

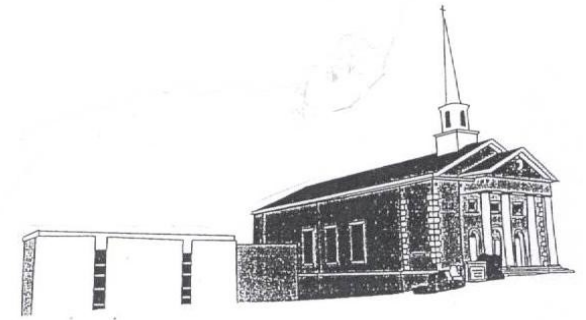
Thoughts From Doug

When (the shepherds) saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.— Luke 2:17-19

I assume that, because she had an advance warning about what was happening to her, and in her body, Mary was not quite as stunned as the shepherds were. Nine months had passed since Mary first received the news, and no doubt she had lived through a whirlwind of emotions during that time. The three months she spent with Elizabeth, learning about her miraculous pregnancy and watching her birth John, likely helped her to think long and hard about her pregnancy. As with any pregnancy, a woman does not have a choice whether or not to think about what is happening—because it is happening within her. So, by the time the birth happens, she has experienced much of the amazement. And while she surely wondered about the new life that was in her arms, she likely was physically exhausted, from the combination of a long journey and the pains of labor. Regardless, Luke gives us the impression that, by the time the shepherds arrive, Mary is in a more thoughtful, contemplative mode. If you try to read Luke's words without injecting your own visions of that night and all you have imagined since you were a child, you may have a different idea about what Mary was "treasuring and pondering." The verse just prior states that the shepherds have told the news about what they have seen to people (perhaps family members? fellow shepherds? people they knew in Bethlehem?), and that the folks who they told were amazed. And it is apparently "all these words" that Mary treasures and ponders. Maybe she received confirmation that God would take care of sharing the news that she had first heard nine months prior. That, just as she received stunning news from an angel, God found a way to communicate to unsuspecting people like lowly shepherds in the field. Maybe she heard how people responded with amazement to the shepherds, and not mere skepticism. Maybe she treasured the fact that she knew, deep inside a mother's heart, that God would go ahead of this baby. That God would provide people like Elizabeth's baby to prepare the way for Jesus at just the right time. Maybe hearing the words of the shepherds and the words of the people who were amazed led her to ponder that, if God could use someone like her to enter the world in a manner in which God had never done before, then God was going to use this baby in ways she could only imagine. And maybe she understands somehow in her heart, that as much as she already loves this baby, God loves him infinitely more.

This Advent—in this tumultuous year—what are the words in your life that God is calling you to treasure and ponder?

Hardwick Herald



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Volume XLI No. 51

December 16, 2020



Prayer List

Glenn Abbey	Rider Hill
Henry/Vivian Andrews	Kenny Huff
James Armstrong	Martha Huff
Mack Atchison	Jim Jennings
Kenneth Babb	Joyce Johnson
Anne Bayne	Michael/Sharon Lord
Joyce Blizzard	Nell Maddox
Scott Blizzard	Jeff McMullen
Braddy Family	Marcus McMullen
Josephine Davis	Marlene Peavy
Gloria Edwards	Jayne Rourke
Eugenia English	Bonnie Stafford
Sandra English	Brenda Tollison
Sharon Ezell	Laise Townsend
	Ben/Jackie Watson

In Military Service: Rudy Webb

All Healthcare Workers, Teachers, school support staff and students.

Wednesday Night Program For Children & Youth

We continue to monitor all updates on the COVID-19 pandemic and pray for the safety and well-being of all the children and youth we minister to with the hope to resume soon.

Gifts for Children We Minister To

Each year Ken Turner purchases gifts for the children we minister to. If you would like to make a donation for this purpose, please send your check made out to Hardwick Baptist Church, designated "Christmas for Children" or you may give online as well (be sure to designate your gift accordingly). If you have questions you may call the church office or Cindy Folendore.

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

Annual Budget 2020.....	\$287,729.67
Needed Per Week to Meet Budget.....	\$ 5,533.27
Contributions Dec. 13, 2020.....	\$ 5,572.00
Total Budget Contributions through Dec. 13, 2020.....	\$ 176,666.20
Total Budget Expenses through Dec. 13, 2020.....	\$ 193,250.85
Payroll Protection Program Loan May 1, 2020.....	\$ 18,685.00



Prayer Meeting/ Bible Study

You are invited to join in a Zoom Prayer Meeting/Bible Discussion each Wednesday at 7:00 P.M. We will not have Prayer Meeting December 23rd or 30th.

Scripture Readings for December 20

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

2021 Offering Envelopes

You may pick up your 2021 Offering Envelopes in the Church Office any morning, Monday through Friday if you are in the vicinity. If you will call ahead, we will bring them out to you.



At their December meeting, the deacons decided that we would best show love for each other and ourselves by not having an in-person Christmas Eve service. Instead we are preparing a recorded service from the Sanctuary involving members sharing Scripture reading and personal Christmas traditions on the video, concluding with communion you will share with your own bread and cup. The video will be posted Christmas Eve.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Dec 21: Amber Ellington, Nell Maddox
Dec 22: Sarah Josey, Kaitlin Tollison
Dec 25: Marcus McMullen

Virtual Sunday School Access

- **Online:** (<https://meet.google.com>). Click *Enter* or link and enter code for class.
meet.google.com/cdi-ibdd-vrx
- **Smartphone app:** Go to the App store and download the *Google Meet* App. Follow instruction for set up. Open and click *enter code* (same as above).

Bible passage for December 20, 2020:
Isaiah 40:18-31

Questions:

- Who is someone you have been compared to? How can a comparison be flattering? How can a comparison lead to trouble?
- Do you ever find yourself wishing that you could control the outcome of events or bargain with God to get what you wanted? Are there idols you have created that give you a sense of control? How does knowing that God is the only true God help you overcome that temptation?
- Have you even been in a situation in which you wondered if God was truly in control? Given the passage we just read, how can looking at the majesty of creation help you when you face struggles in the future?
- Can you think of a situation in which you tried everything you could think of to fix a problem and only then thought to pray about it? Based on the above verses, how should we go about dealing with difficult problems? Does waiting on the Lord mean we don't do anything but wait? Why or why not?

Calendar

Sunday, December 20th

9:00 A.M Virtual Sunday School
11:00 A.M.....Morning Worship
In-person worship in Sanctuary
(Live streamed for those who don't feel comfortable in a crowd setting yet.)
8:30 P.M..... Evening Prayer
(Zoom - <http://us02web.zoom.us/j/84795712518>)

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

No Prayer Meeting Dec. 23 or 30.

Deacon of the Week,
December 20, 2020
Glenn Abbey, 456-4305



Your faithfulness in continuing to give during these uncertain times is so important. We hope it won't be long before we can get back to full time in-person ministry at HBC, but in the meantime your support is crucial as we monitor pandemic conditions and prepare for that time. You may support HBC by giving online, by mail and by placing your offerings in the offering plates as you enter or depart in-person worship.

**Lottie Moon Offering
For International Missions
Received to Date: \$ 245.00**

**The Church Office will be closed
Thursday and Friday, December
24th and 25th for Christmas.**

Thank You!

The family of Harriett Register Braddy wishes to express deep appreciation and sincere thanks for your kind expressions of sympathy. Thank you for everything! No church can out love HBC. Our mother would have been honored by the outpouring of love and sympathy.

Henry, Ben, & Nat Braddy