



Voice

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



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January 3, 2024

VOLUME 75, NUMBER 1

A Word from Your Pastor

Happy New Year Valley Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). There is a hint of excitement in the air as we begin this new year. We just celebrated the birth of our savior once again where we spoke of hope, peace, joy, and love and now as we begin this new year, we will rise to the challenge to not only speak these wonderful fruits but live them out in our daily lives. Yes, there will be challenges, there will be obstacles and there may even be times when we wonder if we are truly making a difference but if we stay true to our faith calling and commitment, if we continue to seek out God and God's will for us, if we remember the words of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you, we will find that our path is made straight and plans God has for us will come to fruition.

We have the opportunity to begin anew, to have a fresh start, to refocus our efforts on not only listening for but actively engaging in that which our Lord puts before us. These words from John 4:35; Do you not say, "There are yet four months, then comes the harvest?" Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see that the fields are ripe for the harvest remind us of the work that still needs to be done. The harvest is out there as this world we live in is yearning for a new direction, for a new understanding of who we are and our purpose in this life and this is where we can provide direction to this alternative, this new beginning, this fresh start. This won't be easy; it will be a challenge and we will need all the help we can get.

We will need to engage God in intentional and consistent prayer, seeking God's will for us and trusting that God will show us the way. We will need to be open to the movement of the Spirit in our own lives as well as in the lives of this church. We may need to take some chances, to shake things up, maybe even rethink our mission and what God is asking us to do at this particular time.

The good news is, when we go to God in prayer, when we allow the Spirit to lead us, when we put our complete faith and trust in the Lord, our God will not only show us the way, but join us on this journey providing all the tools necessary to reap a wonderful harvest. Will it happen overnight, not likely. But if we open ourselves up to the movement of the Spirit and allow this Spirit to flow in and through us, will be led to this harvest and we will make a difference in this world.

I am excited about the opportunities that await us both individually and as a committed body of believers and I can't wait to get started.

So let the Son reign as we begin this new year and may we all reinvest ourselves in his love and his Word as we seek to be faithful and fruitful disciples of Christ.

Rick Malugani
Senior Minister
Valley Christian Church

Dates of Interest:

- Jan 3 - New Horizons begins their Winter Term
- Jan 6 - Valley Work Day
- Jan 7 - Food Pantry Sunday: Cereal (Hot or Cold)
- Jan 7 - Guest Pastor Jan Watts at worship
- Jan 14 - First Sunday sermon for our new Senior Minister, Rick Malugani
- Jan 15 - Martin Luther King Day (Office Closed)
- Jan 21 - Installation of Officers at worship
- Jan 21 - Valley Board Meeting after worship
- Jan 22 - Voice Deadline
- Jan 28 - Committee Planning Day with pizza lunch after worship.
- Jan 31 - AAA Wheeler Wildlife Refuge (Decatur)

Life in the Valley

Prayers, Joys and Concerns

- Many thanks to Jean Thrasher and all those who helped with the recent fellowship events.
- Thank you to everyone who participated in stuffing the 47 stockings for North Hill Nursing Home. You are much appreciated.
- Jean Thrasher has a joy that Phillip Treadway, who has been sick with pneumonia and was in the hospital for two days, is now doing much better.
- Ellen Malugani has a joy that she is celebrating her first year of being cancer free
- Please pray for Pat McDaniel's sister, Margaret Ann, who is sick and not doing well.
- Please be in prayer for Phyllis Kirk (Embellishments Bell Choir leader and member of Grace Christian) who has been diagnosed with cancer and will be having surgery soon.
- Please keep Marie Malugani, Rick's sister, in your prayers. She has been ill with high blood pressure.
- Beth Gregory's long-time friend's brother-in-law was randomly shot and killed in Center Point while he was driving. They do have a suspect in custody.
- Food Pantry Sunday will be January 7th and the need is for Cereal (Hot or Cold). However, you can bring your donations at any time during the month of January and the Outreach Chairpersons will take them to GBM for you.



Retired at Last

Our Minister for the last 1½ years has finally retired and will be enjoying new adventures. Edd and Mary Pat Spencer will be spending more time doing what they love, traveling and visiting family and friends all over the country. We wish them all the "MAGIC" of retirement. We love you and will miss all your Dollar tree gifts, but we wish you the very best.

AAA Trip for January

The Seniors and Friends of Valley are invited to our January trip to Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in Decatur, Alabama on Wednesday, January 31, 2023, leaving the church at 9:00am with arrival at 11:30am. Wheeler Wildlife Refuge is named after Major General (Fightin' Joe) Joe Wheeler. He was a graduate of West Point and served in the Confederate Army, the Spanish American Army and the U.S. Congress from Alabama.

He is also one of the few Confederate Army Officers buried at Arlington Cemetery. Wheeler Wildlife Refuge is a 35,000 acre refuge managed and protected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is the habitat for wintering and migrating birds, cranes, ducks, geese, the endangered Whooping Crane and twelve other federally endangered species. There is not admission charge or a guide at this facility, but we will see a movie showing what we will be able to view from their newly renovated Observation Building that is set in a blind in order to view the waterfowl in their natural habitat. This will be a very interesting trip. Let Marilyn or Peggi know if you want to ride the van or if you plan on driving. As always, first come first served on the van. There is an \$8.00 gas fee. Lunch is at the Francesco's Italian Restaurant - Lunch Special \$7.99. 2613 Highway 31, Decatur, Alabama 35603. Phone 256-584-6770.

Thank you for the Staff Christmas Gift

Thank you so much for the wonderful staff Christmas gift from the church members. We appreciate your kind regard and everything you do to make Valley a wonderful place to work. Love, Edd, Marilyn, Margaret and Beth.

Decorations Go Up and Decorations Must Come Down

We have enjoyed the many items which meant Christmas in our sanctuary. Wreaths, candles, creche and Christmas Tree must be put away until the next Advent. You are invited to help on Sunday after worship and fellowship. The wise men came on Epiphany (the 6th) and now we can undecorate. Again, on the 7th, the more to help, the better. See you Sunday. - Thank you, John G.

Notable Dates in January

January promises to be a busy month as we welcome Rick Malugani and plan for our new year of ministries here at Valley. Please add the following to your calendars and plan to participate where you feel your talents and interests apply.

January 2 - Rick's first day in the office

January 14 - Rick's first day in the pulpit - coffee fellowship to welcome Rick and Ellen

January 21 - Installation of officers during worship

January 21 - Board meeting following worship

January 28 - All-church planning meeting following worship (lunch provided - donations accepted)

The January calendar is attached, so please note the other important activities throughout the month.

All-Church Planning

Sunday January 28th we will have an all-church planning meeting in the Fellowship Hall following worship. A pizza lunch will be provided (donations accepted) so that all may participate fully in the planning. We invite all members and interested guests to attend as we dream and plan for our ministries in 2024. We are excited as we welcome Rick and Ellen to our family and consider what new plans God has for us as we partner in ministry with them while seeking to be faithful and obedient servants of our loving God.