



The Valley Voice

VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
2600 Cherokee Place, Birmingham, AL 35216
(205) 879-0419
www.vccbhm.org; office@vccbhm.org

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COFFEE AND A STORY

I have fond memories of the Advent calendar my parents kept when I was a small child—mostly because it resulted in my getting some fun trinket each day in December, and much less out of any profound understanding of the theological realities of Advent—and perhaps you have similarly fond attachments to an Advent calendar tradition yourself.

These calendars count down the days to the arrival of the Christ Child in our midst, but before 2020 I do not think that any of us could have countenanced a socially distanced nativity scene as what we were counting down towards. There is so much surrounding Christmas for us to look forward to. This includes worshiping on Christmas Eve, and I warmly invite you and yours to join us for our Christmas Eve celebration at 4:00 pm on December 24 in our usual Zoom worship space. Margaret Cox will kick us off at 4:00 by leading us in a brief carol-sing before our worship, and I would love to see you there for it!

I have heard several wonderful stories about the loveliness of Valley's Christmas Eve worship service. That we will be conducting our Christmas Eve service online is a disappointment for sure, and I definitely share with y'all in the wish that it could be safe enough for us to gather and worship in our beautiful Gothic sanctuary. Yet, we continue worshiping online in the hope that nobody will be missing from our nativity scene come 2021.

With the welcome news of effective vaccines against covid-19 on the horizon, I am happy to share that conversations concerning 2021 have begun among our incoming moderating team, moderator-elect Andrea Clark and vice moderator-elect John Neville, and myself on topics such as how to hold the annual leadership retreat in January and how we might return to in-person worship later in 2021.

We are, then, using our Advent calendars this year to count down towards two dates, not only one. The first one will be Christmas, which we have spent every previous Advent anticipating, and which we will spend every Advent in the future anticipating. The other day we are counting down towards is the Sunday in 2021 when we finally return to in-person worship, which God willing we will not have to count down towards again for an extremely long time, if ever. Both days will be days of rejoicing and celebration, and I look forward to them.

Until then, keep the faith and keep watch, for the Christ child will arrive, and He will be made known to us. Christ's and yours, Pastor Eric

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Annual Congregational Meeting of Valley Christian Church will be held immediately after the Worship Service on December 13, 2020. Stewart Draper, Moderator

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING

The Christmas Special Offering which will be collected during the month of December provides funds for camps, conferences, and retreats and supports pastors in their ministries. Please consider adding a contribution for this Special Offering when you mail or drop off your December tithes and offerings. Thanks!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR CHURCH STAFF

We are still receiving gifts for the Church staff. Mail it or bring it by the church office. The Church Mouse

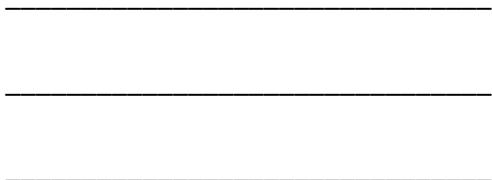
GBM CHRISTMAS PROJECT

\$500 (or 20 each \$25 Wal-Mart gift cards) were collected by Disciples Women for their December service project. Thanks to all who contributed. Pastor Eric and John Neville delivered the gift cards to Greater Birmingham Ministries and they were much appreciated. Valley's generosity will brighten the Christmas of 20 children and their families in our community. Thank you! Cindy Neville

CONGRATULATIONS TO DANIEL DAUGHHETEE

Daniel Daughhete, (son of Doug and Charlotte Daughhete) who grew up at Valley Christian, has gotten a big promotion. He is the Circulation Manager for O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook. He is a graduate of Montevallo and got his master's degree at the University of Alabama in Library and Information Studies. The Library says that Daniel is a tremendous asset to the Circulation Department.

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2600 CHEROKEE PLACE
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35216





THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED

What an amazingly talented group we have at Valley. We have two new beautiful Christmas Wreaths on our Sanctuary Doors and re-fluffed and updated Christmas Wreaths on the canopy doors, thanks to the generosity and creativity of Dana Stuckenschneider. I want to thank those who helped to put up the garlands and bows in the sanctuary behind the pulpit, Carol Speed, Stewart Draper, Ed Guindon and I, Peggi Zinser, supervised.

I hope you noticed the signs that we had for the Cherokee Road neighborhood Halloween Parking Lot Party. They were designed by Lauren Simon Lambert, who also designed the Merry Christmas signs we have put up in the Cherokee Road neighborhood. We are going to put up information signs on the island and by the playground for our neighbors to access the Zoom information for our Sunday services. Thanks again to Lauren for the designs.

Ed and Ginny Guindon have been clearing some areas around the church to extend the walking trail. Some of our neighbors have been enjoying the trail so we will all have the completion to look forward to this Spring. Lynda Reeves has been working on plantings to make the trail a beautiful area for everyone to have a quiet peaceful place to walk.

SCAM PREVENTION ALERT

I have been saddened to hear stories from my colleagues in ministry of their congregants being targeted this time of year by con artists posing as representatives of their churches and asking them to buy gift cards. I want to take a moment to clearly and unequivocally communicate to all of you that the only time we ask you for gift cards this time of year is for the Greater Birmingham Ministries Christmas drive, and that effort has concluded, with John Neville and I delivering \$500 worth of gift cards to GBM this past Thursday on Valley's behalf!

At no point will I ask you to buy gift cards for the church without also inviting you to verify the purpose with one of our financial, stewardship, or outreach leaders. Anyone who asks you for gift cards claiming that I authorized the effort is a scammer and is lying to you. Please protect yourselves and your family's finances this Christmas season and don't fall prey to this unfortunately common scam! ~Pastor Eric

LIFE IN THE VALLEY

- Tim Biero, the former organist at Valley, contacted us to say that his disease, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy

(CIDP) has been stable for several years because of Tim's diligence in exercising. His doctors say that he no longer needs to be monitored with yearly visits. Tim thanks God for his healing powers!

- Pastor Eric would like to thank Ginny Guindon and the Fellowship Department volunteers for the wonderful November tailgate party in the parking lot. It was a big success!
- Thank you so much to all who participated in the 2020 Advent Devotional Booklet. We have received many compliments on the creative writing in it. If you need extra booklets they can be picked up at the office.
- The December-February "Secret Place" Devotional booklets are available in the entryway.
- Andrea Clark's mother-in-law and Katelyn's grandmother passed away last week. She had just turned 109 years old. Please pray for the Clark family.
- Carol Adair's (our neighbor close to the church) husband, Alan, passed away last week. Please pray for the family.
- Bill and Mary Ellen Caughran's son David and his wife Ashley are now clear of COVID.
- Marilyn Ireland has a joy and the blessing of Lola Kiser's leadership. She was 90 years old Sunday and still a blessing working for the church.
- Whitney Devine's cousin, Garrett, who was in a severe car accident six months ago, is doing so great after all of the hard work by him and his healthcare professionals. Garrett had a lot of neuro damage which caused a stroke. The family is praising God for his recovery!
- Peggi Zinser's brother, Alan Rothoff, has left the Veteran's Hospital and is at home now with leukemia (non-cancer).
- Please pray for Jamie Ligon's nephew Brandon Ligon. He has had some improvement after being in intensive care in the hospital with COVID. Brandon's parents, Damon and Melissa Ligon also have COVID but are now at home.
- Please pray for Margaret Cox's friends, Lindsay and Mason, who are pregnant with conjoined twins. They will now start seeing doctors at UAB who are familiar with treating conjoined twins. Joshua and Caleb each had their own lung so that is a blessing. The last time they saw sonograms they were hugging.
- Linda and Russell Reeve's daughter-in-law's sister is still caught in a war in Ethiopia, Africa and it has worsened.
- The Valley Workday is Saturday, December 12, 2020 from 9:00am to 12:00noon.
- The Elders' Meeting is Monday, December 14, 2020 at 7:00pm on Zoom.
- The second Voice deadline in December will be earlier than usual because of the holidays the next week. Articles are due for the Voice on Friday December 18, 2020.
- Please call or email the office with your prayer concerns, joys or reports to include in "Life In The Valley".