



GSPC NEWS



ISSUE # 49

December 16, 2009

www.gspcmobile.org * (251)432-1749 * 300 Government Street, Mobile, Alabama 36602

So This Is Christmas

Rev. Ryan Jensen

Associate Pastor for Evangelism and Discipleship

Laura and I recently attended the “Yuletide Spectacular” performed by the Mobile Symphony. It was a real treat and we continue to appreciate the treasure that Mobile possesses in both the Saenger and the Symphony. Included in this particular program were bell ringers, traditional carols, selections from *The Nutcracker*, the sounds of Hanukah, and a reading of “The Night Before Christmas.” While everything was performed to perfection, the piece that touched me most was something a little more traditional: “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.”

For those of you who know this hymn (and surely all good Presbyterians *must* know this hymn), you are probably thinking, what does “A Mighty Fortress” have to do with Christmas? True, it neither points to snow, snowmen, snowwomen or even snow castles. It does not directly reference the baby Jesus and has nothing to say of the Magi or shepherds, not to mention the little drummer and his pa rum pum pum pum. What the hymn does point out, however, is the whole reason for all of the above. It is God who never fails and it is “a man of God’s own choosing” that is on our side.

Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same... This is why we endure all the fuss. When the shopping is over, when Christmas Eve approaches, and when the anticipation is all but over, Christ Jesus is what remains. Whether the participant in a children’s Christmas pageant or the grandparent of that child, Jesus is the same for all.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us... I assume that each one of us makes something different of the idea that our world is filled with devils. Some may

choose to say “Hogwash. It’s all superstition.” Others may disagree wholeheartedly, saying that it must be devils that force people and situations to turn out as they do. Others may say that a devil filled world refers to conditions such as consumerism, the void between the rich and poor, war, disease, hunger, pollution, discrimination, and so on. Others still may simply fear for what might be, asking, “Jesus is born, but toward what end?”

The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure... Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; The body they may kill: God’s truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever... When it comes to addressing our fears as well as our hopes, I think that we often need the reminder that Jesus was not born for simple reasons. Jesus was not born to make us feel good about ourselves. Jesus was not born to bring health and wealth to those who believe in him. Jesus was not born to win on the field of battle. The paradox of our faith is that our Savior was born to die. Sadly but thankfully, that is what it took for God to save us from sin, destruction, and ourselves. Once again, it is true that death is not the stuff of a festive, holiday season. But oh, how wonderful it is that this is not where the story ends. Through death, Jesus lives. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we too will live to join God in that kingdom that is forever.

In the midst of our own personal, community and family “Yuletide Spectaculars,” let us not forget the significance of the gift that the Mighty God freely shares. Friends, believe the Good News: Jesus Christ is born to us through the goodness of God’s redeeming love. In Christ, *the Spirit and the gifts are ours.* Though Christ, we have hope in life now and in the life to come. Joy to the world indeed.

- Ryan

Worship

Lectionary Readings for December 20:

Mic. 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55 or Ps. 80:1-7
Heb. 10:5-10; Like 1:39-45 (46-55)

Volunteers this Sunday, December 20

Greeters:	J.J. Zandstra and David Pearsall
Sunday Assistants:	Jay Roberds and Becky Ivy
Sanctuary Preparers:	Bligh Jones and Trisha Hawkins
Nursery Volunteer:	Dorothy Morrison
Wee Worship Leader:	Ian Murray
Office Volunteer:	Dot White
Prayer Chain Contacts:	Charlotte Crockett, 478-1003/591-7902 Dibber Lutz, 473-7582/433-5756

The Lord's Supper will be observed on Thursday, December 24th, at the 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Service

The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who have been baptized, remembering that access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance and love. In preparing to receive Christ in this Sacrament, the believer is to confess sin and brokenness, to seek reconciliation with God and neighbor and to trust in Jesus Christ for cleansing and renewal.

Book of Order 4-2.4011

Stewardship

Stewardship Update

Thanks to your generosity we are getting close to our goal, but we are not there yet. The campaign's success depends on hearing from those of you who have not yet turned in your pledge. Please call Bonnie or Laura at the church office if you need another pledge card. Please act NOW as YOU WILL make a difference!

— John Leach

Urban Ministries

The **Coffee Club Christmas Party** will take place on Wednesday, December 23rd, at 7:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. The GSPC Youth will be giving out gift bags to our guests at this event. We are in need of donations of hygiene supplies, crackers, water bottles, and gift

certificates for these bags. Those who like to bake are invited to supply treats as well. We need at least 200 gift bags for this party. Please drop off these donations at the designated box at the Jackson Street entrance. Contact Scott 434-9328 if you have any questions.

IHN is coming! Our next Inter-Faith Hospitality Network commitment begins the week of January 10th, 2010. We are in need of volunteers to provide meals and serve as Evening and Overnight Hosts. IHN is an incredible opportunity to help out families in need and is a critical part of GSPC's Urban Ministry to our community. A calendar is available for sign-ups in the Foyer. Please contact Jay Roberds (IHN Coordinator) or Scott if you are interested.

Help Wanted: Person with a love of urban ministry, access to a truck or van, a strong back, and a few hours of free time a week. The Urban Ministry Committee is looking for a driver to make pick-ups at the Bay Area Food Bank for use at Coffee Club. The food picked up will feed around 150-200 people breakfast five times a week and is a critical part of community mission at GSPC. Please contact Scott Spence at 434-9328 if you have questions or are interested. Thanks!

— Scott Spence

Music and Fine Arts

Upcoming Choir Practice Schedules

- **GMBACS, Sanctuary Choir, and Christmas Eve Sacred Tones ringers**
Wed., Dec. 23 7-8:30 p.m.
- **Children's and Cherub Choirs** will not meet again until January 10.
- **GMBACS** will resume regular practice on Jan. 12.
- **Sanctuary Choir and Sacred Tones** will resume regular practices on January 13.

Upcoming Holiday Music Events

- **Musicians Holiday Party at Jeanie Lindsey's home**
Sat., Dec. 19 6:00 p.m.
- **Lesson and Carols Concert Worship Service**
Sun., Dec. 20 Brunch 9:30 a.m.
\$5 per person, no more than
\$15 per family
Service 10:45 a.m.
- **Candlelight Christmas Eve Communion Service**
Thurs., Dec. 24 Choir Warm-up 4:30 p.m.
Pre-Service Music 5:00 p.m.
Service 5:30 p.m.

Christian Education

Youth This Week

Dinner and a Christmas Movie

Sunday, December 20th, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

The youth will begin our fellowship with dinner together at 5:30 p.m., then join the congregation in the parking lot for a Christmas movie at 6:00 p.m. Please bring your fold out chairs and blankets! Dinner will be provided by the Goodloe and Tamblyn Families.

Youth Looking Ahead

Coffee Club Christmas Party Lock-in

Tuesday, December 22nd – 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 23rd – 8:15 a.m.

Youth will not want to miss this great opportunity to enjoy fellowship and serve others this Holiday Season! We will decorate for the Coffee Club Christmas Party, stuff goodie bags for Coffee Club members and share in Bible Study, Service, Fellowship, and fun! All youth should bring a snack to share for the evening.

“Special Thanks” from all the youth to Dorothy Morrison for providing hot chocolate for the evening and to LeAnne Tamblyn, Jade Bishop, Sally & Brent Ericson, Lisa Goodloe, Jim Van Haneghan, Abbie Baxter, Shawn Walker, and Marcia Wyatt for making this event possible for the youth of GSPC!

No PYC - December 27th

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

PYC – New Year’s Party

Sunday, January 3rd, 2010, at Rev. Kathryn’s House
5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Youth will meet in the church parking lot at 5 p.m. and will return by 7:30 p.m.

Congregational Life

REMINDER: Christmas Movie in the Lot! On Sunday, December 20th, the parking lot of GSPC will be transformed into a **walk-in theater**. A family-friendly Christmas feature film will be shown at 6:00 p.m. Bring a friend, a chair and prepare for cool weather! Popcorn and hot chocolate will be provided. Parking will be available in the adjacent lot or on the street. If raining, this event will be held in Fellowship Hall.

The Talented Among Us! Make your way to the Joe Jefferson Playhouse this weekend to see **Emily Ericson**

and **Shanon Harris** in the cast of **"Scrooge: The Musical,"** a lighthearted, family-friendly holiday production. The JJP is located at 11 S. Carlen St. Shows dates are Friday and Saturday night (Dec. 18-19) at 7 p.m. and Sunday (Dec. 20) at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and seating is first come, first served. The shows are a fundraiser for the community theatre.

College Graduation! Congratulations to **Moses Dimmock**, whose missionary family is supported by our church, graduated from UNC - Pembroke on Saturday, December 12, with a Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts, specializing in Digital Art. His plans following graduation are to do a 3-month internship in northern Uganda with "Save the Children, UK." Moses will conduct art therapy with refugee children and 'reclaimed' child soldiers. His 'real' ministry to these children (and theirs to him) will be in 'hanging out' with them, playing soccer, and encouraging them to share about themselves through their art and their words. Moses will visit four of his siblings and his parents, Frank and Nancy Dimmock, at their home in Lesotho, Africa, before and after his internship.

Christian sympathy is extended to Chris Norwood and family on the recent death of her father.

Church Office Holiday Hours — the church office will be closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day.

Newsletter Holiday Schedule — this is the next to last newsletter of 2009. There will be no GSPC Newsletter produced next week, which is Christmas week. The final newsletter of the year will be published on Dec. 30th. Please submit any news for this issue by Noon on Monday, Dec. 28th. Submit via email to Debbie@gspcmobile.org, or place in the Communications mailbox in the church office.



Presbyterian Women

The **PW Sewing Circle** will NOT meet on Christmas Eve, December 24th, or on New Year’s Eve, December 31st. Regular meetings will resume on January 7, 2010.

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Children's Ministries

by Amanda Murray, Director of Children's Ministries

- **The Children's Christmas Program was spectacular!** The children did a wonderful job! "Thank you so much" to all of the children and their parents for their support and time. "Thank you" to Wanda for all her devotion, time, and commitment, and love for our children. We appreciate all that she does for us at this time of year. "Thank you" to Charlotte and Brian Naylor and everyone else who helped make this program a success.
- **Children's Christmas Party:** All children ages 2 years old through 5th grade are invited to celebrate Christmas together on Sunday, December 20th, during the worship hour. We will come together to celebrate Christmas and have fun during the Wee Worship time of church.
- **Children's and Cherub Choirs** will not meet again until January 10th.
- **Join us for the Christmas Brunch** this Sunday at 9:30 a.m. \$5 per person, no more than \$15 per family.
- **Candlelight Christmas Eve Communion Service.** As there will be no Nursery, families are invited to worship together in the Sanctuary during this very special service.
- **Sunday School will not be held on December 27th.** You may enjoy coffee and donuts in Fellowship Hall during that time.
- **We are having an Epiphany Party** on Sunday, January 3rd, at 9:30 a.m. All children ages 3 years old through 5th grade are invited to attend and celebrate Epiphany!
- **Family Devotional: December**
 - Scripture: Luke 2:10-11
 - Prayer: An Advent Prayer
 - Song: Away in a Manger

Merry Christmas!

Making Time For God: Our GSPC family devotional book. Question of the week related to this week's devotional in the book: **Have you heard the Good News?**