

Thoughts From Doug

I am sitting in my office at Hardwick Baptist at 3:42 PM, Sunday, December 20. I typically bring a “lunch of leftovers” from home with me on Sundays, eat it after morning worship, then work in my office until 4:00 or so. Sundays roll around so quickly—just a few hours after this week’s worship, I start thinking about next Sunday’s service. I will leave the order of service for next Sunday on Elaine’s desk before I head home, so that she has that first thing Monday morning. Elaine always has it ready for me on Tuesday morning, so I can edit and make any corrections. Like all jobs that involve the same weekly routine and responsibilities, it can get a bit monotonous. I have found that I need to read the Scripture lessons assigned for the next Sunday on Monday morning, so that they can be percolating in my mind and spirit. I will contemplate them on the drive to church, and pray with them in morning quiet time. I find, if I don’t do that in advance, I am more likely to write a sermon for the next Sunday that is more informed by my mind and studies, and less informed by things I discern the spirit brings to mind and heart. When I am faithful to that routine, sermons are more of an opportunity for me to share something I have learned, some insight I have gained, something I believe God has revealed to me in my life and the Scriptures come alive as I seek to be open to what they have to say to today—to real life.

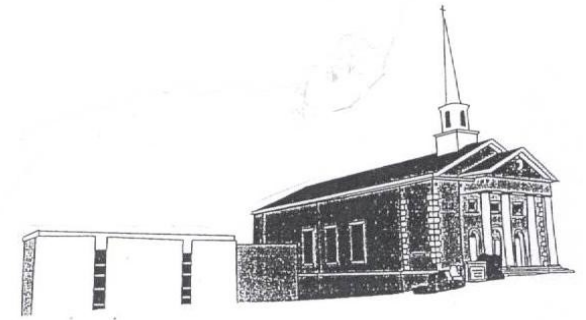
I say all of this because I think what I have described applies to paying attention to God in all of life, no matter who we are or what we do. And it especially applies to the season of Christmas. It is tempting to just get in the routine: “I know the drill; I know what Christmas is about and the story of Jesus’ birth. I am just going to celebrate like every other year, do the gift shopping, send the Christmas cards, go to the Christmas Eve service. I will just try not to be too stressed out, and simply enjoy time with family.” I honestly think that is the way in which many of us approach Christmas. But you have to be paying attention to God’s messages that are all around you and within you. You have to be doing your own work of tending to the Christ that is in you. You have to pray and spend time in silent contemplation (*pondering* like Mary). You have to ask God to give you eyes to see and ears to hear the messages that God has for you this Christmas—which will be very different than the message you received last Christmas because life is different and you are different. Because that dear loved one has died since last Christmas, or you have given up on that long-held dream. You have to serve others in the name of Christ, and encounter them with the awareness that you are doing it unto Christ. Only then—only when you are following with such openness and trust that you can say with Mary, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be done unto me according to your will”; Only then will you find that indeed the Word has become alive for you and in you, because you are not simply celebrating Christmas according to the traditions of years past. Rather, you are experiencing the same wonder and miracle that was experienced by Mary 2000 years ago—because the Word is made flesh through you for the sake of the world.

That, dearly beloved, is what I hope for you this Christmas.

Merry Christmas!!

Doug

Hardwick Herald



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For God
so Loved the World,
that he gave
his only son,
that whoever believes
in him should not perish
but have eternal life.

John 3:16

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 to help defray the cost of the gifts, 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

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 29: Angie Jennings
Dec 31: Jim Jennings
Jan 01: Bill Overman

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 27:**
Isaiah 46:3-13
- Share about a time you completed a task by following a specific plan. How important was following your plan in successfully completing your specific task?
- What is the fundamental temptation of engaging in idolatry? By Contrast, how is it so hard to trust in this all powerful Creator God?
- Is there a particular area of your life in which you find it difficult to trust God? How do the preceding verses challenge or encourage you to trust him?
- How should the mercy and grace that God shows to hardhearted rebels against Him affect how believers relate to God, other believers, and unbelievers?

Perfect As Is

Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that he gave his only Son. The only requirement is to believe in him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life.

-Corrie Ten Boone-

Calendar

Sunday, December 27th

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 30, 2020

No Prayer Meeting Dec. 30.

Deacon of the Week,

December 27, 2020
Cindy Folendore



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: \$385.00

The Church Office will be closed Thursday and Friday, December 24th and 25th for Christmas and Friday, January 1, 2021 for New Years.

"More light than we can learn,
more wealth than we can treasure,
more love than we can earn, more
peace than we can measure.
because one Child is born."

-Author unknown-



Annual Budget 2020.....	\$287,729.67
Needed Per Week to Meet Budget.....	\$ 5,533.27
Contributions Dec. 20, 2020.....	1,940.00
Total Budget Contributions through Dec. 20, 2020.....	\$ 178,606.20
Total Budget Expenses through Dec. 20, 2020.....	\$ 195,424.64
Payroll Protection Program Loan May 1, 2020.....	\$ 18,685.00