

“Who Is Missing in Church?”

Have you noticed who is not in church these days? They were here for almost a year. When they first showed up, many of us told everyone with a connection to the church to come meet them. They were good at everything they did: worship, evangelism, hospitality, remembering names, administration, and congregational care. After almost a year they would miss a Sunday now and then. Now they are gone. I am talking about *Newpreacher* and his sidekick *Panacea*.

When *Newpreacher* and *Panacea* arrived we thought all our problems were solved. They were going to heal all our hurts, repair our broken relationships, reestablish healthy communications, retrieve members who had left the church, restore trust among us, increase worship attendance, unify our congregation, recruit new choir members, and make First Church the church where children and youth in Decatur want to come and bring their friends and have their parents follow.

Newpreacher and *Panacea* basked in the glow of those great expectations and believed they could fulfill every hope and meet every need. Then reality began to set in. *Newpreacher* and *Panacea* started missing church until they disappeared. Some folks want to bring *Newpreacher* and *Panacea* back, but the truth is they are church-hoppers. They never stay anywhere much more than a year. They also leave churches in worse shape than they found them.

Reality never really supported the claim that *Newpreacher* and *Panacea* were solving any of the problems they were alleged to solve. Oh, there was a little bump in the attendance, members who had not attended in months were back in worship, new faces began appearing - there was even chatter about happy days being here again. Many credited this to *Newpreacher* and *Panacea*. Now they are gone along with all the good things we thought we had when they were here.

And look who's here now: *Oldpreacher* and his sidekick *Personal Responsibility*. This sounds boring and several of us are unsure we can be active in a church without *Newpreacher* and *Panacea*. The difference in *Newpreacher* and *Panacea* and *Oldpreacher* and *Personal Responsibility* is the same difference as in taking a pill to make you lose weight and get stronger and the daily discipline of eating nutritious foods and exercising vigorously to become healthier.

Take worship attendance, which has declined since *Newpreacher* and *Panacea* left. Thom S. Rainer of the Growing Healthy Churches Together organization writes, “Stated simply, the number one reason for the decline in church attendance is that members attend with less frequency than they did just a few years ago.” Rainer gives this scenario: “If 200 members attend every week the average attendance is, obviously, 200. But if one-half of those members miss only one out of four weeks, the attendance drops to 175. Did you catch that? No members left the church. Everyone is still relatively active in the church. But attendance declined over 12 percent because half the members changed their attendance behavior slightly.”

There you go. *Personal Responsibility* credits my choice to spend a weekend a month at my lake house or stay over on Sundays after college football games as the cause of the decline in my church. *Oldpreacher* and his sidekick are placing decisions back on me about what kind of church I want, and what I am going to do to heal hurts, repair relationships, establish healthy communications, reach out to members who have left the church, restore trust, and even to increase worship attendance. Church was a lot more fun with *Newpreacher* and *Panacea* here, and I did not have to grow spiritually, emotionally, or relationally in order to make church better. So yes, Church was a lot less healthy with *Newpreacher* and *Panacea* here. There are times I miss them but they are not coming back. Now it is up to me. God help us.

Yours in Christ,

Hughey

Commitment Sunday Will Be Nov. 20

Be in prayer about the commitment you will make to God and His Church. You should have received your pledge cards in the mail. Extra cards can be found in the welcome center.



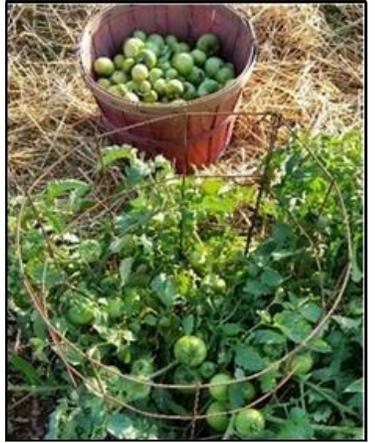
**REFLECT
THE LIGHT**
EPHESIANS 5:8-9

The Urban Acre Community Garden Mid-November Update

Fall harvest season has continued at The Urban Acre in spite of some cold nights and frost nipping sweet potato vines and a few tomato plants. The coming cold weather led to a decision to harvest all the tomatoes, the green ones included. In addition to the tomatoes we set out in May which are still producing, we set out 15 Early Girl tomato plants in our fall garden. Yesterday (November 14) we harvested 104 lbs., two and a quarter bushels, of green Early Girls.



Our November harvest total to date is 239 lbs., which gives us a total of 1226.22 lbs. harvested for the year. This does not count all the vegetables neighbors have gathered for their use without weighing and recording the yield. On one day alone this month, neighbors harvested four cabbages, 10 entire broccoli plants, and a half dozen collard plants. We do hope they enjoyed them but we would like to have known how much they weighed. The cabbages are about five lbs. each and the other plants seven to 15 lbs. We do have several more cabbages maturing and those we cut or twisted off are actually growing new buds and will produce again. We have some beautiful lettuce plants beginning to form heads too.



We are moving into the winter phase of gardening. The turnip greens, lettuces, onions, and carrots will continue for several weeks more, and the collards and greens into January. We hope to dig some mature sweet potatoes too. At the same time we will start pulling plants that the frost kills and composting in place. **We will have a workday for this activity on Tuesday, November 29 from 8:00 until we finish.** Bring gloves, shovels, loppers, hedge clippers, and water. Dress in layers if it is cool. We will finish by noon. Come join us, learn more about gardening, and help us improve the nutritional health of the people in our community who would not otherwise have access to fresh, locally grown food.



Poinsettias will be in the sanctuary to help decorate for the Christmas Season. Please specify to whom you wish to dedicate your poinsettia (in honor or in memory). Place this form with your payment of \$20 for each poinsettia (mark checks "poinsettia") in the offering plate, or turn it in to the church office. Proceeds will go to the FUMC Flower Guild. **Deadline is Wednesday, November 23rd!**

Name _____

Phone _____ # of Poinsettias _____

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

Church Prayer List Nov. 16th Edition

Family of Dorothy Frame upon her death
Sandy Callahan - heart ablation scheduled
for Dec. 5th at Crestwood hospital
Linda Foster - recovery from stroke, rehab at
HealthSouth in Huntsville
Family of JoAnn Christopher upon the death of her
brother-in-law Habib Nackhla

Clyde Sasser
Katherine Johnson
Ed Kirby
Ginger Bramlett, Stage III colon cancer
Family of Kayleigh McClendon upon her death
Our Nation
Unspoken

Please fill out a prayer card found in the pew pockets or email your prayer requests to aquinn@decaturfumc.org for publication in the next newsletter.

Baptism

The baptism of **Aubrey Ann Henry** took place on Oct. 9. Her parents are **Brian** and **Jennifer Henry** and big brother is **J.D.**

Grandparents in this congregation are **Ann** and **Gordon Henry**.



Church and Community

Congregational Care Team

One of the goals of the Congregational Care Team is to ensure that our members who are sick or hospitalized receive cards, visits, and support. To do this we want to improve communication between the various groups in the church and the Committee. We are asking that our Sunday School presidents, the presidents of United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men as well as any member of the church email **Debbie Heard**, Congregational Care Team Chair, with any needs and concerns our members have. Her email is dheard299@gmail.com. Your help with this important task will be appreciated.



Church Cookbooks

We still have an abundance of our Church Cookbooks available for purchase. You will find these in the Church office for only \$5 each. These make wonderful gifts. Pick one up today!

Hartselle FUMC Offers Memory Cafe

Memory Cafe is an informal coffee break connecting those within early stages of memory loss and their caregivers - for conversation, activities, and refreshments. It is on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. at the Hartselle FUMC Student Center. Please call 256-733-6952 for more details. This is for individuals with early to moderate Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia and their Care Partners. Please call the week before to make a reservation. You will find a friendly, relaxed atmosphere for building relationships and sharing the journey.



Christmas Meal for Hilltoppers

The Hilltoppers Christmas luncheon will be Thursday, December 15 at 11:00 a.m. in the church Fellowship Hall. The cost will be \$6 and we ask that you pay in advance to help with the cost of the food. **Sandy Callahan** will be preparing the meal. The sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board along with an envelope for your checks made out to the church. The menu will be Ham, Green Beans, Hashbrown Casserole, Pink Arctic Frozen Salad, Rolls, Coconut Cake



Sumatanga Annual Country Christmas Luncheon



You are cordially invited! Join us at Sumatanga for our Annual Country Christmas Luncheon on Saturday, December 3rd for a decadent meal, joyful fellowship, singing carols, a story for the kids (young and old), a great message, and you can be sure to share plenty of laughs, while starting the Christmas season off right. You are welcome to arrive early and/or hang around after to spend more time catching up with old friends or wandering around camp.

We will gather at 11:30 in Hutto Auditorium. Cost is \$20/person, \$10/Child (ages 5-10), Children under five are free.

Registration required: Please contact Jamie at jamie@sumatanga.org or 256-538-9860.

Sunday Flower Dedications

We have several dates available for Sunday Flower Dedications. Please contact the church office or send an email to aquinn@decaturfumc.org for more information.

November Mission Emphasis Refuge of Grace



This is from a recent note from Refuge of Grace:

One of our residents, Ashlee, is moving to Season Three. That entails moving to an apartment next to the ministry home. We would so appreciate your help with stocking her kitchen. Anything needed in a kitchen is welcome:

- Dish towels
- Small Kitchen Appliances
- Bakeware
- Pots and skillets
- Strainer
- Measuring spoons and cups
- Oven Mitts
- Mixing Bowls

We greatly appreciate any and all help in setting up her new home.

Our Season Three ladies continue to be an active part of the ministry of Refuge of Grace as they move toward independence.

Please place donations in the blue barrel underneath the bulletin board for Refuge of Grace next to the Fellowship Hall.

Children's Ministry

Alexia Claborn, Director of Children's Ministry, 256-606-8646

Family Night/Nativity & Pizza RSVP

- **November 30th -Wednesday- Family Night- Pizza & Candy Nativity 5:30-7:00.**

Join us as we fellowship and make Candy Nativities! The fee is \$10 per family and will include a pizza dinner and supplies to make one nativity. Your Family may make more than one for an additional \$3.00 each. We will need to have RSVPs turned in by Nov. 22. What a wonderful way to start the season! *Pay at the door and there will also be an envelope on the Children's Bulletin Board by the Fellowship Hall.*



Name: _____

Cell #: _____

Number of people attending: _____ Adults _____ Children

The fee is \$10.00 for each family (includes one nativity)

How many additional nativities would you like to make?

_____ (\$3.00 each)

Fireside at the Mitchum home

On Sunday, December 4th, our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade Sunday School Classes will have a Sunday School "Get together" at the home of **Betty Ann** and **Don Mitchum** from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Hope to see our 3rd - 5th graders there!



Just a few photos from our K-2nd Sunday School Class!



Sunday Morning Volunteers

Volunteers for Sunday, Nov. 20

Sunday School

Pre-school - Room #215 Leigh Ann Blankenship
Jessica Mitchell

K-2nd - Room #207 Jami Buckner/assistant - Maryanne
Dunnivant

3rd-5th Grade - Room #306 Betty Ann Mitchum
assistant - Alexia Claborn

Children's Church

8:45 Service Teacher- Alexia Claborn;
Assistant- Vickie Earwood

11:00 Service Teacher-Alexia Claborn,
Assistant- Ashley Ashwander

Volunteers for Sunday, Nov. 27

Sunday School

Pre-school - Room #215 Leigh Ann Blankenship
Jessica Mitchell

K-2nd - Room #207 Barbara Ashwander
assistant - Jan Dean

3rd-5th Grade- Room #306 Betty Ann Mitchum
assistant - Alexia Claborn

Children's Church

8:45 Service Teacher- Alexia Claborn;
Assistant- Shannon Booth

11:00 Service Teacher-Alexia Claborn,
Assistant- Hunter Claborn & Lydia Matthews

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal Dates

Sunday, Dec. 4th - 3:00-4:30pm

Wednesday, Dec. 7th - 5:00-6:00pm

Sunday, Dec. 11th - 4:30-6:00pm (Full Dress Rehearsal)

Upcoming Important Dates

Nov. 30th - Family Night - 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.,
Pizza & Candy Nativity

Dec. 5th - 6:00 p.m. - Decatur Christmas Parade

Dec. 14th - Christmas Pageant and Dinner 5:30 p.m.



Acolyte Information

Nov. 20: 8:45 a.m.-Bristol Rayne Teal & Mary
Elizabeth Booth

11:00 a.m. - LuLu Underwood & John Benton
Claborn

Nov. 27: 8:45 a.m. - Bristol Rayne Teal

11:00 a.m. - Miller & Davis Roberts

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for Sunday School Teachers / Assistants, Children's Church Teachers / Assistants and First Fellowship Volunteers. Please contact Alexia if you are able to volunteer in any of these areas. The best way to contact me is by email, text or call at the following: aclaborn@decaturfumc.org and cell 256-606-8646.



Youth Dates

Sunday, November 20

10:00 Sunday School
4:00 Turkey Bowl at Rhodes Ferry
5:00 Thanksgiving Potluck dinner

Sunday, November 27

10:00 Sunday School
6:00 Hanging of the Greens
7:00 youth to dinner at Mi Hacienda



Thursday, December 1- NY/ DC deposit due!

7:30am Senior High prayer breakfast at Chick Fil A

Senior High New York/ Washington Citizenship Seminar, July 2017

It's time to sign up for the NY/ DC trip! This trip happens once every four years for our high school students. During the trip we will study the topic of poverty and homelessness in each city by visiting sites, hearing speakers, and having discussions. There will also be time built in for sightseeing and free time as a group. I do not know the total cost of the trip because we don't have flights booked or hotel rooms in NYC. Once we know the number going, we can start securing these pricier things. The trip will be no more than \$1,600 per person. Fundraiser and attendance money will be backed out of the total. **A \$200 deposit to secure your spot, so we can start lining up flights and hotels, is due by Friday, December 2.**

It's time for the first ever FUMC Youth Turkey Bowl!

The youth will be playing a flag football "Turkey Bowl" game on Sunday, November 20 at 4:00 at Rhodes Ferry Park. Following the game, we will go back to the church for a Potluck Thanksgiving dinner! Each youth is asked to bring one or two dishes to share with the group (vegetables, salad, dessert, rolls, etc.). Boston Butt Roast and drinks will be provided. You can drop off your dish at the church before going to Rhodes Ferry Park where moms will be getting everything ready!



Mission Moments

Shannon Booth, Director of Outreach

We are excited to welcome **Jeremy and Katie Daggett to our church on Sunday, November 27**, during the Sunday School hour. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall to hear updates from their ministry in Peru. Come spend some time with this precious family that we support through our Faith Promise mission giving. They have been in Peru for two years, and I look forward to hearing more about their ministry, their family, and their community.



During Advent we will offer a way for your family to assist some of our neighbors. **We will have "Reverse Advent Calendars" available.** A typical Advent calendar will offer a small treat or gift as each day passes. Our Advent calendars will have a list of items for you to collect. We will include a devotion guide to use with your family as well. We will collect school supplies to give to the teachers at Austinville Elementary at the beginning of the second semester in January. These kits will be available Sunday in the Fellowship Hall.



If your Sunday School class or family would like to sponsor a child for Christmas but you need help finding a child, please let Shannon know. There are multiple organizations that we support through our Faith Promise giving that help provide Christmas gifts for children, senior adults, and special needs children.



Tour of Homes

Our church is serving as the headquarters for the Old Decatur Tour of Homes on Dec. 10. In conjunction with this we will host our Festival of the Nativities. Make plans to bring any sets that you would like to display. Forms are in the office and in the Sunday School rooms.



Christmas Parade

We will decorate our float for the Decatur Jaycees Christmas Parade on Sunday, December 4 at 6:00. The parade is Monday, December 5, starting at 6:00 p.m. We can line up at 4:30. We will get the float in place early. If you plan on walking with or riding the float, please arrive by 5:00.

Trailer Needed

We are looking for a trailer in the 20'-22' range for our parade float. If you have one that we could use, please let Shannon Booth know (Shannon@decaturfumc.org/256-221-0348).

Upcoming Events

Commitment Sunday
Please bring your pledge cards to church
November 20

Dedication of Our Historic Marker here at the church
Sunday, November 20 at 2:00 p.m.

4:00 Turkey Bowl at Rhodes Ferry
5:00 UMYF Thanksgiving Potluck dinner
November 20

11/21, 6:00 p.m., Worship Team Practice

11/23, 6:30 p.m., Chancel Choir Practice

Happy Thanksgiving!
Church Office Closed Nov. 24 and 25



Looking Ahead.....

Hanging of the Greens, Sanctuary
Sunday, Nov. 27 at 6:00 p.m.



805 CANAL STREET N.E.
DECATUR, AL 35601
PHONE (256) 355-0277
FAX (256) 355-2241
www.decaturfumc.org

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Hughey Reynolds, Senior Minister, hreynolds@decaturfumc.org
Patrick McCormick, Director of Worship, patrick@decaturfumc.org
Beth Green, Minister of Discipleship, beth@decaturfumc.org
Cindy McCulloch, Finance Secretary, cmcculloch@decaturfumc.org
Alyson Quinn, Church Secretary, aquinn@decaturfumc.org
Alexia Claborn, Director of Children's Ministry, aclaborn@decaturfumc.org
Shannon Booth, Director of Outreach, shannon@decaturfumc.org

Charlie Elliott, Custodian
Melissa Wiley, Housekeeper
Sandy Callahan, Food Manager
Wayne Keller, Accompanist
Ruth Moyers, Organist

Upcoming Worship Services

PURPOSE STATEMENT:
"Discipling our church to cultivate a legacy of Gospel-inspired servant leadership"

MISSION STATEMENT:
"Making Disciples of Jesus Christ who become servant leaders for the transformation of our church, our homes, our city, state, nation, and world."

Sunday, Nov. 20, Rev. Hughey Reynolds, preaching
8:45 and 11:00 a.m. Stewardship Commitment Sunday
"Knowing Christ with Your Whole Being"
Colossians 1: 9 - 20

Scheduled To Serve Nov. 20

Acolytes:
8:45 a.m.-Bristol Rayne Teal & Mary Elizabeth Booth
11:00 a.m. - LuLu Underwood & John Benton Claborn
Ushers:
8:45 a.m.-Billy Hudson, Jonathan Green,
Jolly McKenzie and Jim Surber
11:00 a.m.-Larry Weaver, Sam Houston, Jimmy Ray
Smith, Jim Riant, John Alderman

Hanging of the Greens Nov. 27

The Hanging of the Greens service, to be held on Nov. 27th at 6:00 p.m., will include the participation of approximately seven families. Each family will be responsible for placing various Christmas décor throughout the sanctuary during the service as we all come together to celebrate the beginning of the Advent Season.

Dedication of Our Historic Marker
Sunday, November 20 at 2:00 p.m.
Here at the Church