

Mountain Brook Baptist Church

Monthly Guide



“The Gifts of Christmas”

Ask most people what they anticipate most about Christmas and chances are that they’ll respond that they look forward to the gifts. That’s true not only for children but also for us adults. Who doesn’t like to be on the receiving end of something we didn’t pay for?

Of course, that reality has contributed volumes to the rampant commercialization of Christmas that we preachers rail against in this season of the year. Because Christmas can’t be defined by a package or a price tag, we do our best to call folk’s attention to the Bethlehem Baby and the manner in which His birth has changed everything for the better.

Nonetheless, Jesus’ birth can actually be seen as the greatest gift of all. None of us has done anything to merit His presence in our lives. Therefore, His coming at Christmas represents the highest expression of mercy and grace. We get what we don’t deserve and at the same time are spared from getting what we actually should receive.

These four Sundays before Christmas Day give us the opportunity to prepare our hearts for His coming; hence we speak of them as the Sundays of Advent. Over the course of these Sundays our worship will be ordered around the four “gifts” of Christmas: hope, peace, joy, and love. As we gather on each Sunday, let the emphasis on each gift have its way in your life so that when Christmas comes, you may have something much better than discarded wrapping paper and empty packages. You can be blessed with something that money cannot buy—the realization that God is with you and the assurance that the gifts His presence brings will never expire, lose their usefulness, or ever go out of style.



Dr. Doug Dortch

SENIOR MINISTER

December Worship Opportunities

“My Lord Has Come”—Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 9 | 9 a.m. | Sanctuary

Presented by the Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra

A twenty-one piece orchestra will join our Sanctuary Choir and you, the congregation, to raise a glorious sound of our noels and hallelujahs to the Lord. You won't want to miss this meaningful Sunday as the Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra present new arrangements and songs composed especially for the Advent season, along with many of the beloved traditional Christmas carols.

“A Christmas Tapestry”—A Children's Choirs' Christmas

Sunday, December 9 | 5 p.m. | Heritage Hall

Presented by the Cherub Choir, Music Makers, and Young Musicians

The Cherub Choir (K4 and K5), the Music Makers (grades 1-3), and the Young Musicians (grades 4-6) will present their Christmas concert in Heritage Hall. The kids have worked hard this fall to put this program together, and each choir will sing several songs on their own that they have prepared especially for the Christmas season.

“How Great Our Joy”

Wednesday, December 12 | 6 p.m. | Hudson Hall

Presented by the Mellow Brook Singers

The Mellow Brook Singers will present their Christmas concert in Hudson Hall. The Mellow Brook Singers, our 55+ choir, will present the same program they have been sharing with the community as they travel to nearby nursing homes to minister through their songs and presence. Dinner will be served at the regular price (\$6 adults/\$3 kids/\$18 max per family). Come and enjoy great music, good food, fine fellowship, and a lovely atmosphere.

“Glorious: A Telling of the Christmas Story”—Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 16 | 11 a.m. | Heritage Hall

Presented by the MBBC Worship Team, Chapel Choir, and other guests

The Worship Team and members of the congregation will present a telling of the Christmas story from early prophecies to the birth narrative through Scripture and music presented by special guest musicians. This has been a warmly inviting service that people of all ages enjoy attending. Bring a friend to experience the “glorious” wonder of the Advent season.

Annual Presentation of the Living Nativity

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday | December 20, 21, and 22 | 6:45, 7:30, and 8:15 p.m.

Don't miss the 55th anniversary of the Living Nativity, presented by the students and children of our church! Each evening will feature three shows, along with cookies and hot chocolate to share with our guests in our community. If you'd like to participate in one of the shows, simply come up to the Student Ministry Area to find a costume and join the heavenly host. If you can provide cookies for our hospitality tent, contact Sharon Howard (sharon@mbbc.org).

Combined Worship and Churchwide Brunch—Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 23 | 10:30 a.m. | Sanctuary (preceded by Sunday Morning Bible Study at 9:15 a.m.)

We'll have a Combined Worship Service at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary as we continue to prepare our hearts to welcome the Christ child. Immediately following the service, join us for a time of fellowship at our Christmas Brunch. Delicious treats will await you in Heritage Hall hosted by your church staff.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Services

Monday, December 24 | 4 or 6 p.m. | Sanctuary

We invite you to come and hear the good news of Jesus Christ, which we celebrate with the remembrance of His birth during this special Christmas Eve service complete with beautiful décor, lovely music, and candlelight ambiance. This year, we will again offer two service times to allow for more participation by friends, family, and our community. Choose your hour and come with your family and make this time of worship a centerpiece of your family Christmas tradition.

Combined Worship—Sunday after Christmas

Sunday, December 30 | 10:30 a.m. | Sanctuary (preceded by Sunday Morning Bible Study at 9:15 a.m.)

Events & Small Groups

Building Committee Congregational Conversation #2

Sunday, December 2 | 4:30 p.m. | Heritage Hall

The Building Committee has worked with our architect team at Turner Batson to incorporate the input they have received in the presentations they have made to the church, lay leadership, and ministerial staff. A new redesign will be presented to the church at this conversation for the congregation's response. This redesign has received the affirmation of lay leadership and ministerial staff and promises to move the church's vision to make ministry possible become a reality. Join us for this important second conversation. Your voice is significant.

New Sunday Schedule Beginning December 23

Sunday Morning Bible Study | 9:15–10:15 a.m.

Concurrent Worship | 10:30–11:30 a.m.

In response to input provided to our Vision 2020 Implementation Team, we will change our Sunday morning schedule on December 23, going forward into the New Year. This change will allow for more fellowship and interaction among our membership, and a less hectic transition schedule. The last two Sundays, December 23 and 30, will involve a Combined Worship Service in the Sanctuary. The concurrent worship will begin on January 6, with Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary and Contemporary Worship in Heritage Hall.

2018 Advent Devotional Guide

Begins Monday, December 3

Be sure to get your Advent devotional guide, *Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus: Prophet, Priest, and King*. Readings begin on December 3 as we journey through the Old and New Testament to read about how Christ fulfilled the offices of prophet, priest, and king. Copies are available in the Narthex and by the receptionist's desk.

Angel Tree

We are working with several local ministry partners, including Grantswood Community School and Impact Family Counseling, to help make Christmas a little cheerier for some of the children in our community. Pick an angel on our Angel Tree located by the receptionist's desk, sign your name on the sign-up sheet at the base of the tree, and be sure to bring it back to the church by the due date listed on your angel. Thanks for serving in this way.

Poinsettias

Deadline is Monday, December 10

If you would like to give a poinsettia in memory or honor of someone, contact Barbara Morgan (803-3443 or barbara@mbbc.org). The price is \$20 each and the deadline is Monday, December 10.

Christmas Boxes for Perry County

Return by Wednesday, December 12

We are partnering with Sowing Seeds of Hope and Judson Faith Based Learning to help make Christmas a little merrier for some of the children living in Perry County. Boxes can be picked up in Heritage Hall. Gift suggestions for each age group will be in the boxes. Return filled boxes by December 12.

Cooks On A Mission

Wednesday, December 12 | 2-6:30 p.m.

A big “thank you” to all of you who supported our Christmas Luncheon and Pop-Up Shop! As you know, all proceeds benefit The WellHouse. New this month, we will prepare Breakfast Casserole, Boeuf Bourguignon, Hot Bacon Swiss Dip, and Rosemary, Ham, and Parmesan Scones. These delicious items will be available on Wednesday, December 12 from 2-6:30 p.m. Also, we will have any remaining Pop-Up Shop items available at 50 percent off! Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! See you in January.

Pickle Ball

Leslie Bashinsky and Jean Vaughn are teaching us how to play Pickle Ball. They are organizing games on Monday nights from 7-9 p.m. and on Thursday mornings from 9-10 a.m. in the Christian Life Center (CLC). Bring a friend and join us; we have all the equipment, just be sure to wear tennis shoes.

New Bible Reading Plan

We are adopting a new Bible reading plan for 2019. The plan, *Foundations 260*, highlights foundational passages every believer should know. Our children, youth, and adults are encouraged to follow this plan. You may access the plan for free online or utilize a Bible reading app. In addition to the daily readings, the book contains a brief devotional and space to record journal entries. Books designed for adults, children, and youth are available for purchase in the church office for \$10. To access links to the free online reading plan and apps, visit www.mbbc.org/readingplan. We will continue to produce special Bible reading guides featuring staff devotionals during Advent and Lent.

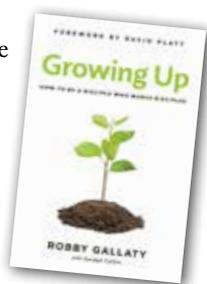
VISION 2020 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Discipleship. We follow Jesus.

Part of the overall vision of the God-sized dream of Discipleship is to “provide small group experiences for every life stage group in the church, both on Sunday mornings as well as throughout the week.” How are we tracking the course of this particular element of discipleship? One has to look no further than to see the many small group activities present to encourage Christ-followers who hunger for deeper experiences with God. Our staff and many congregational members have helped start, support, and sustain the following small group experiences in our church. Refer to the weekly worship guides or church website to find the time and place your small group activity meets.

Growth Groups

Have you seen this book in fellow church members’ hands lately? The Women’s Ministry piloted the Growth Group Discipleship program in the summer to a group of women and the response received from it has taken off! Participants meet each week to encourage each other in prayer, Scripture memorization, and in-depth Bible study as outlined in the book *Growing Up*. The program this summer was so successful that there are now five growth groups offered this fall for women, and the men are piloting the program to expand it into growth groups for winter 2019. This program is offered to encourage all adults of any age to delve further into their spiritual walk with others while following a Bible study plan. Here are some of the comments from participants:



“I always tell three stories when asked about how the growth groups are going. One group began studying about fasting after reading about fasting in the gospels. They decided to each take a day to fast over the other women in their group. It was a powerful experience for them.

One week, a group leader texted me and told me how neat it was to see all the women coming to group with their sticky notes and commentary notes ready to discuss the passages! She was so encouraged that the Lord was doing His work through His Word.

Finally, one growth group member told me of a wonderful note she received from another member of a growth group, apologizing for something that happened years prior. She did not tell me the name of the individual, only that she admired her for writing and that she thought the growth group process was instrumental in her discipleship process and the lives of all involved.” - Mary Splawn, Minister of Connections



“The discipleship training study ‘Growing Up’ by Robby Gallaty was one of the most productive studies I have ever participated in. It provided structure and encouraged discipline in our daily walk of following Christ. It brought all of us closer together as a group.” - Marilyn Ingram, Growth Group participant

“All my life I’ve known that Jesus tells us to make disciples, but I’ve never really known how to go about it. This Growth Group is a step in the direction I’ve always known I should be walking. It’s wonderful to wrestle with Scripture memorization, Bible study, and prayer with sisters who love me and will hold me accountable!”
- Natalie Smith, Growth Group co-leader

“We have really enjoyed our growth group and have grown closer over these 10 weeks. The Scripture reading and memorizing (or trying to memorize!) along with reading the book ‘Growing Up’ has been great. Journaling and memorizing Scripture has been challenging and something new to all of us.” - Jason Harkins, Vision 2020 Small Groups Liaison

Are you interested in participating in a group like this? Be on the lookout for more announcements soon regarding winter 2019 growth group meeting times for men and women.

Other Discipleship Opportunities

Students / Mid-Week Bible Studies: The groups are hosted in homes throughout our community at various times. We have four Mid-Week Bible Study groups: Jr. High Girls, Sr. High Girls, Jr. High Guys, and Sr. High Guys. For more information, please contact Ben Winder (ben@mbbc.org).

College and Career Nights: College and Career Nights are on the last Monday evening of the month for college students, recent graduates, and young professionals. For more information, contact Joel Burks (joel@mbbc.org).

Women’s Monday Bible Study: Our Monday Bible Study meets in Heritage Hall from 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. during the school year. They will start back in January. This group is open to all women. For more information, contact Mary Splawn (mary@mbbc.org).

Women's Life Group: Our Women's Life Group is currently studying 1 Corinthians on Wednesday nights from 6-7 p.m. They meet in the Conference Room and this group is open to all women. For more information, contact Mary Splawn (mary@mbbc.org).

Men's Sharpen Up Breakfast: Sharpen Up meets the second Tuesday of each month during the school year for a home-cooked breakfast and devotionals given by our staff. Participants range from school-age children to adults of all ages! Bring a friend to join you, then head to school or work after. For more information, contact Wayne Splawn (wayne@mbbc.org).

The above are just a sample of the various Bible study and discipleship groups offered outside the regular Sunday Morning Bible Study hour. Find a group that works for you!

MISSIONS

Love Grantswood

We have several opportunities throughout the year where you can be involved:

December 7: Kindergarten Christmas Around the World | 8-11 a.m.

Volunteers are needed to assist the teachers in a craft, game, or activity as they learn about how different countries celebrate holiday traditions.

December 19: Provide Breakfast on Teacher Professional Day

Volunteers are needed to help provide breakfast for this day. Contact Meredith Cale (meredithcale@gmail.com) to sign up.

Reading: Volunteers go to read every other Tuesday morning (9:30-10:30 a.m.); this is a great way to become invested in our community by getting to know students and build partnerships with teachers. The dates for this month are December 4 and 18. If you're interested in getting involved in reading in 2019, contact Laurie Bowers (lauriebowers@att.net).

Breakfast Club: Visit with students who come for breakfast and develop relationships with the students; just show up between 7:10-7:15 a.m., sign in at the office, and head the cafeteria! Cost for breakfast is \$2.25.

Backpack Buddies: Help deliver bags of food each week for students to take home so that they have food to eat over the weekend. If you would like to contribute toward Backpack Buddies at Grantswood, make your check payable to MBBC and note that it is for Backpack Buddies at Grantswood. Visit www.mbbc.org/lovegrantswood to sign up to deliver bags of food to Grantswood. If you would like to become involved, contact Meredith Cale.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Parents' Night Out / Friday Friend-zy

Friday, December 14 | 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Parents, mark your calendar for an evening out from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Children can come to the church for dinner and lots of fun with friends. School age children are welcome to bring a friend. Sign up no later than December 9. Email Sharon Howard (sharon@mbbc.org) to sign up!

1st-3rd Grade Christmas Party

Thursday, December 20 | 5-8 p.m.

Bring a \$10 gift card or game for Dirty Santa. Children will be angels or shepherds (you must be in 3rd grade to be a shepherd) in the first two performances of the Living Nativity.

4th-6th Grade Christmas Party

Friday, December 21 | 5-8:45 p.m.

Bring a \$10 gift card or game for Dirty Santa. Children will be angels or shepherds in all three performances of the Living Nativity.

For more information or to sign up for any of our Children's Ministry activities, contact Sharon Howard (sharon@mbbc.org or 803-3445).

STUDENT MINISTRY

The Brook

Sunday, December 2 | 6-7:30 p.m.

Join us for our final regular meeting of The Brook for 2018! We'll worship together, Tim Sanderlin will help us wrap up our "Self<" theme, and we'll share a meal.

Chris Tomlin Christmas Concert

Monday, December 3 | 6-10 p.m. | \$45

Join us for a Chris Tomlin concert to kickoff the Christmas season! We will meet at the church and ride to the Alabama Theatre together. You can book your spot at www.mbbc.org/christomlin. Tickets are \$45.

Mid-Week Bible Study Christmas Parties

December 4 & 5

It is time for Small Group Christmas parties! Contact your MWBS leaders for more details about your group's plans!

Study Brook

Sunday, December 9 | 6 p.m.

Let your brain take a break from studying for finals and join us for a special night of food and fun!

Advent Experience

Sunday, December 16 | 10 a.m.

Join us in the Chapel during the SMBS hour for an experiential worship experience as we ponder the Advent season together.

Passion Conference

January 2-4 | \$175

High School Seniors and college students, you are invited to join us for the Passion Conference in Atlanta, Georgia! The cost is \$175 and you can register at www.mbbc.org/passion.

Winter Retreat

February 1-3 | Children's Harbor | \$150

It is almost time for our most popular event of the year! We'll spend the weekend retreating from our ordinary schedule to reconnect with God and each other. Our theme this year is Creó, "I Believe." We'll consider together how God calls us to believe, to trust, and to have faith, and how we can do so more fully in our lives. Register now at www.mbbc.org/winterretreat.

Church League Basketball

Our Student Ministry is sponsoring three teams (Sr. High Guys, Jr. High Guys, and Sr. High Girls) in church league basketball this season! You're invited to come cheer them on! Full schedules (Jr. High Guys are playing in the Middle School Guys League) are available at www.quickscores.com/dawson.

MEN'S MINISTRY

Sharpen Up

Tuesday, December 11 | 6:30 a.m. | Heritage Hall.

Our next Sharpen Up Breakfast is on Tuesday, December 11 from 6:30-7:15 a.m. Join us for a hearty breakfast, good conversation, opportunities for fellowship, and a devotion led by Ben Winder focusing on the theme "Lessons I Learned From My Father."

ACTIVE CHRISTIAN LIVING

Famous Brunch at Classic On Noble in Anniston

Sunday, December 9 | 11:15 a.m. | \$32 per person plus tax and tip

Just like its name, this place is "classic." The ambiance and the decor are elegant, and the customer service is as friendly and hospitable as it gets. They make you feel as if you were in their home...the variety of food is awesome. From brunch to lunch they offer a bit of everything; make your reservation to experience this unforgettable brunch!

Christmas Gala

Thursday, December 13 | Hudson Hall | 6 p.m. | \$25

In April, our nine-foot Steinway concert grand piano, graciously donated to the church years ago by Harold and Elouise Williams, was shipped to Lindeblad Piano Restorations in New Jersey to undergo an extensive piano rebuilding project. In November, the piano was returned for regular service in our Sanctuary. It is customary to offer a dedication recital once the instrument is returned. Dr. Kely Hatley secured Anna Williams, daughter of Harold and Elouise, to deliver a piano Christmas concert as both our entertainment and rededication of our instrument to the Lord.

Anna is an accomplished pianist and arranger/composer of music who served First Baptist Church Montgomery for many years. She is currently the pianist of our sister church, Brookwood Baptist, in Mountain Brook. Anna is preparing a delightful program of a few classical pieces as well as lush Christmas arrangements that we will know and love. She plans to bring a few guest instrumentalists to help her. The evening is going to be spectacular and is not to be missed! As always, our own Cooks On A Mission will be catering our meal and it proves to be very delicious! We can seat 104 for dinner so hurry today to purchase your tickets by calling the church office (871-0331).

ACTIVE Christian Living Trip: *The King and I*

Saturday, December 22 | BJCC Concert Hall | Depart church at 11:15 a.m. | Lunch at Nikki's West | Showtime 2:30 p.m. | \$64.50 per ticket plus money for lunch
One of Rodgers & Hammerstein's finest works, *The King and I* boasts a score which features such beloved classics as "Getting To Know You," "I Whistle a Happy Tune," "Shall We Dance," and "Something Wonderful."

Set in 1860's Bangkok, the musical tells the story of the unconventional and tempestuous relationship between the King of Siam and Anna Leonowens, a British schoolteacher whom the modernist King, in an imperialistic world, brings to Siam to teach his many wives and children.

The King and I won four 2015 Tony Awards including Best Revival of a Musical. Led by strong female characters, *The King and I* focuses on the importance of seeing human dignity among cultural differences.

Please call the church office (871-0331) today and make your reservation for these events.

Thank You!

Our low-impact projects for MBBC Service Day on October 20 will have a big impact! Approximately 30 people were busy filling Christmas backpacks for children living along the Mississippi River, filling bags of food for Backpack Buddies, making Christmas decorations for nursing home residents, and decorating Thanksgiving bags for Perry County. We filled 144 backpacks and 400 bags for Backpack Buddies, and made 150 decorations.

Thanks to everyone who provided funds, bought gifts, and helped with assembling these projects!

Churchwide Thanksgiving Luncheon





Meet Our New Members

We are so excited to welcome our new members to Mountain Brook Baptist Church. In the following pages, you are going meet our new members and find out more about their faith journey.



Kay and Keith Harrison Sam and Finn



What led you to MBBC? Our son Finn was attending the ELC. Everyone we encountered associated with the church was so friendly. We met a couple of members through Crestline Elementary and were welcomed to come and visit.

What have you enjoyed the most about MBBC? We love both services and the flexibility with children. We appreciate the Children's Ministry and all the time and attention that it is given. Also, we have found everyone to be welcoming and kind.

Tell us about your faith. Keith accepted Christ when he was seven years old in Dothan, Alabama. I accepted Christ at 15 years old in Columbiana, Alabama. We both grew up associated with a church family and knew that was a connection that was lacking in our life.

Where were you born and raised? Keith was born in Geneva, Alabama and grew up in Laurel, Mississippi and Dothan, Alabama. He attended First Baptist of Dothan and Hunter Street Baptist in Hoover. I grew up in Hoover and Columbiana, Alabama. My family and I attended Riverchase Church of Christ and Columbiana Church of Christ.

Where do you work or go to school? Keith works with Cunningham Pathology as a Neuropathologist. I work at ProEquities, Inc. as a Branch Examiner. Our son Sam is in first grade at Crestline Elementary and our youngest son Finn is in the 3K program here at MBBC in the ELC.

Our hobbies and interests are ... Keith likes to write music, paint, and sculpt, and we both enjoy being outdoors, riding bikes, and hiking.

Our favorite restaurants are ... Oh, we love to eat and are still exploring all the new options since moving into this area. No favorites yet, just lots of fun testing out new ones!

Our favorite book of the Bible is ... We are partial to 1 Samuel. The story of Hannah and her trials and petition to the Lord are moving and such an example of love and loyalty. Samuel's subsequent life story is a testament to leadership and devotion to God. On a second note, I'm going to change this question a little to tell my favorite hymn. I love "Sweet Hour of Prayer" (and all traditional church

hymns!). It is a lovely reminder to cast aside our worries and find some quiet time to submit to God.

Is there anything else you would like to share with the church? We are a little shy at times and private, but once we get comfortable can be quite outgoing. HAHA! It will take us a little time to find our place in the church but are very much enjoying getting to know everyone and all of the wonderful ministries that are available.

Joined MBBC on August 19, 2018

Generosity Scorecard as of November 25, 2018

2018 Ministries Budget	\$3,347,719.00
Weekly Receipts	\$17,759.00
YTD Receipts, includes prepaids and Generosity Sunday	\$2,530,388.92
Average Weekly Budget	\$64,379.21
YTD Budget	\$3,025,822.87
Weekly Net	-\$46,620.21
YTD Net	-\$495,433.95

Remaining receipts required to achieve annual budget:
\$817,330.08

Ways to Give



PLATES



ONLINE

To give online,
visit mbbc.org/give.



TEXT

Text STOREHOUSE
to 73256.

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and Generosity.



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 MBBC Guest (password 803-3452)

 205.871.0331