

Voice

A PUBLICATION OF VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ) Birmingham, AL

December 2026
Volume 78, Number 12

VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
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Office Hours: 8:00am - 12:00pm Monday - Friday

Dates of Interest:
December 2026

- December is for Walmart Gift Card Donations to Greater Birmingham Ministries
- Dec 2 - AAA Lunch with FCC Anniston
- Dec 4 - Valley Workday
- Dec 5 - Disciples Women Christmas Coffee
- Dec 6 - Elders' Prayer Elders' Meeting Congregational Meeting
- Dec 9 - Men's Luncheon
- Dec 11 - Christmas Caroling at Pine Hill Rehab and Wellness
- Dec 16 - Christmas Caroling at Miracle Academy
- Dec 20 - Longest Night Service at Brookdale Senior Living
- Dec 21 - Voice Deadline
- Dec 24, 25 - Office Closed for Christmas
- Dec 31 - New Year's Eve



A Word From the Pastor

The slow plodding of the donkey carrying Mary kicks up dust as Joseph leads them all toward the town of Bethlehem. They are tired for they have been on this journey for the better part of seven days all because some ruler decided it would be a good time to require everyone in the land to be registered and not only that, but it had to be done in their home town.

As they come to the gate of Bethlehem, they find it bursting at the seams as many other travelers have arrived, all there for the same reason. It should not come as a surprise that the inns were full, that people were trying everything they could to find a suitable place to lay their heads, some just find side streets to curl up and rest the best they could.

The best Joseph and Mary could do was a stable and maybe her being pregnant opened this opportunity up as I am sure many others would have liked to stay there as well rather than on the streets.

As they settled in, Mary realized that it was time, the baby she had been carrying was ready to be born and, of all places, in a stable. I am sure this is not what Mary had in mind when we was told by the angel that she would be carrying the very Son of God but here, she was in a stable readying herself to deliver the promised Savior of the world.

As we look at how this is playing out, we start to understand the message our God is sending to us. Although worthy of kingship and all the praise and glory that goes with that, Jesus will be one of the common people, one of the lowest class, one of the marginalized, one of the forgotten and one of the least of these. It is a sign of God's kinship with those others have pushed aside, have bypassed or written off as worthless and meaningless. It is a depiction of ultimate humility demonstrating God's commitment to be the God of all people regardless of status, context or any other delineator we can think of. It is a message of hope for those who for various reasons have little to hope for or in. It is a message reminding us that all people matter, that all are important and that all are loved beyond any mortal measure we could come up with.

The birth of Jesus ushered in a new era, one in which God became intimately involved with each and every one of us. In the person of Jesus, God came alongside us in a most remarkable and life altering way demonstrating to us just how much He loves us and cares for each and every one of us. No one but our God could put together a plan as life changing and life giving as this and then to personally enact that plan speaks volumes to His commitment to recover, redeem and reclaim us back unto Himself. To actually become one of His most valued creations and experience all the ups and downs that are part of our mortal lives is completely out of this world and yet that is exactly what our God did. When we think of Jesus, we don't always think about how much His life resembles ours. He had dirty diapers, He needed to be fed, taught and nurtured and He had to grow into His adult body with all of its problems. Taking a moment, I wonder if He ever had trouble with acne. I am sure He had some skinned knees and bruised elbows along the way which to me brings the human part of Him home in a most impactful way. Yes, Jesus was divine, the very Son of God with power and knowledge that we could only dream of and yet He was every bit one of us and this makes the plan God enacted through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus all the more amazing.

I pray that as we move through this Advent season we take a moment and ponder the incredible way our God has interceded in our lives providing us not just with a pathway to redemption, salvation and everlasting life, but His commitment to be our ever present companion on this our life's journey, no matter where it leads, what we encounter or how far we travel. This is the promise of our God, a promise that was born in a stable oh so long ago and is still present today through the gift of the Holy Spirit.





BROOKDALE SENIOR LIVING
ADVENT EVENTS

Over this past year I have been meeting with a small group of residents at Brookdale Senior Living providing grief support tools and information.

Building off of this I will be offering a program called, "Hope for the Holidays" on Sunday, November 22, beginning at 3:00 PM that is designed to help those dealing with loss cope with the stresses of the holiday season. I have booklets that I will give to those who attend that has information and tools that can help them navigate this holiday season even as they mourn the loss of a loved one. It will be about an hour in length.

I am also leading a "Longest Night Service," on Sunday, December 20, beginning at 2:00 PM. This service provides an avenue for those experiencing loss of a loved one, a dream, independence or other form of loss a way to experience the Christmas story while acknowledging their loss. It is comprised of scripture readings, prayers of lament as well as of hope and the lighting of the advent wreath where each of the candles represent an element of our grief journey and the hope that comes through our Lord and Savior.

I am honored and privileged to be able to offer these to Brookdale and invite anyone who would like to attend to join us as we leverage the love of our Lord to help us through our times of grief and mourning.

DECEMBER OUTREACH DONATION BASKET



The Outreach Donation Basket Collection for December is Walmart Gift Cards for the children of The Greater Birmingham Ministries. We will accept any contribution to buy toys for children ages 1-17. Last year, the Outreach Department bought and delivered several Walmart baskets full of toys. We hope to be as generous this year as last. Please give cards to Peggi Zinser, Carol Speed or Betty Dykes by December 6th so we can buy and deliver them for distribution to their families. Thank you, Peggi Zinser, Outreach Chair



AAA'S VALLEY AND ANNISTON DISCIPLES CHURCH'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH

We have a new restaurant for our annual Christmas Lunch with the members of the Anniston Church. We will be going to Hubbard's off Main in Oxford. They have a large variety of menu items from Shrimp and Grits to Pimento Cheese Hamburgers. I think there is plenty for everyone to enjoy. We have reservations for Wednesday, December 2nd at 11:30 AM. If you would like to go, please let Peggi Zinser know by Friday, November 27th. She will need to confirm reservation numbers by Monday, November 30th. We will be taking the van, so please let Peggi know whether you would like to ride in the van or plan to drive. The gas fee is $7.00. Please be at the church at 10:00 AM; the van will leave at 10:15 AM. Thank you, Peggi Zinser



2026 DISCIPLES WOMEN CHRISTMAS COFFEE

The Disciples Women group invites all ladies and guests to join us on Saturday morning, December 5th at 10:00 AM in the church parlor as we host the annual Christmas Coffee. This year we are blessed to welcome Jane Boyer to present an interesting program entitled "The History of Christmas Ornaments". Jane will bring some ornaments from her collection to "show and tell" about their special significance. We will enjoy holiday goodies, coffee and punch as we fellowship together. If you wish, you may bring a favorite holiday treat, sweet or savory, to add to the refreshment table (not required). Come and celebrate as we begin the Advent season! Ginny Guindon

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2026

John Gregory, Moderator, has called for another congregational meeting to consider a revision of the Proposed Budget for 2027. The Stewardship Committee has some minor errors that need to be corrected. If you have any questions, please speak with John and/or Sara Simon and Stewart Draper. The meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, December 6, 2026, after the closing hymn in worship.



POINSETTIAS

It's time to order poinsettias that will add beauty and bright color to the sanctuary during the Advent season. Order forms will be available in Sunday's worship bulletin or you may call Elaine in the church office Monday-Friday until 12:00 noon. Please make your check payable to the church for $12.10 per plant and place your order by Sunday, November 22nd. As always, you may designate that your plant be in memory or honor of someone. After the Christmas Eve service, plants may be taken home to enjoy.
Thank you! Ginny Guindon



A'CAROLING WE WILL GO!

BVM (Building Valley Macedonia) will offer a program of Christmas carols for both of the following groups this December.

I. Pine Hill Rehabilitation and Wellness

Located at 200 North Pine Hill Road, Birmingham, AL 35217, Pine Hill is a residential home for adults where we have sung Christmas carols before. The residents always enjoy and appreciate our programs especially at Christmas and Easter. The date for this event will be December 11, 2026, at 11:00 AM.

II. Miracle Academy

Located at 3420 Hickory Avenue, SW, Birmingham, AL 35221, Miracle Academy is a private elementary school. Students are always excited and pleased by our Christmas presentation. This is the school where we redecorated the cafeteria and planted flowers in the yard. The date for this event will be Wednesday, December 16, 2026, at 9:00 AM.

Most of the carols we sing are familiar to everyone. We would be glad to have others join us. Please let Lola Kiser know if you would like to be a part of these joyful presentations. We will have lunch after the Pine Hill presentation at Applebee's Restaurant. Lunch reservations are required by Monday, December 7, 2026.



THERE IS A MOUSE IN THE CHURCH!!!!

He is a secret Christmas mouse, but he is not looking for cheese; he is looking for Christmas bonuses for the staff. We have a wonderful staff here at Valley, and we are truly very thankful. Let's show that church mouse what generous church members we have here at Valley. Please help the church mouse this year by making out your check and designating it for the "Church Mouse". You can mail it in or put it in the collection plate. If you wish to give cash, please mark "Church Mouse" on the envelope. The deadline is December 13th.
Thank you, Peggi Zinser, Vice Moderator.

TELL OUR STORY

Our Senior Adult retreat had a very interesting and timely theme, “Go Tell It On The Mountain.” It was a reminder that we are called to share our stories about our relationship with our Lord, what He has meant and still means to us today and how our faith has helped us navigate the trials and tribulations that are part of our life’s journey.

Our speaker, Rev. Tim O’Neal, provided some key reasons why our stories matter.

First, they give the next generation a living testimony of who God is, what God has done and is doing and how our relationship with God has formed our lives. In a nutshell, our stories make God real.

Second, our stories connect generations allowing others to learn from us and helping them realize just as we have made it through with the help of our Lord, so can they.

Third, our stories show that God is still working in our world, even today. It reminds others that God is not an abstract idea but a real living, breathing entity that wants nothing more than a faithful and fruitful relationship with each and every one of us.

Fourth, our stories preserve our spiritual heritage providing a bridge between what God has done and what God will do next.

Fifth, our stories make the Gospel personal as we share how our God has influenced and worked in our lives.

Sixth, our stories give hope, provide strength and help others see a path forward even in the midst of trial and tribulation. Our stories show that faith is meaningful and vital especially in changing times.

Rev. O’Neal emphasized how important our stories are and how valuable they can be when shared with others, and we here at Valley have spoken about the need to share our stories so that others might come to know our Lord as we do.

To that end, we are offering each and every one an opportunity to share their story in a variety of ways. The first will be through our newsletter. I would like to start a monthly article featuring one of our members or friends sharing their story. How you came to the Lord, how the Lord has influenced and impacted your life and what your relationship with the Lord means to you.

Another opportunity is to share this story during a worship service practicing it in front of people who love and care for us. This can accomplish a couple of goals, one to help the rest of us learn a bit more about your relationship with God and how it has helped to shape who you are, and it can help prepare you to share your story outside of these walls where it might just be the impetus for someone else to pursue a relationship with Jesus and experience His love, mercy and grace for themselves.

Jesus has called us the light of the world, but we can’t be that light if we hide our stories under a shade, or bury them in the recesses of our hearts, minds and souls.

We can only be that light if we allow others to hear our stories and to see how our stories have formed our lives, now and in the future.

So, I ask you to prayerfully consider these opportunities to share your story no matter how insignificant or unimportant as you may think it is because it just might be your story that allows another to find hope, to change direction or to find that relationship with our Lord that is not only life transforming, but life giving. Share your story for you just might be saving a life!

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16 NKJ