

The C R O S S T I E



The November 30, 2007
Newsletter of the
Smoke Rise Baptist Church

SRBC Christmas Tour of Homes



December 6

Tickets \$5

Proceeds go to our toy drive!

Tickets are available in the church office.



Help A Child Experience A Night in Bethlehem!

On Sunday, December 9 from 5:00-7:00 pm Smoke Rise Baptist will transform into Bethlehem Village...where the Christmas Story will truly come to life! On this date we will invite families from our community and provide a place for them to get a better understanding of the incredible sacrifice God made in sending Jesus. We need prime timers, senior adults, youth and interested families.... people of all ages to be shopkeepers, craftsmen, shepherds and local merchants and musicians.

Help with set-up and take-down is also appreciated! Please contact Kellie Denton, Amanda Burton or Kara Blankenship at 770-469-5856 or kdenton@smokerisebaptist.org to be a part of this wonderful outreach.

Christmas Carols and Keyboards

Featuring artists Susan Sigmon and Carole Mitchell

Playing two concert Grand Pianos

and the Majestic Pipe Organ

Sunday, December 9

7:30 p.m.

(Come and experience the Live Nativity and Bethlehem Village prior to the concert (5:00 - 7:00 p.m.)



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)

Associate Pastor Search Committee Appointed

The Search Committee for the Associate Pastor has been appointed. Remember them in your prayers as they begin their work. The members of the committee are:

- Jody Jones (Chairperson)
- Tom Raines
- Larry Holmes
- Carole Harrison
- Graham Felton
- Charles Hancock

Brooklyn Toy Drive

Toy collection centers are ready but **EMPTY!!!** The Children's Mission project is collecting new, unwrapped toys for our Brooklyn, NY ministries. Youth and teenager gifts are also needed! (CD's, sports items, DVD's, etc). Please help give a Christmas gift to those less fortunate. Collection center is upstairs in the Breezeway area across from sanctuary. For more info contact Kellie Denton at 770-469-5856. Toys will be collected up until November 20th (no used toys and no clothing please).

Prayer Retreat Scheduled

Do you value prayer? Would you like to deepen your understanding of prayer? Would you like to help us develop a dynamic prayer ministry in our congregation? Come to a Prayer Retreat sponsored by Best Practices for Ministry Network

Led by Dr. Loyd Allen, Professor of Spiritual Formation at McAfee School of Theology

February 15-16, at Simpsonwood Conference Center in Atlanta

\$99.00 per person for double occupancy room

Deadline is November 15, 2007 with a \$50.00 deposit

Pick up a registration form in the Sanctuary Breezeway

Katrina Mission Trip

There is still time to join the December 6th through 9th Katrina Mission trip to Biloxi, Mississippi. 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 web site - <http://www.smokerisebaptist.org/ministry/mis-sions/index.html>

There is home recovery work available for all skill levels and most ages. Veterans (previous volunteers) are welcome to return again. Mention the upcoming trip in your Sunday School classes. Check out the four-minute slide show on the web site depicting volunteer activities. You will return home knowing that you helped others in need.

The first three mission trips in 2008 are scheduled for January 3 - 6, February 7 - 10 and March 6 - 9.

December Prime Time Meeting

The December Prime Time meeting will be Tuesday, December 4, at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. B. J. Abrams, a Christmas story teller, will be entertaining us for the evening along with Christmas carolers. Wear your Christmas attire and bring your friends. Remember to call the church office to make your reservations! 770-469-5956

See you there, Merry Christmas!

You can read *The CrossTie* online on Thursday before it is mailed on Friday. Go to www.smokerisebaptist.org.

Sadies Ladies Circle will meet Monday, December 10, at 6:30 at the home of Suzanne Cowan. All ladies are invited to join us.

Ladies, we invite you to meet with our **Multifocus WMU** on Tuesday, December 11, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 218.

For our mission project, we will be providing Christmas items or donations for the mission trip as Ann Carter, daughter of Evelyn Carter, one of our members, goes on an African Safari to an orphanage. Those who wish to write a check should make it payable to "America Share."

Our Newest Family Members

Spencer Decuir (son of Larry and Cathy Decuir), 5242 Candleberry Drive, Lilburn, GA 30047. Deacon: Wade Higgins.

Jessica Reynolds, 3199 Flowers Road S, Apt. E., Atlanta, GA 30341. Deacon: Penny Stovall.

Leta Fae Smith (living at Tucker Nursing Center), Jackie Rush (her daughter), and Sam Stavish, 4395 Bonaparte Drive, Tucker, GA 30084. Deacon: Mary Ann Niermann.

Joel Tarpley (husband of Amanda Hankla Tarpley), 63 Planters Drive, Lilburn, GA 30047. Deacon: Fredolyn Stitt.

Jolee Wood (daughter of Scott and Lauri Wood), 1074 Westchester Drive, Lilburn, GA 30047. Deacon: Margaret Fite.

Wedding

Congratulations to Susan Taylor and Gerry Banuelos who were married November 3 in Zacatecas, Mexico. Susan is the daughter of Hilda Taylor.

Birth

"Grant Hamilton" and "Blake Joseph," were born to Christi and Vann Riley October 30; brother is Brayden; grandparents are Sheryl and Bill Riley.

Deaths

We extend our deepest sympathy to these who have lost loved ones: Phyllis Landers, whose mother died; Barbara Conard, whose father died; Lita Chandler and Jill Holder, whose sister and aunt died; Lynn Dodson, whose grandmother died; Sandra King, whose uncle died; Connie Sanford, whose grandmother died; and to the family and friends of Henry Hayes (a former member) who has died.

The Grinch that Stole Mom and Dad

The Grinch tried to take away Christmas. The pressure of the holidays can make us feel stressed and tired. All that glitz and glitter that the stores and commercials try to sell can leave us feeling empty, small and sometimes experiencing hurt feelings and awkward conversations. We all need to make sure the hustle and bustle of the holidays doesn't take away our own inner peace and calm.

Join us for a free pancake breakfast and discussion on December 2 and 9 starting at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall as Dr. Browning shares his notes from Hal Runkel's lecture and gives guidance on how you and your spouse can keep your cool even when the sugarplums are dancing about and making a terrible racket.

Discussion begins at 10a.m.

Chrismon Time!



Help needed to make our 2007 Children's Chrismons for the Family Christmas Eve service. Contact Kellie Denton, Amanda Burton or Cathy Decuir. Crafty skills not necessary!

Notes from the Pastor

“Starting Over” Jeremiah 18:1-10

Have you ever watched a potter make a vessel? It is fascinating, isn't it? He takes a clump of clay, puts it on a spinning wheel, adds water and imagination and molds it into a beautiful and useful vessel. The finished product is usually a work of art that brightens any room.

Jeremiah paid a visit to a potter, not to buy a vessel but learn a valuable lesson. It had such an impact upon him that he shared this experience and lesson with others, including us. Let's unwrap this gift from him this morning.

Who was Jeremiah? He was an Old Testament prophet that was born six hundred fifty years before Christ. He was upset with his people because he felt they had lost their way. They were not honoring the covenant they made with God to be a people of integrity, compassion, peace and humility. Instead, they adopted the culture's values and became greedy, selfish, power hungry and complacent.

In addition, they refused to listen to Jeremiah, subjecting him to ridicule and abuse. As a result, Jeremiah questioned God about his pain and asked why he had to suffer. He begged God to take revenge upon his enemies and vindicate him.

What was Jeremiah instructed to do? He was told to go to the potter's house and watch him make pottery.

Why was he told to do this? It was at the potter's house that he would receive a message from God.

Now you would think that he would be sent to the temple, Solomon's Temple, to receive a word from the Lord. Why was he sent to the potter's house instead? The message he needed to

receive would be learned by observing the sights and sounds around him. God would use everyday people doing ordinary things to speak to Jeremiah, just as He does for us.

What did Jeremiah observe? He watched as the potter took a clump of clay and

began molding a vessel on the spinning wheel. All went well until an imperfection in the clay spoiled it and the potter could no longer continue.

So what did he do? Did he throw the clay away and grab a fresh clump of clay? No, he did not. He continued to work with the same clump of clay until it was transformed into a useful vessel.

What did Jeremiah learn from this experience? I think he learned a valuable lesson about the redeeming, healing, renewing power of grace. He did not need to give up on his people because God had not. God still loved them and was willing to work with them to make the world better, and so should Jeremiah. Even God's judgment was redemptive.

Jeremiah learned that belonging to God affected the way he belonged to those around him. It demanded that he be a suffering servant that would keep trying to find ways to redeem the fallen and restore those that had lost their way.

What can we learn from Jeremiah's experience? Belonging to God affects the way we belong to each other, too. Becoming suffering servants for the purpose of restoring the fallen is our mission and purpose.

This leads to two questions I would like for you to ponder today, and the first is this. **On whom are you thinking about giving up?** Who has hurt you to the point you want to walk away and never look back?

What would it take for you to reconsider? Do you think God will provide it? I do because His passion is helping people overcome mistakes so they can rebuild their lives. You will not be alone on this mission of mercy nor will you lack for patience, understanding, willpower and love. If you ask, He will supply these needs and use you as an agent of healing and restoration.

Wasn't this Jesus' mission? Didn't he come to seek and save those that were lost? I'm sure you recall his response to the Pharisees when they criticized him for associating with sinners. "It is not the healthy that need a doctor but the sick. Go and learn what this means. I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" Matthew 9:12.

Shouldn't this be our mission, too? Doesn't it begin with those closest to us? I think it does.

The second question is for those that have made mistakes and hurt others. **How do you need to respond to those that are reaching out to help you?** What do you need to do to be redeemed and heal the wounds you have caused?

Let me suggest that you place your life in the hands of people that love you and want to help you. You need to be as pliable as that clump of clay in the potter's hand and cooperate with family, friends, ministers and counselors that are trying to help you. Don't become defensive and harden your heart. This would be disastrous. Humbly place your life in the hands of those that believe in you, care for you and want the best for you and trust them, with God's help, to lead you in new directions.

I have always appreciated the response of the person, who when asked, "Have you been born again?" astutely replied, "Oh yes, I have been born again and again and again and again." That's the most appropriate answer I have ever heard. I believe that is what this story is all about, starting over after we have failed.

Do you need to be born again this morning? Have you lost your way and need to be found? Have you made some critical mistakes and need to be forgiven? Have you fallen and need to be restored?

Do you need to help someone that has lost her way? Do you need patience, wisdom, understanding, willpower and love? Do you need a reason not to give up on someone?

Perhaps you need to go to the potter's house and watch him work. He's used to people showing up and will be ready for you.

Until Sunday,
Bob

The 2008 Ministry Plan was overwhelmingly approved by the congregation on Sunday, November 28 including the large number of absentee ballots received. Thank you for your participation and sharing of this very important decision.

Don't Miss our "Holiday Breakfast!"

December 16 is the churchwide "Holiday Breakfast" beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall.

2007-2008 Basketball Season



League	Cost	Start Date	No. of Weeks
5-6 Year Old Coed	\$90	Saturday, January 5	6
7-8 Year Old Coed	\$95	Saturday, January 5	8
9-11 Year Old Boys/Girls	\$95	Saturday, December 8	9
12-14 Year Old Boys/Girls	\$95	Saturday, December 8	9
High School Boys/Girls	\$95	Mon. & Tues. Dec. 10/11	10
Men's Open & Men's 35+	\$75	Friday, January 4	10

Reversible Mesh Jersey provided

Skills assessment for 7-14 yr teams - Early November

Practices 1 hour per week beginning - Mid-November

Weekday practices for 5-14 year olds on Smoke Rise teams

On-line sign-up only at impactbasketballleague.com

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 of 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>.

FINANCIAL STATISTICS

As of November 20, 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	\$1,995,014.00	\$2,314,587.00
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	49,485.66	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,044,499.66	\$2,314,587.00
EXPENSES		
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$1,674,227.36	\$1,861,733.00
TOTAL MINISTRIES – WORSHIP	40,771.68	37,625.00
TOTAL MINISTRIES – EDUCATION	99,832.24	137,346.00
TOTAL MISSIONS	175,240.13	196,771.00
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	58,865.20	61,750.00
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	5,763.15	16,413.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,054,699.76	\$2,311,638.00
MORTGAGE BALANCE:	\$ 269,593.79	

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	+2,593,145.41
Expenses	-2,779,552.45
Paid toward Mortgage	- 7,160.10
Cash Balance	\$ 405.00
Outstanding Commitment	\$ 0.00



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Stone Mountain, GA 30087

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OUR STAFF

Church Office: 770-469-5856

Robert F. Browning, D. Min.	Pastor
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

Uganda Mission Opportunity

Uganda Mission Opportunity

May 31 – June 16, 2008.

Construction, Teaching Children, Sports and Games,
Nurturing, Preaching (men only), School Visitation,
Evangelism/Tract Ministry, and more.

January 31, 2008 Deadline

Please contact Wilson Echols at
wechols@bellsouth.net or 404-771-5215.