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MISSIONS SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 3



NO 8:30 SERVICE

SPECIAL 11:00 SERVICE

**SUNDAY SCHOOL AT NORMAL TIME
WATCH FOR THE EXCITING DETAILS!**

FEBRUARY 6 is ASH WEDNESDAY

SPECIAL SERVICE PLANNED

WATCH FOR DETAILS



Senior Adult Outing

to Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament

February 24

Leave Smoke Rise at 4:00 p.m.

Return at 7:45 p.m.

Reservations to Linda Cummings no later than

February 10



The January 11, 2008
Newsletter of the
Smoke Rise Baptist Church

NEW BAPTIST COVENANT

January 30 - February 1

Georgia World Congress Center

This historic celebration is expected to draw more than 20,000 Baptist participants from around the world.

Speakers include Dr. Tony Campolo, Former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton,

Senators Lindsay Graham and Charles Grassley, Former Vice-president Al Gore,

Dr. Joel Gregory, Bill Moyers, Author John Grisham, Rev. Julie Pennington-Russell

and Dr. William J. Shaw, President of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

For more info and to register: phone 678-547-6455, or go to newbaptistcovenant.org.

IS HONDURAS IN YOUR FUTURE?

If you are going, praying about going, or thinking about going on the Honduras Mission Trip April 5 – 12, please plan to attend the Honduras Meeting on Sunday, January 13. The meeting will be in Room 218 after the 11:00 worship service. Please turn in your lunch reservations to Page Fulgham.

Also,

THANKS AGAIN! We appreciate the Katrina Volunteers who worked in Biloxi, MS last week. Thanks for another job well done!

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 who wish to receive *The CrossTie* via mail. *The CrossTie* is always available by Thursday noon on our website before it is mailed on Friday. You can read/print it out. It is exactly the same as the copy we mail — except it is in color! To help us save postage, paper and trees, please call 770.469.5856 to remove your name from *The CrossTie* mailing list. Thank you ahead of time to all who participate in our new "going green" program.

Many of you have already responded and thank you! Please continue to let us know if we can remove your name as stated above!

Sadies Ladies Circle will meet Monday, January 14, at 7:00, at the home of Kim Sekulow. We welcome all ladies to join us.

WEDDINGS

Congratulations to John Neal Scott and Hailey Williams who were married December 29. John Neal is the son of Charlie and Debbie Scott.

Congratulations to Kristen Evans King and John Hamilton Lawrence who were married January 5. Kristen is the daughter of Bob and Vicki King.

DEATHS

We extend our sympathy to these who have lost loved ones: Jana Slocum, whose mother died; Lauri Wood, whose stepfather died; and Cindy Raines, whose mother died.

ATTENTION! TEACHERS USING THE FORMATIONS LITERATURE

Beginning Wednesday, January 9, Dr. Browning will be offering a lesson overview/preparation session from 6:00 to 6:30 pm in the church Parlor. Come whenever you can or when your week to teach is coming up. Invite those you ask to substitute for you to come anytime or anyone who is interested in teaching.

MEDIA TEAM VOLUNTEERS

Now that our new Sanctuary video system is ready we are searching for those who have experience in various types of media production to join the Smoke Rise Media Team. The team will work on a part time volunteer basis to create various media presentations for several services throughout the year involving digital photography, PowerPoint, soundtrack development and video production. Adults and youth are welcome to join the team.

For more information please contact Glenn Paist at 770-979-1668 or glennpaist@comcast.net.

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Smoke Rise,

Thank you for your continued generous giving to Chris, us personally and Greater Restoration Baptist Church. Chris continues to make progress but will still need your prayers as he journeys down this rough road. Your gift was such a blessing, too. We have felt so loved by your members and appreciate your friendship. We will keep you updated on Chris.

Love,

Jared and Beth Webb

Greater Restoration Baptist Church

Smoke Rise Congregation,

Your warm acceptance of our grieving families made the memorial service for my Mom's husband, Bob Rohrer, a more bearable time. Thank you for the open hospitality shown by all at the service and at the reception. I'm very appreciative for your work to stage such an event, and with grace and a smile for all us non-members.

Much obliged,

Malbea and John Lapete

Lent 2008

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

Micah's Challenge and the Journey to the Cross: Justice, Mercy, and Walking Humbly with God

During the season of Lent we will be examining how Jesus demonstrated justice, kindness and humility on his way to the cross and how that becomes a model for our lives.

- Feb. 6 Ash Wednesday Service — 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary
- Feb. 13 Dr. David P. Gushee, Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics, McAfee School of Theology
- Feb. 20 Dr. Emmanuel McCall, Adjunct Professor at McAfee School of Theology and Pastor, Fellowship Group Baptist Church, East Point
- Feb. 27 Rev. Becky Matheny, Director, Baptist Heritage Council of Georgia; Educational Consultant, Lake Oconee Community Church at Reynolds Plantation and formerly Minister of Education at Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta
- March 5 Dr. Fred B. Craddock, Professor Emeritus of Preaching and New Testament, Candler School of Theology and Director of the Craddock Center in Cherry Log
- March 12 Dr. Quentin Madden, Pastor of First Baptist Church, St. Simons Island
- March 19 Dr. Colin Harris, Professor of Religious Studies, Mercer University
- March 20 Maundy Thursday Service — 7:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

Notes from the Pastor

Christmas

What can I say about Advent and the Christmas season at Smoke Rise? It was one of our best. On behalf of the church, I want to thank everyone that helped make the season so meaningful. It took hard work from hundreds of our members to do everything that we did. It was worth it, though. Every program and ministry opportunity enriched our lives and fed our spirits. So many lives were touched and changed because we were the presence of Christ in a wounded world. Thanks to all that made this happen!

Stewardship

I also want to thank you for your generosity and faithfulness. Your financial support of our church means so much to me and the entire staff. I don't have all the final figures yet, but will share them when they are available. Thank you, though, for responding to our financial needs in ways that keep us strong and poised to meet the many needs that will come our way in 2008.

New Video Equipment

Work recently began replacing the old video screen and projection system in our sanctuary with a new one. It took several years to find a company that could do this at an affordable cost due to the large amount of light that enters our sanctuary through the windows. I appreciate the committee that has worked tirelessly on this project and would not give up. Jim Farmer took the lead and is to be commended for his efforts.

We hope to have the new system up and running for Missions Sunday on February 3. What a treat it will be to have the capability to tell our story through pictures and testimonies and bring the world inside our sanctuary for everyone to hear and see. I can hardly wait!

New Baptist Covenant

A history-making event is going to occur in Atlanta on January 30-February 1. It is called the **Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant**. This meeting will bring together 40 Baptists groups representing 20 million Baptists of every race and nationality. In all likelihood, this will be the largest and most diverse gathering of Baptists since before the Civil War.

The theme of the celebration is "Unity in Christ." The purpose is to rally Baptists in a non-partisan way around the issues Jesus made the centerpiece of his ministry: feeding the poor, healing the sick, releasing the oppressed, seeking reconciliation, promoting peace and preaching the good news of redemption and hope. This meeting will focus upon ways that Baptists can cooperate across racial, denominational and ideological lines to work toward common evangelical and social-justice goals.

There will be a number of special interest sessions addressing subjects such as poverty, racism, the AIDS pandemic, religious liberty, faith in public policy, evangelism and stewardship of finances and the earth's resources. For more information, go to www.newbaptistcelebration.org.

Make plans to attend as much of this celebration as possible. It begins on a Wednesday evening and runs through Friday night. I guarantee you that you will walk away from any worship service or break-out session you attend so proud to be a Baptist and happy about all the good work that Baptists are doing around the world. It truly is going to be a celebration that inspires and motivates us to do more in the years to come.

Sermon Excerpt

Let me conclude with an excerpt from last Sunday's sermon. It focused upon the Wise Men's journey to see baby Jesus, recorded in Matthew 2:1-12. I asked the question, "Why did Matthew include this story in his birth narrative?"

I think Matthew was writing to encourage his readers, including us, to discover where God is at work in the world and join Him?

Why would we want to do this? Why did the Wise Men? They were on a lifelong search for truth, wisdom and understanding. They wanted to go beyond the surface and explore the depths of the universe to discover more about God and His involvement in this world. So strong was this yearning that they made great sacrifices in search of the new things God was doing in the world. What good role models they are for all of us. I hope we will follow their lead.

To do so, we need to ask where God is at work in this world. What is He doing? He is wherever people are in despair giving them hope and helping them change. This is God's passion and all scripture bears witness to it, including our Old Testament reading for the day. "Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the people, but the Lord rises upon you and His glory appears over you" Isaiah 60:1-2.

This passage was written as the Jews were returning to the Promise Land from years in exile. Their cities and farms were in rubble. The temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed. Many family members had perished. They were overwhelmed and despondent, reeling in despair. No doubt they felt like giving up and quitting. What did they need more than anything else? They needed hope and encouragement to rebuild their cities and their lives. According to Isaiah, God was at work planting hope in the heart of each weary pilgrim.

Jesus was, too, and made this clear the first time he spoke in his hometown synagogue after his baptism. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened upon him and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" Luke 4:18-21.

Where is God at work in the world and what is He doing? Listen to the prophets and examine the life of Jesus. You cannot miss it. **He is wherever there is despair offering encouragement and hope and we need to join Him.**

"We are called to be persons who embody hope for one another. We have to be each other's partners in hope," writes theologian Paul Waddell. "We must make hope visible."

I like that phrase, "partners in hope." Matthew and Isaiah were partners. The Wise Men were, too. Are you?

Who do you know that needs encouragement and hope? Is it you? Was 2007 a difficult year for you? Are you reeling from mistakes you or others made? Did you encounter some insurmountable challenges and problems? Did your world crumble around you and you are not sure you have what it takes to pick up the pieces and rebuild your life? Is Isaiah's message for you today?

Do you have a family member, a neighbor or friend that is struggling? What could you do to make hope visible to them?

Can you hear the cries of those that are suffering because of natural disasters, war, oppression, disease and poverty? What could you do to be their partner in hope? I hope you will do it, not only because of the difference you will make in their lives, but the difference it will make in yours. You will find God there, and you will forever be changed by that divine encounter.

Until Sunday,
Bob

On behalf of the Children's Department and Smoke Rise Baptist Staff,

A huge thank you to all who volunteered for the Night In Bethlehem. What a wonderful evening! We hope YOU, the volunteers, enjoyed the evening as much as we enjoyed watching this important ministry unfold! I would truly like to thank each one of you for the job you did but I would run out of room on this page.



organization and who volunteered - Pairs and Prophitt's class

Marsha Winston for her talents with clay! place and all the INCREDIBLE food they every ladies who can really roll some dough! a slight Varsity flair...What'll ya have?).

The Dye Shop and Grainery folks ally enjoyed making their coin pouches and grinding raw ily Home decorated by Mary Ann Niermann with Kathy ing, as the place where children learned about Jewish because of our Census team of Lois, Paula, Coach Fran enjoyed putting on their costumes, so thanks to ALL and especially to the women in the costume closet trenches including Marganother helpers who REALLY had their hands full! Special thanks to our (VERY Durden, Jay Aiken, Fredolyn Stitt, and thanks to the children who had comand actually gave her money! Thanks to Amanda Burton, our storyteller, and The Nativity with Mary and Joseph and Shepherds (Decuir family and Lee you to Dee, Marti and Gracie for staying in the stable). And, of course, this "Heavenly" angel choir who sang so beautifully. Special thanks to the little and sweet tempered and special thanks to Oscar the Camel, for not spitting

There were so many who helped make Night In Bethlehem a success by building, decorating, working a shop, taking pictures, making adult and children's costumes and being a part of this important and special Christmas outreach. I appreciate each one of you and pray that you received a blessing as you passed on the gift of Jesus Christ...the gift of ultimate love. Let's remember our Night in Bethlehem throughout the new year and let our faith shine out to the world so that others may find their way to the Christ-child.

Kellie Denton, Minister to Families with Children

FINANCIAL STATISTICS

As of December 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	\$2,428,317.75	\$2,525,000.00
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	52,774.51	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,481,092.26	\$2,525,000.00
EXPENSES		
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$1,930,403.18	\$2,045,611.00
TOTAL MINISTRIES - WORSHIP	43,282.39	43,600.00
TOTAL MINISTRIES - EDUCATION	116,874.71	143,553.00
TOTAL MISSIONS	189,215.61	209,182.00
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	65,023.84	66,500.00
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	7,514.15	17,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,352,313.88	\$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	+2,600,317.91
Expenses	-2,779,552.45
Paid toward Mortgage	- 10,800.10
Cash Balance	\$ 3,937.50
Outstanding Commitment	\$ 0.00



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

ATTN: NURSERY PARENTS & EXTENDED SESSION VOLUNTEERS

It is time to sign up for February, March and April service dates. The scheduling poster is outside the Nursery Office.