

Baptist in
Heritage,
Ecumenical
in Worship
and Outreach



The Spire

River Road Church, Baptist

December 6, 2005, Vol. 60, No. 49

Season of Advent

The Christian year begins with Advent. The Advent season includes the four Sundays prior to Christmas and closes on December 24.

The word Advent comes from the Latin *advenire*, which means "coming." The season focuses on the coming of Jesus Christ in the past (as incarnate Son), in the present (as risen Lord), and in the future (as heavenly King). Thus we can say: "Christ has come, Christ is coming, Christ will come again." Advent is a season of joyous and solemn expectation. The liturgical color is purple, symbolic of a spirit of penitence and preparation.

One of the ways Advent is celebrated is with the Advent wreath. The Advent wreath is a circle of evergreens with four-colored candles, one each for each Sunday in Advent. These candles are often purple, although other colors may be used. There is a fifth, white candle in the center of the wreath, the Christ Candle. One of the purple candles is lit on the first Sunday of Advent. An additional candle is lit on each following Sunday, until all four candles are lit on the fourth Sunday of Advent. The white candle is lit on Christmas Eve.

The Revised Common Lectionary readings for this Third Sunday of Advent, Year B, are:

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126
I Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 11, 2005
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
Sanctuary

Reading of the Advent Text
Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

Sermon by Dr. Michael J. Clingenpeel
Music by the Carol, Crusader and Chancel Choirs

Reception in the Fellowship Hall following
the worship service hosted by the deacons.

GALA CHRISTMAS CONCERT

7:30 p.m. Sanctuary

O Holy Night
by John Rutter

The River Road Chancel Choir with orchestra

A program of familiar Christmas carols and hymns
with narration by the clergy of River Road Church, Baptist.



WEDNESDAY DINNER PROGRAM

December 14, 2005
5:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Program

Christmas Pageant

Annual Christmas program presented by the
children, youth and adults of River Road Church

Services of Advent and Christmastide

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 11, 2005
11:00 a.m.
Reading of the Advent Text
Lighting of the Third Advent Candle
Sermon by Dr. Michael J. Clingenpeel
Anthems by the Carol, Crusader and Chancel Choirs

NATIVITY FESTIVAL

December 7-11, 2005
Displays throughout the church

GALA CHRISTMAS CONCERT

December 11, 2005
7:30 p.m. Sanctuary
Christmas Choral Concert
O Holy Night by John Rutter
A program of readings and familiar carols
The River Road Chancel Choir with orchestra

ADVENT LABYRINTH WALK

December 12, 2005
Fellowship Hall
12:00-8:00 p.m.

THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

December 14, 2005
Fellowship Hall
5:30 p.m. Dinner
6:45 p.m. Pageant
Music by the Cherub, Carol, Crusader, and Youth Choirs
Call 288-1131 for dinner reservations

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 18, 2005
11:00 a.m.
Reading of the Advent Text
Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle
Sermon by Dr. Michael J. Clingenpeel
Anthems by the Chancel Choir

VESPER SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

December 18, 2005
6:00 p.m. Chapel
Offering of Memories
(No Child Care)

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM OF CAROLS, STORIES AND READINGS

December 21, 2005
Fellowship Hall
5:30 p.m. Dinner
6:30 p.m. Program
Regular rehearsals for the Carol,
Crusader and Chancel Bell Choirs

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

5:00 p.m.

Anthems by the Carol, Crusader,
Youth and the Chancel Bell Choirs
Children's Offering—Non-perishable goods wrapped in white
paper

CANDLELIGHT FESTIVAL SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

11:00 p.m.

Reading of the Christmas Story and
Lighting of the Christ Candle
Sermon by Dr. Michael J. Clingenpeel
Anthems by the Chancel Choir
(No Child Care)

CHRISTMAS DAY

December 25, 2005
Sunday School classes will not meet
10:00-10:45 a.m. Gathering in the Fellowship Hall
Preschool childcare available
11:00 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary

NEW YEAR'S EVE LABYRINTH WALK

December 31, 2005
Fellowship Hall
12:00-6:00 p.m.

NEW YEAR'S EVE VESPER SERVICE

December 31, 2005
6:00 p.m. Chapel
Worship Meditation
Service of Holy Communion
(No Child Care)

Sunday Responsibilities

Acolyte: Dexter Gulick

Deacons' Coffee: Craig Carlock, Mike Jones, Rob Taylor, Cathy Whitty

Flower Distribution: Mary Gauldin

Greeters: Barry Harmon, Doug Pace, Bill Rusher, Stacey Rooney, Emily Tuck

Sound: Bill Gray

Tellers: Vara Bottoms, Jean Cauble, Carol Decker, Dean Decker, Pat Dickinson, Holly Smith

Ushers: Jule Bolio, John Gray, Skip King, Andy Mann, Jon Williams

Minister On Call

Barbara Massey

Weekend: December 10-11

673-9156

If you are unable to reach this minister immediately, please leave a message on the church office voicemail at 288-1131. The voicemail will be monitored by the on-call minister.

Adult Sunday School News

Formations Sunday School literature continues a five-week unit of study entitled *Christmas in Mark*. Christmas in Mark? It's a question you will ask as you begin this series of Advent/Christmas sessions. Rarely will you read Mark during this season. Writers and readers alike typically gravitate toward Luke and Matthew. When sugarplums are not dancing in our heads, our minds are filled with angels, shepherds, and wise men. Pastures filled with sheep and mangers filled with hay fill the spaces in our seasonal imaginations. None of these nuances of nativity exists in Mark. That does not mean, however, that Mark has nothing to say about this wonderful, heavenly gift. Christmas in Mark? Absolutely. In the early chapters of Mark, we will encounter a Christmas story. This story, however, will not be quite like the one told by other Gospel writers, but it will resonate with the reality of your life. We will witness the backdrop of some wonderful Christmas cards, enjoy a very personal Christmas wish, participate in a Christmas feast, and learn an important Christmas principle. Mark doesn't deny the beauty or reality of the nativity; however, he seems to believe that Christmas begins—the gospel begins—when Christ intrudes upon the hard realities of life. This week's lesson, entitled *A Christmas Wish*, is based on Mark 2:1-12, and is studied in the following classes:

Fellowship Class will be taught by **Robert Dibble**.

Friendship Class will be taught by **Connie Showalter**. The class Christmas dinner will be held on Friday, December 9. A pre-dinner reception will be held at the home of **Virginia and Bill Smith**.

Journey Class will be taught by **Pam Hern**. The Christmas Party/White Elephant Gift Exchange will be on Saturday, December 17, at 7:00 p.m. at **Robyn and Gary Tyer's** home. Please sign up for food to bring.

Life Class will be taught by **Ken Lantz**. The class Christmas party will be held at the home of **Bonnie and Brock Livick** on Saturday, December 10, at 7:00 p.m. Plan to bring an exotic white elephant!

Lydia Class will be taught by **Emily Tuck**.

Reuben Alley Class will be taught by **Lynn Dickerson**.

Robert Smart Class

Seekers Class will be taught by **Rob Spicer**. The class Christmas party will be held at the home of **Harry and Barbara Boyd** on Friday, December 9 at 6:30 p.m.

TwentySomethings Class will be taught by **Heather Felts**. The class Christmas party will be held on December 16.

Discussion Class—Barbara Kinsey will present a program on "*Angels In Our Midst*." The class will enjoy a potluck dinner on Saturday, December 10, at 6:30 p.m. at the home of **Barbara Kinsey**, 740-8228. The class will meet at 6:00 p.m. in the north parking lot to carpool.

Explorers Class—The class will hear and discuss N.T. Wright's view of *Jesus and the Resurrection*.

Phoenix Class

Shepherd-Simpson Bible Study Class—The class story of Absalom's revolt against his father, King David, continues this Sunday, commencing with

II Samuel 16:1. **Bob Shepherd** will teach the class.



WEDNESDAY DINNER MENU

The adults will have roast beef, baked potato, green beans, salad bar, rolls, and lemon chess pie. The children will have hamburgers and hot dogs, potato chips, salad bar, and ice cream. For dinner reservations, call the church office, 288-1131. The reservation deadline is Tuesday at noon of each week.



Friday—9th

Kate Hunt
Rick Naschold
Maddie Phillips
Bob Smith, Sr.
Nancy Gayle Smith
Wendy Smith

Saturday—10th

Priscilla Biddle
Lee Mayo

Sunday—11th

Tricia Alford
Patsy Barr
Frank Jackson
Pat Patterson

Monday—12th

Ken Dibble
Vikki McIlwain

Wednesday—14th

Amy Matney
John Robertson

Thursday—15th

Bob Fitzgerald
Heather Gammon
Brock Livick
Theresa Price
Caroline Seward-Koskinen



Friday—9th

Doug and Janet Moyers—16 years
Cliff and DeAnne Shelton—10 years

Sunday—11th

Howard and Edith Scott—57 years

Monday—12th

Bob and Jerri Grigsby—41 years

Tuesday—13th

Jule and Nancy Bolio—16 years

Thursday—15th

Karl and Ann Garrett—60 years

AT HOME: Audrey Bradshaw, Jack Congdon,
Donald Bunn, Mary Deane,
Robbie Williams

IN HEALTHCARE: Bob Culpepper, Lakewood Manor

IN REHABILITATION: Harrison Daniel, Healthsouth
Rehabilitation

CONGRATULATIONS to Megan Carter and Jamie Baker on the birth of their daughter, Jessica Lynn, on November 30. **Deborah deTreville** is her grandmother and **Betty Martin** is her great-grandmother.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is expressed to **Charlie** and **Sherry Sorrell** upon the death of his mother, Lucy Adams Sorrell, on December 2, in Durham, North Carolina.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is expressed to **Alvin** and **Mary Mosley** upon the death of his mother, Mary Anne Perkins Mosley, on December 2, in Buckingham, Virginia.

A WARM WELCOME is extended to **Gary Burnett, Joseph Collins, Chris McGee, Tara McNeal** and **Meghan O'Neal** who made their profession of faith, and were baptized, uniting with River Road Church on December 4.



Discussion Group

MODERN THEOLOGIAN DISCUSSION GROUP TO RESUME IN JANUARY

After a two-month break during the busy holidays, the Modern Theologians Discussion Group will resume on **Thursday, January 12, 2006**. The group will discuss the book, *God's Politics – Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, by Jim Wallis. Between family visits, wrapping and unwrapping of presents, football, and high-calorie meals, sit down, catch your breath, and spend some time with this very interesting book. Then plan to join us in January for an always lively discussion. Call **George Davis** at the church, 288-1131, if you have any questions.

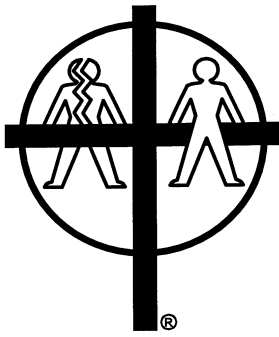


MORNING BRIDGE

The Morning Bridge Game will be played on Thursday, January 19, at 10:00 a.m., in the Reception Room. **Alice Wilkey**, 784-0289, will be hosting.

THE FLOWER CALENDAR

The calendar for 2006 will be in the Narthex after the worship service on Sunday, December 11. Anyone wishing to contribute flowers for a Sunday should see **Nancy Anderson** in the narthex at that time. The cost will be \$75.00 per Sunday.



NEW STEPHEN MINISTER TRAINING CLASS SET TO BEGIN

Pastoral Care ministry at River Road Church continues to expand as members are invited to make application to be Stephen Ministers and to attend the training class set to begin in January 2006. At the completion of the training in May, the class will be commissioned as Stephen Ministers, who will then begin providing one-to-one pastoral care to individuals of the church.

The Stephen Minister training will be conducted by Stephen Leaders: **Bob Dibble, Joan Hines, Don Powell** and **Jessica Price Vaughan**. The 50 hours of training are broken down into twenty sessions. The schedule of training will include one weekend retreat at River Road Church. The skills the Stephen Ministers learn and practice prepare them to provide a very high level of Christian caregiving. The training is intense as it explores some serious life issues. Among the training topics are:

Feeling: Yours, Mine, and Ours	Maintaining Boundaries in Caregiving
The Art of Listening	Confidentiality
Distinctively Christian Caregiving	Ministering to Those Experiencing Grief
Assertiveness: Relating Gently and Firmly	Caring for People before, during, and after Hospitalization

In addition to this training, Stephen Ministers participate in twice-monthly supervision and continuing education. All this underscores that being a Stephen Minister is a big commitment, but it will also be life-changing. **So, how does someone become a Stephen Minister?**

The first step is to pray. God has called each of us to ministry and it is through prayer that we often discern to what ministry God is calling us. As you pray, ask whether Stephen Ministry is right for you. Pray about what gifts God has given you and whether they can best be utilized as a Stephen Minister. Not everyone has gifts to be a caregiver. Among other attributes, Stephen Ministers need to be loving, patient, non-judgmental, confidential, prayerful, encouraging, and good listeners. **A next step is to look at your current responsibilities.** Not everyone who has the gifts to be a Stephen Minister can necessarily do so at this point in his or her life. Evaluate and prioritize the things you are presently doing so you can make the two-year commitment to Stephen Ministry. **Finally, potential Stephen Ministers go through an application, interview, and selection process.** One of the reasons is so the Stephen Leaders can look at all of the above factors with you and help you determine whether Stephen Ministry is right for you at this time in your life. If you have an interest in becoming a Stephen Minister, applications can be obtained from the church office or any of the above-mentioned Stephen Leaders. The deadline for applications is December 31. The selection process for training will begin in early January 2006.



HOLIDAY CHOIR REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Wednesday, December 14	6:00 p.m.	Choirs assemble in regular rehearsal rooms
	6:30 p.m.	Christmas Pageant (Cherub, Carol, Crusader, and Youth Choirs) Chancel Bells rehearse following pageant
Thursday, December 15	7:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir rehearsal
Sunday, December 18	6:00 p.m.	Youth Choir rehearsal
Wednesday, December 21	6:00 p.m.	Rehearsal for Carol and Crusader Choirs
	6:45 p.m.	Chancel Bell Choir rehearsal
Sunday, December 25		No Youth Choir
Wednesday, December 28		No Children's Choirs and No Chancel Bell Choir
Thursday, December 29		No Chancel Choir



Missions

WMU WOMEN ON MISSION DAY GROUP: The Day Group will meet on **Tuesday, December 13, at 10:30 a.m.** in the Reception Room. Penny Jenkins, assistant facilitator of the South-West Group of the WMU of the Richmond Baptist Association, will be the speaker. Penny will share some of the experiences she had teaching English during the several missions trips to China. Lunch will be served after the meeting.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING FOR GLOBAL MISSIONS: The December emphasis on global missions sponsored by the Woman's Missionary Union and the Board of Missions has begun. Based on John 6:35, this year's offering theme is *Famished Lands...The Bread of Life*. All of this offering goes to provide the bread of life-spiritual, emotional, medical, educational and economic-to the most neglected of the world, those with the greatest needs and the fewest resources. Last Wednesday evening Nomie Derani, a CBF missionary to Arabs in the Brooklyn, New York area, gave her testimony. As a young muslim woman, she had been sent to the United States to reclaim her brother who had become Christian. Instead, she herself converted and became an enthusiastic witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. 100% of the offering for Global Missions supports Nomie and the 360+ other CBF missionaries at work in the United States and around the world. Offering envelopes are available in the pew racks or can be found in your personal envelope packet.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORK DAY ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2006: Volunteers will meet at the church and carpool to the work site to do painting, installing cabinets, trim work, plus hundreds of little things that have to be done to finish the house. All inside work. Volunteers must be at least 16. **Sid Hays** is the contact person for this wonderful opportunity. Call Sid at 288-7682 if you can help.

RIVER ROAD CHURCH TO SEND MISSION TEAMS TO BRAZIL AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN 2006: Church volunteers are being recruited for mission projects in Brazil and the Czech Republic in 2006. Under the auspices of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board, River Road Church will send a team of adult volunteers to each of these countries. First, a team will go to Brazil, March 6-17, to assist in the construction of a new church and children's leadership in Maringá, Paraná. Then later, another team will travel to the Czech Republic during the period of July 31-August 11 for similar work. Here's where you come in. If you would be interested in being a mission volunteer, please call the church office, 288-1131. A \$100 deposit will reserve your name on the list of volunteers. If you have questions about what it entails, contact **Robert Dibble**. Consider prayerfully your involvement in one or both of these meaningful opportunities. It will change your life!

A FINAL REPORT ON "PROJECT BACKPACK": Dian Suder, coordinator of the Richmond area "Project Backpack" campaign to help children displaced by Hurricane Katrina, sent the following report to churches and organizations participating in the effort. Note that 457 backpacks were contributed by area families during the 41-day campaign. Of that number, River Road Church donated 65, or 14.3%. Thanks to everyone in the church family.

Dear Friends,

Thanks to you 457 backpacks filled with age-appropriate school supplies were collected and delivered to children affected by Hurricane Katrina. I know our family is still winding down from this effort, but unfortunately the people affected by this disaster are still feeling the loss, hurt and sadness. Since we have all found each other through "Project Backpack," please accept my thanks for helping my family take on a project that was larger than we ever dreamed. Here is a breakdown of where your donations went: 41 backpacks and baby bags to St. Joseph's villa in Richmond, Virginia; 53 to Woodlake Methodist Church for mission trips to Gulfport, Mississippi; 150 to the City of Richmond Public School System for incoming relocated students; and 213 to Hattisburg, Mississippi Public School System. The drive for backpacks and school supplies was published between September 15 and October 26, 2005 in the Richmond area. The total end result has been 50,000 backpacks collected nationwide without any ads or money spent. Just a few emails. "Project Backpack" has pretty much ended for backpacks, but it certainly had a great effect on my family and the many people I met along the way. It proved to us that, yes, every person can make a difference in the lives of others. You just have to step up to the plate and be a member of the community. You have all proven that. Thanks to everyone who was involved in this project. It was a pleasure and an honor to meet each of you and learn about your families and groups. Each one of you made a tremendous difference in a child's life by getting involved and taking charge. Have a great holiday season and thank you again!

Dian Suder

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS



BREAKFAST AT BETHLEHEM—Sunday, December 11, 9:00 a.m., elementary area. This special breakfast is for Preschool 4's and 5's through Elementary grade 5, prior to Sunday School. We will make a special star of Bethlehem and have breakfast together. And we will hear from a very special Christmas guest! Come celebrate with us!

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT— is Wednesday evening, December 14.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP—There will be no Children's Worship on December 25 or January 1. Children's Worship will resume on January 8.

STUDENT MINISTRY NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR YOUTH

Sunday, December 11	5:30	Snack Supper—Dinner provided by Norma Hays
	6:00	Youth Choir rehearsal
	6:30	Bible Study
Wednesday, December 14	5:30	Dinner
	6:30	Christmas Pageant—no other youth events this evening
Sunday, December 18	5:30	Youth Christmas Party

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 5:30 p.m.: Celebrate the season with your friends and families. Youth, parents and siblings are invited to a Christmas dinner in the Fellowship Hall. This is a potluck dinner, so please bring a dish to share! Please RSVP to **Mary Mann** by Wednesday, December 14.

RIVER ROAD CHURCH PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

River Road Church Preschool is currently receiving applications for the 2006/2007 school year. The school serves children from ages 2 through age 5, with morning and afternoon programs. There is a Developmental Program for two-year-olds, a nursery school for three and four-year-olds, and a junior kindergarten for five-year-olds. There are also some extended day programs. The school is a vital ministry of River Road Church. It presently serves over 300 families in the church and community, helping them meet the social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs of their children. This developmental school has been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children since 1987, is licensed by the State of Virginia, and often serves as a model program for local universities. The school is staffed by very qualified and dedicated professionals, who, in addition to their teaching responsibilities, are often called upon to share their expertise with other child care professionals on the state and national level.

Church members who would like to have their children in one of the programs will receive priority for applications turned in to the preschool office by January 9, 2006. Application forms and additional information are available in the preschool office. You may also call **Margaret Collins** at 282-4368. In addition to these programs, there is an Infant and Toddler Enrichment Program for children under the age of 2. Children may attend this program one morning a week. Application to this program may be made at any time, with church members receiving priority. Information is available in the preschool office.

December

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, December 9	Decorating the Sanctuary , 9:00 a.m.
Saturday, December 10	River Roadsters to Washington, D.C. , 9:00 a.m., meet in north parking lot
Sunday, December 11	Nativity Festival , displays throughout the church Breakfast at Bethlehem (Preschool and Elementary) , 9:00 a.m., Elementary Area Recreation Committee , 5:00 p.m., Archives Room Concert , 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary
Monday, December 12	Labyrinth Walk , 12:00-8:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall Civil War Forum , 7:00 p.m., Journey Classroom
Tuesday, December 13	WMU Women on Mission Day Group , 10:30 a.m., Reception Room
Wednesday, December 14	Stephen Ministry Supervision , 4:30 p.m., Church Parlor Christmas Pageant , 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary Intern Committee , 7:30 p.m., Church Parlor
Sunday, December 18	Stephen Ministry Supervision , 9:00 a.m., Church Parlor Vesper Service of Remembrance , 6:00 p.m., Chapel Board of Administration , 7:00 p.m., Assembly Room

THE LABYRINTH: WALKING A SACRED PATH

On the floors of several European cathedrals are drawings, now often unnoticed, that served an important function during life in the Middle Ages. Called labyrinths, the spiraling pathways provided an opportunity for the faithful to “go on pilgrimage.” Though sometimes used as a form of penance, more generally the labyrinth served as an occasion for a walking meditation as a “pilgrim” slowly moved toward the center and then returned with a renewed sense of focus about God and the responsibility of the self in God’s world. Our canvas labyrinth is a replica of the one originally laid in the 12th century in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France. River Road Church cordially invites you to make a “Sacred Walk” a part of your preparation for the coming of the Christ child in this Season of Advent and/or a part of your preparation for the new year. Written material about the labyrinth’s history and symbolism will be available and you may spend reflective time after your walk. Bring a friend or come alone. Allow approximately 45-60 minutes for the labyrinth experience. The next walks are scheduled for Monday, December 12, 2005, 12:00–8:00 p.m. and Saturday, December 31, 2005, 12:00-6:00 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall.



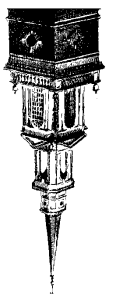
Visit us on the web at www.riverroadchurchbaptists.org

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River Road Church, Baptist
8000 River Road
Richmond, VA 23229-8415
(804) 288-1131
Fax: (804) 282-9172
E-mail: thespire@rrcb.org



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