

Audubon Baptist, *a Church in the Park*

SO WE, THOUGH MANY, ARE ONE BODY OF CHRIST

1046 Hess Lane, Louisville, KY 40217, (502) 635-2100, www.achurchinthepark.org

December 2019

PRAISE GOD, BROUGHT NEAR!

Ephesians 2:13, But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

I stood among the peoples and suddenly felt small, looked past, pushed, and wholly out of place, "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and a stranger to the covenants of promise" (Ephesians 2:12). The feeling surprised; I had recently journeyed to Jerusalem with AmyJo to experience the Holy Land, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, to be refreshed and renewed in my faith. Frankly, I expected a genuine welcoming to visit the places sacred to our faith. Yet, as I stood alongside the Western Wall of the temple, touching the stones that towered some 60' above me, wandering among the worshippers and wailers too, I felt out of place. And anything but welcomed.

Christians are a scant minority in much of the Old City. Still a vibrant and functioning city, within the walls are "quarters" housing resident Jews, Muslims, Armenians, and a small group of Christians too. Inside the city where the chosen people of God gathered through the millennia, edgy faith wars are waged today. Muslims are at the Jews; Jews are at the Muslims; everyone is at the Christians. The place is uncomfortable; it is confrontational and 'pushy'; frankly, it is hostile (Eph. 2:14,16).

I paused one evening as I touched the Western Wall of the temple. The temple, of course, housed God in the days of the OT. God lived in the temple; those living near His dwelling-place and having access to Him were His people and covenant holders of the promise. Israel was near; Gentiles, like me, were far

away. Gentiles were without hope and without God. (Eph. 2:12). Such beliefs remain among the Orthodox even today.

An overwhelming sense of sadness enveloped me as I bumped among the worshippers still seeking the Messiah. People all around, straining to be close to God, conjuring up just the right emotion, walking backwards away from the wall to "not turn their backs upon God", crying out for the Messiah, and yet wholly missing Him. I committed afresh to pray for those yet called. May their time be close at hand.

Despite the stark reality, the trip propelled my faith to higher heights. Certainly, it is wondrous to touch the 2,000-year-old stones from God's temple, to stand upon the Mount of Olives, to sit within the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus spent His final hours, to view the place where it is said our resurrected Lord departed for Heaven. AmyJo and I shall always remember being together in those places.

But those sacred places merely provide the backdrop to Jesus' earthly ministry, a ministry that called those far away, like me, to Himself by the gift of grace from a Father who loves me. Being there and seeing it, well, I know that it is indeed a most precious gift to be called, beloved, and kept. I marvel anew that He has brought me – a sinner - near. I was far off and now I am near. It is beyond my understanding.

May we all marvel afresh at the gift of grace given to us though our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and may we continue also in prayer for those everywhere without such hope, in Jerusalem and Louisville too.

He is worthy.

Pastor Jeff

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 01 Isaiah 1-2; Matthew 1
02 **John Bechtler**
Isaiah 3-4; Matthew 2
03 Isaiah 5-6; Matthew 3
04 Isaiah 7-8; Matthew 4
05 Isaiah 9-10; Matthew 5
06 **Carolyn Morris**
Isaiah 11-12; Matthew 6
07 Isaiah 13-14; Matthew 7
08 Isaiah 15-16; Matthew 8
09 Isaiah 17-18; Matthew 9
10 **May Zickel**
Isaiah 19-20; Matthew 10
11 Isaiah 21-22; Matthew 11
12 **Carol Wahl**
Isaiah 23-24; Matthew 12
13 Isaiah 25-26; Matthew 13
14 Isaiah 27-28; Matthew 14
15 Isaiah 29-30; Matthew 15
16 **Melissa Schweri**
Isaiah 32-32; Matthew 16
17 Isaiah 33-34; Matthew 17
18 **Juan Valero**
Isaiah 35-36; Matthew 18
19 **Charlene Gerlach**
Isaiah 37-38; Matthew 19
20 **Jeff Washburn**
Isaiah 39-40; Matthew 20
21 Isaiah 41-42; Matthew 21
22 Isaiah 43-44; Matthew 22
23 Isaiah 45-46; Matthew 24
24 Isaiah 47-48; Matthew 25
25 Isaiah 49-50; Matthew 26
26 Isaiah 51-52; Matthew 27
27 Isaiah 53-54; Matthew 28
28 **Sara Bishop**
Isaiah 55-57; Psalms 140-142
29 Isaiah 58-60; Psalms 143-144
30 Isaiah 61-63; Psalms 145-146
31 Isaiah 64-66; Psalms 147-150

PREPARING FOR SUNDAY (PREACHING SCHEDULE)

12/01	(Eph. v3:1-7)	Pastor Dan Hatfield
12/08	(Matt. v1:1-17)	Pastor Dan Hatfield
12/15	(Matt. v1:18-25)	Pastor Dan Hatfield
12/22	(Matt. v2:1-23)	Pastor Dan Hatfield
12/29	(Eph. v3:8-13)	Pastor Jeff Akin

AUDUBON MISSIONS – REACHING OUT



CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

Time flies and it is already time to start filling shoeboxes for the children of Churchill Downs. Please have boxes at church by December 6th so that they can be distributed to the children in time for Christmas. Suggested items: toiletries such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant; clothing such as socks, underwear, knit tops, gloves, hats; school supplies such as crayons and coloring books, pencils and markers. Toys are always great too! Mark your box as Boy or Girl with an age range. The BW will wrap each box in special Christmas paper!

The annual outreach to fill CHRISTMAS FOOD BOXES for those in need is underway and will run through December 14th. We are hoping to fill at least 12 boxes with food that will bless families in need of such a blessing. While some food will go to our Nepalese friends, or possibly our new African friends, we certainly want to take care of any needs within our church community. Please direct any questions or referrals to Susan Snyder at (502)797-5096. Thank you!

CAMP TAYLOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL “Winter” Supplies. Many children are without basic necessities such as gloves, mittens, head coverings, and warm socks! We are collecting supplies to give to the children, so they are blessed and comfortable through the winter months. Donations will be accepted through 1/5.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AUDUBON BAPTIST

Don't miss out as the church gathers throughout the month for fellowship and wonder. Be sure to invite family and friends!

Wednesday, 12/4	Hanging of the Green
Wednesday, 12/11	Lottie Moon Service
Monday, 12/23	Candlelight Communion