

FAITH NOTES

DECEMBER
2018

Gadsden Cumberland Presbyterian Church

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ELDER of the MONTH

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USHERS

Sid Moyer

Mike Ray

Randy Nickels

Mike Kirby

Church Family and Friends,

We approach another Advent/ Christmas season, a season to celebrate the blessings of God through Jesus the Christ, our Savior. With all the emphasis on joy and giving in this season, it is easy to carry a grin on your face. For some however, that grin may only be for show. Many during this season find their circumstances of life bring anything but joy. I ran across an article titled, "Lord of the Messy Manger" by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson. I want to share just a portion of it with you this month. He writes...

Your life may appear well-ordered on the surface, but underneath there may be disarray. Brokenness, pain, shame. Things you seem utterly incapable of fixing.

The good news, my friend, is that God is bigger than your messy life. He is not impotent. He is not confined by your boundaries. He is God! And he is unafraid of working in messy situations. In fact, he gets a kick out of surprising us with his amazing grace.

What are your points of pain? What is the mess that *you* are struggling with? Maybe, just maybe, God is able to take *your* mess, and out of it bring blessing. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

How bad can it get? A girl gets pregnant. Her parents are utterly shamed. Her fiancé -- not the father - is ready to dump her. And then he is told, "Do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

How bad can it get? The girl is in labor, far from home with only a cave-barn where she can lie down and have her baby. The only place to put her newborn is a manger. A cattle trough. We imagine it with fresh, fragrant straw plucked from a bale of hay. But I doubt that the cave was stocked with neat bales stacked against the wall. The straw that night was neither fresh nor fragrant. Life was a mess -- but God was in it.

God sees Mary with her tiny infant and sends a host of angels to announce the birth. "Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

The messy manger is itself a sign from God. Is your life a mess? Then let this be a sign to *you*.

Your very good news is that the God of the messy manger, the resurrected Christ of the cruel cross, and the Holy Spirit, in whom you live and move and have your being, are able to break through in *your* life, begin to clean up *your* mess, bless you too. And that -- like the messy manger -- will be a wonder all its own.

May you find joy this season, even in the midst of pain, knowing that God is even God of the messy parts of life.

In Christ, Rev. Daniel



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PRAYER REQUEST

RECENT PRAYER REQUESTS

(This list will be purged every two to three weeks, unless indicated otherwise in your prayer request.)

- *Linda Sue Warren
- *Sid Moyer
- *Kristin Bean
- *Margaret Segrest
- *Alan Hawkins
- *Harold Hawkins
- *Rev. Carl Cook
- *Terry Marie Richards
- *Paul Puckett
- *Larry Boling

- *Kathryn Chitwood
- *Tony Elrod
- *Dell Bates
- *Jerry Stombaugh
- *Tabitha Cavaness
- *Mary Otwell
- *Stanley McClendon
- *David Colvard
- *Jessica Smith



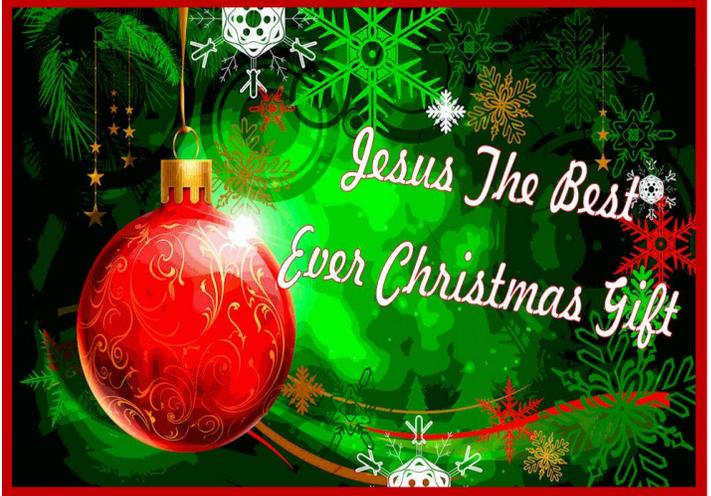
LONG-TERM PRAYER NEEDS

- *Jerry & Carol Stombaugh
- *Ginny Acton
- *Michael Moyer
- *Betty Jo Ponce
- *Walter Westbrook
- *Charlotte Davis
- *Elaine Ray
- *Dale Mayo
- *Larry Gramling
- *Aimee Collier
- *Ava Gallahair
- *Our military personnel, police, fire, and rescue
- *The children & families of The Children's Home

- *Marie Hendricks
- *Janice Spivey
- *Neil Hall
- *Sonny Brady
- *Greg & Jennifer Dobbins
- *Wesley Lyons

OUR ASSISTED LIVING, NURSING HOME And HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

- *Milton Roe— *Piedmont Health Care Center in Piedmont, AL*
- *Ann Corley— *Cherokee Village in Centre, AL*



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