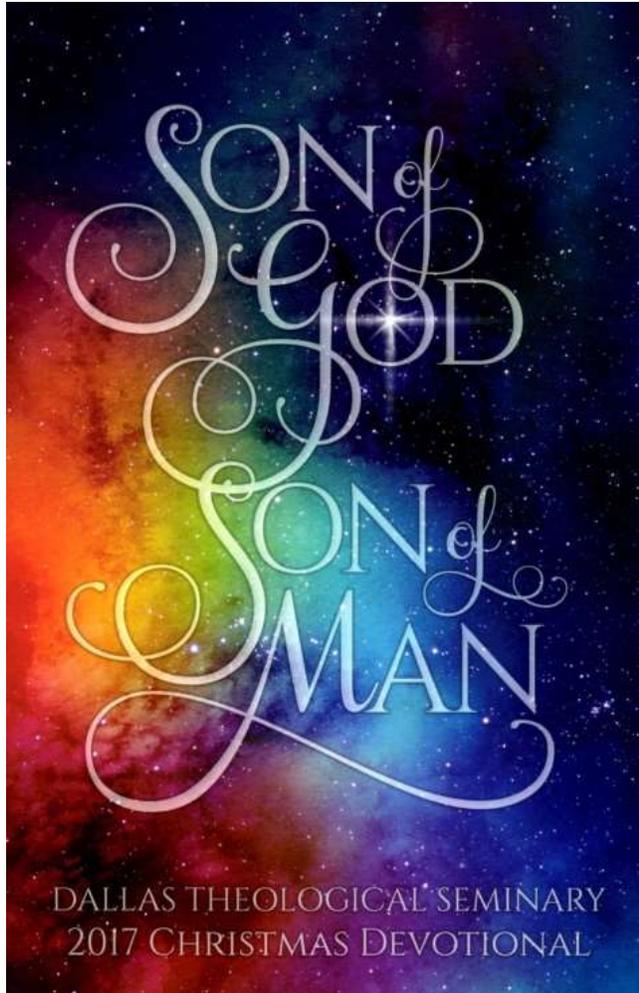


2017 December Devotional

On December 1 our church family will embark on reading 25 daily devotions from the same resource. If you did not receive a copy of that booklet, there are still copies available on the table in The Gathering Place.



Won't you plan to join us on this amazing journey of reflection, at your own convenient time and place? It will make this Christmas season richer and fuller as we reflect on the first advent of our magnificent Savior.

Through Christ,

Les

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, Nov. 29

5:15 p.m. Movin' Up

Thursday, Nov. 30

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Sunday, Dec. 3

9:00 a.m. – Sunday School

10:05 a.m. – Kids' Time

10:15 a.m. – Worship Service

Teachers This Sunday

Nursery

Evalyn Fate / Sydney Collins

Kids' Time

Ruth Ann Monroe / Chris McFarren

LOL

Remain in service

Last Week

Nov. 26, 2017

Attendance

Worship Service – 106

Sunday School - 49

Stewardship Report

Giving Toward:

Current Expense	\$2182.00
Missions	\$85.00
Building/ Maint. Fund	\$46.00
Thanksgiving	\$25.00
Total:	\$2338.00



Cookie Donations

The Connection Center, which FBC supports, is having a cookie walk. They have asked if our church could provide six dozen or more cookies or other holiday treats - like fudge. There is a sign-up sheet in the foyer, if you can help. They need to be delivered to The Connection Center at 116 S. Johnson Street on Thursday, Dec. 7 from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. or Friday, Dec. 8 from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Board Minutes Available

On the foyer table, you can pick up a copy of the November minutes of our boards, along with the minutes from our annual business meeting. We will put the board minutes out toward the end of each month. We made 15 copies, and will adjust this number based on how many copies are taken.

Homebound Goody Bags

The five goody bags for our homebound friends are set up in The Gathering Place for your donations. We will collect items until their delivery on December 10.

Poinsettias

You have the opportunity to purchase a poinsettia in honor or in memory of someone. The flowers will be used to decorate the sanctuary and you may take them home after the Christmas Eve Service. They cost \$6.00 and the order deadline is December 4. There are order forms on the table in the foyer. You may turn in your completed form, along with payment, to the church office or place it in the offering plate. Make checks payable to First Baptist.

Winter Collection



We will collect mittens, gloves, and hats to donate to local school children. Please leave your donations on or beneath the mitten tree located in The Gathering Place.

Winter Wonderland of Lights

We have a display at the Ouabache State Park's Wonderland of Lights. The event will be open December 1, 2, and 3, and then again December 8, 9, and 10 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. After that, the Wonderland of Lights will be open nightly beginning Friday, December 15 through Sunday, December 31 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. A \$5.00 donation is collected at the Main Gate.

Christian Education Meeting

The Christian Education Board will have their monthly meeting next Wednesday, December 6 at 6:30 p.m.

It Is Not Too Late

Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol" is usually understood as a tale relating to the need for change and transformation of the soul. It has been told and retold in a variety of forms, with the lead character being played by personalities ranging from Bill Murray to Mickey Mouse and Mr. Magoo. A 3D version starring Jim Carrey brought the tale into our modern technological age. These cute adaptations make the story accessible to children, but they often miss the essential point. Scrooge is financially successful but a failure at life. Reduced to its essence, "A Christmas Carol" is the story of an older adult and his quest for spiritual and emotional healing and significance.

Numerous scenes reveal Scrooge as a very angry person. Anger is often a mask for sadness. Actually, Scrooge's tendency toward isolation, his bitterness, his limited relational skills, and his scarcity of friends all point to someone struggling with a form of depression. He has pushed everybody away, including family, potential friends, and employees. For some unknown reason, Bob Cratchit keeps working for Scrooge despite brutal mistreatment. Scrooge's "bah humbug" is less a contempt for Christmas than a disgust for life. His pervasive greed and selfishness are merely symptoms of spiritual and emotional emptiness.

Treatment Session I – The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge to the country school where Scrooge attended as a boy. Scrooge weeps as he remembers the loneliness he experienced as a child. The sight of his long deceased sister Fran reminds him of a time when he was nurtured, but also of his father's coldness. He sees clearly the choices he could have made. Fezziwig and the path of joy. Belle and the path of love. He is confronted with the consequences of his poor choices, and acknowledges for the first time the pain and suffering he has experienced as a result. His drive for money and resulting isolation have only been an effort to anesthetize himself from pain. But the pain is still there, never far from the surface, and it awakens in his tears.

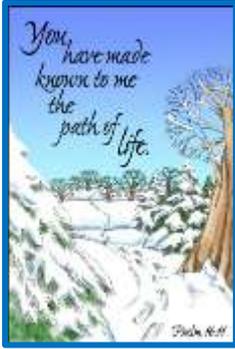
Treatment Session II – The Ghost of Christmas present helps Scrooge gain perspective. His compassion is rekindled and starts replacing gloomy self-absorption. This allows Scrooge to change the dominant story of his life. No longer limited to a story that sees himself as a victim of paternal slights and institutional callousness, Scrooge is able to put the suffering into context. Others have it worse. Others are hurting, and yet resilient. Empathy and kindness arise in his soul. Not coincidentally, the depression begins to lift at precisely this point. Caring for another begins to pull him out of his narcissism. Caring about someone else begins to bring life!

Treatment Session III – The third visitor helps take the spiritual and emotional crisis to a head. Scrooge is given a vision of the future. Facing mortality is hard enough. But things look worse yet. If he does not change, it will be as if he never lived. He will not be missed. His grave stands desolate and isolated. Thus the question: is it too late? When he wakes up in his own bed, Scrooge realizes it is not too late. There is still time! Thus awakened to life, Scrooge sees there is not only time, but there is also love. He has something to offer others besides his wealth – namely, the gift of himself. He engages in caring, mentoring relationships. He re-establishes broken family connections. Healed from the paralyzing effects of depression, Scrooge becomes the wounded healer who has compassion and vision for others. He "keeps Christmas well."

Depression can effect anybody, at any age. It can also be hidden in many forms, as the Christmas Carol reveals. Scrooge discovered it is never too late to heal. The way forward usually requires an honest self-assessment. But we can all discover there is still time, and still much we can give. It is not too late!



202 West Cherry Street
Bluffton, Indiana 46714



Homebound Members

Christian Care

Mildred Huss – Room 219B

River Terrace

Phebe Edington – Room 134
LaVera Krummen – Room 116

Markle Health and Rehabilitation

Barbara French – Room 216

As we co-labor with other churches
in our community,
this week we pray for:
Covenant Chapel
Pastor Arley Higgenbotham

First Baptist Church
260-824-1558
firstbaptist@adamswells.com
fbcbluffton.com
 First Baptist Church - Bluffton, Indiana

Pastor: Les Cantrell
Cell phone: 260-273-9073
Music Director: Sarah Landell
Secretary: Debbie Cantrell

Sunday:
9:00 a.m. – Sunday School
9:50 a.m. – Coffee/Tea Time
10:05 a.m. – Kids' Time
10:15 a.m. – Worship Service