

# MOUNTAIN BROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# THE MESSENGER

JANUARY 2012

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

The beginning of a new year always holds promise, perhaps even hope. I imagine that after the past few years of “bad” economy, hurricanes, tornadoes, and wars, most folks are hoping for a better year. I wonder if you are thinking theologically about the New Year.

There is a line from the Bible that I quote at funerals and memorials. I also say it a great many times on Ash Wednesday. “From the dust you came and to the dust you shall return.” We are all returning rapidly to the dust. Some of us faster than others. All we have is this moment and it is no more. We are all momentary. Our faith teaches us that only God is beyond. That means that God is beyond time and our ability to conceive of God. Our feeble attempts to think and speak about God are what we call theology. One of my seminary professors laughed at the idea of someone receiving the graduate degree “STD,” and probably not for the reason you are thinking. The Doctor of Sacred Theology degree was a joke, according to my professor, precisely because there is nothing sacred about theology.

In my lifetime in the church I have witnessed rule changes. When I was growing up in the Presbyterian Church, at twelve years old I attended

“communicant’s class.” The old belief was that even baptized children could not receive the sacrament of Holy Communion until after we had completed the communicant’s class. Some years ago the denomination changed that rule so that all baptized persons are now welcomed to the table. Why did the rule change? Are children today smarter and therefore they understand the theological concepts of this sacrament? Children today are smarter, but that has nothing to do with the rule change. Someone realized that receiving communion is a sign of God’s grace, similar to infant baptism. Neither sacrament is received because the recipients understand it.

When you celebrate the New Year, I invite you to stop long enough to think about the moment. On Christmas morning I read the line from the Gospel According to John, “The Word became flesh and lived with us.” We are not redeemed away from time, but rather God moves into our time, adopts our time, and generates the “fullness” of time.

The Mountain Brook Church marks time as the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, rather than as the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Mother’s Day. We, in the church, know something about

the passing of time that the world does not know.

We believe that time begins and ends with God and in God’s time. We also believe that the Word became flesh and lived with us, died for us, and was raised for us. The resurrection was not a human accomplishment but a divine gift. The gift of the Christ and of our salvation is the real reason we give gifts at Christmas. At the New Year we remember that human history plods along in its well-worn ruts, until God intervenes and everything changes. When tragedy and hardship strikes our country or us as individuals, we know that the light still shines in the darkness. Our hope is not naïve optimism. We hope in the God who is faithful to us and who time and again has shown us that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

I am indebted to Will Williamson for the January 1, 2012, issue of *Pulpit Resource*.



*Cary E. Speaker*

## LECTIONARY B

January 1, 2012

*Isaiah 61:10-62:3*

*Luke 2:22-40*

January 8, 2012

*Genesis 1:1-5*

*Mark 1:4-11*

January 15, 2012

*1 Samuel 3:1-10(11-20)*

*John 1:43-51*

January 22, 2012

*Jonah 3:1-5, 10*

*Mark 1:14-20*

January 29, 2012

*Deuteronomy 18:15-20*

*Mark 1:21-28*

## STAFF

*Pastor*

Cary Speaker

*Administrative Assistant*

Bonnie Hartley

*Financial Assistant*

Bernie Gregson

*Preschool Director*

Kelly Huddleston

*Director of Youth Ministry*

Traci Finch

*Organist*

Gary Smoke

*Director of*

*Christian Education &  
Children’s Music Ministry*

Peggy Thompson

*Director Of Music*

Dewin Tibbs

## EPIPHANY PROCESSIONAL

Sunday, January 8, we will celebrate the arrival of the wise men who follow the star to find Jesus. Even though nativity scenes depict the wise men at the manger, they did not arrive until later. The exact time is not known. It could have been as long as three or four years later. Join the children Sunday, January 8, for the Epiphany Processional.



## FINANCE UPDATE

### Financial Year-end Projections as of 12/27/2011

Income	<u>2011(Estimate)</u>	<u>2011 Plan</u>	<u>2010 Actual</u>
	\$379,000	\$400,400	\$414,121
Expenses	<u>2011 (Estimate)</u>	<u>2011 Plan</u>	<u>2010 Actual</u>
	\$414,175	\$400,400	\$420,585

To date\*, we estimate that we will receive \$379,000 in income for 2011 against a plan of \$400,400. Actual income for 2010 was \$414,121.

Spending for the entire year is estimated to total \$414,175 against a plan of \$400,400. Actual spending or expenses for 2010 was \$420,585.

### 2012 Pledge versus 2011 Pledge as of 12/27/2011

<u>2012 Pledge</u>	<u>2011 Pledge</u>
\$301,567	\$296,638

As of now, we have received 61 pledges for 2012....5 new pledges; 27 increased pledges; 22 pledges the same dollar amount as 2011; 7 pledges reduced from 2011, and 9 pledges still outstanding.

If you have questions or comments, please call Bill Hester, Moderator of Finance.

\* As of December 28, 2011

## STEPS 2 DISCIPLESHIP: WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT MBPC

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT PROGRAMS RESUME JANUARY 11.

#### *Wednesday Nights at a Glance*

5:00 p.m. Blessed Yoga in the reception room	6:45 p.m. Adult Study in the reception room
6:00 p.m. Dinner in the Fellowship Hall	7:30 p.m. Adult Choir Rehearsal
6:30 p.m. Children and Youth Activities	

## CHILDREN'S MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

I hope every family will take advantage of the children's choir program here at MBPC. Choir involves more than singing. Children have the

opportunity to play rhythm instruments, move to music, lead in worship, and participate in other activities. Wednesday night activities,

including choir, resume Wednesday, January 11.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

On Sundays a nursery is provided for birth to age 2 from 10:30 until noon.

#### **Adult Sunday School** 9:30-10:30

The *Adventure Class* meets in the Reception Room. This class is led by Larry Harper.

The *Other Class* meets in the Pastor's Classroom in the Administration Building and is led by Rev. Cary Speaker. January 15 they will begin the book, *The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer* by John Dominic Crossan. Crossan wrestles with the theological, political, social and cultural implications of this prayer. He challenges the reader to think deeply about what it is that they are saying

in this prayer.

#### **ParentTeen** 9:30-10:30

This class for youth (and parents who wish to attend) meets in the St. Stephen Youth Room.

#### **Children's Sunday School**

2 and 3 Year Old Class  
11:00-Noon

The sessions are directed toward developing the faith of children between the ages of two and four. This Sunday school class offers them a learning experience that allows them not only to learn about the stories of their faith, but also live and play in them. This class meets in Room 109 next to the Nursery.

#### **Step x Step Kids Learn 2** **Live B.I.G.** 11:15-12:15

Age 4 through Grade 2 meet in Room 201 St. Stephen

Grades 3 through 6 meet in Room 208 St. Stephen

Following the Passing of the Peace in the worship service, children age 4 through grade 6 are invited to leave with their teachers for Sunday school. (On the first Sunday of each month, there is no Sunday School for age 4 through grade 6. Families are encouraged to worship together and join in the celebration of communion.)

## BANNER FROM MBPC TO WELCOME TORNADO RECOVERY VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to everyone who "lent a hand" to make this banner to welcome Tornado Recovery Volunteers at First United Presbyterian Church of Forestdale, the host site for volunteers in the Birmingham area.



## WHAT'S YOUR INTEREST?

The Christian Education Committee is providing you an opportunity to join others who have the same interest by forming several new INTEREST GROUPS. You may sign up for the group topic that sounds "interesting" to you. The group will then choose a facilitator and agree on a time and place to meet as well as how often to meet...does that sound "interesting?"

How is THIS for an array of Interesting Topics?

- The spiritual growth of children
- Single parenting
- Parenting a teenager
- Money management
- Marriage and family
- Divorce
- Facing retirement
- Aging parents
- Facing death
- Cooking with local ingredients
- Theater
- Books
- Subject of the day

Sign-up sheets will be posted soon in the Narthex.

Should be interesting.....

- Jean Covington



## DINNER AND A MOVIE

Sunday, February 26, 2012

5:00 p.m.

### **Goundhog Day (PG)**

Starring Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell, this movie

is number thirty-four on the American Film Institute's list of 100 Funniest Movies.

This is a film the whole family will enjoy!



## FRAZZLED FAMILIES IN FEBRUARY

Mark your calendars now!

Wednesday Nights in February (except Ash Wednesday, February 22)

For families of all shapes and sizes — single parents, multi-generational families, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and teenagers.

Sessions will offer help for frazzled families. Learn family survival skills — better communication, how to disagree without being disagreeable, enabling an atmosphere of love and forgiveness, promoting togetherness and independence, plus other topics about relationships.

## INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RELIGIOUS ARTS FESTIVAL CHILDREN'S PRESENTATION ABOUT THE PIPE ORGAN WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2012 AT 6:30 P.M.



IPC

*41st annual  
Religious Arts Festival*

All children, K through grade 6, are invited to join us on a field trip Wednesday, February 8, 2012, to the IPC Religious Arts Festival. The program is a children's presentation about the pipe organ. John Panning of Dobson Pipe Organ Builders will be the presenter. IPC has recently purchased and installed a new pipe organ for their sanctuary. This presentation about

the organ should be fun as well as informative.

For a complete line-up of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Religious Arts Festival, visit [www.ipc-usa.org/concertschedule](http://www.ipc-usa.org/concertschedule)

## CHILDREN'S BIBLE ADVENTURE RETREAT

(children in grades 4-6)

Saturday, February 11, from 9:00 until 1:00 at the church

Cary will lead the children in a Walk through the Bible.

They will also experience the Bible stories through drama and art. The retreat is on a three year cycle. This year the stories are from the second year. **This is one of the**

**most important events of the year for your child.**

Our goal is for every child in fourth through sixth grade to attend. Mark your calendars now!



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The Community Outreach Committee is responsible for a number of activities at the Church. These include the receptions after the Sunday worship service, scheduling greeters before the service, and recruiting new members. Over the next few weeks the Outreach Committee will be contacting members to help us with these functions.

When you are contacted, please help if at all possible.

We do not have any specific

activities planned in the near future for reaching out to new members. That does not mean, however, that we should ignore opportunities to invite others to our church. The health and growth of the church depends upon its members and their evangelism.

- Lloyd Gathings

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## LOOKING FOR A KINDERGARTEN?

Do you know anyone who has a child or grandchild between the ages of 6 months - kindergarten? Are they looking for a preschool for their child?

Year after year, teachers from the Mountain Brook School System state that the MBPC Preschool children are the most prepared for success. We believe that in order for children to be successful, they must develop a firm founda-

tion of self-confidence and the love of learning. It is with this foundation in place that children will gain the knowledge necessary for success. This focus begins from the youngest to the oldest.

Contact Kelly or Mary Liz in the preschool office to set up a time to tour. (205) 967-5037 x4 or email [preschool@mbpcusa.org](mailto:preschool@mbpcusa.org) space availability is limited.

Registration for the 2012-13 school year.

In-house registration (children currently enrolled & church members) Deadline, Thursday, January 12.

Open Registration (new students) begins Friday, January 13.

Check us out at [www.mbpcrechool.com](http://www.mbpcrechool.com). Forms can be downloaded from this site.




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## LITURGIST NEEDED IN 2012

The on-line sign-up for liturgists and minute for missions is awaiting your name!

1. Visit [www.signupgenius.com](http://www.signupgenius.com)
2. Click on the FIND A SIGNUP tab
3. Type in [three128@gmail.com](mailto:three128@gmail.com)
4. Select 2012 WORSHIP

### SIGN UP.

5. A new window will open. Click on the Sign-up button and type in your name.
  6. Or - simply call the church office to find out available dates!
- Easy!

# CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Thanks to Alisa Long, Jean Covington, Jill Bonatz, Suzanne Cook and everyone who helped with the Christmas Pageant. Also thanks to all the parents who helped and brought your children to participate! Here are some pictures from December 18.

## Mary, Joseph, and Angel Gabriel



Arden Plugge



George Terry



Zoie Terry

## Eshleman Inn



Ryan Eshleman



Joe Eshleman



Heath Eshleman

## Speaking Angels



Shelby Howard



Sedona Segars



Ella Speaker

## Speaking Shepherds



Ethan Clark



Ralph Cook



Rob Gunn



Jack Howard

## Little Shepherds, Angels, and Animals



Avery Spransy



Savannah Moran

## Shepherd Boys



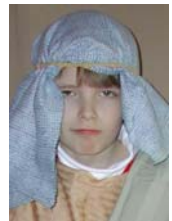
Ben Brown



Miles Plugge



Liam Skates



Charlie Wellman



Adair Plugge



Daniel Carter



Evy Skates



MOUNTAIN BROOK  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

3404 Brookwood Road  
Birmingham, Alabama 35223

Phone: 205-967-5037  
Fax: 205-967-4945  
Email: [bhartley@mbpcusa.org](mailto:bhartley@mbpcusa.org)

## 2012 DIRECTORIES

The 2012 Directory will be distributed at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 12.

Please email any changes or additions to [bhartley@mbpcusa.org](mailto:bhartley@mbpcusa.org), or call the church office.

Please update addresses, emails, phone numbers, and don't be shy about sending those birthdates!

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## SESSION ANNUAL REPORTS

All Session Moderators for 2011 should turn in an annual report. If you would like a copy of last years report, please contact Bonnie in the church office.

church office by January 20.

Reports are due in the

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WE'RE ON THE WEB

[WWW.MBPCUSA.ORG](http://WWW.MBPCUSA.ORG)

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## THE TOMATO VINE

The MBPC garden has been on a holiday break. Our little beets and their greens were harvested the first part of December, along with some salad mix. We may yet see some more salad mix in our future.

In the meantime, the collards and carrots will continue to

hang out and do their thing. We'll be harvesting collards periodically for the rest of the winter, and the carrots will come out sometime in the early spring.

Stay tuned in January and February for opportunities to come out and help get our garden ready for next season.

If you'd like to receive email updates, email Charlie Hunter, [cshunter@gmail.com](mailto:cshunter@gmail.com).

- Charlie Hunter

