



The Mulberry Messenger

VOLUME XLI

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Mulberry Experiences the Gift of Giving

The weather was certainly anything but wintery on a hot, humid December Saturday morning when a number of residents from the Montegut/ Pointe-Aux-Chenes area experienced an early Christmas. On December 20, 2008, over 250 children and adults, who were in need following the year's hurricane season, travelled to a gift-giving party at Live Oak Baptist Church. Members and friends of Mulberry Baptist Church had "adopted" the



Pastor Steve Graves and church member Christy Barnes organizing gifts.

children and purchased gifts for them based on their wants and needs. The church itself provided gift cards to the parents

to spread a little Christmas cheer to the adults as well as the children.

Several members of Mulberry also traveled to Live Oak to help with the dispersal of gifts and to meet and have fellowship with the families. Music minister Chris Babb coordinated a Christmas musical line-up to add to the festivities. And what Christmas celebration would be complete without a visit from the jolly man

himself, Santa Claus?

Overall, the experience was a wonderful way to reach out and support and minister to those particular members of our community. Thanks to everyone that participated and donated their time and funds to this cause. The children were thrilled, and their holiday was brighter thanks to the generosity of so many.

Will you accept the challenge?

In January, we'll begin the Awana Adult Challenge. "What is the Awana Adult Challenge?", you ask. It is a challenge for adults at Mulberry to keep up with the kids. Our children are memorizing scripture every week as part of the Awana ministry on Wednesday nights. They are moving at a great pace, and even if we grown-ups complete the challenge, we probably won't have memorized as much as the kids this year.

Here's how it works: Each week this spring, we will choose a verse that the kids

are learning and the adults will learn it as well. One of the kids will introduce the verse each Sunday morning during the service, and we will have a chance to say the verse of the week together. By May, we'll have made it through almost 20 verses.



Here are the verses for January, if you want to get a head start:

- January 11—John 3:16
- January 18—Romans 3:23
- January 25—1 John 4:14



Smiles are inevitable when visiting with Santa!

A Note from Steve...

Happy New Year!

I love that the calendar gives us a fresh start each year. As we literally turn the page on another year, we get a fresh start in many ways. I suppose that's part of the New Year's Resolution tradition—a fresh start in a new year to do something different or better.

Most of us will make a resolution or two, even if it is not "official" and simply a hope or plan for something to come in 2009. And we'll accomplish those goals with varying results. Many resolutions are long forgotten by February, but a few actually take hold for the long haul.

Isn't it great that in Christ, we don't need a calendar for a fresh start? 2 Corinthians 5:17 teaches us that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" We have a new life in Christ, not just in January, but everyday. We are cleansed and refreshed and restored by His grace and love every time we draw near to God.

Lamentations 3:22-23 adds to this idea:

"Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." As we enter a new year, let's make our New Year's Resolutions and go hard after them. But most of all, let's be resolved together to seek the Lord daily and live in the freshness and new life that we have in Jesus.

I also want to briefly encourage you to try the Awana Adult Challenge. Our children are memorizing scripture (and doing a great job—one of my highlights of the week is walking through the building at the end of Awana and hearing the children study and quote their verses!). As adults, let's try to keep up! We'll have a verse a week for the spring that the children are also memorizing. Hiding God's word in our heart by committing it to memory is beneficial no matter our age.

In Christ,

Music

It has been a great year. I would like to extend a special thanks to all who participated in musical programs this Christmas season. Each of you made it special. Thank you Lisa, J Ryan, and Meredith for your help and support. You guys are great! Words cannot express how grateful I am for all of you. I hope that your Christmas was blessed; I pray that you will have a wonderful New Year.

Just a note: Choir practice resumes on January 14th (6:15PM), and Children's Choir resumes on January 11th (5:00-7:00PM). We have a lot of great plans for the spring...don't miss out!

In Christ,



CDO News

As this year draws to a close, the CDO staff wants to take the opportunity to thank you for the prayers, gifts, treats, and cards and for all of your help during the last months. We've had a few bumps with storms, staff, etc., and we really appreciate your cooperation and thoughtfulness. Now as we look to the new year, we will continue to need and appreciate your prayers. We also appreciate the old Christmas cards you have sent us, so if you have any to throw out, please send them our way.

Our first day back is Tues., Jan. 6th, and we have lots of fun activities planned (mostly inside, but outside activities are always a possibility, so please bundle your child up, and make sure all garments are labeled).

If you need tuition info for 2008 tax purposes, please see one of the teachers or Charlene. Several people have asked about fall registration—we hold registration in March. You will receive registration info in mid-February.

Our prayer for you is for a most Happy and Blessed New Year!

Charlene Patrick, CDO Director

Children's Ministry

Happy New Year everyone! Wow! 2009 will be a busy year in Children's Ministry. Awana has been a big hit with the kids and will be constantly growing for a few years. Do you know what that means? We need to DOUBLE our Awana staff! Awana requires a whole bunch of volunteers, but when everyone is in place, it's a breeze. We even have positions that only require you to show up—no prep. It will never be any easier than that! We also need three Children's Sunday School teachers. Lesson plans are spelled out—it's a no-brainer. And, we need Children's Choir leaders and helpers on Sunday evenings. I really do not like to continually blow the "we need volunteers" horn, but we have such a BIG need for teachers and leaders in 2009. Until those needs are met, we will just have to keep playing that song.

And speaking of volunteers, it's time for the second verse! VBS 2009 is right around the corner. The week of **June 15-19** we will be travelling "down under" on **The Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus**. You can find out more about this theme at www.lifeway.com. Keep VBS week open, and volunteer today! The sooner you volunteer, the sooner we get our plans underway, and you get first choice of work assignment. If you've already booked that week, keep the week of **July 20-24** open to volunteer for our **Children's Music Camp**. I worked this camp last year, and we had a blast! We haven't made the final decision on the theme yet, so watch your newsletter for the announcement.

It's going to be an awesome year in children's ministry! It's vital that we as a church body invest in the children of the community so that, like Jesus, they may "grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). Make a New Year's resolution that will last for eternity: resolve to help grow children at Mulberry!



In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marjorie".

Keenager's Korner

Wishing you a belated Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year! I don't know about you, but I feel like my life has been spinning around since Gustov and Ike, which added to an already busy schedule. I can speak for myself, and I'm sure for you also, that our church's Christmas activities were so wonderful and meaningful and a break from a hectic schedule. The joy of

the birth of Jesus, our Lord, portrayed through our children and the music and spoken word lifted my spirit at such a busy time. Thanks to everyone for all the hard work it took to bring to mind what Christmas truly means—the birth of the Baby Jesus.

I think of the important tasks I needed to accomplish this time of year like visiting the sick and hurting; I did some visiting, but never made time for all I wanted to do (my confession!). This year I plan to be better organized and more dedicated to reading and studying God's Word and serving Him more diligently. I hope that you will devote a New Year's resolution that will bring you to a closer and more personal relationship with our Lord.

A Servant,

Evelyn Head and The Keenagers

Join us for...

Family Mission Night

Friday, January 30, 2009
in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30PM

**Please bring a covered dish

Deacons to Serve for January

Eric Duplantis and Charles Kirkpatrick

**Deacon's Meeting, Sunday, January
11th at 7:15PM



Congratulations

to Robert and Jennifer
Bouly on
the birth of their daughter

Emma Paityn

Born 12-06-08 6 lbs, 5 oz
18 inches

The **2009 Flower Calendar** has been posted on the bulletin board near the office. Sign up on any available Sunday to provide Sanctuary flowers in honor or in memory of your loved ones. Hurry before the date you want is taken.

Mulberry Ministry Team

Church members: Ministers-at-large
 Steve Graves, Pastor
steve.graves@mulberrychurch.org
 Chris Babb, Minister of Music and Media
chris.babb@mulberrychurch.org
 Mary Dowden, Children's Minister
mary.dowden@mulberrychurch.org
 Charlene Patrick, Children's Day Out Director
charlene.patrick@mulberrychurch.org
 Haley Kraemer, Secretary
info@mulberrychurch.org

Mulberry Baptist Church

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Giving with Ease

Did you know your bank offers you the ability to set up scheduled electronic payments to the church? Just give them the following info:

- Your name (to be used as an identifiable "account number")
- Payable to: Mulberry Baptist Church
- Intended recipient: Charlene Patrick
- Mailing Address:
 Mulberry Baptist Church
 Attn: Charlene Patrick
 2025 Bayou Black Drive
 Houma, LA 70360



Awana Activities...

will resume:

January 7th: Leaders Only
January 14th: Regular Meeting

Choir Practices...

will resume:

January 11th: Children's Choir
 (5:00-7:00PM)
January 14th: Sanctuary Choir



December Statistics

Date	Budget Receipts		Attendance	
	Amount		Sunday School	AM Worship
12-07-08	\$4,540.00		74	160
12-14-08	\$6,761.00		67	135
12-21-08	\$10,179.00		85	90
12-28-08	\$25,394.00		52	93

Budget Goal YTD: \$339,490.32
Budget Receipts YTD: \$338,165.91

The Beth Moore Bible Studies **Believing God** and **Breaking Free** will resume the week of January 12th.

Believing God: Tuesdays @ 9:45AM in the Fellowship Hall
Breaking Free: Thursdays @ 7:00PM at the home of Sharon Bergeron