



**ATTENTION! College Students  
(Parents of College Students)  
& HS Seniors!**

St. Mark's is once again taking a group of college students, young adults and HS Seniors to THE number one conference for ages 18-25! Last year was a phenomenal experience and we can't wait to join with thousands of others who want to worship Jesus and make Him famous! Check out the promo video at: <http://268generation.com/passion2015/> and then sign up! You DO NOT want to miss this life-changing experience!

**Worship leaders:** Chris Tomlin, Crowder, Matt Redman, Christy Nockles, Kristian Stanfill, Brett Yonker; **Speakers:** Louie Giglio, John Piper, Frances Chan, Carl Lentz; **Lodging:** Hilton ATL  
**Transportation:** church bus

**PASSION 2015 ~ January 2-4, 2015  
~ Georgia Dome ~ Atlanta, GA Cost:  
\$100 + food ~ Cost includes: conference,  
2 nights hotel lodging, transportation and  
lunch Saturday**

We will be having a fundraiser to offset the costs! **A \$50 non-refundable deposit is due by Dec. 1** to reserve your spot! Partial scholarships are available. Space is limited! For more info or to register, please contact Jeanne!



Jo Hebert

## An Encouraging Word From Jo Hebert

Here we go. Like it or not, it's December (or it will be when this newsletter arrives). Thanksgiving and black Friday will have passed, and we will be looking ahead to Christmas celebrations with joyful anticipation...and perhaps with a little dread. In fact, though we as believers recognize the significance of Christ's birthday, if we are honest, most of us have some aversion to the busyness of the holidays. And if you have experienced significant loss, triggers and reminders may be intensifying your feelings of sadness and dread. Whatever outlook you find yourself with today, I want to invite you to choose your focus.

A few weeks ago, I had an experience that made me think about how my focus affects everything. While at an out of town softball tournament with my daughter, I set my phone alarm for 5:45 so that we would have plenty of time to get ready, check out of our hotel, grab some breakfast in the lobby, and drive over to the field by 7:15 for an 8:00 game. After waking up the next morning surprisingly rested, I checked the time on my phone...7:09!

Now, I know this was not a true crisis. But, her coach wanted her there in six minutes, and we were fifteen minutes away. I didn't have time yet to investigate what I had done for the alarm not to go off, but I knew I'd made a mistake; and I felt horrible. Assessing the situation, I also knew there wasn't time to berate myself. The only way to proceed was to let everything fall away except those thoughts and actions that would help May get ready and get in the car. I would have to drive back to check out later. Brush our teeth? No...not essential. Make-up? Definitely not. Just notify the coach that we were on our way, check to make sure she has everything, and go. Thanks to our sense of urgency and May's gracious cooperation, we made it there by 7:30, well before game time.

As I drove back to load up our things and check out of the hotel, and many times after, I reflected upon the rush of that morning. My initial shock had elicited feelings of defeat, anger (at myself), and panic. But, if I had fed those feelings, I couldn't have moved forward toward my goal of getting May in the car. Though it was very unpleasant to be in that position, there was something about that **focus** that was so significant. I started wondering how my life would be different if I kept a clear vision of each step in front of me, passionately and confidently weeding out what does not fit my purpose.

What is our purpose this Christmas? If you are facing Christmas alone for the first time, you might be focused only on getting through this month. Traditions normally associated with joy might have to fall away this year because they are too painful. The search for hope and comfort will trump all other activities. Someone overcoming addiction must continually ask, "will this decision lead me on the path to who I was or who I am?" in order to stay victorious this Christmas. A person desiring a simpler Christmas focused on Christ will have to plan for it, inspecting each opportunity and demand.

If we desire a meaningful holiday season, I suggest we examine our goal...longer than I examined that phone alarm. I was horrified when I later realized I had set it for PM. Had I not even double-checked?!? Let's double-check our focus this Christmas, making Jesus our target, and let's ask Him for a sense of urgency to weed out what does not fit His purposes for us.

May God bring you comfort, joy, peace, and rest this Christmas.

*Jo is a Licensed Professional Counselor at St. Mark's. She has flexible hours in the morning and evening. You can reach her by phone (601-259-1749) or email ([jhebertlpc@comcast.net](mailto:jhebertlpc@comcast.net)).*



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

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DATED MATERIAL DECEMBER 6, 2014

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### 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
- 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](http://www.saintmarksum.org)

## Office Holiday Schedule

**December 24, 25, 26  
office closed**

**Wednesday, December 31  
office closes at noon**

**January 1, 2  
office closed**

In order for your contributions to count toward 2014, it must be in the church office by **noon** on **December 31, 2014** OR if mailed, must be **postmarked before January 1, 2015**.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*



# BEACON

*Shining Christ's light into the community*



December 2014 • Number 99

## *Saint Mark's UMC Advent & Christmas Events*

- Sunday, Dec. 7**      **6PM**  
"The Characters of Christmas" - Youth Christmas Program in the CLC followed by a cookie reception
- Sunday, Dec. 14**      **4PM**  
"A Christmas Story" - Children's Christmas Program in the CLC
- 5PM**  
Snacks with Santa
- Sunday, Dec. 21**      **8:20AM & 10:45AM**  
"A Festival of Carols" presented by The Sanctuary Choir and a string quartet from The Jackson Symphony Orchestra in the Sanctuary
- Wednesday, Dec. 24**      **4:30PM**  
Child-friendly service of the Christmas story, candlelight & communion in the Sanctuary
- 6:00PM**  
Candlelight and Communion Christmas Service in the Sanctuary
- Sunday, Dec. 28**      **8:20AM, 10:45AM, 11:00AM**  
Regular services
- \*\*\*\*\*
- Wednesday, Dec. 3**      **5PM**
- 10**      Dinner
- 17**      **6PM**  
Youth & Children's Activities  
Adult Advent Study "Under Wraps"
- Wednesday, Dec. 31**      No Activities - Happy New Year





# Children's Corner



Karie Sue McCaleb

**THANK YOU! We reached our Operation Christmas Child goal! 100 kids around the world will have an amazing shoe box blessing for Christmas because of your generosity! And a special thanks to the families who helped with the packing party!**



**SIGN UP!!!**  
Kids Movie trip  
December 28th!  
After worship we will head to CeCe's pizza for lunch then to the theater for **Night at the Museum**  
*Chaperones needed!*  
**DEADLINE TO JOIN**  
DEC. 21st

**Children's Council Dec. 7th 12pm**



**New Wednesday Schedule**  
*starting January 7th*  
6:00pm Cherubs (3-4 years) and Kinders-1st-2nd Grade devotion in Asbury Hall.  
6:00pm PATH 345 in CLC  
6:30 -7pm Bible Study or Choir (all)

**New Year — New Ministry for our Kids!**  
Join a new Wednesday night journey: PATH 345 Based on Luke 3:4-5 "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight..." kids will participate in a designated sport each Wednesday in the CLC at 6PM, then study about Jesus' Parables with a TRAVEL GUIDE bible study at 6:30PM. This sports devotion time will be just for our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade kids and parents. **WE NEED COACHES!** Parents and all interested can join our *LEAD 4* campaign as we ask you to *LEAD four* Wednesday nights for the semester. Sign up in office! This will be a blessing for our kids and families! Invite friends & tell your neighbors as we have fun & grow closer to God on our PATH together!



# youth news

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

## "The Characters of Christmas"

### Youth Christmas Program

Sun., Dec. 7 @ 6 PM  
Christian Life Center

Cookie Reception Immediately following



**EVERYONE INVITED!**  
Special activity for children!



Wednesday's 3:30-5:00 @ the Hub

### DECEMBER SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

- 7 - Youth Christmas Program (CLC) 6 pm
- 14 - Christmas Party! 5 - 8 pm
- 21 - Hayride/Caroling & Bonfire 5-7 pm
- 28 - No MERGE

# THE AMAZING RACE

**CHRISTMAS PARTY!**  
**SUNDAY, DEC. 14**  
**5 - 8 PM!**

*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. 7th!

Go M.A.D.  
@ Good Sam Center

Watch for more details!

Bring \$5 for Sal & Mookies

Space is limited! Sign up today!



### FUEL

*High octane for your soul midweek!*  
Wednesdays ~ 5:30 - 7:00 pm  
Dec. 3, 10 & 17



Dive into God's Word in separate Bible studies for middle school and high school students!

**Ski Trip Meeting**  
Sun., Dec. 4  
@ Noon!

## ELEVATE SKI CONFERENCE

~ Gatlinburg, TN ~

**January 16 - 19, 2015 ~ COST: \$225\* (+ meals)**

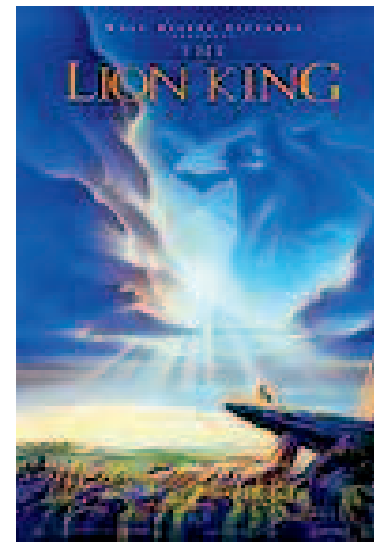
Cost includes: 2 days skiing (lift ticket, equipment rental, lesson), 3 nights hotel lodging, 3 breakfasts, all programming, transportation and t-shirt.

\*There is also a Non-Ski Option that includes: indoor water park, Water Works Museum, hot air balloon ride & afternoon at Outlet Mall.

**\$100 non-refundable deposit due ASAP. Space is now subject to availability. Please contact Jeanne fore more info.**

## Trendsetters will enjoy variety of activities in December plus "Lion King" in February

A 56-passenger bus has been secured for the trip to the "Lion King" in Memphis on February 26. There is room for more. There is only one ticket that has not been sold that can be purchased for the original cost of \$150 which will include ticket, charter bus transportation, lunch and dinner. When that ticket is sold, we can continue to add on as long as the show is not sold out, but the price will be higher as we will not be able to wait and order in groups of 10. It will still be a bargain as "Lion King" productions sell out on Broadway and the prices are much higher. The balcony, upper and side galleries are already sold out and when individual tickets go on sale, this matinee will probably sell out quickly. You are invited to come join the 43 who are already signed up to go on the trip.



### December 5, 9 and 17 will be fun



#### *Old Jackson Christmas Tour*

*Friday, December 5 4:00 -7:00 p.m.*

It's free. Light refreshments will be offered at some of the stops. Bus is full, but we will have some members take vehicles to accommodate everyone. Once downtown, Cline Tours will bus us to see the old and new Capitol, Governor's Mansion and many other decorated buildings downtown.

#### *Advent Lessons and Carols with Millsaps College Singers*

*Tuesday, December 9 11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.*

Program is free. We will eat lunch in the Millsaps Cafeteria after the program.

Lunch cost will be \$8.00.

Bus is full but we will have some people take vehicles to accommodate everyone.

#### *Christmas with "Luckenbach"*

*Wednesday, December 17 12:00 Noon in the CLC*

The meal will not be a traditional holiday meal, but some good homemade specialties selected by our very own "What's Cookin'?" chef, Nancy Crisco, who is also a member of Saint Mark's UMC.

Also pictured is Janis Burgess, co-owner. Entertainment by Trey Jones and Bill Dillon of Luckenbach.

Cost for dinner and the program is \$20.00.



Nancy Crisco and Janis Burgess