

Providence Press



Providence Presbyterian Church

"You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood."

Pastor's message

He is near

As I child, I was the one asking, "Are we there yet?" My impatience for waiting to arrive at the destination didn't help my relationship with my older sister or brother.

One Christmas, my parents decided to drive from Red Bird Mission in Southeastern Kentucky to San Diego. After my grandfather died, my grandmother sold her Michigan farm to one of her sons and moved to California to live near her oldest daughter. A trip to see grandma for Christmas seemed to be just what our family needed.

However, a six-year-old who couldn't sit still . . . an eleven-year-old boy and a fourteen-year-old girl who couldn't stand either of us . . . made for an "interesting" trip. So Mom and Dad came up with games and stories to keep us busy . . . and we sang lots of songs.

As a first grader at the mission school, I had learned a

wonderful Christmas carol my family had never heard. So as we traveled across the country, I attempted to teach them the verses to "The Friendly Beasts." You may know it . . . it begins with "Jesus our brother, kind and good . . ."

The last verse goes, "Thus every beast, by some good spell, in the stable dark was glad to tell . . . of the gift he gave Emmanuel, of the gift he gave Emmanuel."

The problem was, I was missing my two front teeth, and they couldn't understand the words. I can remember standing in the center of the backseat of the car, repeating over and over the words, with my parents trying to unscramble what was coming out of my mouth.

That's called patience. When we finally got to my grandmother's house, she asked if Mom and Dad would tell her Presbyterian church about their mission to the mountains of Kentucky . . . and would

(See "Near," page 2)

A toy's journey from Germany to the Nativity

By Joan Rommes

Growing up, I never enjoyed playing with dolls as my sister did. I much preferred the rough and tumble games of my seven brothers. But this doll was different and came to me much later in life. It was made in Germany, and it belonged to a little girl (I believe), who lost it in the Mobile Airport.

The Airport often donates unclaimed, lost items to nonprofit agencies. At the time, I worked with an agency as the director of an adult day program called Grandfriends, for those who could not be left home alone.

One of the participants was a lady who was often in deep

distress and fearful because, in her mind, her baby was lost and in danger. Although we tried various ways to distract or calm her, none was successful. Each morning in prayer, I asked God for a solution to bring her and her family relief.

So one morning, I found myself looking at this container of unclaimed, lost items from the airport and spotted the baby doll. I wondered if this was a solution and claimed it for the day-care program.

The results were instant. From the time I placed it in Mrs. M's lap, she smiled and was calm and was able to join the others in the group in activities.

(See "Doll" on page 3)



Providence Presbyterian Church
(251) 633-9701

www.providence-pc.org
office@providence-pc.org

Mary Montei Clark, Pastor
Debra Ehman, Nursery Staff
Bob Ellis, Treasurer
Laura Fletcher, Accompanist
Justin Gipson, Director of Music Ministries
Pam Fredelake, Bookkeeper
Amy Messer, Administrative Assistant
Wendy Mouner, Nursery Staff
Jimmie Roebuck, Percussionist

Boy Scout Troop 292 Liaison
Curtis Andrews 342-1375
Newsletter Editor
Ken Gadomski 660-8565
Prayer & Care Coordinator
Sharon Smith 776-6958
Session
Ken Gadomski 660-8565
Clerk of Session & Communication
Mary Mastrangelo 602-1993
Worship
Emmett Proudfoot 633-8899
Building & Grounds
Aggie Roebuck 665-4900
Fellowship
Joan Rommes 653-4308
Evangelical Missions
Barry South 660-8670
Discipleship
Christine South 660-8670
Stewardship
Sharon Smith 776-6958
Nurture

Providence Press is published monthly by Providence Presbyterian Church. Email articles to kengadomski@comcast.net.

This month's contributors:

- Laura Anderson
- Nancy Bowen
- Mary Montei Clark
- Ken Gadomski
- Mary Mastrangelo
- Amy Fletcher Messer
- Aggie Roebuck
- Joan Rommes
- Manny Russo

(“He Near,” from page 1)

our family sing? I’m pretty certain there wasn’t much debate about what song we would sing; everyone knew the words pretty well by then . . . even the last verse.

Patience . . . waiting . . . and traveling: Those are the themes on our way to a celebration of a new life in the Messiah that continues to bring the Good News into our lives today. This scripture has been called the “Gospel of the Infancy.” The title is appropriate . . . for these stories are truly *gospel*. Throughout the whole section, like an overture to a symphony, runs the theme “*God brings salvation.*”

This is the sense that marks the Advent season. It is a time of waiting, a time of longing, a season of hope in the impossible. As we reflect on our lives . . . on our mistakes . . . our questions . . . our worries . . . all the things that can separate us from the love of God . . . our hearts ache for him to come and deliver us.

During this Advent season, we’ll be using a resource written by Jeremy Summers and found in *Reformed Worship*. It begins with the first chapter and first verse of the book of Luke and will take us through the nativity story. We begin with the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth; they are barren and beyond the age to have children, but they haven’t let their heartbreak become bitterness against God. So we find Zechariah in worship, faithfully doing his work as a priest . . . when God breaks into his worship and reveals a miraculous message. The angel proclaims, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, your prayer has been heard.”

Zechariah, full of fear and not quite getting it all, does what most of us do when we see the miraculous . . . he wonders if it

can be true. He argues against it, claiming all the reasons it will be impossible for his wife to have a son. Can’t you see the Angel Gabriel rolling his eyes as he says, “Listen buddy . . . you may not believe this, but I am Gabriel . . . and I’m kinda high up in the high up . . . if you know what I mean. And even though God could have sent one of his lower angels . . . this is important . . . so he sent me. And I’m telling you, go home . . . make nice with you wife . . . and you’ll be a father to a baby boy nine months from today.”

Now, I think Gabriel is getting a bit “het” up . . . if you know what I mean . . . and he tells Zechariah, “And just because you kept talking about how all this isn’t possible . . . I’m going to shut your mouth until that baby gets here.”

Now, of course, I’ve had a lot of fun paraphrasing this wonderful scene in the first chapter of Luke . . . but the end result is that Zechariah’s prayer has been answered.

Isn’t this the great promise of Advent? Do not be afraid! Your prayer has been heard! We were in desperate need of a Savior, and God heard our prayer. Advent is the reminder that we serve a God who hears our prayers and moves with compassion and mercy to answer them.

Summers writes, “A strange thing happens when God



starts to draw near. When Jesus shows up, life begins to stir in the most impossible places. From barren wombs to occupied tombs, life springs up where we would least expect it.

“Isn’t it beautiful that God fulfills the age-old longing of Israel by answering the prayer of a small but faithful family? He sets into motion a plan that will rescue all of creation but begins by answering the prayer of a single woman, Elizabeth. That is just like God . . . simultaneously accomplishing a sweeping deliverance for a nation and at the same moment, creating a miracle for a mother.”

What prayer remains unanswered in your life? What longing is yet unfulfilled? What need . . . what fear . . . ? What wakes you up in the middle of the night . . . or causes you pain? During this season, let’s give God the opportunity to do the impossible in our lives, the things we can’t possibly orchestrate . . . the stuff of life that only comes when God intervenes.

If Advent teaches us anything, it is that God is in the business of bringing about the impossible. After generations of waiting, longing . . . and hoping in the darkness. . . . Advent is that first sign of dawn. We see that God is on the move, and the impossible starts to become the commonplace as he draws near.



The heart of giving

Gifts are wonderful to receive and fun to give. Jesus tells us that we should give to others without expecting anything in return because we have received so much ourselves.

And Christmas is certainly a time for giving. Think of all the good food people prepare – the cookies, the festive meals. Think of the celebrations and parties we have. All of these things remind us of the goodness of creation and how wonderful it is to be a part of it.

God has given us all this, and we try to share it with other people in gratitude. And God has given us more: faith in Jesus as our Savior. Through that faith we can celebrate by giving and receiving, knowing that God has given us the most important gift of all.

The Providence Angel Tree is an opportunity to share God’s love with seven families



in need this Christmas. The Angel Tree will have information about each family member’s wishes and will be located in the back of the Sanctuary, starting the first week of December.

Plan to bring your gift(s) in by December 17. On each gift place the name of the person the gift is for.

Please do not wrap them. We will wrap

them as a group, and everyone is invited to help with the gift wrapping after church services on December 21. Consider including a Christmas card with your gift.

There will also be requests for Christmas dinner groceries for these families located on the Angel Tree. For additional information contact Joan Rommes at (251) 653-4308 or buttonsjpr@bellsouth.net



If you read Facebook during November, people posted what they were thankful for each day. I’d like to share some of the things I’m thankful for:

- That I am a part of an encouraging Session that is willing to try something new.
- That our pastor is helping us along the journey.
- That Providence Presbyterian Church stepped up and stepped out to provide the 1st Annual WeMo Chili Cookoff.
- That the participants, friends, and people of Providence forgive me for all the mistakes with the awards.

I am thankful.

(“Doll,” form page 1)
 A few years later, Mrs. M died, and the doll was forgotten when I retired several years ago. Until this year. While helping to plan our live nativity scene at Providence, I called the current director of the Grandfriends’ program and asked about that doll . . . Was it still there? Did they have a need for it and, if not, could I have it?

The answer to all was “YES.” So this doll can once again represent the wonder, peace and love of Christmas to a troubled world.



By Manny Russo,
Scoutmaster

Your troop had a successful November.

We completed our annual popcorn sales and set a record for the troop with \$15,000 in sales. This money was divided among each scout, the troop, the Mobile Area Council, and the Boy Scouts of America. Thanks to Providence for buying popcorn from us and allowing us to sell popcorn at the Chili Cookoff.

In November, the troop traveled to the Wiggins, MS, area to tackle the "Ropes" course. The scouts had to climb up 40' and perform tasks while standing on a 1" cable and holding on to free swinging ropes above them.

Most made it from one side to the other. Other scouts either fell (they wore a safety harness) or would not attempt the task due to their fear of heights. The purpose of these activities was to build self confidence and

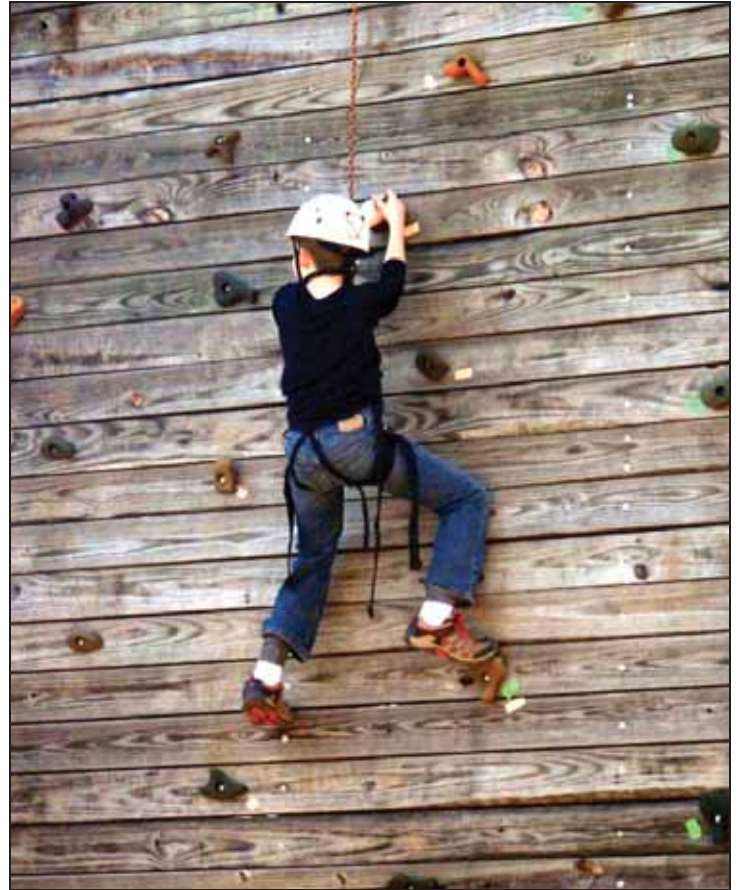
move the scout out of his comfort zone (sitting on the couch playing video games!).

In December, the troop will camp at Camp Pinetreat in Bay Minette. We will camp with fifth-grade Cub Scouts who will be joining Boy Scouts next March, and we hope they join Troop 292.

Our boys have planned activities that will help the young Cubs get a feel of Boy Scouting. This type of camp-out is fun for our scouts.

The troop is looking forward to participating in the Angel Tree by supporting a family that is in need. We plan to provide Christmas lunch and gifts for the children. "Giving back" to the community is a cornerstone of scouting.

Thanks again to Providence Presbyterian Church for chartering our troop and for being such a great partner. Because of your involvement, we are touching many lives.





Session Activities

Ken Gadomski, Clerk of Session



October 19, 2014, Stated Session Meeting

- Approved a motion to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2014, Session eMeeting and the September 21, 2014, Stated Session Meeting.
- Received a letter of resignation from the Session from Elder Don Bloom, who has been spending a great deal of time with family in Phoenix and felt that it was not fair to the Session or the members of Providence to be on the Session when he could not be here, in Mobile, full-time to support the church.
- Agreed that the position of Worship Elder was too important to leave unfilled until Elder Don's term officially ends in May/June 2015.
- Requested that the 2014 Nominating Committee (Session members Ken Gadomski [chair] and Joan Rommes, and congregational members

Laura Anderson and Laura Fletcher) nominate someone to fill this position and schedule a congregational Meeting as soon as the committee has found a candidate.

- Received a letter from the Bay Area Food Bank, stating that Providence has been granted a number of Thanksgiving Meal Boxes, each of which includes enough food for 4 families of 4-16 people. Evangelical Missions Elder Joan Rommes will gather a team to pick up the boxes and schedule them for distribution.
- Were informed that Pastor Mary has scheduled a New Members Class with Nick and Ashley Garner Weitzel and Ryan and Samantha O'Dell.
- Received an update from Pastor Mary on the McKemie Place residents Providence has been assisting.
- Reviewed the church calendar.

- Reviewed the September Treasurer's Report.
- Approved a motion to suspend the extra payments we have been making toward the mortgage principal for the time being and to reassess our finances and this extra payment in February 2015.
- Were informed by Buildings and Grounds Elder Emmett Proudfoot that the overhang on the north side of the building needs to be repaired.
- Were informed by Buildings and Grounds Elder Emmett Proudfoot that some lights on the front lawn are broken and need to be fixed.
- Were informed that Stewardship Elder Chris South is researching the church's insurance options.
- Received Communication Elder Ken Gadomski's written report.
- Were informed by Communication Elder Ken Gadomski that Facebook is working really well to publicize the Chili Cookoff.
- Were informed by Discipleship Elder Barry South that the Wednesday night discipleship program, FIRED UP, and the adult Sunday School

class are both going well.

- Received Evangelical Missions Elder Joan Rommes' written report.
- Were informed that Evangelical Missions Elder Joan Rommes has posted refrigerator and freezer guidelines in the kitchen.
- Were requested by Evangelical Missions Elder Joan Rommes to label and date everything that is put in the refrigerator, so items can be kept current.
- Were reminded by Evangelical Missions Elder Joan Rommes that Cardboard City is scheduled for October 25.
- Were informed that Bettina Kelson Sewing Class will be meeting with Anne Place Property Manager Tammy Stalcup regarding youth scholarships for Bettina Kelson's monthly sewing class.
- Were informed that Evangelical Missions Elder Joan Rommes will also be working with Tammy Stalcup to select families for our Angel Tree this year.
- Were reminded by Evangelical Mission Elder Joan Rommes that the Presbyterian Home for Children is currently in a



(See "Session" on page 7)

news from



the grove

By Nancy Bowen

- **Sunday, December 7**
 - 11:00 am – Service
 - Backpack ministry food collection – Oatmeal, grits, cereal bars
 - 1:00 pm – Grove Girls gathering at Vickie Bowers' home
 - 5:15 pm – Youth Christmas
- **Wednesday, December 10**
 - McKemie Place – Serve our ladies dinner
- **Thursday, December 11**
 - 11:00 am – Backpack ministry food collection: Pack/distribute
- **Friday, December 12**
 - 7:00-11:00 pm – SOLD OUT! Youth Group Conference at the church
- **Sunday, December 14**
 - 11:00 am – Service
 - Backpack ministry food collection – Macaroni and cheese
 - 6:00-8:00 pm – Journey to Bethlehem, sponsored by Providence Presbyterian Church
 - Blanket drive collection: Last Day
 - 5:15 pm – Youth
- **Thursday, December 18**
 - 11:00 am – Backpack ministry food collection: Pack/distribute
- **Sunday, December 21**
 - 11:00 am – Service
 - 5-7pm Grove Family Open House
 - Backpack ministry – Canned tuna/chicken collection
 - 5:15 pm – NO youth
- **Thursday, December 25**
 - NO Backpack ministry
- **Saturday-Sunday, December 27-28**
 - McKemie Place Safe Haven at the church
- **Sunday, December 28**
 - 11:00 am – Service
 - Backpack ministry – 1 lb. bag of dried beans collection
 - 5:15 pm – Youth
- **Looking Ahead**
 - January 18, 2015 – Financial Peace University: NEW CLASS BEGINS!



("Session," from page 6)

- serious financial situation.
 - Approved a motion to have a Moment for Mission about the Presbyterian Home for Children on November 9 and to hold a special offering for the Home on November 9 and 16.
 - Were reminded that the Christmas Joy Offering will be taken at the December 21 worship service.
 - Divided up duties and responsibilities for the WeMo Chili Cookoff.
 - Received Nurture Elder Sharon's report.
 - Were reminded that Nurture Elder Sharon Smith needs all prayer requests by Tuesday morning in order to send out her weekly email on Wednesday morning.
 - Were informed that Pastor Mary Monte Clark and Stewardship Elder Chris South will be meeting soon to make plans for the stewardship season.
 - Were informed that worship is going well.
- ## October 29, 2014, Session eMeeting
- Approved a motion to replace the rotten wood, caulk the seams, and paint the new wood on roof overhang on the north side of the church.
- ## November 9, 2014, Congregational Meeting
- Approved a recommendation from the Nominating Committee to elect Mary Mastrangelo as Worship Elder to fill Don Bloom's unexpired term (November 2014-May/June 2015) on Session.

Presbyterian Muffins

From the December 2014 issue of Neighbors, a publication of the Alabama Farmers Federation; contributed by Joan Rommes

Makes 24 muffins. They freeze well.

- 2/3 cup butter
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 2 eggs well beaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350°. • Cream butter and brown sugar. • Add eggs and vanilla and beat well. • Mix together flour, baking soda and salt. • Add this mixture and buttermilk alternately to butter mixture, beating well after each addition. • Fold in the nuts and place in lined muffin tins. • Bake for 12-15 minutes.



December worship volunteers

Contributed by Mary Mastrangelo

Date	Liturgist	Communion	Ushers	Nursery
Dec 7	Graham Hayes		Bill Berry	Myrna Andrews
			Buck Bolton	
			Joan Rommes	
			Amy Westerberg	
Dec 14	Graham Hayes		Ann Bosarge	Amy Westerberg
			Aggie Roebuck	
			Buddy Low	
			Mary Mastrangelo	
Dec 21	Ken Gadomski		Marlene Taylor	Sue Drinovsky
			Les Taylor	
			Bob Ellis	
			TBA	
Dec 28	Ken Gadomski		Al Drinovsky	Kathy Taylor
			Debbie McLendon	
			Myrna Andrews	
			TBA	

Condolences

Sharon and Steve Crenshaw and Family

- On the death of Sharon's sister, Bonnie Lynch, on November 11.



25th Anniversary

Angel Ornament



The 25th Anniversary Committee would like to invite all of the members of our Providence family to bring an angel ornament for the Christmas tree.

We will be decorating the tree on **Wednesday, December 3**. Soup supper at 5:15 pm and decorating at 6:00.

Memory Minute

Do you have a favorite Providence memory you would be willing to share?

Memory Minutes will be presented to the congregation during worship service on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. They will also be collected and printed at the end of our 25th Anniversary celebration. Please sign up on the Narthex.



December 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Justin Gipson Senior Vocal Recital at the University of Mobile	2 6:30 pm Boy Scouts	3 5:15 pm Soup supper and hanging of the greens 7:00 pm Choir	4 6:00 pm Closely Crafted 7:00–8:00 pm AA meeting	5 10:00 am Worship Team meeting	 6 8:00 am Journey to Bethlehem setup 8:00 am Duane Parham Eagle Scout project: Prayer Path and woods Bill Berry
 7 8:20 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Worship 10:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am The Grove Jud Lambard	 8 Mattie Dean	 9 6:30 pm Boy Scouts Jerry Williams	10 5:30 pm McKemie Place (The Grove) 7:00 pm Choir	11 6:00 pm Closely Crafted 7:00–8:00 pm AA meeting	12 10:00–11:00 am Food Pantry 11:00 am Evangelical Missions Team meeting	13 TBD Bettina Kelson sewing class
14 8:20 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Worship 10:45 am Town Hall meeting 11:00 am The Grove 6:00-8:00 pm Journey to Bethlehem	15 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	16 6:30 pm Boy Scouts	17 7:00 pm Choir Angel Tree gifts due	18 6:00 pm Closely Crafted 7:00–8:00 pm AA meeting	19	20
21 8:20 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Worship— Choir's special Christmas music 10:45 am Wrap angel tree gifts 11:00 am The Grove	22	23 6:30 pm Boy Scouts	24 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship with The Grove Christmas Eve	25 7:00–8:00 pm AA meeting Christmas Church office closed	 26 Buddy Low	27 8:00 am McKemie Place Safe Haven
28 8:00 am McKemie Place Safe Haven 8:20 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Worship 10:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am The Grove	29 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	30 6:30 pm Boy Scouts	 31 7:00 pm Choir New Year's Eve Dot Harcey	1 7:00–8:00 pm AA meeting New Year's Day Church office closed	2	3

Providence Presbyterian Church
2320 Schillinger Road South
Mobile, AL 36695

www.providence-pc.org

REMEMBER WHEN?

Live Nativity • December 8, 2007 • Left (clockwise from top): Jessi Gadowski, Linda Payne, Jude Mosley • Right (L-R): Brian Kane, Mary Ann Benefield

