

The C R O S S T I E



The December 28, 2007
Newsletter of the
Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Retreat Registration



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 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.



Katrina Mission Trips

Upcoming mission trips in 2008 are February 7 - 10 and March 6 - 9.

Contact Greg Everett at 770-985-1316 or geverett@wilwat.net or Jim Huston at 678-760-0419 or 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.

Please pray for the Katrina mission team in Mississippi January 3 - 6

There will be no 8:30 service on December 30
Sunday School will meet at the regular time.

An Exciting Update from our Stewardship Committee!

We have exceeded last year in two ways...First - we have pledged \$1,809,828 (\$88,944 above last year) with 43 more families pledging than last year. How exciting!! We have said many times throughout our Stewardship Emphasis, "Consecration Sunday," that God calls each of us to be faithful stewards of the resources He has entrusted to our care and to give generously, along with others, to meet needs. We also experience the truth that our love for and care of others increases our sense of being loved and cared for by God.

If you missed "Consecration Sunday" you still have time to join other Christians in supporting the ministries of Smoke Rise Baptist Church during the coming year.

We have Estimate of Giving cards available in the upper breezeway and in the church office. You can still catch the spirit of traveling the high road of Christian giving by committing yourself to a generous support of God's kingdom – as much for your sake as for that of the needs of others through the ministries of Smoke Rise Baptist Church.

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.

New Members

We welcome these newest members to our church family.

Mr. and Mrs. Ken (Cheryl) Ayers, 1565 Kings Crossing, Stone Mountain, GA 30087; tel. 678-380-3462. Deacon: Doug Torbush.

Mr. and Mrs. Rex (Mary Emma) Jones, 3319 Springhouse Circle, Stone Mountain, GA 30087; tel. 678-694-3348. Deacon: Ken Stephenson.

Jim Simpson, 4500 Dundee Court, Snellville, GA 30039; tel. 770-972-0201. Deacon: Marc Beaver.

Grace Williamson, 5121 Wyndemere Lane, Stone Mountain, GA 30087. Deacon: Mary Wilson

Smoke Rise Needs You!

Would you consider being a Shepherd for the coming year? Each family that joins our church is assigned a Shepherd for three months to welcome them to Smoke Rise. If you would enjoy being part of this group, please call Terry or Joe Shields at 770-381-8890 or email tms4him@yahoo.com. Thank you for considering being part of this ministry.

Honduras Mission Trip

Reserve your space on the Mission Team with a \$100 deposit for the April 5-12 trip (Spring Break). For more details, contact Page Fulgham at 404-316-3544 or rpfulgham@bellsouth.net or Deb Leamon at 770-923-8762 or dalor53@comcast.net.

Thank you to the Church Family

Dear Church Family,

Our family thanks you for the way you have and continue to reach out to us during the loss of Michelle's husband, Kyle Michael Locker. Because of you and through you we have felt God's presence and healing hands in what has been our most difficult time as a family. We appreciate Dr. Browning and those of you who traveled so far to be with us in Meridian. We are eternally grateful to each one of you for your prayers, every word, act of support and encouragement that you have so graciously provided.

Our spirits have been lifted by the beautiful way that you have shared God's love with us.

Thank you again for your love and support,

Janis, Mike, & Michelle (Holcomb) Locker

Births

Congratulations to 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, Stephen Smith; and, to Andrea and Tripp Smith on the birth of a son, "Emory Carter (Beau)," born December 13; sister: Ellie; grandparents are Andy and Brenda Alexander; great grandparents are Joyce & Charles Lovern; aunt & uncle are Autumn and Charlie Alexander.

Artist Painting Of Smoke Rise Baptist

Danish artist Anni Moller has painted Smoke Rise Baptist Church and her beautifully matted prints are 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.

Thank You

Thank you to Arlene & John Kirkland, Karen Smith and Bobbie & Jerry Wade for sharing their homes on our Smoke Rise Christmas Tour of Homes. They were beautiful and inviting. Everyone had many nice compliments.

Thank you to all who worked to make it a great night. AND, thank you to all who visited each home and shared in the joy of the Christmas season.

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. It is exactly the same as the copy we mail — except it is in color!! Please call us at 770-469-5856 to remove your name the 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 who wants it through the mail. Thank you ahead of time to all of you willing to participate in our new "going green" program.

Deaths

We extend our sympathy to Jim Bailey whose sister died; and to the family and friends of Robert Rohrer who died. Bob had been a member of Smoke Rise since 1999.

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

LeMoyne Blvd. Baptist Church
Biloxi, Mississippi

Greetings!

We are humbled by the love and generosity that has poured through our church for Katrina rebuilding efforts this past year! Words alone cannot express our deep appreciation for all the hours of volunteer labor and financial support that has been given. Families have been blessed and several people have come to know Christ as their Savior. We are so very thankful.

Since we started our rebuilding efforts in September of 2005, God has sent over 4,300 volunteers to our church, 9 new homes have been built, significant work has been accomplished in over 140 homes and repairs have been made to over 350 homes. What a difference one person can make when we all work together for the glory of God! Permits are being obtained now for two homes that we will start building in January. The Mission Continues!

From all of us at LeMoyne Blvd. Baptist Church, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and pray that God will bless you and your church in this upcoming year.

From the LeMoyne Blvd. Baptist Church Family

Notes from the Pastor

“I’ll Second that Motion”

Luke 1:26-38

It was a Claypool classic. Many of you knew Dr. John Claypool personally because he ended his illustrious career as a theologian, preacher, teacher, and author in Atlanta teaching at the McAfee School of Theology. He died on September 3, 2005, and I miss him.

In a meeting I attended recently on McAfee’s campus, someone made a reference to Dr. Claypool’s description of the Annunciation, Gabriel’s visit to Mary. “It was as if Gabriel made a motion and Mary seconded it.” Only Dr. Claypool could say it so succinctly.

You recall the birth narrative that is recorded in Luke 1:26-38. The angel, Gabriel, was sent by God to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a young maiden that was engaged to Joseph. At first she was frightened, and understandably so. In that culture, an angelic visit was not always positive. The angel encouraged Mary not to be afraid because he meant neither her nor Joseph harm. Instead, he told her that God looked with favor upon her and wanted her to have His son, whom she was to name Jesus. Her immediate reaction was to ask how this could occur since she was engaged but not yet married. The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” Luke 1:35.

What was Mary’s response to this announcement? “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said” Luke 1:38. She did what Dr. Claypool said, didn’t she? She seconded Gabriel’s motion.

What did God want Mary to do? He wanted her to give birth to Jesus and nourish and nurture him. He wanted her to teach him right from wrong, to be honest, truthful, trustworthy, reliable and dependable.

He wanted her to teach him to be compassionate, reaching out to others with grace and mercy, even those that mistreated him. He wanted her to prepare him to be a servant leader, becoming an advocate for the powerless and a voice for the voiceless.

He wanted her to teach him to be a wise and faithful steward of the time, talents and resources he would have. He wanted her to encourage him to use his enormous potential to make the world better by confronting evil, replacing it with good and pursuing justice for all people.

He wanted her to teach him the value of humility and the need for a close relationship with his heavenly Father. He wanted her to help him understand that God would be the source of his greatest needs: wisdom, guidance, direction, peace, security, strength, courage, confidence, faith, hope and love.

And then, God wanted her to be willing to let him go at the appropriate time with all the confidence in her heart that he was following his divine call.

This was no small order. **Why do you think Mary accepted this challenge and seconded that motion?** It was hard to turn down an angel, I’m sure. However, others may have.

Perhaps she agreed out of her own love for God or desire to leave her mark on the world. When given an opportunity to partner with God to change the course of history, she could not refuse, regardless of how difficult it would be.

Do you think she regretted it? No, I don’t believe she did even when she was sitting at the foot of the cross. She had to know that her efforts and his were not in vain.

It is my understanding that Dr. Claypool asked a penetrating question after declaring that Mary seconded Gabriel’s motion. **“How many motions from God have died for lack of a second?”**

This question brings it home, doesn’t it? In what ways would God like to partner with you and me to make the world better? What challenge is He laying before us today?

Is He asking you to be the kind of parent Mary was, teaching your children to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God? Is He asking you to be a respectful and responsible young person, obeying your parents and expressing gratitude for their sacrificial love? Is He asking you to be a faithful and loving husband or wife?

Is the Lord asking you to build bridges of reconciliation and tear down walls of hatred and prejudice in your community? Is He asking you to reach out to those that others have shunned? Is He asking you to be responsive to the needs of those that others ignore? Is He asking you to take the high road and forgive someone that has hurt you and rebuild a relationship?

Perhaps you have lost someone very dear and precious to you this year. Would He like to use you as a role model for overcoming grief and sorrow? Could you provide hope for others that are struggling?

Does He want to use you as a role model for confronting or overcoming addictions? Will you share your story with fellow strugglers?

Does He want to use your voice to speak out against injustice or offer an alternative to war and violence for settling disputes?

Does He want you to go back to school and live up to your potential? Is He asking you to

travel down some new roads in the year to come, ones that would benefit you and your family?

Does He want to use you to show people how to run an ethical business based upon the Golden Rule? Are you willing to be a positive role model in the marketplace?

Does He want you to become more involved in our church? Would He like for you to go on a mission trip, become a team leader on one of our mission trips, teach Sunday school, work in the nursery or with our children and youth?

What would God like to partner with you to accomplish? How will you respond to His call upon your life? Will you, like Mary, second His motion? Why not ask her for some advice.

Until Sunday,

Bob

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 31, 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 on the way to the great festivals of the Jews and as key elements of the worship at 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 through Sunday, January 6. **Lilburn Coop** will be closed through Tuesday, January 1.

FINANCIAL STATISTICS

As of December 19, 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	\$2,196,872.40	\$2,525,000.00
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	52,893.60	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,249,766.00	\$2,525,000.00
EXPENSES		
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$1,850,356.32	\$2,045,611.00
TOTAL MINISTRIES – WORSHIP	43,019.81	43,600.00
TOTAL MINISTRIES – EDUCATION	107,310.97	143,553.00
TOTAL MISSIONS	188,331.23	209,182.00
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	63,319.52	66,500.00
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	7,514.15	17,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,259,852.00	\$2,525,946.00
MORTGAGE BALANCE:	\$ 247,759.01	

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	+2,596,380.41
Expenses	-2,779,552.45
Paid toward Mortgage	- 10,800.10
Cash Balance	\$ 0.00
Outstanding Commitment	\$ 0.00



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