



DECEMBER 2016

Bethany Spirit

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor

Secretary

Annie King

Pianist

Carolyn Peters

Choir Director

Joanna Reesman

SESSION MEMBERS

Class of 2017

Stuart Clive

Joe Lewis

Donald Smith

Sandi Thompson

Chris Mize

2018

Brandon Douglas

Bill Mote

Chandler Salmon

Tracy Pirkle

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“Tis the Season”

Elder Brandon Douglas

As I was preparing to write this article, I began to think about Christmas being on a Sunday this year. I must admit that I was kind of upset about that. I guess we all get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season. I felt like I wanted to be able to get up and enjoy seeing my kids open their presents and enjoy the time with “MY FAMILY” and not have to worry about getting ready for church.

After think about this and going through an upset phase I got to thinking, why do we get caught up in all the STUFF of Christmas? Why do we say at Thanksgiving what we are thankful for only go out afterwards and act crazy just to buy some material things? All of us are all guilty of it. Why do we all work so hard to make everyone happy during this time?

I feel like the reason we get so caught up in the “stuff” of Christmas is because it is human nature. We all like to give and receive stuff which is fine, but we need to remember what Christmas is all about. To me it should be about spending time with family and friends. It should be a time to reflect on the birth of our Lord, Jesus. Without that one thing in our history, where would we be? This is such a wonderful time of the year for us as Christians. I hate how it gets materialized. I guess what I am trying to say is — let’s make an effort this year and in the years to come to stop focusing on all of the material things and get back to what really matters!

Now don’t get me wrong, all the gifts are still going to come and we are going to still get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season, but maybe a little less. Maybe if we have to go out and buy stuff we can add a little in for someone that needs it more than we do. Maybe we can show up to the services instead of complaining that our membership is slowly getting smaller and smaller.

In our church we have plenty of opportunities to make the Christmas season more meaningful than just getting caught up in the typical STUFF. We have the Joy Gift Service coming up on December 4, at 7:00p.m. with pot luck dinner before hand at 6:00p.m. We also have the Christmas Eve Service at 5:30p.m. with the Kids Club preforming, “One Starry Night” and then ending with a candle lit hymn. Then we have worship on Christmas Day this year. Just think how much of a blessing this is, to be able to worship together on Christ’s birthday! Also during this Season, we will have a Giving Tree where we are asked to pick up a star (or more) and provide the item on that star for the homeless shelter here in Covington. It is a blessing to help people less fortunate than we are and that is what we are called to do.

I hope that all of us mainly focus on the real meaning of this season. And I hope to see EVERYBODY at these services throughout the season. It would be great to see all of the pews filled like they were 16 years ago when I came to this wonderful FAMILY.

Merry Christmas to all!

Session Summary

Clerk of Session Chris Mize

The regular monthly meeting of the Bethany Session was held on November 15, 2016. The meeting was opened in prayer at 6:30 pm in the Church office and a quorum was declared present.

Donald led the devotion by reading from Ecclesiastes 3 with encouragement for us to build each other up in such a way that our relationship with God grows stronger. Especially during hard times, our support of others reveals the love of God and the hope we have in trusting Him with all things. Dr. Myers then closed this time with prayer.

The financial report for November was reviewed and elders were given the opportunity to clarify and ask questions. A donation letter from Scott Ward Funeral Services (as is their practice to donate to a charity of the individual's choosing) was received in memory of Delores Robinson Norris and her daughter, Debbie Mote, has indicated that her mother's desire is for that donation be used for the music program at Bethany.

The Prayer List was reviewed and updated. Prayer cards were sent to those in need and Dr. Myers led us in prayer for all those on the list and others mentioned.

Items attended to during the Clerk's Report:

- The Docket and minutes, pending any corrections that need to be made, were approved.
- Our ending membership is now 121 with the death of Bob King on October 26, 2016.
- The November 15, Presbytery Meeting report was received. Our thanks to Chris Mize for attending.
- The Annual Meeting of the Corporation is scheduled for December 18, 2016.

Reports from Ministry Teams

- As the Trunk or Treat event was cancelled in respect for the funeral for Bob King that day, the Children and Youth Ministry Team has planned on using the food purchased for a fund-raising event for summer camps and conferences. The candy purchased will be put in small gift bags for the children.
- The Girl Scouts will be participating with the Sack Lunch Program in November.
- The Thornwell offering "Turkeys" will be collected Sunday, November 20.
- A welcome letter to first time visitors has been sent to those visiting during the past 2-3 months.
- The Mission and Outreach Team will be distributing small crosses for members of the congregation to give to those we encounter who seem to need Christ's love. Watch for more details about this project in the near future.
- Commitment forms have been received, tabulated, and distributed to all Session members. This information will be used by the Session to enlist our members in ministry opportunities.
- The Session has begun the process of planning next year's budget. The main changes are in the Pastor and Guest/Supply Minister amounts. Finalization and approval of the 2017 budget should occur at the December Session meeting.
- The Thanksgiving Eve service at 7 pm will be led by Dr. Myers.
- The preliminary Greening of the Church is scheduled for November 26, at 9 am. Some of the decorating of the sanctuary will be left for Sunday, November 27. During worship on the 27th, Dr. Myers will provide a time for "Hanging of the Greens." Members of the congregation will share special

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Session Summary *(Continued from page 2)*

readings referencing why certain greens and decorations are used in the church during Advent.

- The Joy Gift program is scheduled for December 4 and the choir will perform the program for that evening. The dinner starts at 6 pm and the service at 7 pm. The church will provide the meat for the Christmas dinner this year and asks that everyone use the sign-up sheet in the assembly room for the side dishes, deserts and drinks.
- The Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service will be held at 5:30 pm and will feature a short program by the Kid's Club entitled, "One Starry Night" and special music from the Bethany choir. The luminaries will be prepared earlier in the day December 24 and set out at 5 pm. These luminaries are in memory of Doris Mote, Betty Davenport, Dee Norris, and Bob King, who passed away in 2016.
- The cemetery has an area that is eroding and needs repair. It was approved to use funds from the Cemetery Fund for this repair.
- The final updates to the operating procedures have been made. The Administrative/Personnel Ministry Team will now begin the process of annual performance reviews on the Bethany staff (secretary, pianist and music director).
- An Ad Hoc Committee has been formed to study the various options available to the church as part of its decision to leave or stay in the denomination. Those serving on this committee are: Session members — Stuart Clive, Joe Lewis and Sandi Thompson; Congregation members — Cathy Cowan, Lawson Hooper, Barbara Lawson, Tommy McFarlin, and Barbara Smith. Stuart Clive will chair this committee and set up a meeting to begin the process.

The next regular meeting of the Session is scheduled for Tuesday, December 20. Chris Mize will have the devotion. The meeting was closed in prayer by Tracy Pirkle at 8:40 pm.

Worship Ministry Team

Elder Chris Mize

First I want to thank everyone who participated in the "Greening of the Church". Bethany looks so beautiful and it starts off the season with a wonderful CHRISTmas spirit just looking around in the sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall.

A big "Thank You" to all of the ones who helped to make the First Sunday in Advent so meaningful. I know everyone enjoyed hearing all the readings and the meaning of all the different symbols used in the church during Advent.

Please be in prayer for our Church and all its members during this time. If there are any of you willing to help with our services by being Liturgist, Usher, Greeter or any of the other important positions, please see Chris Mize or one of the Elders. It is like the old saying "It takes a village to raise a child", I think it takes a whole congregation to participate in order for a church to grow and serve our Lord.

Thank you once again and I look forward to sharing this special Advent Season with everyone.

A Tribute to Delores "Dee" Robinson Norris

Mrs. Delores "Dee" Robinson Norris, age 89 of Covington, died Monday, October 10, 2016. She was preceded in death by her husbands, Richard Robinson and Jake Norris; daughters, Dayle Robinson, Gayle Clark; parents, Clarence and Helen O'Neil; and brother, Clarence O'Neil, Jr. She is survived by her children, Janet and Roger Duffey, Richard and Rachel Robinson, Darlene and Harold Esslinger, Carol and Charles Bray, Paula and Frank Huffman, Debbie and Lanier Mote, Lori and Tony Mooney, James and Theresa Robinson, Teresa and Brett Peace; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Dee became a member of Bethany Presbyterian Church on May 5, 2000 after moving in with her son and daughter-in-law, James and Theresa Robinson. Dee was faithful in her attendance at church and enjoyed worshiping with her family. You would always find her at worship sitting with her daughter and son-in-law, Debbie and Lanier, and usually several of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She loved music, especially when the choir performed a traditional hymn. For many years, she was honored on Mother's Day as the mother with the oldest child. Her sweet smile will be missed by everyone.

Funeral Services were held on Friday, October 14, 2016 at 11 a.m. at Scot Ward's Green Meadow Chapel. Interment was at Green Meadow Memorial Gardens.

Mission and Outreach Ministry Team

Elder Brandon Douglas

Iwould first like to say thank you to the Girl Scouts! They provided all of the food and helped with the preparation of the sack lunches for the month of November. They also went with us to help distribute them. It is a great blessing that they were able and willing to help.

Secondly I want to touch on the fact that Christmas is coming up and the Mission and Outreach Team is going to be decorating the small tree in the assembly room. We have placed a basket of stars in the front of the church and one in the rear. Each star has a different item written on it. We would ask that you take one (or more) and purchase that item to benefit the Gethsemane Homeless Shelter here in Newton County. After you have purchased the item(s), place the star on the tree and place your item under the tree.



Best Wishes to Crystal and Adam!

Crystal Stevens, daughter of Skipper and Linda Stevens, was married to Adam Franklin, Saturday, October 29, 2016, in Lagrange, Georgia. In 1991 at age five, Crystal began attending Bethany Presbyterian Church when her family moved from Lagrange to Covington. She was a part of Bethany until her longing for adventure called her to sail the Pacific with National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions as a steward and later, purser. Crystal and Adam met while working on the ship, *Sea Lion*. After leaving life on the water, Crystal made the decision to live in Portland, Oregon, while she finished her degree at Oregon State University.

Recently, Crystal and Adam have once again accepted positions with Lindblad Expeditions. They are both working on land (not at sea) at the company office in Seattle, Washington. Crystal has fond memories of her Bethany family and keeps up with many through the Bethany Spirit and Facebook.



Monthly Volunteers

	December 4	December 11	December 18	December 25
Children's Worship	Kelly Lewis Tina Douglas	Kelly Lewis Tina Douglas	Kelly Lewis Tina Douglas	Jessica Salmon
Liturgists	Schylar Parris	Chris Mize	Jessica Salmon	Tommy Pirkle
Greeters	Billy & Connie Hunt			
Ushers	Stuart Clive Cathy Cowan Carolyn Sullivan Chaz Woods			
Open Bldg.	Donald Smith	Bill Mote	Buddy & Rae Cook	Bill Mote
Close Bldg.	Lisa Parris	Jessica Robinson	Tracy Pirkle	Wayne & Chris Mize



Prayer Concerns

The Family of Jenny Arlt (Friend of the Hunts)
 Jane Asbel (Friend of the Wagners)
 Joyce & Sam Ball (Friend of Nancy Boyce)
 Shane Beam (Friend of the Mizes)
 Caitlin Burbige (Friend of Betty O'Donnell)
 Mark Burton
 Cheryl Burke - Forman University (Pakistan)
 C. C. for Christ – Marcin K. & Maciek M.
 Jeff Clive (Stuart Clive's brother)
 Clyde Cook (Buddy Cook's brother)
 Jenzy Cook (Buddy Cook's niece)
 Jeff Dugan (Friend of Bethany)
 Zach Foster
 Bill & Margaret Frisbee (Friends of Nancy Boyce)
 June Gaines (Friend of the Cooks)
 Terrie Greer (Friend of the Douglas')
 Billy Hunt
 The Family of Dean Hunt (Billy Hunt's brother)
 Alan Jones (Friend of the Wagners)
 Ruth King

Dillon Large (Friend of the Wagners)
 Clarence Lawrence (Nancy Boyce)
 Lynn Lewis
 Ruth MacEntee (Friend of Nancy Boyce)
 Beth Milliken (Nancy Boyce)
 Jane & Bill Moore (Nancy Boyce's family)
 David Morris (Charles & Charlene Rape's g-son)
 Christian Parsons (friend of Betty O'Donnell)
 Larry Shoemate (Terry King & Carolyn Sullivan)
 Bill Smith (Friend of the Pirkles)
 Joe Starr
 Charlotte Sweeten
 Brycen & Brenlee Wadsworth (Friends of Tommy Pirkle)
 Polly Wagner (The Wagner's daughter)
 Lynn Waters
 Our College Students
 Our Military Men and Women



December 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Gus Bowen Donald Smith	2	3 Kid's Club to see Christmas Lights 5:00pm
4 2nd Sunday in Advent COMMUNION Sunday School—9:30am Morning Worship—11:00am — Communion Christmas Dinner — 6:00pm Joy Gift Program — 7:00pm Bobbie Mote	5	6 Boy Scouts — 7:00pm	7 Fun Seekers Christmas Lunch at Thomas' Country Buffet Choir Practice 7:00pm	8 Daniel Mote Ron Sweeten	9 Cathy Cowan	10 Robinson Family Fellowship Hall
11 3rd Sunday in Advent Sunday School — 9:30am Morning Worship — 11:00am Kathi Turner	12 Girls Scouts 6:30-8:00pm	13 Boy Scouts — 7:00pm	14 Choir Practice 7:00pm	15 Austin Frederick Joe Starr	16	17 Lawson Family Fellowship Hall 11-3pm
18 4th Sunday in Advent Sunday School — 9:30am Morning Worship — 11:00am —Meeting of the Corporation Kids Club/Youth Group 2:30-4:00 McKenna Smith	19	20	21 Andrew Mote	22	23 Tommy Pirkle	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service 5:30pm Ken Frederick
25 CHRISTMAS NO Men's Breakfast NO Sunday School Morning Worship—11:00am	26 Church Office Closed Linda Stevens	27 Newsletter Deadline	28 NO Fun Seekers Choir Practice 7:00pm	29 Buddy Cook Robin Hall Wayne Mize Joan Wagner Avery White	30	31 New Year's Eve Cleaning of the Church 9:00am Sack Lunch Prep/Delivery 10:00am

A Tribute to Robert T. (Bob) King

Robert T. (Bob) King, age 84, died Wednesday, October 26, 2016 at Rockdale Medical Center. Bob was born on January 17, 1932, the youngest son of James W. and Lucy Mae (Turner) King. He attended Bethany Presbyterian Church his entire life, joining in 1944 along with life long friend, Ray Mote. He only left the Bethany community for a brief time when he joined the army and served for three years. When he returned, he was hired by AT&T Corp. where he worked until his retirement in 1986, after 30 years of service

Bob married Idabelle Blanton on February 14, 1958. They were devoted to each other and married for 50 years until Idabelle's death in 2008. He always considered his family to be a blessing. He's survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Barbara and Donald Smith of Covington; son and daughter-in-law, Jim and Vickie King of Alapaha, GA.; grandchildren Jessica and Chandler Salmon, Katie and Cory Seymour, Turner King and Madison King; 3 great-grandchildren, Cooper, Peyton and Corbin.

As a descendent of Charter Member, Col. Alfred Livingston, Bob was a fifth generation elder and served for 47 years, being elected Elder Emeritus in 2004. Serving as an elder was one of Bob's greatest honors. He never felt burdened by this task and he served to glorify God. He always wanted to serve in any capacity he could. Many of us remember his leadership in Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, and as Clerk of Session. Bob's attention to detail, guidance, and his desire to help his church family prosper were unsurpassed. He loved Bethany and was devoted to making sure it remained a foundation for members to build a Christ centered life upon.

Bob taught Sunday school for 37 years, many of those years were spent teaching the Adult I class made up of young couples and single adults. One story he often shared was how he, as a young adult, first started teaching the adult class that his parents and other respected church members attended. He expressed how nervous he was, but knew he was supported and kept teaching. He always used his experience to encourage others to try their hand at teaching Sunday School. He also served as Sunday school Superintendent for 10 years and was very active in the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, where he served on most every ministry team, chaired Council for five years, and was elected Moderator of the Presbytery for one term.

Many in the Bethany congregation looked to Bob as a leader, advisor, and encourager. He was always ready to lend a listening ear and share how a life lived in obedience to Christ was a life well lived. He wrote many devotionals that he shared with his family and friends. There is no way to know how many letters of encouragement he wrote or how many conversations he had with visitors sitting on the carport at his home. Bob was loving, generous, kind, and a man of great faith.

Bob's funeral was held on Sunday, October 30, 2016 at 2:30 pm at Bethany Presbyterian Church. Rev. Dr. Sam Rutland and Rev. Dr. Al Myers officiated the service. His son, Jim King, granddaughter, Jessica Salmon, and close friend, Tracy Pirkle paid tribute to him during the service. He was buried in the Bethany Cemetery.

While we all mourn the loss of Bob, we are encouraged to know that he is with our Lord and Savior. We know he would love to leave us with this passage from Romans 12:1-2, *"Therefore seeing we also are surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily ensnare us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God."*

Kid's Club / Youth Group News

Submitted by Elder Joe Lewis

The Kid's Club enjoyed a slow November to allow for the Thanksgiving holiday. On November 20, we had a regular meeting at the church and began preparations for our Christmas Eve presentation of "One Starry Night."

December should prove to be more active, as we are planning on driving to Hampton for the Atlanta Motor Speedway's Christmas Light Spectacular on Saturday, December 3. December 18, we will have our dress rehearsal for the Christmas Eve service during our regular meeting time 2:30pm-4:00pm. Then we invite everyone to enjoy all our hard work on December 24, at this year's Christmas Eve service.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service

This beautiful and meaningful service begins at 5:30 pm. The churchyard will be decorated with luminaries (weather permitting) in memory of Doris Mote, Betty Davenport, Dee Norris and Bob King, who passed away this year. We hope you will plan to celebrate Christmas with us, and be sure to invite your friends and family to join you!



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