



An Encouraging Word From Jo Hebert

Jo Hebert

It is hard for me to believe that we are coming up on our 14th Christmas in Mississippi. I had to count it just now, twice, on my fingers. Yes, it's true! Mississippi is home for me and my family. But, so was Georgia, and so was Ohio...but only because God taught me a significant truth about what *home* is 16 years ago: Home is where God has planted me. Home is where I am.

In 1998, Michael and I moved from the only home we knew (metro Atlanta) to Cleveland, OH with 15 month-old Lily. In that first year, we made the 1400-mile round-trip to GA at least seven times. Even though the Lord was showing Himself faithful in so many ways that helped us feel settled in a new (and COLD) place, we missed "home." I can remember sometimes feeling the dread of having to leave GA before we ever got there for a visit. I would buffer my happiness so that the letdown wouldn't be as strong.

About two years into our four years in Cleveland, I got to visit some old Sunday School friends in GA. I started talking to them about how hard it was to go back to OH after a trip, even though we were happy there. I asked some of them who were not from GA how they adjusted to living away from their home. My friend Henry told me how, through his moves, he always remembered Heaven is his true home... and that truth helped him feel at home wherever he was.

I got that! Not immediately... but I chewed on it, and I prayed about it. I stopped saying, "We're going home for Christmas" and said "We're going to GA for Christmas." I treasured the weighted-down, snow-covered evergreens and the surprise sweat I would break while snow shoveling. It was still sad at times, but affirming this truth that my home was where I lived with my husband and kids (and, ultimately, with Jesus), was life-giving to me. As our family grew and our children got older, we developed a tradition of being at our own home for Christmas, making travels to extended family either before or after; which was also helpful.

Jesus must have known we would need some help feeling at home, because in John 15:4, He extends the invitation to us, "Abide in Me!" The Jerusalem Bible actually says, "Make your home in Me." More than any earthly home can offer, Jesus is our shelter (Psalm 91:1), our rock and refuge (Psalm 62:7), and our dwelling place (Psalm 90:1). How do we make Him our dwelling place...our habitation? Paul's words in Colossians 3:16 give us insight: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." And, again... listen to how the Jerusalem Bible puts it: "Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you."

In this Advent season, I encourage us to ask the Lord to show us how to make a home for Him. Let's ask Him to let scripture permeate us a little deeper. We know the Christmas story, but every day is a new chance to know Christ more intimately. Not only did He ask us to abide in Him, but He also said He would abide in us. He takes up residence in us. What a Savior!

As we celebrate His birth, let's sink into our true home a little more. No need to buffer ourselves, because Jesus is the home we never have to leave; and in knowing Him, we have the hope of being welcomed into our eternal home which He has prepared for us.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

Merry Christmas, St. Mark's!!

Jo is a Licensed Professional Counselor at St. Mark's. You can reach her by phone (601-259-1749) or email (jhebertlpc@comcast.net).



Saint Mark's United Methodist Church
400 Grant's Ferry Road
Brandon, MS 39047

DATED MATERIAL DECEMBER 1, 2015

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Wednesday schedule in December:

Wednesday, December 2, 9, 16
will be regular Wednesday
activities, including supper.

ATTENTION! College Students
(Parents of College Students) & HS Seniors!
PASSION 2016 ~ January 2-4, 2016 ~ Phillips
Arena ~ Atlanta, GA

Cost: \$150 + some meals Cost includes: con-
ference, 2 nights hotel lodging, transportation
and lunch

Sunday Worship leaders: Chris Tomlin,
Crowder, Matt Redman, Christy Nockles,
Kristian Stanfill, Brett Yonker

Speakers: Louie Giglio, John Piper, Christine
Caine, and Ravi Zacharias

Lodging: Omni Hotel (ATL)

Transportation: rental van

A \$50 non-refundable deposit is due by
Dec. 1 to reserve your spot! We will be having
a fundraiser to offset the costs! Partial scholar-
ships are available. Space is limited! Don't delay!

You DO NOT want to miss this life-chang-
ing experience! For more info or to register,
please contact Jeanne!



Saint Mark's United Methodist Church
Phone: 601-992-2131

Church Staff:

Warren Coile, Senior Pastor	x103
Jeff Nesbit, Teaching Pastor	x105
Sandra Thomas, Minister of Worship & Music	x104
Martha Hand, Director of Nurture/Outreach	x102
Karie Sue McCaleb, Pastor to Children & Families	x109
Jeanne Chapman, Youth Director	x113
Jim Readell, Church Facilities Manager	x112
Delores Seward, Administrative Assistant	x101
Martha Toombs, Business Office	x106
Corrine Carpenter, Preschool Office	x110
Chris Phillips.....	11th hour Worship Leader
Darlene Baker.....	Music assistant/pianist
Jason Boyd.....	Music assistant/organist
Robert Ghoston.....	Custodian
Dennis O'Neal	Media Director
Ed Chapman	Media Assistant

Check the church website or Sunday bulletin for times
of events and further information. See the bulletin
for all on the caring list.
Worship is each Sunday at 8:20, 10:45 and
11:00 a.m.; Sunday School is at 9:30 a.m.

www.saintmarksum.org

OFFICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 24, 25
Office Closed

Thursday, December 31
Office Closes at Noon

January 1
Office Closed

*Merry Christmas
and Happy
New Year!*

In order for
your contributions
to count toward
2015, it must
be in the
church office
by noon on
December 31,
2015 *or*
if mailed, must
be postmarked
before January 1,
2016.

*Saint Mark's UMC
Advent & Christmas Events*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6
5:00 pm
"The Stars of Christmas" - Youth and Children
Christmas program in the CLC,
followed by Snacks with Santa

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20
8:20 am and 10:45 am
"Lessons and Carols" presented by
The Sanctuary Choir and instrumentalists from
The Jackson Symphony Orchestra in the Sanctuary

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24
4:30 pm
Child-friendly service of the Christmas story,
candlelight and communion in the Sanctuary

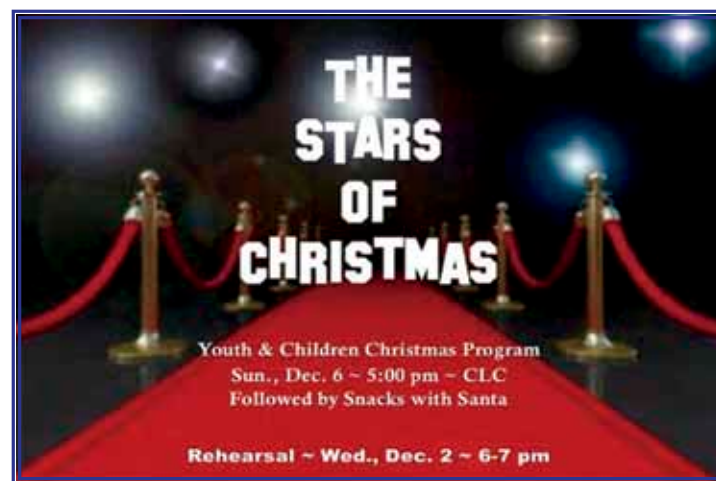
6:00 pm
Candlelight and Communion Christmas Service
in the Sanctuary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27
8:20 am, 10:45 am 11:00 am
Regular services



Children's Corner

Korie Sue McCaleb



All students (3 years through youth) are invited to participate in St. Mark's newest Christmas program! Join us for rehearsal Wednesday Dec. 2nd in the CLC! Snacks with Santa will be after the program Sunday Dec. 6th at 6pm. This is a wonderful program for our whole church family! See you

Parents' Night Out!

Friday, December 18th

5:30-9:00PM - Christian Life Center

Join us for a holiday dance party!

\$10 per family: for babies - 5th grade

Enjoy a night out! Finish your Christmas shopping, or enjoy a special dinner!

RSVP kariesue@saintmarksum.org by Dec. 16th!



Thanks!

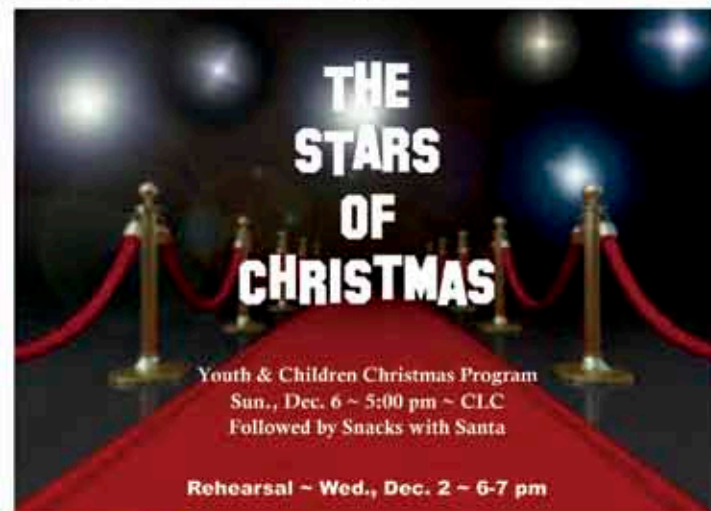
St. Mark's Kids and preschool surpassed the goal of 100 shoe boxes for Operation Christmas child! Thanks for being a blessing for this ministry!

St. Mark's Kids Schedule:

Children's Church (3-5 yrs) during every worship service. **Sunday School** 9:30, **Wednesday** nights 6-7pm for PreK3—5th grade! Join in the faith-building fun!



Jeanne Chapman, Director of Youth Ministries
jeanne@saintmarksum.org



DECEMBER SUNDAY SCHEDULE:
6 - Youth Christmas Program (CLC) 6 pm
13 - Christmas Party! 5 - 8 pm
20 - Hayride/Caroling 5-7 pm
27 - No MERGE

Driven
CHRISTMAS PARTY!
SUNDAY, DEC. 13 ~ 5 - 8 PM
IN THE CLC!
Celebrating the season and proclaiming the reason!
WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE!
(NO TEETH, PETS/ANIMALS OR GIFTS WRAPPED IN DUCT TAPE!)
FOOD! FUN! FRIENDS!
Registration required! RSVP through Dec. 6th!

Go M.A.D. @ Good Sam Center
Watch for more details!
Bring \$5 for lunch
Space is limited! Sign up today!

FUEL
High octane for your soul midweek!
Wednesdays ~ 5:30 - 7:00 pm
Dec. 9 & 16
Note: Dec. 2 is rehearsal for Christmas program

RPM WKND
A weekend of Making a Difference!
January 15 - 17, 2016
Service projects, FIFA tournaments, games, team building, worship, fun & surprises
Cost: \$35 all inclusive (lodging @ St.Marks)
Deadline to register is Sun., Jan. 3

Trendsetters Adults Over 50



Rev. Sandra Thomas

Christmas With The Trendsetters

Tuesday, December 8 • 11 am - 2 pm

A worship service of Lessons and Carols presented by the Millsaps College Singers followed by lunch in the Millsaps Cafeteria. Bus leaves for Millsaps – Cost is your meal @ \$10.00.

Tuesday, December 15

3 pm - 8 pm • Christmas in Canton

Enjoy a trolley ride, the animated museums, supper on the square and a horse and buggy ride as we view the spectacular Christmas lights on the Square in Canton. Even if you've done it before, it's a great way to spend a Christmas evening with friends and enjoy some great Christian fellowship. Cost is \$15 plus your meal at Cilantro's @ \$15-\$25.



Jeff Nesbit

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."
- Luke 2:10-11

The "city of lights", Paris, France recently had reason to fear. The attack by ISIS on November 13, 2015 gave all of the west reason to be aware that the presence of this evil regime is right around the corner. What we came to find out about the "city of lights" was this: it is not just the "city of lights" anymore; they are becoming the "City of the Light" - Jesus Christ.

Jean-Paul Rempp, an evangelical pastor in Lyon, France said this: *"The situation is not easy in France. Before the killings, people were already desperate in a general way. Now they are more desperate... We are more convinced that we have to preach the gospel, because only the gospel can change human hearts."*

The gospel has changed my heart. What about yours? The Savior is giving His heart to people all over France right now. What ISIS meant for evil, God meant for good...to bring about their salvation (Genesis 50:19-21). He is doing it through their desperation for a Savior. Jean-Paul Rempp testifies to this fact even more. He went on to say that a new evangelical church is started every ten days in France! God is not buried by the challenge of ISIS or the secularized culture of France.

Maybe you are buried right now in fear. The message of terrorists is: "Fear". The message of Satan, evil and our own sin is: "fear". However, hear the good news: The message of Christmas in Luke 2 above is: "FEAR NOT!" "FEAR NOT!" This day. "FEAR NOT!" Any other message is a lie.

I don't know about you, but I am desperate *not* to fear. ISIS is not the only reason to be afraid. You and I have things in our life causing enough trembling as it is. I'm desperate for the Savior, Jesus Christ. I'm desperate for us to publicize the gospel to change human hearts.

Could the gospel bring us good news, great joy, a happy spirit, a smile, and a laugh this Christmas? Could we be people who are a "city of *The Light*" this Christmas, so much, that people come up to us and ask us why we have so much hope, peace, joy, and love (1 Peter 3:15). I think we can. I know we can. We have the season of Advent. We have the Holy Spirit of Christ. We have each other. We have Christmas. No one can put that Light out. Fear not this Christmas. *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

Reference for quote above: *<http://www.denisonforum.org/cultural-commentary/2082-ringleader-of-paris-attacks-has-been-killed>