

December – January 2013

Advent 2013

First Sunday in Advent December 1

Hope

A.M. – The Second Advent

Matthew 23:36-44

6 P.M. – Community Christmas Service

Second Sunday in Advent December 8

Peace

A.M. Children's Christmas Program

5 P.M. Lottie Moon Prayer and Study

Third Sunday in Advent December 15

Joy

A.M. John the Baptist Matthew 3, 11

5 P.M. Christmas Caroling

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 22

Love

A.M. The Birth of Jesus Matthew 1:18-25

5 P.M. Lighting of Christ Candle and Communion

Sunday after Christmas December 29

A.M. Escape to Egypt Matthew 2:13-23

No Evening Service

Epiphany Sunday January 5

A.M. The Word Matthew 2; John 1

No Evening Service

Community Christmas Tree Lighting

Thanksgiving Day

Thursday, November 28

5:00

At the Red Light in Downtown Collinsville

Community Christmas Service
Christmas Time in Our Little Town

Sunday, December 1

Collinsville Baptist

6:00

Refreshments after the service – if you would like to help, please bring finger foods only (cookies, brownies, fudge, chips and dip, etc.)

Children's Choirs Christmas Program

Sunday, December 8

11:00

WMU Christmas store

December 5

Store needs – lotion, powder, sugar free candy, stuffed animals, socks, wrapping paper, non-breakable items

There is an **Open House** at the Alabama Baptist Children's Home in Decatur on Sunday, December 8 from 2-5 in the afternoon.

Collinsville Christmas Parade

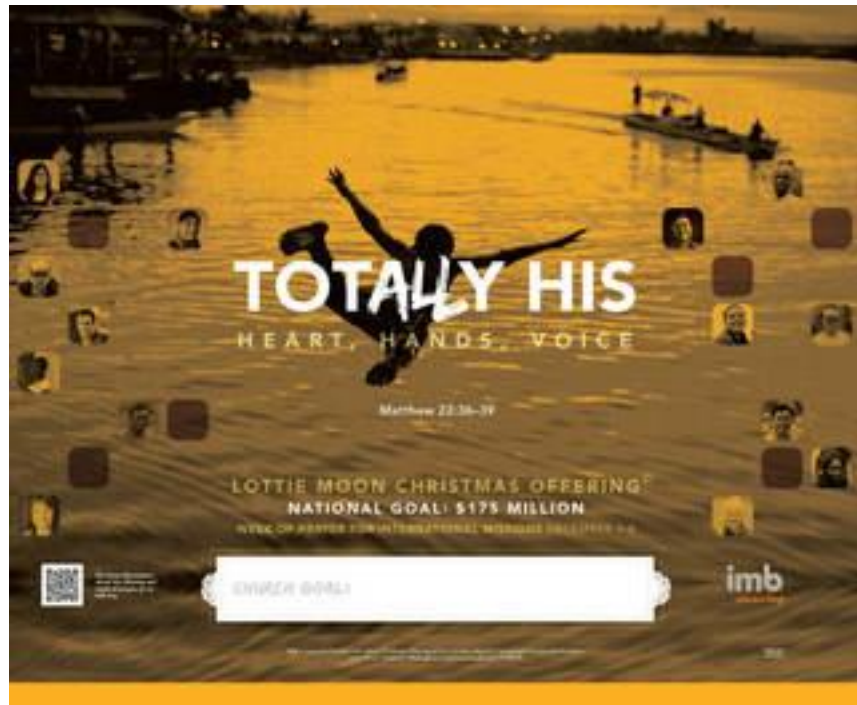
Saturday, December 14

2:00

The Giving Tree

For several years we have had a giving tree at church. It works this way – you bring nonperishable food to church and leave it on the tree. People come to the church that need food. We give it to them.

The tree is a little empty right now – a couple of families needing food came through recently. Some of you have also been bringing soaps, diapers, etc. Any gifts are appreciated.



Start with Saying “Yes”

Matthew 22:36-39

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

For International Missions

Church Goal - \$3400

National Goal – \$175 Million

November 24 – January

2013 Week of Prayer for International Missions

December 1 – 8

You will also have the opportunity to use a special 30 day prayer book.



Typhoon Hiyan Relief

Southern Baptists have been providing relief to victims of the typhoon through the International Mission Board partnering with Baptist Global Response. Our missionaries and emergency relief personnel are ministering the love of Christ with food, clothing, shelter, medical care and in other ways. 600,000 displaced with thousands of deaths. Please pray often for this relief effort. If you would like to contribute to the relief, you may make gifts through the IMB at www.imb.org/helpnow.

Covered Dish Dinner and Quarterly Ministry Meeting

Sunday, January 12

Noon

Marty has questioned the judging at the chili cook off and has issued an open challenge to any and all to try to live up to the awesome chili he will have at this dinner. Are you up to the challenge?

Sanctity of Human Life

Sunday, January 19

Men's Day

Super Sunday

February 2

December Flowers – Dec. 1 Sandra Killian; Dec. 15 Belinda Barksdale; Dec. 22 Lisa Gibbs; Dec. 29 Lisa Gibbs

January Flowers – Jan 5 Donzella Bobo; Jan 19 Dee Fortner; Jan 26 Open

December Lord's Supper – John and Amelia Dorr (on Sunday night, December 22)

There will also be a Lord's Supper observance at the Community Christmas Service at our church on December 1. January 12 – Mark and Glenda Morgan

New Material to Replace on Page 1

Change is to No evening service

Sunday after Christmas December 29
A.M. Escape to Egypt Matthew 2:13-23
No Evening Service

Epiphany Sunday January 5
A.M. The Word Matthew 2; John 1
No Evening Service

It was a Christmas where I felt very grinchy. Or scroogeey.

I was in my teens and was out Christmas caroling in Nashville on Christmas Eve. The night had been great. Our church youth group was singing in a neighborhood where my aunt and uncle lived, a newer subdivision near my high school.

In Nashville, churches went out caroling to collect donations for a day home for needy children. We were glad to help the children, but we really went because it made a great excuse to get together – something you may have noticed that teens like to do. And, of course, being a Baptist group, we had refreshments after the caroling back at my cousin's house.

This night had been better than most because of something else. It had started snowing. It was looking like that it would be a white Christmas for Nashville. At the house we drank our hot chocolate, ate our cookies and looked out at the snow. Then people started getting calls telling them to come home.

You see, the snow was coming down harder and harder. The beautiful white covering on the grass was becoming an inches-deep blanket. Parents were worried. We teens all knew they were being silly. But it was time to go home.

Being family, I was one of the last one to get ready to leave. I called my dad to come get me. And then I learned how much it had snowed. My father could not get across the hill on Cahal Avenue to pick me up. And my uncle couldn't get me home. I realized this just as the last car of my friends was leaving the driveway. I yelled at them. Too late. Only tail lights slowly going up the street.

I was stuck. On Christmas Eve. I could spend the night at my cousin's. Or I could walk the almost two miles home. In the cold. And snow. In tennis shoes. It was enough to make me feel very unloved.

But I started the walk. Up Guest Drive (yes, the real name) to Welcome Lane (I am not kidding here). And on toward my school. The most unwelcome person in the world.

There was no one out. Not a car. Not a caroler. Just me. Poor neglected me. My family has deserted me. My uncle and dad safe and warm at home. Me out here. In the cold. In four foot deep snow (okay, eight inch).

I worked me up a real pity party. Bah, humbug. Told you I was feeling scrooge. Not hard for an uncertain pimple faced teenage boy to do. Poor me. Nobody. No love. Just cold. Maybe you can relate. I trudged a little further. Past the school.

Turning onto Porter Road, I stopped my self-indulged pity long enough to realize something unusual. There really had not been a single car. I would probably never again see these roads this empty. I really was alone.

The wind was blowing the snow, surrounding me with swirls. It was like I was in a snow globe. Despite myself, I realized how beautiful it was. I hunched my shoulders in my jacket against the cold. And smiled. I didn't want to smile, but I did. I was walking in a winter wonderland.

I realized that, against my every desire, I was enjoying myself. My heart was growing three times larger. Told you I was feeling grinchy. My toes were numb through the canvas, my nose and eyes running. The wind cutting my skin. The blowing-snow-dimmed street lights limiting my vision to a few feet. Sometimes a few Christmas lights visible in someone's front yard. I stopped to enjoy the isolation in my own little snow globe world. I blew on my hands, smelling where I had spilt a bit of hot chocolate on them and then buried them back in my pockets. And I smiled. This time because I wanted to smile. This was great. Making a great memory. I sure was glad I didn't get in that last car.

I no longer felt alone. I felt surrounded. Hugged by the snow and cold. Or hugged by someone. Not alone.

And even a teenage boy could make the leap – Christmas Eve. Walking. Joseph and Mary walking to Bethlehem. How hard it must have been for them. So far from home. And then in a stable they were no longer alone. A baby. God with them. Immanuel. Christmas Eve, but Christmas Day came.

And I felt overwhelmed by the presence of that someone else. I was still a teenage boy – no tears, no singing carols. But I wanted to do both. I had to fight both back. And my adult self cries a little now as I write this. Cries for the holiness of that night. And for all of us never having to be alone again. Christ with us. Christ in us.

I kept walking and was surprised to see that I had already come over Cahal Hill and was turning onto Scott Avenue. To the first house on the right. 2103. Home.

I walked through the deep snow, up the steps to the porch and opened the front door. “Mother, I’m home. Merry Christmas. It’s going to be a white Christmas.”

I am so thankful for that night. For that transcendent night. For that holy night. When I was alone. And then I was not. Christmas. And I never told anyone about it until now. Merry Christmas. Gloria and I wish for all of you the joy of the presence of Jesus Christ. And that sometime during the season, no matter how alone you feel or how busy you feel, you will again know the miracle of his presence in your life.