

The C R O S S T I E



The December 14, 2007
Newsletter of the
Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Sunday, December 16, 23, & 30

No 8:30 a.m. Service,
Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., Worship at 11:00 a.m.



Holiday Breakfast

December 16

9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.



Peter Mayer Concert

Wednesday, December 19

6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

It's free and fantastic!



Christmas Eve Services

5:30, 7:00 & 11:00 p.m.

Please join us for the Christmas Season to celebrate, give thanks,
and praise God for being present with us in Jesus Christ.

The Christmas Season begins Christmas Eve
and goes through the Day of Epiphany, January 6.

Prime Time: Greet, Meet and Eat

January 8 at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Make a New Year's resolution to join us each month
for great food, fellowship, programs and day trips.



Gloria!

Music of the Angels

Presented by
Sanctuary Choir, Harp, Brass & Organ
Sunday, December 16
11:00 a.m.

Daniel Pinkham

Christmas Cantata

Festival Singers and Brass
Sunday, December 16
7:00 p.m.
(Chapel)

Personnel Committee Seeks Applications

The Personnel Committee is seeking applications for the position of Director, Administration and Communications. Anyone wishing to apply should send a resume to the Personnel Committee at the Smoke Rise Baptist Church mailing address. Also, if you know a qualified person that might be interested, please submit their resume in the same manner.

Following is a summary description of the Requirements/Prefereces for this position.

Requirements/Prefereces

Education: MBA(preferred) or Bachelor Degree in a business discipline, preferably Marketing , Management or General Business. Or, any degree with five or more years experience in managing/coordinating the activities of an organization focused on fulfilling the needs of customers/members.

Skills/Experience

- IT: Planning, selection and implementation of technology in an office or production environment.
- Marketing/Communications: Development, planning and implementation of campaigns or efforts directed at an identified audience using all categories of media (print, audio, video and web).
- Database Resources: Planning, development and maintenance of database resources to support all communications, marketing and administrative purposes.
- Management/Supervision: Management of support and subordinate management personnel.
- Constituent (prospects, visitors, members, community) Services: Directing/Coordinating hospitality, greeting, welcoming, congregational/member services and contacts.
- Personal : A professing Christian with an established pattern of discipleship and leadership in a local church/congregation.
- Character that is above reproach.
- References required.

A Simple Christmas

Pick up a copy in the Sanctuary Narthex of some inspiring ideas from the women of Smoke Rise on how to keep Christmas simple and meaningful.

We're Going Green

In January, we would like for you to help us begin saving postage, paper and trees by mailing only to those that wish to receive *The CrossTie* through the mail. *The CrossTie* is always available on our website where you can read and/or print. It is exactly the same as the copy we mail! To help us save postage, paper, and trees please call us at 770-469-5856 to remove your name from *The CrossTie* mailing list. We are certainly aware that some of you do not have computers and we will gladly continue to mail *The CrossTie* to you as well as anyone else that really wants it through the mail. Thank you ahead of time to all of you willing to participate in our new "going green" program.

The Church Office will be closed December 24, 25, 26 and January 1. We will follow the regular schedule on Sunday, January 6. Wednesday evening activities begin again on Wednesday, January 9.

Online Advent Devotional

This season we are introducing an online devotional resource developed through a joint ministry of the CBF, Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Episcopal church. Click on the link below and try it out. There is an introduction of how to use the site and a music feature that can be turned off if you prefer silence (see bottom left side of page when you are in the site). If you like what you experience and want to experience something like this with a group, come to Sacred Space on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Parlor. Note: Sacred Space will not meet after December 12 and will resume on January 9.

Description: Following the Star, the online devotion site for Advent, can be accessed every day at www.followingthestar.org. New devotions on the themes of Hope, Peace, Love, Joy, and Christmastide will be available daily through Epiphany Sunday, January 6. Make this unique meditative resource a part of your personal preparation for the coming Christ child!

Registrations

Middle School Retreat - "Moving Mountains"

For all 6th – 8th graders January 18 – 21. Get \$10 off your cost for every person you bring. Deadline for deposit is Jan. 6th

All Youth All Night Xtravaganza

Monday, Dec 31, It's free and fantastic! Cost: \$65
Begins at 6:30 in the gym. Pick up your students at 7:00 a.m.
January 1. Deadline is December 23.

Katrina Mission Trips

The first three mission trips in 2008 are scheduled for January 3 - 6, February 7 - 10 and March 6 - 9. Contact Greg Everett at 770-985-1316 and geverett@wilwat.net or Jim Huston at 678-760-0419 and srbckatrinamission@comcast.net Sign-up forms and Q&A handouts are available in the church missions office and on the church website - <http://www.smokerisebaptist.org/ministry/missions/index.html>

There is home recovery work available for all skill levels and most ages. You will return home knowing you helped others in need.

Artist Painting Of Smoke Rise Baptist

Danish artist Anni Moller has painted Smoke Rise Baptist Church and her beautifully matted prints on sale to help the Appalachia Ministry. Half of proceeds will go to the ministry of Appalachia. Two sizes are available- 8 x 10 or 14 x 18. A few prints are available now or you can place your order. See Jenny Brannan or a member of the Appalachia Mission Team in the fellowship hall on Wednesday evening or the breezeway on Sunday morning.

Births

Congratulations to Whit and Elizabeth Weaver on the birth of a daughter, "Ensley Catherine," born September 15; grandparents are Mary and Steve Brannon; Ryan and Carrie Stallings on the birth of a son, "Harrison Crosby," born November 11; grandparents are Philip and Katie Smith; aunt is Jennifer Smith; uncle is Stephen Smith; Brian and Robin Still on the birth of a son, "Samuel Phillip," born November 28; brothers are Noah and Joshua; grandparents are Jerry and Linda Still; and, to John and Amy Cowan on the birth of twins, "Katherine (Kate) Blair" and "Jackson (Jack) David," born December 4; grandparents are Bob and Jackie Brown-ing.

Notes from the Pastor

Advent Programs

I want to thank everyone that has made our Christmas services and programs so meaningful. Each one has been outstanding and reminded us of the reason for the season. I am grateful for the hard work of our staff and the large host of volunteers that have gone above and beyond the call of duty. I appreciate each one of you!

Christmas Eve Services

One highlight of the church year is our Christmas Eve services. One reason they are so meaningful is because it allows families the opportunity to worship together, including family members that have moved away and returned for the holidays. Make it a priority on your December calendar and join us for one of these very special services. I cannot imagine celebrating Christmas without attending one of these services. I look forward to seeing you.

By the way, invite neighbors and friends to attend with you that may not have a Christmas Eve service. Not every church schedules services on the 24th. Everyone is welcome to ours.

The 5:30 service is designed for children. The 7:00 service is our traditional candlelight service featuring our choir and other vocalists. The 11:00 service is liturgical and includes communion.

Stewardship

You have been so generous and faithful in giving your tithes and offerings throughout the year, and the staff is grateful. Your contributions fund our ministries, programs and worship services. They enable us to purchase the supplies we need and take care of our facilities. Most of all, they help us to help others through local and global mission projects.

Ministry is expensive, but isn't everything of value in this world? All great endeavors require dedicated people that are faithful stewards. I consider it a joy to support the church with my money and am grateful for the difference it makes in our community and world. It is through the church, Smoke Rise in particular, that I am able to fulfill my personal mission statement, "To make the world a better place to live." Each time the church gives me another way to do this, I am eager to respond. I cannot accomplish this mission without the help of the church. Let me give you an example of what I mean.

Yesterday, Kathy handed me a letter from Anita Beaty, Metro Executive Director of the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless. I'll share a portion of it.

"On behalf of all of us, please accept our most heartfelt gratitude for everything you did to make this year's coat drive a success. Smoke Rise Baptist alone brought in over 250 coats! With your help, we distributed over 500 coats to homeless men, women and children. I cannot begin to convey the appreciation that we have for the devoted community of Smoke Rise Baptist Church. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you!"

We get letters like this from organizations all over Atlanta, our state, our country and the world. It makes me proud and grateful to read each one. There is no way I could touch all these people on my own. Through this wonderful and generous church, I can, though. "Thank you, Lord, for Smoke Rise and making it possible for me to help so many through this church."

Help us end the year on a strong note. Evaluate your giving this year and catch up if you need to do so. Give an extra gift before the end of the year to strengthen our work. It is important that we meet budget for 2007 and start the year financially strong.

The needs of our neighbors here and around the world will be just as great in 2008 and we need to be poised and ready to help them.

"The Grinch that Stole Mom and Dad"

I want to share a portion of the Sunday school lesson I wrote for our young families earlier this month when I taught on "The Grinch that Stole Mom and Dad." I certainly enjoyed my time with them the first two Sundays in December.

"More than any other time, kids want their parents to get along during the holidays. They are kids and want to have a Merry Christmas. They really do have visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads and a happy, peaceful family enjoying the holidays. You owe it to them to help them enjoy the few years they will have as a child at Christmas. It really is about them and this golden opportunity to make lifelong memories.

Who was it about on that first Christmas? Ask Mary and Joseph. It was about their baby. All their attention was upon him. They wanted to take care of him and make sure his needs were met. They did everything they could, even under adverse circumstances, to provide for him.

Follow their lead. This year, focus upon your family and what you can do to make this the best Christmas ever.

Isn't Christmas a time for giving? Why not give your family the kind of gifts they need the most. Give them kindness, patience, encouragement, affirmation and love. Give them a positive attitude. Give them compliments. Give them your time and undivided attention.

Give forgiveness. Ask for their forgiveness and let them give it to you.

Surprise them throughout the month with little gifts they were not expecting. Start some new traditions. Pull out a tradition from your past and share it with them.

Model the true spirit of Christmas. Be the presence of Christ in their lives. Become a spiritual leader in your home. You don't have to wait until the New Year to make resolutions and changes in your home life. Start now. Make this a Christmas wish that can come true.

Ask yourself this question. **'If I were a child, would I want me for a mom or dad, especially at Christmas?'** If you would not, talk to God about it. Ask Him to show you what you need to change and to help you begin making those changes. It's the season for giving, remember, and this is one gift He is anxious to give you this year."

Merry Christmas

I wish you and your family the merriest Christmas ever. I want your home to be filled with love, laughter and plenty of good aromas. Spoil the children and be nice to out-of-town relatives. The memories you make will last a lifetime and beyond.

Until Sunday,
Bob

Twins

Speaking of Christmas gifts and family, I am grateful for the arrival of Amy and John's twins. Katherine Blair (Kate) and Jackson David (Jack) Cowan were born December 4. They are strong, healthy and beautiful! Thanks for your thoughts and prayers for our daughter, Amy, during her recovery. This means a lot to Jackie and me.

2008 Offering Envelopes will be mailed to your home on a quarterly basis. It has become more economical to mail smaller sets on a quarterly basis than the whole year's set one time. Should you not receive yours by December 27, please call us at 770-469-5856.

A Giving Opportunity during the Gift-Giving Season

We have entered the season of giving. What a wonderful season it is!

Gifts can be made in many different ways. You may be interested to learn of a new provision in the law for those who are 70^{1/2} or older and who must take unneeded taxable distributions from a traditional IRA or Roth IRA.

In August 2006, the President signed the Pension Protection Act. The new law allows you to direct your annual mandatory withdrawal amount (up to \$100,000) to be used to make charitable gifts on a totally tax-free basis.

If you are 70^{1/2} or older and your retirement assets are held in another type account such as a 401(k), you may be able to transfer those assets to an IRA account first and then give them on a tax-free basis.

Because you will not be taxed on the money rolled over from your IRA directly to a charity, you will not receive a charitable deduction for this type of gift.

Check with your financial advisor on the best ways to make tax-favored gifts from your retirement accounts. For more information, you may also go online to <http://www.independentsector.org/programs/gr/IRARollover.html>.

Remember contributions have to be received in the church office by the end of the day (4:30 p.m.) on **December 31** or postmarked no later than December 31 in order to receive credit for 2007. Please do not file income tax returns until you have received written confirmation from the church regarding your contributions.

Stepping Up: A Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent

Beth Moore's newest study explores Psalms 120-134. Traveling pilgrims sang these psalms both on the way to the great festivals of the Jews and as key elements of the worship of those festivals. 6 weeks

- Sundays at 5:00 p.m. beginning January 13
- Mondays at 9:45 a.m. beginning January 14

Stone Mountain Coop will be closed Monday, December 24, through Sunday, January 6. **Lilburn Coop** will be closed Monday, December 24, through Tuesday, January 1. Please bring food for pickup by Wednesday, December 19.

FINANCIAL STATISTICS

As of November 30, 2007

Three hundred seventy families have pledged \$1,875,654.40 to date for the 2007 Budget.

	YEAR TO DATE (THIS YEAR)	BUDGET TO DATE
INCOME		
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$2,031,330.15	\$2,314,587.00
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	<u>50,940.25</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,082,270.40	\$2,314,587.00
EXPENSES		
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$1,753,864.42	\$1,861,733.00
TOTAL MINISTRIES – WORSHIP	40,938.44	37,625.00
TOTAL MINISTRIES – EDUCATION	105,470.71	137,346.00
TOTAL MISSIONS	187,181.28	196,771.00
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	60,569.52	61,750.00
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	<u>5,763.15</u>	<u>16,413.00</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,153,787.52	\$2,311,638.00
MORTGAGE BALANCE:	\$ 254,842.13	

FAITH, FAMILY & FUTURE CAMPAIGN:

Four hundred forty-nine families have pledged \$2,689,784.00 to the Faith, Family & Future Campaign.

Funds designated by Finance Comm	\$ 30,000.00
Add'l Funds from Finance Comm	+ 163,972.14
Contributions	+2,593,550.41
Expenses	-2,779,552.45
Paid toward Mortgage	<u>- 7,160.10</u>
Cash Balance	\$ 810.00
Outstanding Commitment	\$ 0.00



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5901 Hugh Howell Road
Stone Mountain, GA 30087

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OUR STAFF

Church Office: 770-469-5856

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Linda Cummings	Interim Church Administrator/Senior Adults
Kathy Dobbins	Minister of Spiritual Formation
Danny Vancil	Minister of Worship & Music
E. Ernest Forrester, Jr.	Minister of Families with Youth
Kellie Denton	Minister to Families with Children
Tim W. Adcox	Minister of Missions/Recreation
Amanda Burton	Nursery Director
Truett Gannon, D. Min.	Pastor Emeritus

Smoke Rise Counseling Center
Affiliate of Care and Counseling Center of Georgia
770-469-6547

Gloria White, M. Div., LCSW	Counselor
Rene Ely, M. Div., LMFT	Counselor
Gina Campbell, M. Div., LCSW	Counselor

The Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless

has sent an expression of appreciation for making their coat drive a huge success. Smoke Rise alone brought in over 250 coats for homeless men, women and children! The Task Force touches between 800-1000 homeless people every single day. Thank you for answering "Micah's Challenge" in such a loving way!