congregation is actively involved, also. Of course, Christmas Eve follows on Tuesday with our three services! So much MERRY all around! See you at Saint Mark! *Ruth K. Miller*

Stewardship and Service

Sunday, December 15, 2019

Morning Worship	262
Sunday School	195
Toward Budget	\$10,976.00
Toward Capital Fund	\$1,096.00

Sunday, December 22, 2019

Counters

Kirk Griffin
Nancy Kennemer

Children's Church

9 am Heather McClellan
11 am DeAnna Ryan

Monday, December 23, 2019

Visitation

Lillian Sheffield and Bonnie Gaston



Please note: If you see any changes needed in the assignments, please call the office ASAP!

ON SUNDAYS

WEDNESDAYS AFTER 4:00 PM AND OTHER CHURCHWIDE EVENTS

Upper Level Parking

Restricted to Seniors (75 and older),
People with Disabilities
& 5 Slots for Parents with Infants



SAINT MARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
2901 COLUMBIANA ROAD
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35216
 CHURCH OFFICE: 822-5980
 EARLY LEARNING CENTER: 822-1312
 WWW.SAINTMARKUMC.ORG

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SENIOR PASTOR: Rev. Drew Clayton
ASSOCIATE PASTOR: Rev. Ryan Karr
ASSOCIATE PASTOR: Rev. Don Cross
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY: Ruth K. Miller
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRY: Joshua London
DIRECTOR OF KIDS' MINISTRY: Liz Benninger
DIRECTOR OF ELC : Sandy Jenkins
SECRETARY: J. Ruth Miller
FINANCIAL MANAGER: Deanna Holmes
FACILITIES MANAGER: Ashley Kirby
DIRECTOR OF MODERN WORSHIP & YOUTH CHOIR: Dan Cater
ORGANIST: Matthew Toone

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9 AM to 5:30 PM

Next Week at Saint Mark

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

9:00 am Traditional Worship (Cantata)
 10:00 am Sunday School
 11:00 am Traditional Worship (Cantata)
 7:00 pm Men's Prayer/Share Group

December 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23 (ELC CLOSED)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 (ELC & OFFICE CLOSED)

4:00 pm Modern Christmas Eve Service
 5:30 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Service
 11:00 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Service

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25 (ELC & OFFICE CLOSED)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26 (ELC & OFFICE CLOSED)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27 (ELC & OFFICE CLOSED)

8:00 am Feed the Homeless (Highlands)



*Please call the office if any changes are
 needed on the calendar!*