

Troup Baptist Association

My Swan Song

Swan song, noun: “A person’s final public performance or professional activity before retirement.”

January 1st, 2001, was my first day of employment with the Troup Baptist Association, as your Associational Missionary. Back then, I could barely spell Associational Missionary, and sure didn’t have a clue as to what one was supposed to do! December 31st, 2021, twenty-one years to the day, I will retire from my position as your Associational Missionary. And hey, I still struggle to spell it and know what one is supposed to do! In fact, when I announced my retirement to the Administration Team, after the initial shock subsided, they asked to see my job description. I laughed and said something to the effect of, “Ha! You’ve got to be kidding. I haven’t had a job description the entire twenty-one years I’ve been here. I’ve just been winging it! My job description has been to tell y’all what to do - and then tell you that you will enjoy doing it!” (Of course I was joking about the last part!)

Not long after I started, I began to utilize this format to write and publish my

Pastoral Nuggets. Somewhere around 250 times you have read my ramblings. In essence, I have used this medium to vicariously open a window for you, allowing you to both see into my world and take this journey of a lifetime with me. Along with getting to know me, you have gotten to know my wife, Marianne, our children and their spouses, our grandchildren, my momma and daddy, my brothers, my sister, and other family members. You have rejoiced with me in my Spiritual victories and prayed for me in my defeats. You have agreed with me, disagreed with me, laughed both at and with me, cried with me, gotten angry over political, religious, and societal issues with me, worshipped with me, and at the end of 2020, you mourned with Marianne and me in the death of our precious granddaughter, Abbie. Thank you for taking this journey with me!

During the past twenty-one years, God has allowed me to get to know, love, work with, and to be loved and supported by some of the greatest pastors ever. As I think of the “Old Guard,” of pastors, of which I am a part, (or as Bryan Geter and I refer to ourselves, the “Old Warhorses”) I think of pastors such as: Max McCord, Paul Baxter, Bobby

(The Parson) Robinson, that “Prince of Pastors,” Olin McClain, Jerome “The Ship” Shipman, and the most faithful pastor I have ever had the privilege to meet, befriended, and work with, bar none, Wendell Brown. These, along with the “Young Guard” of pastors, too numerous to mention, have poured themselves into me and made me better than I am. And lest I forget, let me quickly mention the friendships I was privileged to forge along the way with the lay members in all the churches.

As with any meaningful and worthwhile endeavor, I have experienced both joys and disappointments along the way. And I’ve made friends, and sadly, some enemies. That’s just the way life works. But if I somehow had the magical power to go back and do things differently, I doubt I would. You see, it’s the totality of all the ingredients that give the stew its flavor. I am blessed beyond measure that the joys I’ve experienced along the way have far exceeded any disappointments.

There are many titles that apply to my life. The first title was: Son. Then came brother, husband, daddy, father-in-law, pawpaw, and friend. But somewhere in the middle of it all, I picked

up the title of Pastor, which ultimately led to the title of Associational Missionary. And while I don’t know what the final years of my life may hold, I do know this, when anybody views the Spiritual trophy case of my life, the twenty-one years I spent as your Associational Missionary will be on prominent display as one of greatest titles of my life!

As I draw this Swan Song to a close, I do so by highlighting a few other people who have made me better than I am: Marion McCord, who graciously stayed on as my administrative assistant for my first year, allowing me time to get my feet under me. Dottie Henson and Angela Maddux, you have made me look like a hero! And to my darling wife, Marianne. You were the consummate First Lady of the Troup Baptist Association. You were there with me every step of the way. I could not have done this without your support. I love you!

As I bid you a very heartfelt adieu, I leave with no regrets, rather, a boatload of friendships, blessings, and fond memories that I will cherish forever. It has been quite a ride. Thank you for making it possible – and for taking it with me.

Brother Aaron

Association News

Association - On November 1, Associational Missionary Aaron McCollough announced his retirement from the Troup Baptist Association effective December 31, 2021. Brother Aaron has served as the Associational Missionary for 21 years beginning on January 1, 2001. A Retirement Reception was held for Brother Aaron & Mrs. Marianne on Sunday afternoon, December 5 at First Baptist on the Square's New Life Building. The McColloughs received many cards and gifts from pastors, friends and family who came out to congratulate them. Georgia Baptist State Missionary Ricky Thrasher presented Brother Aaron with a new Bible as well as other gifts for Brother Aaron and Mrs. Marianne. Troup Baptist Moderator Derek Williams, on behalf of the association, presented Brother Aaron with a plaque commemorating appreciation for his 21 years of service as the Associational Missionary. Vice-Moderator Andy Buchanan presented to Brother Aaron and Mrs. Marianne on behalf of the association, the gift of an Alaskan Cruise! Another very special presentation came from Berta Weathersbee Elementary School faculty. Along with a gift basket of assorted goodies, each of the four faculty members told what the Partnership in Education with Troup Baptist has meant to them. The reception finger foods and cakes were provided by First Baptist in West Point and Sloppy Pig Catering. Going forward, the Administration Team of the association will serve as a search committee. Please be in prayer for this committee and the Troup Baptist Association as they prepare to seek and find the one that God would have to serve in this position.



Above: Marianne & Aaron, Derek Williams & Andy Buchanan

Below: Barbie Whitley, Marianne & Aaron McCollough, Stephanie Walker, Bridget Stanley and Lynn Hadden



Troup Baptist Association

Mission Statement:

The Troup Baptist Association is a Spiritual, educational, and community resource that, through cooperative fellowship, equips pastors, staff, and churches as they seek to fulfill The Great Commission of Jesus Christ.



Above: Marianne & Aaron McCollough with Ricky Thrasher of GBMB

Association - The final of three Medicare Consultation days was held on Monday, November 29 with Belinda Meadows of Three Rivers Regional Commission. Everyone said they received very helpful and unbiased information. If you didn't get an appointment but would like one, you may call Belinda at 678-552-2839 to arrange a consultation time. For those who are on Medicare Advantage plans, there will be Medicare Advantage Open Enrollments beginning January 1 and continuing through March 31, 2022. This is a time when you can change from one advantage plan to another or go back to original Medicare and pick up a drug plan. If you have any questions, you may call your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP GEORGIA CARES). You may also call Belinda Meadows at 678-552-2839 or email her: bmeadows@threeriversrc.com.

Association - Church Prayer List

For December 2021, please pray for following churches:

Week of December 5, 2021 - Bethlehem Baptist Church
Week of December 12, 2021 - Callaway Baptist Church
Week of December 19, 2021 - Concord Baptist Church
Week of December 26, 2021 - Confidence Missionary Baptist Church

For January 2022, please pray for following churches:

Week of January 2, 2022 - Creekside Baptist Church
Week of January 9, 2022 - Davidson Baptist Church
Week of January 16, 2022 - Dunson Baptist Church
Week of January 23, 2022 - East LaGrange Baptist Church
Week of January 30, 2022 - East Vernon Baptist Church

Please pray for God to bless these churches and meet their needs.

Church News & Announcements

Baptist Tabernacle (BTC) - added two new members to their church family! "Praise God! We are so thankful for what God is doing at our church." • The Food Closet served 290 individuals giving away 121 boxes of food, 308 meals to shut-ins and 120 backpacks to children at Clearview Elementary for weekend food. The Clothes Closet served 161 families and gave away 16 coats. The Food Closet and Clothes Closet is open every Thursday from 9 to 11 am. • A Blood Drive was held on November 29 from 2-7 pm. • The Awana's children collected donations for Thanksgiving Feed a Family. The Children made cards and helped to pack the boxes. They were able to give out 20 Thanksgiving boxes. Most of the boxes went to Clearview Elementary School families. Each box included a turkey and everything needed for a great meal. "Thanks for the donations and hard work that made this project successful." • The Veterans were recognized on Sunday, November 7. "We appreciate those who served and we thank all of you very much." • BTC will partner again with Clearview Elementary School to help those who are in need for Christmas. Participating in giving gifts to others is a true blessing. "We look forward to this project each year."

• BTC will participate in the Gideons "Birthday for Jesus" which provides a simple and fun way to share the good news of Jesus Christ. By donating, you are helping to send God's Word across the globe. • The Awana's will be Christmas Caroling on December 15 from 6:30 - 8:00 pm.

• Brotherhood will have their annual Men's Christmas Breakfast on Friday, December 24 at 8:00 am. • Baptist Tabernacle wishes each of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. "May God bless you and your family."



Baptist Tabernacle participated in the October Community Mission Project for Wellstar West Georgia Medical Center.

(This photo was omitted from the October newsletter by mistake)

Creekside - enjoyed a great time at their Fall Festival on November 6. Fun was had by all with games, cake walks and food. • The ladies had their second meeting on November 9 with guest speaker Joy Burnham giving her moving testimony.

• Creekside Brotherhood met on November 20 with Bryan Geter speaking. • On December 4 the choir enjoyed a Christmas dinner. • On December 5, Creekside made their annual trip to Thomaston for the play, "*From the Christ Child to the Judgement*" hosted by Clark's Chapel Baptist Church.

• The Ornament Service will be December 12 at 6:00 pm.

• On December 13, the ladies will meet at 6:00 pm for a covered dish meal. They will be drawing for a secret sister.

• On December 18, Creekside will gather to make fruit bags to be given to the shut-ins and elderly in their community.

• On December 19, the Creekside Choir will present the Christmas play, "*A Family Christmas*" at 6:00 pm.

• Creekside will host its annual New Year's Eve singing with Mike Moore and New Vision as well as other local groups beginning at 8:00 pm on New Year's Eve.

FBC Hogansville - One of the many reasons to love FBC Hogansville is that it ministers to the community. On Thanksgiving Eve there were plenty of volunteers from the church who planned, organized, cooked, set tables and invited people to come and have a early Thanksgiving meal. Some meals were also delivered to those who were unable to get to the church. What a blessing each of the volunteers received as they were able to serve others and share the love of Jesus!

• The choir presented special music at the Community Thanksgiving Service which was hosted by Highland Baptist Church. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and message as they joined with others in the community to give thanks at this special time of year. • A charming group of young ladies provided special music on Sunday morning, November 21. Mrs. Sondra Lee and Miss Emily Smith sang "*My Jesus*" with backup provided by the Hallelujah Girls: Everleigh and Skileigh Blanks, Ally Dye, and Willow McGhee. These young people take part in the Wednesday evening children's activities, and they are obviously learning a lot. "We were blessed by their song and look forward to hearing from them again." • Mrs. Joyce Williams' Grapevine Sunday School Class had their first outing since the beginning of Covid. They were fortunate to have Mr. Terry Irvin drive the bus as they went to Riverbend Restaurant in Thomaston for good seafood. The group enjoyed being able to socialize together again.

• It is a privilege to participate in Operation Christmas Child because it gives the opportunity to share Jesus with children all over the world. Mrs. Sondra Lee directed this project, and 30 boxes were filled to join those prepared by other area churches as partners with Samaritan's Purse. • Jay Mitchell was welcomed as a new member by baptism. "What a blessing to welcome young people into the Kingdom of God!" "We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!" (continued on next page)

If you or someone you know would like to be added to the mailing list for this newsletter, please call the Troup Baptist Association at 706-884-1975 and give your name & address.

Church News & Announcements

FBC Hogansville - (continued)



FBC Hogansville's Grapevine Sunday School Class outing to Riverbend Restaurant in Thomaston.



FBC Hogansville enjoyed special music by Mrs. Sondra Lee, Miss Emily Smith (center) and the Hallelujah Girls, Everleigh and Skileigh Blanks, Ally Dye, and Willow McGhee.



Above: Grace Deacon Ordination

At Right: Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

Grace - Pastor Appreciation Lunch was held on October 31 after the service. "We love our pastor and his wife and are so grateful for them." • Trail of Treats - Walk Through Jerusalem was held on October 31. About sixty children participated in the walk-through. • Grace distributed 72 boxes of free food in November. Each box included a turkey for Thanksgiving. • Logan Burns was licensed to preach during the morning service on November 14. • Deacon Ordination for Jim Blair and David Bleemel was held during the evening service on November 14 followed by a reception. Each new deacon was presented with a Bible. Deacon James Boyd also received a Bible. • A church-wide Thanksgiving Dinner was held after the service on November 21. • Join Grace for Sunday School at 9:45 am, Morning Worship at 10:45 am, Evening Service at 6:00 pm, Wednesday Service at 7:00 pm Children's Church PreK-3rd grades and Teen Ministry 6th - 12th grades. Generation Now will meet every 1st & 3rd Sundays during Worship for PreK-Age 20. Children's and Teen Ministries will meet in the George Harris Building. Grace services are streamed live on their Facebook page and available on their YouTube page. Reformer's Unanimous meets every Friday night at 7:00 pm and streams live on Facebook at 8:00 pm. and is available on their YouTube page. Please check the Webpage <http://www.gbclagrange.com/> for updates and links to Facebook and YouTube or search Grace Baptist Church LaGrange Ga and RU Recovery Ch. 1078.



Above: Grace's Logan Burns receives minister's license



Church News & Announcements

Highland - • hosted a community-wide Thanksgiving Service on November 25th. There was a great turnout from churches in the community. Pastor Terry Rainwater delivered the Thanksgiving message, and special music was provided by Hogansville First Baptist Church Choir and also by Bernie and Vina Osborne. • The annual Christmas Card Exchange has begun where members bring cards to be distributed to others at church for a small donation per card. Donations will go to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

• The annual Hanging of the Green ceremony will take place during Morning Worship Service on December 5. This is a beautiful service where everyone sings hymns and Christmas selections while decorating the sanctuary for the Christmas season. Everyone is invited to join them for this special service. • On Sunday, December 19, they will have a special Christmas Program during Morning Worship Service, followed by a Christmas Meal in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to join them for this special day. They will not have Sunday School that morning. • The Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will start at 5:00 pm. Everyone is invited to join them for this beautiful service. • The Morning Worship Service is available on Facebook each week for those who are not able to attend in person. Also, Wednesday night Prayer Meeting and Bible Study are available by teleconference, as well as in-church.

Lakeview - A new member, Mrs. Mary Cobb, was received by baptism on November 7. "Welcome, Mary!"

- Thanksgiving gathering and bountiful food were enjoyed by all on November 14.
- A Christmas celebration will be held on December 19 after morning worship.

Wehadkee - "From our church family to yours: Happy Thanksgiving to all!"

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:20 KJV

- Happy Anniversary to Buck and DeDe Hurt.



Operation Christmas Child Drop-Off Center received a bumper crop of filled shoeboxes this year - 3,652 shoeboxes were packed in 241 cartons. David Blackwell of Blackwells, Inc. provided the manpower and transportation of those cartons to Phenix City, AL where they were counted and together with 14,072 other boxes from other area Drop-Off Centers were delivered to the Atlanta Distribution Center. Many thanks to the individuals, groups, and churches who participated and brought their boxes to our local Drop-Off Center at First Baptist Church on the Square last week. May your lives be blessed as you continue to prepare the shoeboxes in abundance. We give our God all the praise for each shoebox turned in and thank Him for touching the lives of those preparing them as well as the children receiving them. Prayer is the most important thing going into the box. The pictures reflect our wonderful volunteers who gathered the boxes from cars; cartons full of those shoeboxes, and cartons being taken out to the waiting trucks. Thank you! From Barbara Nivens, Drop-Off Center Lead (see photo on previous page)

Community Christmas Program with food fellowship to follow

Presented by 5 Churches:

*Dunson, Friendship, Oakside,
New Macedonia, & Unity*

Sun. Dec. 12, 6 pm

Oakside Baptist Church
1921 Hamilton Rd

Dementia & Alzheimer's Support Group for Caregivers

Meets the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 am
Next Meeting: January 6

Location: Troup Baptist Association
1301 Washington St., LaGrange GA

Looking for Support, Answers & Resources?
You are not alone - Join others like you!

For more info, call the association office at 706-884-1975

Faith Bible Institute

Do you wish you knew more about the Bible?

As a satellite campus of Faith Bible Institute, the Troup Baptist Association just may have exactly what you are looking for! Faith Bible Institute is a six-semester course that teaches the Bible in a clear, concise manner. The class meets in person each Tuesday, with your choice of morning or evening classes at the association office. Online classes are also available.

Registration for Spring Semester is open.
(late fee will apply)

Call the association office at 706-884-1975
or visit www.troubaptist.org for more information.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

2 Dementia Support Group, 10:00 am with Beth Dow
6 Pastors' Prayer Fellowship, 11:00 am In Person & Zoom
13 Pastors' Prayer Fellowship, 11:00 am In Person & Zoom
20 Pastors' Prayer Fellowship, 11:00 am In Person & Zoom
27 No Pastors' Prayer Fellowship
Dec 23-Jan 2 TBA Office closed for Christmas & New Year

TBA refers to Troup Baptist Association

Association Prayer Group meets by conference call Wed. at 11am
Prayer requests by phone (706)884-1975 or www.troubaptist.org

Happy Birthday December



1 Rev. Michael T. Stiggers, Eastside
6 Rev. James Kelley, Glenn
9 Rev. Doug Bingham, Unity
20 Rev. Andy Buchanan, Franklin Road
22 Rev. Bill Bryant
31 Rev. Wesley Boatman



Merry Christmas!



On The Lighter Side:

It was the Sunday after Christmas at St Peter and Saint Paul's Church in Borden, Kent, England. Father John was looking at the nativity scene prior to packing away the figures when he noticed the baby Jesus was missing from the scene. Immediately, Father John turned towards the vicarage in order to call the police. But as he was about to do so, he saw little Harry with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant, Jesus. Father John walked up to Harry and said, 'Well, Harry, where did you get the little infant?' Harry replied honestly, 'I took him from the church, Father John.' 'And why did you take him?' With a sheepish smile, Harry said, 'Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to little Lord Jesus. I told him if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give him a ride around the block in it.'

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Additional Photos



Above: Scenes from Grace's Walk Through Jerusalem



Operation Christmas Child - Cases of Shoe Boxes



Operation Christmas Child boxes being loaded from the collection center at First Baptist on the Square in LaGrange.



Above: Grace's Pastor Appreciation Lunch for Rev. Donnie & Mrs. Brenda Benefield

Additional Photos



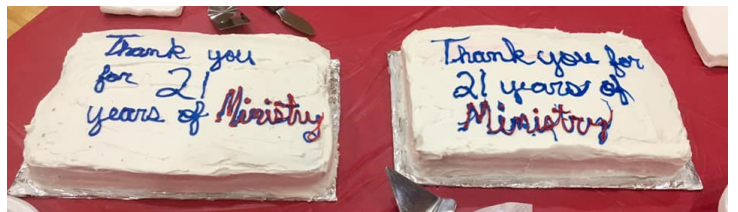
Above: Grace's Thanksgiving Dinner on November 21



Associational Missionary Aaron McCollough above with Mrs. Marianne, was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the Georgia Baptist Mission Board for 20 years of service as Associational Missionary for the Troup Baptist Association.



Retirement Reception: Presentation of a new Bible from State Missionary Ricky Thrasher of Georgia Baptist Mission Board. L-R Mrs. Marianne, Bro. Aaron, Ricky Thrasher



Above: Vice-Moderator Derek Williams, Admin Team Member Terry Rainwater and Ricky Thrasher GBMB



Above: That look of surprise when you find out that you are going on an Alaskan Cruise!