

DECEMBER
CALENDAR

December 1	Women’s Christmas Party	7:00PM
December 2	Men’s Breakfast	9:00AM
December 3	Sunday School	9:45AM
	Morning Worship	11:00AM
	<i>AWANA to sing during service</i>	
	Church Luncheon	12:15PM
	Bridal Shower for Brinne Stewart	2:00PM
December 6	AWANA Christmas Performance & Store Youth	6:30PM 6:45PM
	<i>No OASIS</i>	
	Christmas Choir	7:15PM
December 10	Sunday School	9:45AM
	Morning Worship	11:00AM
December 13	Youth	6:45PM
	OASIS	6:45PM
	Christmas Choir	8:00PM
December 14	HBC Pre-K Christmas Program	6:00PM
December 17	Sunday School	9:45AM
	Morning Worship	11:00AM
	Church Luncheon	12:15PM
December 20	OASIS	6:45PM
	Christmas Choir	8:00PM
December 24	Sunday School	9:45AM
	Morning Worship	11:00AM
	Christmas Eve Service	6:00PM
December 25	Church Offices are Closed for Christmas	
December 26	Church Offices are Closed for Christmas	
December 27	No Church Activities	
December 31	Sunday School	9:45AM
	Morning Worship	11:00AM
	<i>Family Worship-No BLAST</i>	

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Harlem, GA
Permit No. 8

Rev. Carson Britt
Pastor
Evan Powell
Minister of Youth and Children
Rebekah Dickerson
Minister of Music and Media
Ashley Driggers
Administrative Assistant
Lindsey Rogers
HBC Pre-K Director

Happy Anniversary

12-03	Daniel & Rebekah Dickerson
12-05	Daniel & Emily White
12-11	Randy & Stephanie Lewis
12-14	Wesley & Kacee Morris
12-15	Valerie & Kevin Allen
12-17	Tony & Dianne Mundy
12-19	Carson & Jennifer Britt
12-21	Ryan & Jennifer Guy
12-22	Randall & Ruth Hill
12-24	Jimmy & Shirley Tankersley

Happy Birthday

12-01	Jennifer Guy
12-01	Raven Truitt
12-01	Coleman McClellan
12-05	Annette Coleman
12-06	Annette Moore
12-06	Shirley Tankersley
12-06	Liza Davis
12-06	Brandy Storey
12-10	Brigitte Cozart
12-11	Wil Hardy
12-12	Chandler Arnold
12-12	Wesley Morris
12-14	Nick Hill
12-15	Sadie Trobaugh
12-16	Lyndey Moorhead
12-17	Leanna Williams
12-25	Nancy Morrison
12-26	Brandi Morrison
12-27	Hope McClellan
12-28	Raley Truitt
12-28	Chris Smith
12-29	Donna Knighton

* Please call the Church Office if your birthday or anniversary is not listed.

FINANCIALS

as of November 28, 2023

Actual Expenses YTD \$356,771
Actual Received YTD \$330,789

Deacon of the Month

Gary Wilkes
706-829-4876

CONNECTIONS

O Holy Night

December 2023

The
Pastor’s
Desk

December has arrived and apparently it is “the most wonderful time of the year.” I wonder sometimes if I polled 100 people how many would actually agree with that statement. I know there are many who love the décor, the presents, the food, the traditions, and the added time with family. But as I have gotten a little bit older, I must admit that my attitude regarding Christmas has gradually transitioned from one filled with joy and anticipation to an attitude that more closely aligns with that of Mr. Scrooge.

I am a self-proclaimed romantic during the holiday season. I tend to plan out the perfect Christmas season in my mind. One where the weather is perfect, my children behave, there is no hustle and bustle, a fire is in the fireplace, and there is plenty of good food to eat. As a pastor, I envision a full sanctuary each Sunday in December with all worshipers singing classic Christmas carols in perfect harmony and with joy-filled hearts. But what I have come to discover is that this picturesque Christmas is never reality. And that has led me to experience a great deal of stress and disappointment with each season which is largely to blame for my Scrooge-like attitude. I suspect that my experience is not unique to me. So for those of us that often fight stress, disappointment, frustration, and/or sadness at Christmas, what are we to do?

The gospel narrative makes clear that Jesus’ arrival was anything but perfect. Mary and Joseph had their own stresses as they prepared for the birth of their son. They faced tremendous criticism. They had a nightmarish trip to Bethlehem where they couldn’t even find a clean place to stay. Jesus was not birthed in a high-end hospital nor was he welcomed by an entourage of VIPs. The first Christmas would best be described as humble, exhausting, and frustrating. And yet, it was one of the two best moments in all of history. For on that day “*the Savior, who is Christ the Lord*” was born for all of humanity. When Christ was born so too was love, hope, and joy.

After several years of Christmases that just didn’t quite meet my own expectations, I have challenged myself this year to alter my expectations. Rather than finding temporary joy in gifts, food, and fellowship, let’s strive to realign the season on Christ and rediscover the joy of our salvation. Rather than trying to take hold of peace in the midst of busyness, let’s be intentional to find rest in Him and in His word. For it is only in Christ that we will truly experience Christmas as “the most wonderful time of the year.”

Merry Christmas!

Press on!
Carson

LOVE
GOD

LOVE
PEOPLE

MAKE
DISCIPLES

Church News



Women's Ministry Christmas Party

December 1st
7:00pm-8:30pm

Wear your ugly
Christmas sweater and
enjoy dessert together!



BRIDAL SHOWER
IN HONOR OF

Brinne Stewart

DECEMBER 3 • 2PM-4PM
HBC- YOUTH BUILDING
Registered at Amazon & Target



In observance of
Christmas and New Year
the Church Office
will be closed
December 25th & 26th
and January 1st

AWANA Christmas Performance and Store

December 6th
at 6:30PM

(THERE WILL BE NO OASIS)



**Sue Whiddon
Building Offering**
December 3rd



DECEMBER 3

(FISHES AND LOAVES)

HAMBURGER STEAKS
& FIXINGS

DECEMBER 17

(CHILDREN'S MINISTRY)

CHICKEN CORDON BLEU
& FIXINGS



What comes to your mind when you think about corporate worship? Singing together is so important. Did you know there are more than 400 references to singing in the Bible and at least 50 direct command, including the command to sing out loud as part of the 'assembly of the saints'? And one of the ways to help a congregation sing whole-heartedly is leading by example. Those who help lead in worship choose week in and week out to sing, play instruments, run sound, or put lyrics on the screens for the congregation to follow. Worship leaders in the church are a VITAL part to the call of all believers to "sing joyfully", "sing a new song", and "admonish one another with songs and hymns."

Leading worship is about so much more than getting on the stage with a microphone in your hand. It's about seeing a need in the church – the need to help others grow closer to God in the unique way that is worshipping through music. And it takes so many moving parts. It's not about any one person. It's not about having the perfect band or choir. It's not about keeping up with what other churches are doing. It's about giving God the best Harlem Baptist can offer each and every Sunday as we lift our voices together in praise, so that our lives might be changed through the beautiful process of worship in song. There are so many ways that individual church members can help lead worship: Yes, we do need singers for our praise teams.. But we also need folks who would be more comfortable singing in the choir. We need people who play instruments – drums, guitar, etc. And we need people willing to run our computer (if you can run Google Slides, you would be great). We need people willing to learn and run sound. We need...people.

Our music/media ministry can only grow when people are willing to answer a call that might be uncomfortable. It might mean standing on a stage or learning a new skill. And it isn't about being the best or showing off your abilities or wanting all of the attention. Leading worship at Harlem Baptist Church is about having a desire and a calling to serve the church by being willing. Willing to learn and grow as a person and a musician. Willing to challenge yourself and put in the work – so that others can benefit in the beautiful experience that is corporate worship. And the personal blessings it brings are too many to count. So if you think you could be that person, or if you know of someone else who might need a little nudge, pray about it. Think it over. And please, come see me soon so we can find the place that God has for you to serve.

Come, let us worship together.

-Rebekah



DECEMBER 6TH

**AWANA Christmas Performance
& AWANA Store**
at 6:00PM

DECEMBER 14TH

**HBC Pre-K
Christmas Program**
at 6:00PM

DECEMBER 24TH

**Christmas Eve Morning Worship
Service**
at 11:00AM

**Christmas Eve
Candlelight Communion Service**
at 6:00PM



Sometimes the task of writing these newsletter articles comes with a lot of pressure. The objective is simple, but not always easy: be informative, be thought-provoking, be spiritually encouraging... and accomplish all that in about 500 words or less. Not easy for someone as verbose as I am. And not all months are created equal. For instance, June does not bring with it the same pressure as December. But I mean, this is *the* Christmas newsletter for Harlem Baptist. Surely I have to bring my "A game" this month. No kidding here: I was having such extraordinary brain block that I went back and read all of my previous December newsletter articles from throughout my years here at HBC. I was looking for some inspiration and direction. I wasn't expecting to get a *literal* sense of direction. But it dawned on me that in all of my past newsletter articles for December, I have focused on writing about the expectation, the hope, the adventure, the "what's next" excitement that the advent season brings with it. I was right to do so... I mean the earthly coming of the Savior of the world is a **big** deal.

But this year I am going to do the exact opposite. I am going to look backward.

When I look closely at the past year, a few fuzzy memories come into sharp focus: This year I can thank God for allowing the Georgia Bulldogs to win another National Championship.

Far more significantly, this year I became a father. That's huge!

This year, God showed mercy in allowing a bad car accident that totaled one of our vehicles to not cause any bodily harm to Katie.

This year I was able to extend my friend group and community by working alongside several other area youth pastors; some of these guys have already become close friends!

This year we tried something very new at church – a summer program for children called "Camp Harlem" – and over 100 different kids showed up across those three days. Finally, God used *you all* to bless our family with so much support and encouragement as we began our journey as foster parents.

If you look back, you will no doubt find plenty to be grateful for. You may also find, as I have, some moments throughout the year that weren't as kind. For our family, that moment was back in May when we found out that we had lost our second pregnancy in a little over a year.

But the promise of Christmas – the wild, sweet, wonderful, magnificent, awe-inspiring promise is that God is hard at work redeeming all our circumstances for our absolute best good and for His glory. We may not understand how He is going about His work or why He does as He does, but we can be assured that He sees us, He hears us, and He is with us. That is why He sent His Son into the world... to remind us always of "Emmanuel" ... God is with us.

I can testify that God was with me at all times this year. I encourage you to look back and reflect on how He has been with you. And let this recognition give you assurance that He will continue to be with you in an Almighty way as we approach the new year of 2024.

-Evan



Saturday, December 2nd
at 9:00am
**Red Oak Manor
Harlem, GA**