

Christmas Spirituality

I hope you have been enjoying the celebration of this Christmas season. As I mentioned the Sunday before Christmas—we are going to be intentional in our observation of Christmas at Hardwick Baptist just as we were intentional in Advent, so we are celebrating the Christian community's historical practice of twelve days of Christmas. The sanctuary will still be decorated on Sunday, January 5. In our household we are trying to decide the best day to take the ornaments off the tree, while many of our neighbors have already placed their tree on the curb, ready to be hauled away. Most folks on our street have taken down their outside Christmas lights as well.

I understand that many folks "take Christmas down" right away because of the tyranny of the calendar and busy schedules. However, I think this tendency is also a sign of our "surface spirituality"—our shortsightedness to presuming that we already understand all there is to know about the Christmas story, and all we are doing with each year's observation is paying proper respects to Jesus' birthday, just as we would in acknowledging the birthday of a loved one. In his book *Ancient-Future Time*, Robert Webber reminds us how our observation of Christmas can help us to grow spiritually. As we hear the Christmas story, we are reminded of the importance of the incarnation. The incarnation (God becoming flesh) has everything to do with our spirituality. During this season, Webber says, we are called to an "unceasing contemplation of the mystery of this unfathomable condescension." John's gospel tells us, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (1:14). The key to the "Divine condescension" is the *glory* of God that is seen in Jesus.

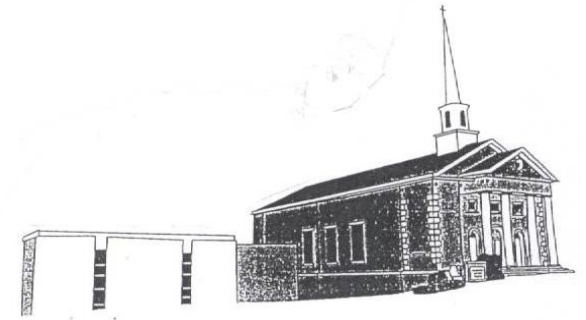
In the incarnation, human nature—*our* human nature, the nature that we share with Jesus—was united to God. What humans could not attain because they could not raise themselves to God, God attained by descending to humans. Jesus in his humanity fully chose to cooperate with the will of God. He is the only man who has been united with God—and he did that for us all. That is one side of Christmas spirituality. The other side is dependent upon us. Even as Jesus willed to choose union with God in his life on earth, so we are called to unite our wills with the will of Jesus—and through him to be united with God.

As we begin a new calendar year at Hardwick let us renew our resolve to unite ourselves with the will of Jesus. We do this through God's grace and through our commitment. The incarnation is an act of God's grace, just as the life of Jesus, the cross, and the empty tomb are acts of grace. By the grace of God poured out in these events, we have the possibility of overcoming our alienation from God. We claim this grace, choose this grace, and enter in their grace by living in Jesus Christ. Let us help each other as we seek to *live in Jesus Christ*. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Love and Blessings!

Doug

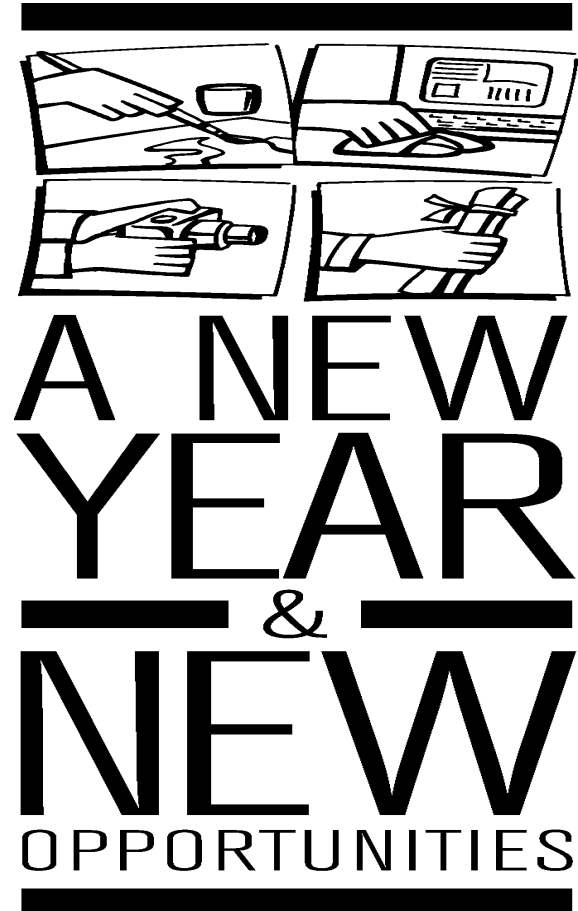
Hardwick Herald



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January 2, 2020



Prayer List

Henry/Vivian Andrews	Sharon Ezell
James Armstrong	Lamar Guy
Mack Atchison	Kenny Huff
Kenneth Babb	Martha Huff
Katie Bainbridge	Jim Jennings
Anne Bayne	Michael/Sharon Lord
Joyce Blizzard	Neil Maddox
Harriett Braddy	Jeff McMullen
John Cooper	Marcus McMullen
Josephine Davis	Marlene Peavy
Eugenia English	Bonnie Stafford
Sandra English	

In Military Service: Rudy Webb



**Prayer Meeting/
Bible Study
Wednesdays , 12 noon
In Fellowship Hall**

Regular schedule resumes January 8th. You are invited to bring a sack lunch if you like and we will study and eat together. Bible Study resumes January 8th, 2020.



**Choir Rehearsal
Every Wednesday
At 7:00 P.M.
Rehearsals begin
again January 8th**


**Wednesday Night Program
For Children & Youth
Will resume
January 15th, 2020**

**Scripture Readings for
January 5th:
Psalm 147:12-20
Isaiah 31:7-14
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:1-18**

**Check out the HBC Website
www.hardwickbaptist.org**

**Lottie Moon
Christmas Offering
Our Goal: \$3,500.00**

Offering Received: \$1,828.24
Lottie Moon P.O.: \$ 142.75
Total: \$1,980.99



**Adult Discipleship
Opportunities**

Covenant Group: 6:30 P.M.
January 13 & 27

Offering envelopes for the new Church year not picked up are available in the Church Office.

Annual Budget 2019.....	\$280,579.00
Needed Per Week to Meet Budget.....	\$ 5,395.75
Contributions 12/22/19.....	\$ 1,666.00
Budget Contributions through 12/22/19.....	\$208,621.24
Total Budget Expense through 12/22/19.....	\$205,402.75
Contributions 12/29/19.....	\$ 2,145.00
Budget Contributions through 12/29/19.....	\$211,008/88
Total Budget Expense through 12/29/19.....	\$207,552.64
12/24/19 Offering for Dinner Church.....	\$ 320.00

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jan 05: Ashley Parham
Jan 06: Sallie Guy
Jan 09: Bill Crump
Jan 11: Lois Bentley

**Nursery Workers
Sunday Morning, 1/5/2020
Babies
Cindy English, Lauren Dean**

**Bus Ministry, 1/5/2020
Cindy English**

**Children's Sermon, 1/5/2020
Cindy English**

**Counting Committee, 1/5/2020
Cindy Folendore, David Lewis**

**Worship Coordinator, 1/5/2020
Mack Atchison**

**Deacon of the Week, 1/5/2020
Marilyn Skinner**

**Next Dinner Church
Scheduled for
January 25, 2020**

If you would like to help with this ministry, please contact Cindy Folendore.

**Lottie Moon Post Office
is now closed**

How to Find Peace

*Blessed are the single-hearted,
for they shall enjoy much peace.
If you refuse to be hurried and
pressed, if you stay your soul on
God, nothing can keep you from
that clearness of spirit which is
life and peace. In that stillness
you will know what His will is.*

-Amy Carmichael-


CALENDAR

Sunday, January 5th:
9:45 P.M. Sunday School
11:00 A.M. Morning Worship
2:00 P.M. Deacons' Meeting

Monday, January 6th:
9:30 A.M. Ladies' Prayer Group

Wednesday, January 8th:
12:00 P.M. Bible Study/Prayer Mtg.
7:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal
Children & Youth Groups resume Jan. 15.

Deacons will meet Sunday, January 5th, 2020 at 2:00 P.M.



A New Year
A New Beginning

A new year and an opportunity to sort out the useless tasks and plan for the important; to review the failures and resolve to be successful; to take an inventory of causes and pledge life to purpose and service. These being done, the new will truly be new, different and better.

-C.S. Lewis

Trusting God Without Question

*The Light of God surrounds us,
The love of God enfolds us,
The power of God protects us,
And the presence of God watches
over us;
Wherever we are, God is.*

Milward Simpson was Governor of Wyoming a half century ago. He was a Christian who trusted God without question. He and his wife often shared this statement of faith which helped them through good times and bad. By trusting God without question we can have this kind of faith as well.