

THE MESSENGER

Published by the First Baptist Church of Altamont, Illinois



December 2011

Our Mission

"The First Baptist Church of Altamont seeks to glorify God by worshiping together, enjoying the fellowship of one another, providing opportunities for people to grow in Christ, ministering to the needs of all, and reaching people for Christ."

Pastor's Paragraphs

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

Luke 2:13-17

What a birth announcement! The shepherds were terrified, but their fear turned to joy as the angels announced the Messiah's birth. First the shepherds ran to see the baby; then they spread the word. These shepherds told everyone who would listen all that they had heard and seen. Often people who try to tell all that they know are politely avoided. It can be boring to listen to someone who never stops to take a breath. But in the shepherds' case, people listened, because: (1) Shepherds were not supposed to know much, and these shepherds had startling information; (2) The message was revolutionary, breathtaking, and transformative. It changed listeners' lives. (3) The shepherds spoke from the heart, and their words connected to the deepest needs of others. When you tell about Jesus, start with what you know best: your life experience. Tell the story of God in your life. You don't need to embellish, but don't hold back either. Your words will change many, and God will use you to change the world.

The Donnelley family wishes you all a **Blessed Christmas** and a **Prosperous New Year!**

In His Service,

Pastor Lowell

December Sermon Series

After December 4th, we will take a break from our study of 1 Corinthians. We will resume that study in January. Our chancel choir will present the Christmas Cantata "Joyful and Triumphant" on December 11th. Pastor Lowell will teach on Luke chapter 1 on December 18th and chapter 2 on Christmas day. We will also celebrate the Lord's Supper on Christmas Day.

December	4 th	"Unity and Diversity in the Church"	
	11 th	Christmas Cantata—"Joyful and Triumphant"	
	18 th	"Good News!"	Luke 1
	25 th	"The Lord Is Come!"	Luke 2:1-20

Ministry Team Moments

December Youth Activities



Our event this month is Youth Encounter, December 29-30, in Springfield, IL. The cost is \$30 per person. The lineup for this year will be hip-hop artist CZ, Group 1 Crew, Jarrod Jones, George "The Shoeman" Hutchings, The Micah Watson Band, Living Illusions, and Outcast BMX. Plus, don't forget the Extreme Room passes are \$10.

We need everyone to sign up by December 11th!

SHUT-IN MINISTRY



*"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."
Isaiah 7:14*

What a blessed time of year! As we approach the holiday season, we are thankful for God's goodness to us in the gift of His Son and for all the many blessings that He bestows on us. We want to share His love and remember our church family Shut Ins - to call, visit, or send cards - just to let them know that we care and that they are missed. Although the holidays can be lonesome and difficult times for many, our goal is to encourage and lift up those who can't always fellowship with us. We have recently visited with Cleo Allen, Doris Larsen, and Irene Tucker-Riley. More Shut In visits are scheduled as we continue this outreach.

If you have an interest to serve in this ministry or if you know someone in our body in need of encouragement, please contact Alice Potts (618.483.3126) or Nancy Byars (618.483.9826).

Merry Christmas blessings to all!

Worship & Music Wonderings

Music Notes

I would like to invite everyone to attend our chancel choir's performance of **"Joyful and Triumphant – A Worldwide Christmas Celebration"**. The songs in this cantata remind us that Christ came for everyone. I am quoting from one of the songs:

He is everybody's King,
Jesus is Everybody's King...
No matter your race,
No matter your place in life,
He's a King for everyone,
No matter where you came from....

Another song points out that Jesus came for people like you and me. I am reminded that Jesus came for me and He is the greatest Christmas gift one could ever receive.

Please come and join us on Sunday, December 11th, at 10:15 am.

Thank you choir members for all your hard work!

In Christ, *Mirta*

Fellowship Findings

"Christmas Time is Here...."

Though there will be no church-wide fellowship events in December, each Sunday School class is encouraged to put together its own unique celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Host an informal party at your home, go bowling, gather at a restaurant, or even meet at the church to enjoy some special Christmas fellowship with those in your class.

Lowell and I will be hosting the men and women's senior classes at our home. Watch the bulletin for more details about what your class may be doing.

...janet



Evangelism & Mission Mentions

2011 Lottie Moon Offering

His heart, His hands, His voice – through praying

Jesus commissioned us to be His heart, His hands, His voice – and one of the ways we can do that is through prayer. In fact, prayer is first and foremost! Pray with God's heart for people groups who have never heard the Good News. (Would our church even consider adopting a people group to pray for?) Pray for our missionaries who are our voice in the darkness. And pray about giving as much as you can to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® to sustain those we've sent to be our hands touching a lost world.

What is the 2011 theme?

"His heart, His hands, His voice - I am Southern Baptist missions"

Jesus has commissioned us to be His heart, His hands, His voice. Through praying, giving and going, Southern Baptists have fulfilled this legacy for more than 160 years. Yet billions remain lost and time may be running out for them. Our churches must take direct responsibility for helping reach the nearly 3,800 unengaged, unreached people groups that missionaries may never be able to get to.

What is the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®?

Southern Baptist churches collect the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for the sole purpose of supporting international missions. Every penny of the offering goes to the International Mission Board's overseas budget, thus supporting our missionaries and their work.

Discipleship Doings

Youth Bible Study

Youth, grades 7 – 12, are encouraged to attend a weekly Bible Study here at the church on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm.

Take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about God's Word, how to apply it to your lives-- learn more about each other too!

Women's Bible Study

Our women are currently meeting at 1:30 pm on Tuesday afternoons at the residence of Nancy Powell.

If you are ever free on a Tuesday afternoon, please join us for study and discussion.

Sunday School Hour

Sunday School for Children

- >Preschool & Kindergarten
- >First & Second Grades
- >Third & Fourth Grades
- >Fifth & Sixth Grades
- >Youth ~ Grades 7 through 12



Sunday School for Adults

- Adult 1: Young Adults
- Adult 2: Mixed Adults – Life Values
- Adult 3: Mixed Adults – Exploring the Bible
- Adult 4: Time-Honored Women
- Adult 5: Time-Honored Men

Nursery services are provided from 8:45–11:45am. **See your Sunday School teacher to enroll in Sunday School.**



AWANA & TREK Awareness

AWANA Children's Bible Program

Sundays 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Open to all kids age 4 through 6th grade

Music, games, Bible memory work snacks, & mo...



TREK Youth Bible Study

Sundays 5:30 – 6:30 pm+

Open to all youth grades 7 – 12

Join in this open Bible study with activities!



Come and join in the fun!

Adult Mid-Week Small Group Bible Studies @ 6:30 pm

We have some exciting small-group Bible study opportunities for adults in our church:

- On Wednesdays, Pastor Lowell is leading a study for adults on the Holy Spirit entitled, "Remembering the Forgotten God"
- Pastor Ron is leading a young adult Bible study in his home on Thursdays

These are open to all!

Church Administration

First Baptist Church of Altamont



Leadership Teams



Discipleship

Paula Putnam

Evangelism & Missions

Rev Ron Mulvaney

Fellowship

Janet Hunsaker

Ministry

Dr. Lowell Donnelley

Worship & Music

Dr. Mirta Donnelley

Church Library

Our library needs you to help with processing donations. If you have a free hour or two each month, please see Paula.

Church Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT)

All church leaders are invited and encouraged to attend our CMLT evening meetings scheduled for 6:30 on the first Tuesday of every month.

Tuesday ~ Dec 6th @ 6:30 pm

Trustee Tidbits

Our new projector screen is in place and is working beautifully! Thank you to all who were a part of this purchase and installation.

Please call....

If you or someone you know is ill, injured, admitted to the hospital, and/or needs pastoral ministry, please call a Pastor or deacon.



Pastor Lowell

483-5264 home

618/553-5560 cell phone

Pastor Ron

217/690-0874 cell phone

Kieffer Milam 618/483-6374

Duane Guffey 217/536-5727

Ron Hite 618/483-5058

Jim Pritchard 217/663-4235

Dennis Whitten 618/483-5566

***Art Davidson 618/483-6577**

***Randy McElroy 618/245-9155**

***Larry Riley 217/868-5751**

*** = inactive**

Deacon Yokefellows

Keith Heltsley

Robert Hite

Nicholas Pritchard

Baptist Questions, Baptist Answers

What do Southern Baptists believe about the Kingdom?

“The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God’s will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.”

Baptist Faith and Message, 2000



Money Matters in Church

No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Luke 16:13 (ESV)

Our obedience to Christ is tested by how we use money. Here are some conclusions we can draw from this passage in Luke. (1) Let us use our resources wisely, because they belong to God and not to us. (2) Money can be used for good or evil; let us use ours for good. (3) Money has a lot of power, so we must use it carefully and thoughtfully. (4) We must use our material goods in a way that will foster faith and obedience.

Money can be a tool for helping others. We are to make wise use of our finances, spending our money to help those in need and to spread the gospel. In this way, our earthly investment will bring eternal benefit. When we obey God’s will, the unselfish use of possessions will follow.

Our integrity often is tested in money matters. God calls us to be honest, even in small details we might think unimportant. Heaven’s riches are far more valuable than earthly wealth. But if we are not trustworthy with our money here (no matter how much or how little we have), we will be unfit to handle the vast riches of God’s kingdom. Guard your integrity in small matters, and it will not fail you in crucial decisions.

Money must be managed or it will manage. Money has the power to take God’s place in your life. It can become your master. How can you tell if you are a slave to money? (1) Do you think and worry about it frequently? (2) Do you give up doing what you should do or would like to do in order to make more money? (3) Do you spend a great deal of your time caring for your possessions? (4) Is it hard for you to give money away? (5) Are you in debt?

Money is a hard master and a deceptive one. Wealth promises power and control, but often it cannot deliver. Great fortunes can be made—and lost—overnight, and no amount of money can provide health, happiness, or eternal life. How much better it is to let God be your Master. His servants have peace of mind and security, both now and forever.

<Web Report>

Reaching Out with Technology

For some time now, a new area of the church web page has been under development. It’s a way to let member’s sign up to participate in an interactive way. As a minimum it is a way to deliver an email newsletter, but also to stay in touch with other class members, share between teachers and students, and offer a resource of study, worship, and ministry information.

With our new commitment to the REACH system of reaching out to our community, this could be one way for us to meet needs, pray for, and serve those in need in our community. Unless other ideas for its use are suggested, the tentative plan is to begin to use this new area to post study reference material targeted for Sunday School, and the archived articles on the current page will be slowly be taken down.

The URL to find this new sub domain is: <http://altamontfirstbaptist.org/sym>

This is a working web address, and could change to something more permanent as interest in the site grows. Security encryption ensures that member areas of the site are not viewable from the general public, a feature needed to keep sensitive or controlled topics out of public viewing. The look of the new sub domain will be different than the main page. At this writing a social networking plug-in is being tested that makes the site operate similar to Facebook. Members can form their own groups of friends, and share what they want with them. Of course this level of access is limited to members only, and intended as a way to keep in touch with each other’s needs. Clearly the need for security and privacy are held in utmost concern.

Questions and comments are always welcome. Complaints and suggestions will also be taken seriously. I’m always just an email away: webmaster@altamontfirstbaptist.org and interested in your ideas for ways our web presence can be of most use to our church and our community.

Best regards ~ *Keith Heltsley*

Mark 16:15 And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”

FBC-A Benevolence Fund Credit Policy

1. The church can only give contribution credit for a gift of cash or cash equivalents, like checks, to the church. For gifts of property like real estate, stocks, building materials, receipts of items purchased on behalf of the church, and other tangible items, the church can only send a thank you to the donor acknowledging the gift without assigning a value. Only cash or cash equivalent contributions can be recorded on a contribution statement.
2. The church can give a contribution credit if the donation was made before the close of the tax year. As a general rule, a contribution is made at the time of delivery. However, a contribution that was mailed is considered delivered when the contribution was postmarked.
3. The church can give a contribution credit when the contribution was voluntary and made without the donor receiving or having the possibility of receiving anything of material value. The contribution should be given as an unconditional transfer without personal benefit to the donor. The contribution may be undesignated or designated according to the written policies of the church.
4. The contribution must be made "to or for the use of" the church. The church must exercise control over the contribution. The contribution cannot simply be "passed through" to an individual or ministry outside of the church. The Benevolence Committee has the authority to accept or reject the donation and determine the amount of the contribution to be given to recipients.
5. The burden of proof to prove the contribution was made to the church is on the donor, not the church. However, the church should furnish a contribution statement to all donors requesting a statement regardless of the amount of the donation. The contribution statement should contain the following information: 1) donation dates, 2) individual donation amounts, 3) the church's name and address, and 4) the statement "No goods or services were provided in exchange for the contribution, other than intangible religious benefits." The donor must receive the contribution statement before he files his income tax return.
6. As a general rule, contributions made to a specific person for benevolence reasons are not charitable contributions to the church. For instance, a donor gives a gift designated to the church for a specific person that has benevolence needs. The donor cannot receive a contribution credit from the church for this designated gift. However, a donor's contribution that does not name a specific person but is given to the church's general benevolence fund can receive a contribution credit from the church. Additionally, donors can contribute to a designated fund for individuals going on a church-sponsored mission trip and receive a church contribution credit.

The designated donation is not taxable income to the person going on the church-sponsored mission trip if the individual provides the church receipts for the trip. Finally, contribution credit is allowed for church-approved love offerings for church employees since the donations are taxable income to the church employees.

7. Contributions to a non-qualified organization like a Sunday School class that the church does not control the organization's funds or the organization does not report to the church the expenditure of its funds is not considered a contribution to the church and the church cannot give the donor a contribution credit.
8. If the donor or family members expect to receive a portion of contribution for personal benefit, then the contribution credit cannot be allowed. Only the portion of the contribution that the donor will receive only intangible religious benefit is allowed as a contribution credit by the church. The church cannot give a contribution credit to a donor if the donation benefits him personally or his family members.
9. The church cannot give a contribution credit for the value of the donor's time of services. This would include a contribution credit for a reduced billing that the business performed at the church.
10. The donation must be irrevocable by the donor. The donor cannot have any future control over the contribution given to the church.
11. To avoid a conflict of interest, a majority of the Benevolence Committee members must approve each transaction.
12. All contributions and transactions will be kept in strict confidence.

Member Minutes

December Birthdays!

1—Una Tish		16—Beverly Koberlein
4—Kaitlyn Hurst		Charlene Sidwell
9—Janet Hunsaker		19—Patricia Childress
11—Ryan Mathis		20—Jim Pritchard
Lowell Hunsaker		24—Randy McElroy
14—Bob Powell		31—Lucas Donnelley
15—Elliott Putnam		



Baby Dedication

Jackson Allen Hite, son of Robert and Danielle Hite was dedicated during our Morning Worship on Sunday, November 20th. Our church family is here to help Robert and Danielle as they continue to work toward raising Jackson with a solid foundation of Christian principles and values.

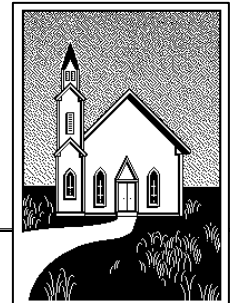


Happy December Wedding Anniversary!

- ❖ Dec 5th ~ John & Kristyn Bowman
- ❖ Dec 14th ~ Art & Eeva Davidson

Christian Sympathies

Our church family wishes to express condolences to the entire Alberta Clymer family at the passing of her husband, Jonathon Clymer.



Joining the Church

You may become a member of our church by:

1. Profession of Faith & Baptism—If you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and follow Him in baptism by immersion.
2. Promise of Church Letter—You can transfer your membership from another Southern Baptist Church or a church of like faith and order.
3. Statement of Faith—If you have already accepted Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior and have been baptized by immersion as a believer in a church of like faith and order.
4. Baptism—If you are a Christian but have never been baptized by immersion.

Kid's Corner!

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.



A B C D E G H I J L
 ▽ ♥ I ☆ ● ★ ◆ ○ ✱ ☆
 N O P R S T V W Y
 ■ ✱ ▶ ● ▲ † ◆ □ *

I bring you _____
 ☆ ✱ ✱ ☆ ■ ● □ ▲

of great _____ that will be for
 ✱ ✱ ✱

_____. Today in the
 ▽ ☆ ☆ ▶ ● ✱ ▶ ☆ ●

town of David a _____ has
 ▲ ▽ ◆ ○ ✱ ●

been _____ to you; he is
 ♥ ✱ ● ■

_____ the _____ ...
 I ◆ ● ○ ▲ † ☆ ✱ ● ☆

Help wisemen find the stable.

