



## FROM THE PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE...

Christmas is past, the new year has come. It's 2026, and we've entered the second quarter of first century of the third millennium AD!

The passing of one year and the beginning of another is always a good time to pause both to reflect and to look forward. God has blessed us wonderfully here at Murfreesboro Baptist Church. Though our church, like so many others, has faced some difficulties and transitions over the past decade, the Lord has seen us through them. The Lord continues to move among us, and for this I say, *Thanks be to God!*

As we journey through this year of our Lord 2026, we don't yet know everything it holds for us. But we do know that as a church, our mission is the same: to be on mission with Christ as we love God, follow Jesus, and serve others.

Look at the focal points of that statement: *God, Jesus, others.*

So often in church life, it's easy to focus on our needs or the survival of the institution—in this case, this institution of Murfreesboro Baptist Church. There are institutional matters that we do have to attend to so that the church can function properly. But we have to remember that from the perspective of the New Testament, the church is an *organism* even more than an organization. It is the living body of Christ, and each congregation is a local expression of that body and a microcosm of the church as a whole.

As the body of Christ seeking to love God, follow Jesus, and serve others, our focus then needs to be on God's reign in Christ, *the kingdom of God.*

What I mean is this. While we must care for the institutional needs that provide the structure for us to fulfill the mission God gives us (finances, staff and volunteers, buildings, technology, etc.), our primary focus must be the kingdom of God.

# The Messenger

A Newsletter of  
Murfreesboro Baptist Church

JANUARY 2026

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses how his followers should trust God to provide for their needs. He tells them not to worry about what they'll eat or drink or wear. God provides for the birds of the air and flowers of the field; his children are of much more value to him, and he knows what they need and will provide it as they trust in him! Then Jesus says, "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33 NRSV).

I believe this principle applies to the church as well, that when our focus is on seeking or striving to live under and advance God's reign and his righteousness in our community and our world, he will provide everything we need to accomplish his purpose. In other words, when the kingdom of God is our primary focus, the institutional needs fall into place. It's another new year, with a whole new set of challenges and opportunities.

So here's my pastoral challenge to our congregation—may we truly above all else, both individually and corporately, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. As we do, my new year's wish and prayer for our church—that throughout this year and the years to come we will be on mission with Christ, obedient to and following him wherever he may lead us, trusting in the Father's will, the Son's heart, and the Spirit's power—will be fulfilled.

May we truly embody Christ's presence to those around us, near and far, as we love God, follow Jesus, and serve others.

Happy new year!

Grace and peace,

*Mark E. Perkins*

We are Excited for the Return of

## Community Cafe

Sunday, January 18 5:00 p.m.

Free to All!

Join us to enjoy Christian fellowship and a delicious hot meal.

Sign-up sheets are available on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

Volunteers are needed for cooking, meal prep and clean-up.

## Wednesday Evening

JOIN US FOR  
**BIBLE STUDY**

We will resume Wednesday evening Bible study beginning on January 7 at 7:00 p.m. Our regular schedule will be at 7:00 weekly including Big Wednesday event dates.

## Kids Club

MBC Kids' Club will once again participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring from now until Feb 8.

Our goal is 400 cans of soup. We will place the cans of soup in the church food pantry to be distributed to those in our community.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SCHEDULE

### Kids' Club

|        |           |
|--------|-----------|
| Jan 7  | 6:30-7:15 |
| Jan 14 | 6-6:45    |
| Jan 21 | 6-6:45    |
| Jan 28 | 6-6:45    |

**USING THEIR GIFTS  
TO SERVE IN  
JANUARY**

**Deacon of the Month**  
Bardin Torres

**Opening the Church**  
Colon Ballance and Wayne Brown

**Ushers**  
Johnny Jenkins, Bob Lee,  
Charlie Aycock, and Bob Turner

**Radio Ministry Sponsor**  
Mike and Susan Alston

**Caregivers**  
*Dec. 28-Jan 10* Charlie and Dell Aycock  
*Jan 11-24* Booker Daniel  
*Jan. 25-Feb 7* T.K. Warren, III

**Flowers**  
*January 4* Sarah Davis  
*January 11* Grace Brown  
*January 18* Gene and Mary Etta Flowers  
*January 25* Available  
To place flowers in the Sanctuary on dates  
available...*Please contact the church office.*

**UPCOMING DATES  
IN  
JANUARY**

- Jan. 4 Epiphany Sunday  
Communion
- Jan. 7 Big Wednesday
- Jan. 13 Deacons' Meeting
- Jan. 18 Community Cafe
- Jan. 19 Martin Luther King  
Holiday  
*Administrative Office  
Closed*
- Jan. 20 Food Bank of the  
Albemarle
- Jan. 25. Quarterly Conference

**Church Office Hours**

Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
252-398-3613

[www.murfbc.org](http://www.murfbc.org)

Office Will Be Closed Monday, January 19th for  
Martin Luther King Holiday

**2026 OFFERING  
ENVELOPES**



The 2026 offering envelopes are available for pick-up in the church library. Names have been placed on the boxes. If you do not see a designated box with your name, please contact the church office.

**COMMUNITY  
MISSIONS  
CHRISTMAS  
ANGEL TREE**

Thanks to you, Murfreesboro Baptist Church provided 16 local children in need with gifts for Christmas. Our church may be small, but our members have hearts of gold.

**FUEL ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM**

Thank you to Ben McLean for organizing and to many of you who donated to the Fuel Assistance Program once again. \$2,500.00 was donated towards helping those in need of home heat, and the excess of donations was given to the MBC Missions Fund.

**WHITE CHRISTMAS  
BOXES**

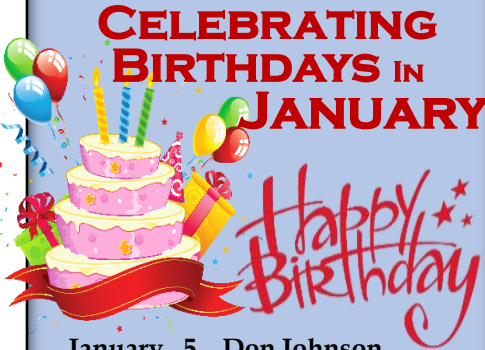
Thank you to everyone who contributed to the White Christmas Boxes. With your donation, we were able to provide 16 families with the fixings for a wonderful Christmas meal.

**FOODBANK OF THE  
ALBEMARLE**

Volunteers are needed on Tuesday, January 20 by 1:30 p.m. in the church parking lot to distribute food.

**FOOD PANTRY**

If you have committed to help us keep our pantry filled, please remember to bring twelve of your selected items to the church by the 15th of each month. As always, any donations are greatly appreciated.



**CELEBRATING  
BIRTHDAYS IN  
JANUARY**

- January 5 Don Johnson
- January 8 Mamie Ballance
- January 8 Jennifer Taylor
- January 12 Jessica Torres
- January 15 Jack Cole
- January 15 Patty Joyner
- January 18 Chris Sumner
- January 23 Claire Revelle
- January 30 Charlie Cole

*Don't see your birthday? Please call the church office and let us know when your special day is.*

**CHURCH STAFF**

**Dr. Mark E. Gaskins**  
PASTOR

PAULA  
PRESSNELL.....ORGANIST  
& CHOIR DIRECOR

KAYLEIGH LANCE.....DIRECTOR  
OF YOUTH MINISTRY

TERESA  
MARTIN.....ADMINISTRATIVE ASST.

Murfreesboro Baptist Church  
200 West Main Street  
Murfreesboro, N. C. 27855

Return Service Requested