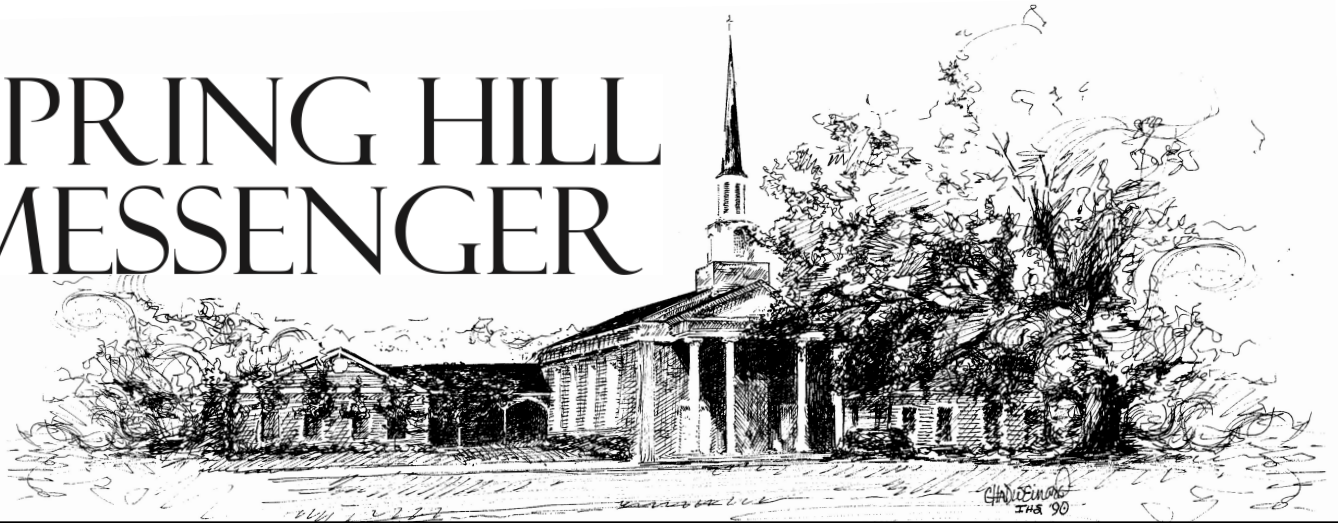


SPRING HILL MESSENGER



Spring Hill Presbyterian Church, Mobile, Alabama

Volume 82, Number 10, December 2017

“GETTING” CHRISTMAS RIGHT

DEAR CHURCH FAMILY,

What are you getting for Christmas? Maybe you are one who likes to be organized, maybe you've got a well thought through wish list. Or maybe you are one who likes to be surprised. Maybe you like gifts that are practical or maybe ones that are sentimental.

Throughout this past fall, our new Word in the Week Bible Study took a close look at the gospel of John. Now as we begin the season of Advent I find myself thinking back to the very beginning of that gospel to one of the strongest statements in the whole Bible about the importance of Jesus' birth. It is from the prologue to John's gospel that we hear loud and clear the truth that **“the word became flesh and dwelt among us.”** The poetic opening to John not only tells us who Jesus is, but also what his birth means for our world and our lives. What are we getting for Christmas? John answers that we get **1) the gift of creation and life, we get 2) the light that shines in the darkness, we get 3) “power to become children of God,”** and finally we get **4) “grace upon grace.”** So, this Advent and Christmas, as shopping and gift wrapping fill our lives and our social norms, remember what you are really getting for Christmas. In the birth of Christ you are receiving life, light, identity and grace.

Now, what are you doing for Christmas? Some of us may answer that question with a travel log: “First we're

celebrating Christmas with one part of the family here in town. Then, we'll go out of town for a few days to be with other family.” What are you doing for Christmas?

Driving, flying, hosting? Cleaning, decorating, cooking and baking?

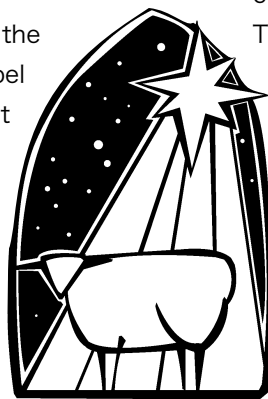
This year, I invite you to consider other ways of “doing Christmas” with your church family, namely **worshipping, fellowshiping, and sharing.**

Join us as we worship God and celebrate the coming of the Christ Child with our many special Advent worship services. December 3 is Cantata Sunday, filled with music and proclamation. On December 17, we will join in our Service of Lessons and Carols singing and remembering the prophecies and stories and Jesus' nativity. On December 24, we will begin the day with an

intergenerational worship service, and that night we will conduct our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight services. Giving praise and glory to God in our worship is the primary way we “do Christmas” as a church family.

But of course, we also join together for fellowship with friends and good food...a lot of good food. In the pages that follow you will read about many different Advent and Christmas parties and fellowship gatherings for our whole church and for various small groups. Please join your church family and grow closer to each other as we share meals and memories in the weeks ahead.

Continued next page...



...Continued from page 1

Finally, what are we doing for Christmas? We are sharing! We are giving! We are serving! Our 3rd Annual Alternative Gift Market is still running strong. You can fill out order forms and make donations all the way up until Christmas to give the gift of life-changing care through the mission agencies that we support. You can also give the gift of toys and other needs to the children at St. Mary's Home here in Mobile with our Christmas Wish List posted outside of the Fellowship Hall. And looking ahead into January you can serve with your church family at two of our early Festival of Faith projects: a Community Clean-Up Day at Lavretta Park on January 13 and our

water station on the route of the First Light Marathon on January 14.

What are you getting for Christmas? What are you doing for Christmas? In the true meaning of this season, we know that we are getting the gifts of life, light, identity and grace. And in gratitude for these gifts we respond with worship, fellowship, and service. May this Advent and Christmas be full of reminders of the presence of the Word-made-flesh who comes to dwell with us in our lives and to transform our world!

Grace and Peace,

BUZ

Christian Education At a Glance: Spring Offerings

Stop by the church to pick up a brochure with all of these dates and information inside!

Look Ahead to these Church-Wide Events:

Jan. 21: Breakfast and Festival of Faith Sign-Ups

Feb. 18: Potluck Breakfast and Annual Congregational Meeting

Feb. 25: Festival of Faith

May 6: Senior Breakfast (High School) and Graduation

May 13-27: Enneagram with Buz, Anna, and Friends

Sunday June 3: Summer Series Begins

"Pop-Up" Classes-January through May

JANUARY: BIBLE 101, PROVERBS This pop-up class will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 9:00 am on Sunday mornings and will be led by Buz Wilcoxon. Come explore wisdom and how we can grow from Proverbs.

MARCH: RAISING RESILIENT CHILDREN This pop-up class will meet Mar. 4-25 in Room 7 in the Edington Building at 9:00 am on Sundays. It's for parents of children and youth of any age. This time around the class will be more discussion based.

MARCH: PRESBYTERIAN 101 This class happens on an annual basis and helps people explore what it means to be Presbyterian. We will meet at 9 am Mar. 4-25 in Room 9 in the Edington Building. This class is geared towards new members and visitors but all are welcome.

MAY: THE ENNEAGRAM This class will meet in the Terry Room in the Edington Building at 9:00 am May 13, 20, and 27. We will be exploring the personality test called the Enneagram and its implications on our faith.

Christian Education At a Glance: Spring Offerings

Popular Sunday Classics and Week-day Delights

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

BIBLE DISCOVERY CLASS

Bible Discovery Class: Meets in the Conference Room at 9:00 on Sunday mornings. This class is for adults of all ages. In January and February, we are focusing on Faith in Action, looking at Scripture from Daniel, James, and more. March-May, they will switch gears exploring worship and acknowledging God.

CURRENT ISSUES CLASS:

Current Issues: Meets in the Terry Room in the Edington Building at 9:00 am on Sunday mornings. This class is for adults of all ages. In January they are joining Buz's Bible 101 class on Proverbs in the Fellowship Hall. During Lent (in Feb. and Mar. they will be exploring the theme of forgiveness. In April, they will be meeting with different people working with youth and children sharing the transformation it has had in their own lives.

Jan. 7-28: Bible 101, (Proverbs with Buz-during Lent)

Jan. 21: Congregational Breakfast

Feb. 4: Meeting with Beth Reinert on
Caregiving and Aging

Feb. 11: Forgiveness

Feb. 18: Annual Meeting and Potluck Breakfast

Feb. 25: Festival of Faith

Mar. 4: Forgiveness

Mar. 11: Forgiveness

Mar. 18: Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Mobile
with Merceria Ludgood

Mar. 25: Forgiveness

April 1: Easter, A Ted Talk with Pope Francis

Apr. 8-29: Building the Future Church through
Community Outreach

Week-day Delights

Word in the Week

Pastor Led Bible Study: Word in the Week: This weekly engaging Bible study will meet from 12:00-1:00 pm on Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall, Jan. 17, 24, 31. Our pastors will lead us on a tour through the book of Proverbs digging deeper from our Sunday morning discussions. You are welcome to bring your own lunch for this "brown bag" style study. Our class will break during Lent for the Lenten Mid-Week Services and will resume in mid-April.

It's not just for men anymore!

MORNING BIBLE STUDY Join us for a great time of food, fellowship, study, and prayer on the second Tuesday of every month. This breakfast isn't just for men but is now open for everyone! We meet at 7:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

"FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN"

DEAR FRIENDS,

As I have been reading the devotional materials for this Advent, I have been reminded, that Jesus was not born in a palace or even a modest home. He was born in a stable. We invite you this year, to explore Jesus' birth through a cardboard box nativity. I kind of love the idea of building a nativity out of a cardboard box. There are nativities worth thousands of dollars. I am sure if you had the money and desire you could get a nativity out of rubies and gold. But Jesus was not born in this luxury. A cardboard box seems kind of fitting. It isn't fancy; it isn't always completely stable. It can seem rather temporary and ordinary. We throw away or recycle cardboard boxes all the time. Yet, I am reminded that God takes ordinary things and uses them for extraordinary purposes. God takes an ordinary stable and makes it the birth place of our Savior. God takes a feeding trough, a manger and uses that for the Messiah's cradle. God



takes two ordinary people and calls them to be Christ's parents. God takes the ordinary parts and places of our lives, and uses them for extraordinary things—if only we have eyes to see it!

We take ordinary candles and light them each week, counting down to Jesus' birth. Dozens of you make ordinary treats and sandwiches, and they are used to console grieving families, offer community and fellowship, and even to feed hungry teenagers. And we take bread and juice, ordinary elements. With them we remember Christ and the Last Supper, we are blessed, filled,

and sent out again.

As you create your cardboard box nativity and read the devotions written by our congregation members, may you be filled with hope at our God who uses ordinary things, just like us, to bring the Messiah into the world.

PEACE,

ANNA FULMER

.....

Children's Ministry:

Our children's Sunday school class will begin December by Isaiah's prophecy of a Savior. We will also learn about the advent wreath and what each candle represents. We will continue learning about the Christmas story and how shepherds felt when an angel appeared to them. We will also talk about how Mary and Joseph felt when the shepherds and wise men showed up to see their tiny baby.

We will continue our stories into children's church with extra activities. In January, we will begin the new year by learning about the life of Jesus. The children will hear the story of Jesus calming the storm, Jesus healing a little girl, and Jesus feeding five thousand people. We will discuss how each of these stories show the miraculous power of Jesus, as well as his care and compassion of all people.

Children's Ministry Save the Dates:

March 25, 9 am Children's Lent, Holy Week,
and Easter Class (for parents too)

April 29, 9 am Presbyterian 101 for Kids (and parents)

RETREAT!

...The Youth Kind

Feb. 2-4 Youth Retreat: This February youth 6th-12th grade are invited to our Spring Retreat. There will be two separate retreats happening at the same time: one for middle schools and the other for high schoolers. We will meet at the church at 4:30 pm, travel to Living Rivers Camp (a Presbyterian Camp near Birmingham). This retreat will have youth from across Alabama there, so it will be a fun and full time! We will return Sunday afternoon. RSVP by emailing Anna Fulmer or calling 342-1550

Music Notes

by Randy Sheets, Director of
Music Ministries and Organist



WHEN SIN DEPARTS BEFORE HIS GRACE

Cantata Sunday and Words from Back to the Source
Advent and Christmas Services at Spring Hill Presbyterian Church

IT IS A TRADITION AT SPRING HILL PRESBYTERIAN for the first Sunday in December to be Cantata Sunday, when our worship includes a major musical presentation by the Chancel Choir, soloists, and orchestra. This year's Cantata Sunday follows on the heels of our Back to the Source worship series in which we have focused on key words and concepts of our faith, some of which we will sing on that Sunday.

Among the words and phrases that the choir will sing on Cantata Sunday, one line from Sussex Carol resonates particularly strongly—**“when sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place.”** Here, in one phrase, are two of our key words from the Back to the Source series: “sin” and “grace.” How remarkable that in such few words, we are reminded that we are all human, that we are all sinners, but that we are brought to fullness of life not by our own goodness, striving, or power, but by God's grace freely given to each of us. Sussex Carol asserts that because of God's grace, angels and people may sing with joy to see the newborn King—the baby who brings this grace to us.

Other Cantata Sunday carols will sing of the familiar characters of the Christmas story—the Baby Jesus, the shepherds who hear the angels' song and hurry to see the Christ Child—and the wisemen who, by the light of the Star, journey from afar to bring their homage—and of course, the angels, whose song pierces the darkness of night, proclaiming the birth: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth!

The Cantata Sunday songs, along with scripture and poetry read by our pastors and by Wes Baldwin, resonate with another theme of the Christmas season, a theme that is so common that we may need to take special care to break through mental inertia to recognize anew its deep significance for our lives—that theme is Light.

Poetry by Susan Palo Cherwien simply and beautifully leads us— from the light accompanying the appearance of the angels— to the light of the Star—to Christ, who is The Light, the Morningstar. Her poetry is steeped in scripture, with images here from Old Testament prophecies and the Magnificat in Luke.

Await the hand of God,
Who, loving, will create
From formless darkness, light,
From winding pathways, straight,
The reed now bruised, God will not break,
Nor quench the dimly burning wick.

Await the hand of God,
Who wondrous deeds has done:
The lowly, God has raised,
The mighty are unwon;
The former things have come to pass,
And God declares new things at last.

Here are more lines of light from another poem by the same author:

From the dwelling place of light,
Summoned from its velvet home,
Rising shines the star in night,
Light no dark can overcome.
Rise, O Star, and clear our eyes;
World and need lie dim concealed;
Rend the dark of inward skies;
Shine, and all shall be revealed.

Let it be our prayer that, during this Advent and Christmastide, we bring our gifts of heart and song to the Christ Child, who by grace frees us from the bondage of sin, giving us light and life, health and peace.



Opportunities for Fellowship, Service and Study

The Fellowship Committee Pulls out all the Stops!

The Fellowship Committee invites you to:

Christmas Cheer- December 10th after church in the Fellowship Hall. We will serve cookies, hot cocoa and have crafts for the kids!

Christmas Eve Breakfast get together at 9:00 in the Fellowship Hall. We will serve coffee, juice, muffins and doughnuts.



Spring Hill Mother's Day Out
& Week Day School cordially invite you and
your family to our preK1
Annual Christmas Program.

**When: Wednesday, December 13
12 Noon**

Where: The sanctuary at SHPC

Pre-K and Pre-K2 will present songs we have
learned in Chapel this year as well as classic
Christmas carols. Come join us as we celebrate
Jesus' birth and spread Christmas cheer.

Schedule for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Activities:

There will be no Sunday school on Dec. 31. Sunday school will resume Jan. 7.

Worship Sunday, December 24 at 10:30 am:

We invite our families to worship together on this Christmas Day. Our worship service will welcome children of all ages. We want our children age 3-1st grade to worship with us this Sunday instead of going to Children's Church. Nursery will be available for children 2 and younger (but they are always welcome in church too). Do not worry if your child is a little loud—we are pretty sure the baby Jesus cried too! We look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior with all of God's children together.

Awake! Arise!

Breakfast Bible Study and Church-wide Christmas Breakfast

Over the last two years our Men's Morning Bible Study has been going strong and we have enjoyed the chance to meet together, study together, eat together, and pray together. The group has decided that we would like to expand our fellowship and invite our whole church family (women and men) to all come together once a month for a Breakfast Bible Study on the **second Tuesday of every month. We will begin this church-wide pattern this December on Tuesday, December 11.** Come at 7:00 AM for a special time of fellowship before work or starting your day. We will have a few "Christmas surprises" this month!

Joy Gift

The Joy Gift
Offering is taken
once a year at
Christmas by
Presbyterian
congregations to
support the Board of Pensions for the
Assistance Programs and for the
Committee on Higher Education to
support Presbyterian racial and ethnic
schools and colleges. Special
envelopes will be in the pews on

December 17.



Back Pack for Kids Mission - Anyone can help! Join Us

We meet on the first Saturday of the month to prepare back packs for children in need with nutritious, easy-to-prepare weekend food. The Back Pack for Kids Mission supplies meals to children that would have nothing to eat on the weekend. If you would like to furnish food for the mission, please place it in the Back Pack barrel in the Bride Room. There is a flyer in the hallway explaining the program, along with food suggestions. Also, monetary support is greatly appreciated. Please write your check out to Spring Hill Presbyterian Church with a note that the check is for Back Pack Missions. We will meet on **December 2 and January 6 in the Bullard Building**, room 215 at 9:00 AM to assemble the back packs. Thank you to all that have contributed to this worthy mission and anyone that would like to help assemble the bags is welcome.



LET'S DECK THE HALLS!!!

Everyone is invited to join in the annual **Hanging of the Greens** at SHPC on **Saturday, December 9**. We meet in the Bullard Building at 9:00 a.m. where we will make wreaths to adorn the walls of the sanctuary. If you can provide greenery, it needs to be left at the side door of the Bullard Building Friday or brought on Saturday morning. Greenery needed: magnolia without the white blight, white or small needle pine, smilax and anything else. Bring simple finger food to be enjoyed at lunch time. We are usually finished by noon. This is a fun time of fellowship and sharing the beauty of the sanctuary being decorated for Christmas! Willingness to help and participate is the only requirement. Come and be a part of a meaningful annual gathering!

Advent Booklets

Advent Devotional
Booklets are
available in the main
hall and narthex.

Many thanks to
Karen Spaulding for
the beautiful cover

design. (note: the
original oil painting that appears on the
cover is on display in the church library)



PW Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team meets
Wednesday, December 6 at 9:30 a.m. in the
Conference Room.

Circles will meet on Wednesday, December 14
as follows:

- #1 at 10:00 a.m. in the Bride's Room
- #2 at 6:00 p.m. in the Parlor
- #3 at 9:30 a.m. on the Parlor

May 9, 2017 – Birthday Luncheon and Installation
of Officers. Budget presented
June 13-15, 2018 AL/MS Women's Conference,
Brierwood PC, Jackson, MS
August 2-5, 2018 Church-wide Gathering,
Louisville, KY

Reminder:

The Spring Hill Presbyterian Church Foundation Trust – Don't forget that this Trust exists for managing and disbursing money and other properties left to "Spring Hill Presbyterian Church" in your will (or by a lifetime gift) which could be your own special Spiritual Legacy left for the use and benefit of the Church.

Wheel-A-Meal No Cooking Required!

Wheel-A-Meal is one of the local mission projects that Spring Hill Presbyterian supports. The ministry is supported by monthly contributions from the participating churches: Saint Ignatius Catholic; Saint Paul's Episcopal; Spring Hill Baptist, Spring Hill Presbyterian, the plate collection from the annual Ecumenical Service as well as other donations. The Mission is to deliver lunch meals to the needy and elderly five days a week in the 36608 area. There are approximately 50 volunteers involved, delivering meals through 4 routes 5 days a week. These meals are paid for by the recipients or, in case of hardship, delivered at no charge. At present, we are delivering 105 meals per week. Wheel -A-Meal is managed by a board of 15 members, consisting of representatives from each of the participating churches. It is a non-profit organization and donations are welcomed and can be mailed to Wheel-A-Meal, 10 Westminster Way, Mobile AL 36608.

LECTIONERY FOR THE LORD'S DAY: DECEMBER, 2017

3- Cantata Sunday
10- Isaiah 9:2-7 & 11:1-9
17- Lessons and Carols
24- Luke 2: 1-20
31- Matthew 2: 1-12

LECTIONERY FOR THE LORD'S DAY: JANUARY, 2018

7- Mark 1: 4-11
14- John 1: 43-51
21- Mark 1: 14-20
28- Mark 1: 21-28

Interfaith Community Worship Service

**"Do Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly
with Your God"**

**On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, January 15 at 1:00 PM
Calloway Smith Middle School**

350 N Lawrence St, Mobile, AL 36603
Sponsored by L'Arche Mobile, Mobile United,
and other local churches and organizations Let's
share Christ's love during the holiday season with
these precious children!

SANCTUARY FLOWERS GIVE TWICE!

Each Sunday, the sanctuary flowers are given by a member usually in honor or memory of a loved one. There are several dates open on the flower calendar for 2018. If you would like to reserve a Sunday, please call the church office or email sconnell@springhillpresbyterian.org.

Also, each Sunday after the worship service, the sanctuary flowers are delivered to members who are hospital patients or shut-in (either at home or in a facility). It is a very rewarding experience and wonderful ministry of the church to reach out to members unable to attend worship.

**We need volunteers to deliver the flowers
in 2018 and it's coming up soon!** If you are
available to do this on a Sunday, please call the
church office (342-1550) or email Sallie at
sconnell@springhillpresbyterian.org.



We Rejoice.

We rejoice with Margaret Miller in the birth of twin granddaughters, Evangelina Amelia and Lyanna Aislin Miller, on November 14 (Parents are Jeremy and Julia Miller).



We Share in Sorrow.

The prayers and sympathy of the congregation are with Mary Byrd and Barkley Shreve in the death of Mary's husband and Barkley's father, Judge Bob Byrd, on October 29, with Kim Rice in the death of her mother, Phyllis Trimble, on October 29 and with the family of Doris McGowan in her death on November 1.



**Memorials have
been received
for the following:**

Joe Dan Dunnam
Joe Croom
Bob Byrd
Doris McGowan

From the following:

Ben & Martha Harris
Mitch & Sally Cobb
Bonney Irwin
Carroll & La Rone Bow
Cort & Susan Schlichting
Roy & Sue Martino
Michael & Celia Delaney
Vernon & Sallie Hunter
Norman & Nancy McCrummen
Dick & Lila Pennington
Murray & Anne Meador
Phyllis Feibelman
Martha Zuelke
John & Susan Leach
Nancy & Billy Melton
Stephen Brown
Mary Lee Elden
Kenneth & Beverly McAuliffe
Gulfview Development &
Construction, LLC
Sylvia & Doug Smith
Harriet Rutherford
Bill & Perrin Drew
Carolyn Stephenson
Alix & Bill Hardie
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas M. Benjamin
Lynn & Kirby Bland
Sam Strada
Robins & Morton
Mr. & Mrs. Brooks Milling
Ferrell & Pauline Anders
Graham McClintock
Kenneth & Elizabeth Whitlock
William Phelps
William & Melba Howard
Lisa & Tommy Clement
John & Phyllis Mostellar
Architectural Heritage Inc.
Rocky & Danette McMichen

| Church Calendar: December 2017 | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 3 | Cantata Sunday worship service |
| 5 | Committees |
| 6 | Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team – 9:30 am. |
| 7 | Writing & Spirituality – 2:30 p.m. |
| 9 | Hanging of the Greens |
| 10 | In worship Children's choirs will sing and Spring Hill Ringers will ring Holiday Cheer |
| 12 | Churchwide Christmas Breakfast – 7:00 a.m. Session – 6:00 p.m. Diaconate – 7:00 p.m. |
| 13 | Circles Preschool Christmas Music Program – Noon in the sanctuary |
| 17 | Service of Lessons and Carols |
| 22 | Church Office closed |
| 24 | Christmas Eve breakfast – 9:00 a.m. 10:30 Worship 5:00 & 9:00 p.m. Candlelight Services (Communion at 9:00 p.m.) |
| 25-26 | Church Office closed |

| Church calendar: January 2018 | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Church Office closed |
| 3 | Presbyterian Women Coordination Team – 9:30 a.m. |
| 4 | Writing & Spirituality- 2:30 p.m |
| 7 | Officer Ordination & Installation of New Officers during worship |
| 9 | Breakfast Bible Study |
| 10 | Circles |
| 15 | Church Office Closed – MLK |
| 16 | Newsletter Deadline – 9:00 a.m. Session – 6:00 p.m. Diaconate – 7:00 p.m. |
| 17 | Pastor's Bible Study – Noon |
| 19 | Officer Retreat |
| 20 | COLT (Church Officer Leadership Training – 8:30 – 12:30 at Spanish Fort Presbyterian |
| 21 | Communion |
| 24 | Pastor's Bible Study - Noon |
| 30 | Prayer Shawl Ministry- 10:00 a.m. |
| 31 | Pastor's Bible Study - Noon |



Spring Hill Presbyterian Church
10 Westminster Way
Mobile, AL 36608

www.shpc.us

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Merry Christmas from the Staff!

