



Chickasaw METHODIST CHURCH

JAN
2024



PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

PHIL KING ON BEHALF OF REV. DAVE RHODES

"Now you are no longer strangers to God and foreigners to heaven, but you are members of God's very own family, citizens of God's country, and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Ephesians 2:19 TLB

The year 2024 is upon us. The seasonal changes will happen as they do each year. The day and night cycles will happen, and the months will come and go. What will happen in my heart and my life? That is an exciting thought. I welcome the activities of the Chickasaw Church and the collective life of my church that will impact my life. I will engage in weekly Sunday school class times. I will worship our Savior each week with my church family. I will sing and I will pray. I will absorb the truths of the Bible through the weekly sermons. I will receive the blessings of communion. These are the rhythms of my life and I welcome them. There will be special times of baptism and confirmation. Weddings and funerals will take place this coming year, though not likely my own.

As Christmas comes and goes, and the New Year 2024 comes upon us, my thoughts turn toward a part of the holy story we often overlook. Joseph flees with Mary and the child Jesus into Egypt. He escapes the murderous actions of Herod. I want to think about the spiritual and social meaning of this event; and what of the weeping of the mothers whose children are killed in Bethlehem? Will you join me in thinking about this event?

Easter comes early in 2024. Easter will be the last day of March (March 31) this year. Ash Wednesday is February 14, and the season of Lent moves us toward Holy Week. We know more about the life and activities of Jesus during Holy Week than we do of any other part of his life here on earth. I want to enter into those experiences from his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, his actions in the temple, the last supper in the upper room, washing the disciples' feet, praying in Gethsemane,

his trial, his suffering, his burial, and his glorious resurrection. I will not miss these things. My personal faith and the faith of my church move me along into spiritual things. I will not miss them. I urge you to commit to these events, too.

Summer months often include family events. My church is my family and I value these relationships. You, the members of my church, are my brothers and my sisters. My biological family is small, but my church family is large. I will volunteer my time with our food pantry. I will practice and sing with the choir. I will attend special meals and outings and trips as they come. You and I always find time for the things which are important to us. I challenge you to make your church and your faith important. Take the time and make the sacrifices and expend the energy. Your life and your soul will benefit. I have chosen to move back a bit from Vacation Bible School, though I strongly believe in this ministry. As the years go by, I do not have as much energy as I once did. VBS is so important! It may be the only Bible that some children in our fair city will ever learn. I am pleased that my church engages children in this way every summer.

My church is involved with our neighborhood schools as the 2024 school year comes upon us in August and through the fall months. This church, my church, is engaged, and I heartily support this.

I want to be part of a church that reaches into the lives of children and young people. My faith is not a "Sunday-only-faith." It is a faith for the whole week. There will be opportunities to engage the children of this community around Halloween. Will you want to help? I want to.

Thanksgiving comes on November 28 in 2024. Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. The emphasis on gratitude and recognition that God is our source makes it a faith experience for me and for my church. It seems that this holiday, more than most, can resist secularization. It is uniquely spiritual. Then, the four weeks of Advent follow. We move from darkness into light. The Savior is come into the world. I want to move softly into Bethlehem and look with wonder into the stable. My heart will thrill at the truth that the great God of the universe has come to this earth. I will experience it in my heart and with my church family.

The year 2024 is here. I want it to be a faith experience for me and for you. The Good Lord willing, I likely have fifteen more years upon this earth; maybe more, or maybe less. God knows. As the years come one upon another, the events of church become more precious to me. I especially value communion when I confess my sins and receive the bread and cup. I feel close to God then. The New Year is here. I will welcome it and its spiritual rhythms. Please join me in the cycle of faith and life.

God Bless,

Phil King



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| | 1 | 2 <i>Mike's Food Pantry 3pm - 5pm</i> | 3 <i>Choir Practice 6:30pm - 8pm</i> | 4 | 5 <i>Kids4Christ Birthday Celebration 6pm - 7pm</i> | 6 |
| 7 <i>Virtual Baby Shower for Davis and Veronica</i> | 8 | 9 | 10 5:30pm ROW Dinner 6:00pm Kids4Christ & Youth 6:15pm Adult Bible Study 18+ 6:15pm Pathfinders 6:30pm Choir Practice | 11 1:00pm Adult Bible Study | 12 | 13 <i>MLK Day of Service 7:30am - Noon</i> |
| 14 <i>Men's Club 7:30am LifeSouth Blood Drive 8am-1pm Virtual Baby Shower for Davis and Veronica</i> | 15 | 16 <i>Ageless Adventures Mike's Food Pantry 3pm - 5pm</i> | 17 5:30pm ROW Dinner 6:00pm Kids4Christ & Youth 6:15pm Adult Bible Study 18+ 6:15pm Pathfinders 6:30pm Choir Practice | 18 1:00pm Adult Bible Study | 19 | 20 <i>Ladies' Breakfast 9:00am</i> |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 5:30pm ROW Dinner 6:00pm Kids4Christ & Youth 6:15pm Adult Bible Study 18+ 6:15pm Pathfinders 6:30pm Choir Practice | 25 1:00pm Adult Bible Study | 26 | 27 |
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MinistrySafe
COMING SOON
 Monitoring and Oversight

If you have ever considered being part of the amazing work that God is doing through our Next Generation ministries, NOW is a great time to jump on board! We are in a period of transition in many ways - one of which is our child/volunteer protection service. We are moving away from Safe Sanctuary (which is very limited in some ways), and moving to Ministry Safe, which is being recommended by the Global Methodist Church because it is less expensive and more comprehensive.

We will announce our Ministry Safe Coordinator soon, please be in touch with them for more information. Watch the bulletin and church Facebook page for more details about how you can go through the very quick and easy Ministry Safe process so that you don't miss any of the beautiful moments that come from serving with the youth and children of our church!

GNEX GENERATION

Connecting the Next Generation to Christ

Chickasaw UNITED METHODIST
Living God · Building Relationships · Serving the World

“He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

Mark 9:36-37

Some of the most compelling research on “Sticky Faith” – that is, ensuring that young people don’t walk away from God when they graduate high school – has shown the importance of “keychain leadership” in a church.

The people most trusted in an organization are often given a set of keys to the building – and the more keys they have, the more “power” they typically possess. Sticky Faith asks us to think about keys not as a literal tangible privilege from something jingling in your pocket, but rather as something symbolic of the capabilities, access, and opportunities that you gift young people with when you entrust them with leadership and a voice in the church.

This Advent Season I was bursting with gratitude for all the “keys” given to our student ministry by their church family. There were so many ways they showed up and served! From actively helping to get the church building and grounds ready for Advent, serving breakfast on “their Sunday,” to showing up in full force representing the church by singing Christmas songs as they rang the Salvation Army bell, to riding in the city of Chickasaw’s Christmas parade (and throwing a meaningful message to the parade watchers), and Christmas Caroling to some of the saints of our church. On Christmas Eve weekend, they directed and took active parts in the Children’s Christmas program, taught Sunday School, and totally independent of any adult presence, ran the sound, slides, and live feed for the Candlelight Christmas Eve Service.

When you entrust the “keys” of the church to our young people, they will trust you with their time, their hearts, their energy, their creativity, and their friends...and then we all grow more Christ-like as we fully welcome the children (and teenagers!) among us in His name.



~ Jennifer Barnes,
Next Generation
Chairperson



~ Noah Morgan
Youth Ministry
Co-Leader



Chickasaw United Methodist

Kids4Christ

Love Learn Serve Worship



In December we celebrated Jesus together in our Kids4Christ group but also with our whole church family! We take a short winter break on Wednesday nights during the holiday season, but we kept the fun going on Sunday mornings!

The new year is going to be all about new adventures! We are going to kick the New Year off with a "Countdown to Noon" event after church service. Then we are going to have a birthday party Jan 5th to celebrate all of our upcoming birthdays for 2024. Our new theme in January will bring lots of 'pet' fun. In Psalm 24:1, David wrote, "The earth belongs to the Lord. And so does everything in it." (NIV) God is the author of creation, and God has entrusted us to care for and cultivate the world we see around us. We do that by taking responsibility. From work we need to accomplish, to people we meet, to the words we use, life is filled with moments where we can decide to reflect God's character, take responsibility, and use what we have wisely. When we follow through and do what needs to be done, we can point others to Jesus, the One who took the ultimate responsibility for us and made it possible for us to be with God forever.

~Michelle Phillips
Children's Director



Thank you to our January Volunteers!

Sunday January 7th

Nursery: Robin Lee, Greg and Diane Green

Counters: Gary Smallwood

Ushers: Doc Greene, Greg Green

Breakfast: Transitions Class (Linda Lyles)

Greeters: Bobby Smallwood, Margaret Sorenson, Brenda Weeks, Linda Lyles

Building Steward: Dave Rhodes

Communion: Phil King, Kathy Couey, & Linda Lyles

Sunday January 14th

Nursery: Babe McGrew, Greg and Diane Green

Counters: Gayle Cawthon, Karen Wells

Ushers: Gary Smallwood, Bobby Smallwood

Breakfast: Youth (Jennifer Barnes)

Greeters: Bobby Smallwood, Bobbie Spencer, Linda Lyles

Building Steward: Dave Rhodes

Sunday January 21st

Nursery: Lynn Lankford, Greg and Diane Green

Counters: Bobbie Spencer & TBD

Ushers: Bryan McGrew, Jim Trout

Breakfast: Men's Club (Bryan McGrew)

Greeters: Bobby Smallwood, Margaret Sorenson, Brenda Weeks, Linda Lyles

Building Steward: Dave Rhodes

Sunday January 28th

Counters: Doc Greene and Sheri Greene

Nursery: Karen Wells, Greg and Diane Green

Ushers: Steve Reeves & Chris Coaker

Breakfast: Ladies Sunday School Class (Lynn Lankford)

Greeters: Bobby Smallwood, Bobbie Spencer, Linda Lyles

Building Steward: Dave Rhodes

How could you serve our church?

LIFESOUTH Blood Drive

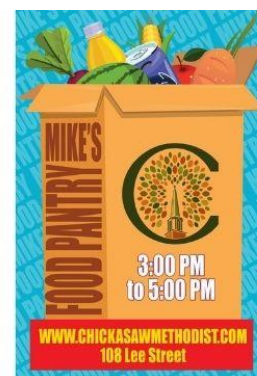
January 14th @ 8am-1pm



Mike's Food Pantry

January 2nd & 16th @ 3-5pm

Mike's Food Pantry is on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 3-5pm. Feel free to make non-perishable food item donations at anytime. Please let the church office, Disa Danger, know if you would like to serve in this way!



Ageless Adventures

January 16th @ 9:30am

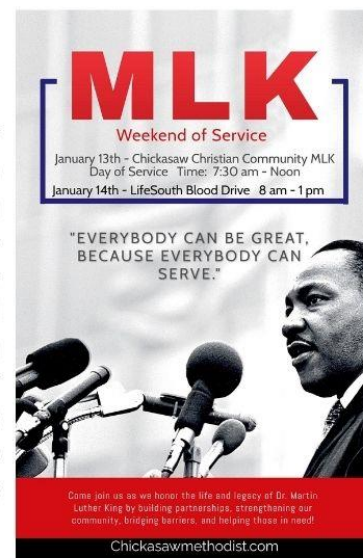
Our Ageless Adventurers will be leaving the church at 9:30am on January 16th to go to Grove Hill, AL to visit the Clarke County Museum. Then, they will have lunch at the Courthouse Cafe. If you would like to attend this trip, please contact Barbara Pulliam at (251) 457-2339



MLK Day of Service

January 13th @ 7:30am

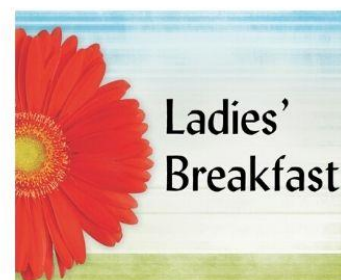
Celebrate a day of service to our Community. Join us Saturday, January 13th as we come together with the Beautification Project and residents to make a difference in our neighborhoods. We will meet at the Civic Center at 7:30am for breakfast and organise into teams. Please come with gloves, rakes, buckets, etc. One of our projects will include clearing Hwy 43 sidewalks. We will plan to meet back at the Civic Center at 12 noon. Call for details (251)463-9194. Families are welcome!



Ladies Breakfast

January 20th @ 9am

Every 3rd Saturday of the month is the Ladies' Breakfast, held in our fellowship hall at 9am. They always have wonderful food and a very touching devotion. We look forward to seeing you there.



Men's Club

January 21st @ 7:30am

Please Join our Men on the 3rd Sunday of the month, January 21st @ 7:30am for a delicious hot breakfast and time of fellowship. Our Men's Club is a very involved group of men from our church and they are so happy to have guests and potential members.





Church News

by: Rev. Dave Rhodes

What was your favorite event/experience in the month of December? I think questions like that one are totally unfair. That question is like asking which of your children do you like the best. As I think about the month of December in the life of our church, my heart is so full of joy and gratitude. The Lord has been good to us as a church. I was just thinking about all special Christmas events we enjoyed as a church and decided to make a list. In addition to our regular ministry events in December we also were able to: ring the bells for the Salvation Army, visit the D.A.R. House with our Ageless Adventurers, participate in the Chickasaw Christmas Parade with two floats, sing Christmas Carols to our shut-ins at their homes, have a great Christmas Music Sunday with a wonderful lunch afterwards, enjoy a Christmas ROW dinner and singing, experienced great love at our children's program and Christmas Eve service, and worshipped the Lord together with a candlelight communion Christmas Eve service.

If I was to explain the month of December at Chickasaw Methodist, I would say "glorious." We loved each other, served the community and gave praises to our Lord. I think of Mary pondering things in her heart about her son. I am enjoying pondering about the love that was exchanged by our church during the season of Advent. We will start back with ROW and other activities on January 10th. I hope you will join us as move into fellowship and ministry in January 2024. Of course, we will seek to know the Lord in power and love on Sunday mornings in Sunday school and worship each week.

Speaking of worship services, I am excited to share with you that our Staff Parish Relations Committee has chosen Angie Middleton to be our minister of music. Angie will be working with our choir this Wednesday, January 3rd, at 6:30pm. Also, please read the two articles that Angie has written for this newsletter. One of the articles is the "get-to-know-me" article and the other is a great piece on living out the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I am exciting about having Angie leading our music worship in our worship services. Also, Angie and I are talking about some other initiatives that she is working on. It is too early to speak about them, but I do want to say that I am excited about the plans that she is making. One of the initiatives that I can share is that she is leading a group of the ladies of our church on a retreat in April.

Advent season is a beautiful season of the year, but also a very busy time of year. We were working on some new endeavors for our church, but we just ran out of time in December. So, we will be picking up in January making plans and seeking to live into the dreams that God has for us. We will continue in our practice of serving our community in active ways with our annual MLK Day of Service on January 13th. I love this event each year as we seek to bring our community together by serving the community. We will start the day with a breakfast at the Civic Center at 7:30am.

Finally, today is December 29th, I want to share that our granddaughter, Camellia, has not arrived yet. I know that I will be eager to share about her arrival when I can. I do want to thank the whole church for the Virtual Baby Shower that we are having next month. Elise and I feel so blessed by your generosity and kindness.



If you are in grades K-5th or a family member, please join Kids4Christ at their birthday celebration for the children as they celebrate all birthdays in 2024!





Worship Ministry

The last year has brought about more change for me than I think I've ever experienced in this amount of time. Some of the change was welcomed, but most of it was not what I wanted or anything I was comfortable with. In fact, a lot of it left me grieving deeply. What God has shown me through it all, is that, He is there every step and that change is necessary for growth. A lot of this change was not by my choice...it just happened beyond my control, but some of it, God clearly told me to do. For example, for the first time in my life I had reached the most success in the business world than I had ever had in the past. I was a stay at home mom for most of my adult life with many different jobs here and there. I'd finally found my place in a sweet coffee shop and worked my way up from a part time barista to full time general manager of 2 thriving coffee shops. I basically ran them completely myself. I was making more money than I've ever made personally. But I found myself putting my full trust in my work. My identity was in my work. My hope was in my work. A few months ago, God told me it was time to go! I think telling my boss that I was leaving after almost 7 years was one of the hardest things I've ever done. I didn't want to let them down. God confirmed to me over and over that this was His will and though I feared losing the security of that income and what I was going to do next; we had a peace and confidence that God would provide, because He told us He would. Now, my full trust is in Him, my identity is in Him, my Hope is in Him. Stepping away from that place was simply not anything I wanted, but if I had been disobedient; I know I would've missed so many things. Jesus says in John 15:2-6: "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."

Are you in a season of "change"?

Is God asking you to make a huge decision that may change everything about your life or even a simple change that doesn't seem very significant? I want to encourage you to obey! He is doing it for your own good because He knows what is best and wants what is best for you! I still don't know all the ways God is moving in this year of hard change, and I may not know for years to come. I'm also still grieving many people and things as a result, but I do know this, He and I have a special relationship that had gotten lost over the years. As the new year approaches, it is a good time to look over your life and see if there are areas God wants you to change. Let Him prune you so that you can produce more fruit!

-Angie Middleton

Hello! My name is Angie Middleton. My husband Brent and I just celebrated 5 yrs of marriage! We have been serving here at Chickasaw for 2 years now, but I'm excited to start in this new position as Minister of Music! I just wanted to tell you a little about myself! I grew up in it Tillman's Corner/Theodore! I went to IMS then Theodore High School where I graduated in 1992! While attending First Baptist Tillman's Corner with my family, I began my personal relationship with Jesus in the 5th grade and I heard God's call on my life at age 15 to be a worship leader. I then went to Mobile college and graduated from University of Mobile (fun fact: they changed the name while I was attending there) in 1996 with a degree in Vocal Performance. I have always been a worship leader to some capacity although it took many different forms over the years. I was in a ministry called DEMASKUS with a friend for about 10 yrs where we shared through music and testimony to many churches all over the U.S. and even a couple other countries. Leading worship at Women's retreats was probably one of my most favorite things we did. I've been a part of several church choirs and worship teams since the age of 10 which is also when I sang my first solo. More than anything, I know God has called me to lead worship. It's my deep desire to help lead people to just worship Him. Worship is our response of love and gratitude to the One who loves us the most. I pray that each time I stand before someone with that responsibility, that God will completely take over and bring us all straight into His presence. I hope each one of you will join me each time we gather to do just that!



~ Angie Middleton
Music Director

 MinistrySafe

COMING SOON

Monitoring and Oversight