



**JANUARY 2023**

## Bob's 2023 Challenge

*Repeat, Memorize and Adopt the following scripture:*

**Romans 12:15-18 (ESV)**

**"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."**

**Seasoned Adult Minister:** Bob Smith  
**SAM Assistant:** Debbie Arrington  
**SAM Newsletter Editor:** Judy Bryant  
**Newsletter Design:** Stephanie Entrup

*This newsletter is prepared and emailed monthly by and for 55+ adults of First Baptist Church Trussville, Alabama. Suggested information to be included in an upcoming SAM newsletter may be emailed to [sam.news@fbctrussville.org](mailto:sam.news@fbctrussville.org). Printed copies will be available at the church Welcome Center and Events Center.*

# GOD IS NOT DEAD, NOR DOTH HE SLEEP!

It is because of Christmas that I can wish you all ... HAPPY NEW YEAR!

*For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end." Isaiah 9:6-7*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) wrote the original words upon which the hymn I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day is based. Did you know that? The American Poet, so named especially for his poem Paul Revere's Ride wrote many, many others. I have not seen the movie "I Heard the Bells" which was out in theatres over the last several weeks, but I've heard about it! Briefly, it is a true story about Longfellow's life leading up to his writing the poem. The story goes that Longfellow wrote the poem while in a great deal of personal distress. He lost his beloved wife tragically and was injured himself while attempting to save her; he could not even attend her funeral because of those injuries. She was buried on the day of their wedding anniversary. (He lost his first wife years before, also unexpected and tragic.) One year after his wife's death, their oldest son decided at age 18 to enlist in the Union Army only to go off to battle in the Civil War, also something that saddened his father greatly.

Then Longfellow's son was injured in the war; something his father had feared. Longfellow brought him home and nursed him back to health. That period of time was when his son realized how emotionally "lost" his father was. Longfellow's grief was so hard that he lost his will and heart to write. He did note in his journal: "Perhaps some day God will give me peace."

Christmas in their family had always been a wonderful time of giving and sharing, and his wife particularly loved the tradition of declaring it Christmas when the church bells rang at midnight on Christmas Eve. Father and son were talking one day about their "bells of Christmas" tradition ...and how mother used to always say the bells were the voices of the church at Christmas. I wonder, those of you who saw the movie, did you catch this ... the son says to his father after he realized his father's great suffering ... Father, you are the bells! You are a voice to many through your writing. Then with pen in hand and late nights, much struggling, the words came. In the midst of his lingering pain and a devastating Civil War, he wrote of peace ... out of the darkness, into the light ... hope!

No matter the year, month or day, no matter our circumstances, we must "go and tell the world" the WAY from darkness to light. My brothers and sisters, we are the bells of Christmas!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob".



# I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

By Bob Smith

The original version titled "Christmas Bells" has been added to/or changed a few times over the years as many have sung the song. There are some differences as to when the poem was written, but it is believed December 1865. Just a few verses here that remain as in the original.

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old familiar carols play.  
And wild and sweet, the words repeat,  
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!*

*And I thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along the unbroken song  
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!*

*(omitted here 3 verses describing the  
terrors of the Civil War)*

*And in despair I bowed my head;  
"There is no peace on earth," I said;  
"For hate is strong and mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!  
The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

CLICK [HERE](#) TO LISTEN  
Gaithers with David Phelps

## Midweek @ First Baptist

**KickOff:**  
Wednesday,  
January 11th

**Dinner:** Served 4:30-6:00pm in the Gym  
Adults: \$5, Kids: \$2, Immediate Family Max: \$20

**Discipleship University KickOff:**  
6:00pm in the Worship Center

All age-graded activities will begin on this night as well.



## Winter Semester Classes Starting Wednesday, January 18th

- Extreme Grandparenting
- Intro to Disciplemaking (discipleship)
- Engage (parenting)
- Financial Peace (stewardship)
- Experiencing God (Growth)
- Turning Everyday Conversations
- Into Gospel Conversations (evangelism)
- The Reason For God (apologetics)
- No More Perfect Marriages (marriage)
- Biblical Citizenship (enrichment)

**January Menus:** January 11th - fried chicken (kids: chicken legs)  
January 18th - spaghetti (kids: grilled cheese)  
January 25th - beef tips (kids: hot dog)

**Especially the new "GRACE BASED GRANDPARENTING"  
Class Facilitator: Bob Smith**



We even helped prepare the church trailer for our Trussville Christmas parade! Our float won Best Parade Float! Did you notice the sign on the float: 'tis so sweet to trust in Jesus!



# NEW BIBLE STUDIES

Don't punt the Bible. It is God's Word! Show your Bible. Exalt, praise, worship, delight in His Word yourself ... it's contagious! Dr. Jim Shaddix, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

## Ladies Precept Bible Study

A study of the book of Hebrews

Begins Wednesday, January 11 • 9:00AM • Room 142

Contact: Denise Dockery—[dockerymom@gmail.com](mailto:dockerymom@gmail.com)

## Ladies Sunday Evening Bible Study

An 8-session Elizabeth Woodson's study,

"From Beginning to Forever"

Begins Sunday, January 15 • 5:00PM • E204

Workbook required may be purchased at the first session.

Contact: Shirley Lyle [shirleydakota@gmail.com](mailto:shirleydakota@gmail.com)

## Men's Precept Bible Study

A study of 1&2 Corinthians for Seasoned Adult men

Begins Tuesday, January 17 • 8:00AM • E204

*This is a two-part study:*

**Part 1 is 12 weeks: workbooks are \$27**

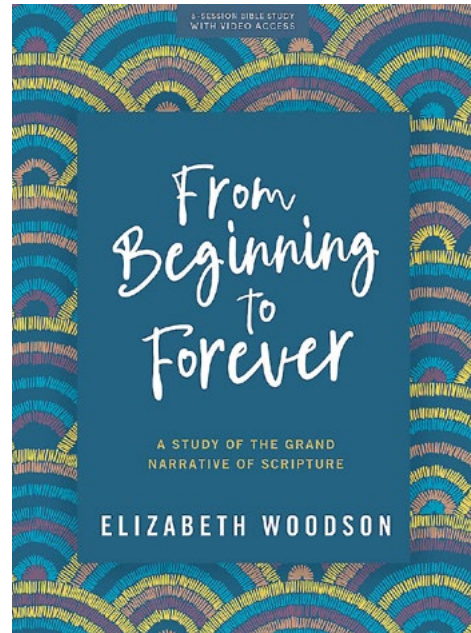
**Part 1 Title: Overcoming Divisions and Difficulties in the Body of Christ**

**Part 2 is 10 Weeks; workbooks are \$22.50**

**Part 2 Title: Ministers of Reconciliation**

Workbooks will be purchased separately, before each study.

Contact: Larry Payne—205-601-2288, [larrycpayne@gmail.com](mailto:larrycpayne@gmail.com)



# PLEASE COMMIT THESE TO PRAYER

## D-NOW • JANUARY 13-15

If you or your Sunday school class would like to help provide breakfast for our students and leaders on Sunday morning January 15th, please email

[Nicoles@fbctrussville.org](mailto:Nicoles@fbctrussville.org).

*Thank you, Spencer Jones*

JESUS  
—MVMT—

## DENNY ROGERS PRAYER JOURNEY SCHEDULE 2023

Thank you to all Prayer Warriors who faithfully pray for my safety as I travel and who agree with me in Prayer.

January 22-26 • First Prayer Journey • Florida

February 19-23 • Second Prayer Journey • Florida

March 26-30 • First Prayer Journey • Alabama

April 23-27 • First Prayer Journey • Mississippi

May 21-25 • First Prayer Journey • Georgia

June 25-29 • Second Prayer Journey • Alabama

July 23-27 • Second Prayer Journey • Mississippi

August 27-31 • Second Prayer Journey • Georgia

# LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING

## Healthy Habits ... 2023

(American Heart Association)

1. Slow down.
2. Snooze more.
3. Let worry go.
4. Laugh it up.
5. Get connected.
6. Get organized.
7. Practice giving back.
8. Be active every day.
9. Give up the bad habits.
10. Lean into things you can change.



## FIRST MONDAY PRAYER FOCUS

Monday, December 5 • 10:00 AM • Chapel

Meet in the Chapel or stop wherever you are and join us in prayer.

Email prayer requests to

[Sam.prayer@fbctrussville.org](mailto:Sam.prayer@fbctrussville.org)



*And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the Word of God with boldness. Acts 4:31*

Praying for your



## FIRST THURSDAY:

### MEN PRAYING for their ONE

First Thursday of every month • 6:30 am

Worship Center

## FIRST THURSDAY:

### LADIES PRAYING for their ONE

First Thursday of every month • 12:00pm

Room D147

## JOYFUL HEARTS REHEARSALS

FIRST & THIRD Thursdays OF EVERY MONTH

10:30 AM • Fellowship Hall

## SAM VOCAL BAND REHEARSALS

(Men's Southern Gospel Group)

Wednesdays • 4:55PM • Room D144



## MEN'S 6:11 BREAKFAST

Thursday, January 12 • 6:11AM • Gym

Invite a friend and join us.

## EDIBLE EDUCATION RETURNS!

Thursday, January 12 • 11:30AM • Fellowship Hall

Dr. Drew Smith joins us on the topic of diabetes prevention and care.

\$6 per person. Register online at [FBCT.org](http://FBCT.org)

## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

Monday, January 16

## SAM MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Thursday, January 26 • 11:30AM • Gym

Our guest will be Jonathan Hardison, Anchor/Managing Editor/Investigative Reporter for WBRC Fox 6 News

\$7\* per person



**\*Now is the time to purchase your annual SAM Monthly Luncheon 2023 meal ticket.**

The tickets are on sale through January 31.

Cost is \$85 per person; includes all luncheons plus Christmas.

## WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



Friday-Saturday, January 27-28

First Baptist Church Trussville

Keynote Speaker: Nicki Koziarz

\$50 • Register online at

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



## FIFTH SUNDAY COMMUNITY SING

Sunday, January 29 • 4:00PM • FBCT

• HOW TO BE •

# SAM with KEN LASS **SATIONAL!**

How can you tell it's January? Just drive past any of the gyms in the Trussville area. You'll find the parking lots are packed. It's the busiest time of the year for them. January is the month of new beginnings, which very often involve resolutions to lose weight and get into better condition. We start out excited and motivated to work out. We set our goals and prepare to sweat it out. This time, it's on for real. We might even splurge and buy a treadmill or a stationary bike for our home. Or map out a walking route around the neighborhood. We begin our exercise regimen with energy and intensity.

Ah, but after a few days, muscles begin to ache, joints are sore, back is throbbing, and you're just plain tired. All the time. It gets hard. Too hard. Oh, you press on for a few weeks, but eventually you start to invent excuses to take a few days off. You have a doctor's appointment. You have to babysit the grandkids. The dog needs a bath. Your favorite episode of *Gunsmoke* is on TV. Gradually, you get more and more creative with the excuses, you work out less and less, and by sometime around mid-February, the gym has become a distant memory, and that new treadmill has become handy for hanging wet clothes so they can air dry.

Our Christian walk can be like that. We experience a great spiritual renewal at church over the Christmas season. We are pumped up for Jesus. We leap headlong into the new year determined to get closer to God, to pray more, to get more deeply involved in church activities, to reconnect with folks in your life who might need a little ministry. This is the year!

But we rediscover that it takes time and effort. It usually involves coming out of your comfort zone, and it often doesn't yield the kind of immediate, satisfying results you envisioned. You try to press on, but slowly you begin to let yourself off the hook. So many others are praying for this person, they don't need my prayer time. I've done all I can to minister to that person, but it doesn't seem to be making a difference. I can't make time for this ministry, I'm too busy. I'm just not cut out for that kind of service. I don't know what to say.

Did you ever decide to go on a diet, and hear people say "the first few weeks are the hardest, but eventually you'll lose your desire for sweets and fatty foods. You won't even want them anymore." Well, maybe you've had that experience, but it never happened for me. I've gone on restrictive diets for six months at a time, and guess what? I still craved those french fries and that hot fudge sundae more than ever. And they still tasted every bit as glorious. Temptation is not going away. The devil is real, and he will not relent in his effort to lure you into sin and lazy worship. He will have excuses ready for you if you want them. Here's one thing I have tried, and it has worked. When I got hungry and was enticed to break my diet, I picked up my Bible and started reading. It doesn't matter where you are in the Good Book, eventually you get into the Word and get your mind off eating. Even better, you will find that praying and studying the Bible is going to help you stay the course in your Christian walk as well.

So get back on that treadmill. Find your path back to the gym. Head out the door for that walk. Open your Bible. Read and pray. And every once in a while, go ahead and order the french fries. Just maybe share them with someone. That counts as ministry, right?

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT ...

What is the biggest threat to Christians in 2023? Paul Tripp writes "it is something that I would title identity amnesia. Identity amnesia is when you forget who you are in Christ and what you have been given in Christ."



# WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

JANUARY 27-28, 2023

We hope you've had a good Christmas season and are ready to start the new year afresh. We have an update on our women's conference scheduled for the evening of Friday, January 27, and the morning of Saturday, January 28.

Many of you have already registered for the conference, but there is still room for more! We hope you bring a friend who could use a blessing this time of year. But we do need you to register so we can have plenty of food. We have lots of fun planned and some good Bible teaching!

We have had a change of plans. Our original speaker, Whitney Capps from Proverbs 31 Ministry, has had to have some unexpected surgery that will prevent her from being with us. Whitney has suggested and helped us secure another Proverbs 31 speaker however. Nicki Koziarz is a three-time best-selling author and Bible study teacher. She is a wife, mom, writing coach, and first-generation farmer. She lives just outside Charlotte, North Carolina, on a small farm they affectionately have named The Fixer-Upper Farm. Nicki is passionate about helping women connect with God's word in powerful and practical ways.

**We are so excited about having Nicki join us at FBCT!** We are confident that this was our sovereign God's plan all along, and we cannot wait to meet together with you on January 27 to experience what He has for us!

Nicki will be bringing us lessons from Rachel and Leah – the two most famous striving sisters in the Bible. Do you ever look around at other women and wonder "Why her? Why not me?" We will uncover all that we can learn from these two sisters about not letting comparison compromise who we are in the Lord.

## This study will help us:

- Take a deep dive into Genesis and all we can learn from Rachel and Leah
- Become settled without settling for less than God's best plan
- Recognize how comparison ruins us and become able to combat it.

## So in closing we'd like to ask you for four things:

1. Begin praying for our conference because it is soon!
2. Pray for Whitney Capps as she currently deals with her health challenge
3. Register on the FBCT website
4. Invite or bring a friend or your daughter or mom

**See you Friday and Saturday, January 27-28!**

## FBCT Women's Conference Committee

Diane Poole

Katy Kinard

Mary Beth Baccus

Angela Jones

Susan Hornsby



PRESIDENT'S DAY EVENT

FEBRUARY 20 • 10:30AM

DON'T MISS IT!

# LOOKING AHEAD FROM LOOKING BACK

By Janice Shelton

As 2023 begins, it brings with it the memories of not only 2022 but also the memories that occupy our hearts and minds, memories that may have helped shape who we are in the new year and who we will be beyond this year. Memories are more than emotion-filled episodes; they are reminders of the impact of the past. Memories help us keep those we have loved and who may no longer be on earth as examples to follow and of hope as we look into the future.



As I decorated during December, I again loved touching various pieces which represent real people who occupied some time in my life: a cute snowman ornament made by a dear student in 1980 who became a dedicated nurse and is now a grandmother; a very old Christmas sugar bowl and cream pitcher my mother-in-law proudly gave me; the first ornament my husband and I bought for ten cents after Christmas 1970 before we were married June 1971; a silly, grinning Styrofoam ball ornament my husband made when he was 4 or 5; and on and on.

While I put away Christmas decorations and ornaments, a number of them speak to the sweet people with whom they are associated. One very rustic, hand-carved nativity with only the baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph bring to mind a family from our past and the husband who held the knife to the wood to produce his crafts and the testimony of his heart that his pieces showed and still show to any who see them. The many—and I, mean many, trees that I take down take me back to one very brutally cold Christmas in upstate New York when our mother went out into the elements to get a little tree for us, braving terrible weather because that was about all she could give us that year in way of celebration in our small, broken family.

The greatest memory to take into 2023, however, is that of the salvation so freely given to those who will accept the Christ child we so recently remembered again. The greatest beginning for 2023 comes in Romans 10:13: For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. I can think of no better memory to take into this year and all other years granted us than the memory of coming to know Him.

*NOTE: We introduced our SAM Newsletter writers in last month's issue of the newsletter, but inadvertently omitted Ken Lass's piece! Our apologies to Ken and our thanks to you Ken for your enlightening articles every month.*

By Ken Lass

I spent 43 years in the television news business, but long before I ever stepped in front of a camera, my first love was always writing. I was that nerd in school who actually enjoyed writing book reports and term papers. When I retired in 2016, I started writing my own blog as a hobby. One thing led to another, and now I am blessed to be a columnist for a variety of publications and websites.

I first became involved with SAM when Bob Smith asked me to do some videos for the monthly meetings. Eventually the videos evolved into a regular column in the newsletter. Every time I open my Bible, I am awestruck by God's wisdom and foresight, and I truly enjoy describing some of my thoughts in the SAM columns. I am very grateful for anyone who reads them, and my prayer would be they might be inspired just a fraction as much as the Lord's word inspires me.

Sharon and I have been members here at First Baptist since 1990. We've seen our church grow exponentially right along with Trussville itself. It seems clear God is working in a great way in our community, and I hope my writing can, in some very small way, contribute to the effort of our congregation to fulfill His path for our fellowship.







# THIS IS CHRISTMAS 2022

From the Family Christmas Festival and the Trussville Christmas Parade (where our church float won best float!), to our choir's spellbinding Worship presentation "Dawn of Redeeming Grace", to our Candlelight services and Christmas Day Service, and so much more ... God has BLESSED and INSPIRED us this Christmas! Let's not quinch the Spirit in 2023 ... we're on a roll!



## JOYFUL HEARTS AND SAM VOCAL BAND CAROLING

By Suellen Edmondson

Two weeks of fast paced caroling visiting over 50 homes (more than 60 people) and 6 nursing home facilities (100). Each recipient was prayed for and a gift left with them. Words cannot describe the joy we personally received in sharing Christmas and the love of Jesus with those in our church who are home bound, facing health issues, or just needing some special love. Many of these have not seen the inside of FBCT for as long as 10 years! As we sang Silent Night, tears flowed.

We also had the blessing to sing at St. Vincent's Ascension Lobby, the Col. Robert L. Howard State Veterans Home, and with our own Independence Place folks right here at FBCT. SAM Vocal Band sang at Grantswood Community School as well.

This has been Christmas for our music group—taking the love of Jesus outside the walls of our church and reminding our loved ones that they have not been forgotten. JOY To The WORLD!!!!!!





# LOTTIE MOON LUNCHEON

On Saturday, December 3 our ladies attended a beautiful Lottie Moon Luncheon. The event planners did a wonderful job! There were some 30 nativity sets from all over the world gracing the tables as centerpieces. Lottie Moon (a/k/a Ginger Cornelius) visited the luncheon. She was also known as the cookie lady, telling us about her famous sugar cookies. What a joy it was to have our own Hazel Taylor (90+ years young) on stage reading the Christmas story to the children.



# STOCKING MINISTRY

By Sandra Bearden

Ladies in Martha Jones' Sunday School class may not have the ability to paint school buildings or set up outdoor lighting, but they've found another way of ministry. Using their well-honed skills of shopping, sorting and sharing, they're assisting with a number of FBCT ministries that call for support from many corners. "Our class meets monthly, collecting, assembling and packaging items for many diverse projects," said Sarah Henderson, class treasurer. "These include WMU backpacks and stockings for children of all ages; "Toys for Tots," sponsored locally by the Trussville Fire Department; soap and washcloths for nearly every ministry; contributions for the church's "Season of Giving," and many other causes." Jones, the group's teacher, pointed out that the class not only enjoys this part of the monthly meeting, but learns more about the scope of FBCT's ministries.



# SAM CHRISTMAS BANQUET

On Sunday, December 11, 321 Improv entertained approximately 400 of us over two shows. What does it mean to improvise? These three performed spontaneously, playing off each other's words and the audience suggestions ... and they did it well! Funny, quick wits, amazing ... oh those young, quick minds ... I seem to remember having one, but it's gone now! Thank you to our students who served our meals to raise money for their mission trip! It was an excellent program on all counts!





# SAMMERS SERVE

By Jack Sittre

SAM small groups of FBCT regularly serve, and most especially over the past few months ahead of the Christmas season, in a variety of mission opportunities. Any class or individual so inclined may contact Jack anytime at 205-810-9480 or poppycorvette@yahoo.com for more information or to inquire about serving in these and other ministries as 2023 begins. These opportunities are year 'round ... some monthly.

**CLCC** Serving dinners as a Sunday school class mission. Providing kitchen necessities.

**Serving You** Laying new flooring in office building, painting, hanging awnings on outside of building, serving in food pantry and the like..

**BMBA** Assisting with loading of over 1,600 backpacks for delivery to Mississippi Delta for Christmas.

**Area schools** Outside landscaping; painting; inside set up as school begins in August (Grantswood Community School, Magnolia and Paine schools).

**Jimmie Hale Mission** Continuing monthly service at Jimmie Hale every 3rd Monday of the month.



## DEACON'S LUNCHEON FOR WIDOWS & WIDOWERS



On Sunday, December 4 our Deacons treated our widows and widowers with a lovely lunch prepared by Mrs. Georgia and her staff and served by the Deacons. Deacons sang their traditional "we wish you a Merry Christmas"; Kevin Grigsby entertained the crowd with his music, and yes, this is Kevin laying on his back playing upside down! (He treated a few of our Small Group classes with his musical talents over the holidays as well, including this feat!) (Note: this picture was posted with his permission!) Our Deacon Chairman Craig Copham recognized George Peoples, his wife Linda at his side, with a plaque commemorating George's designation as a Deacon Emeritus here at FBCT. Congratulations George and thank you for your continuing service over the years!



# WALKING THE WALK, WRITING THE TALK

A review of **Essential Discipleship Preparation** by James Long

By June Mathews

*"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23*

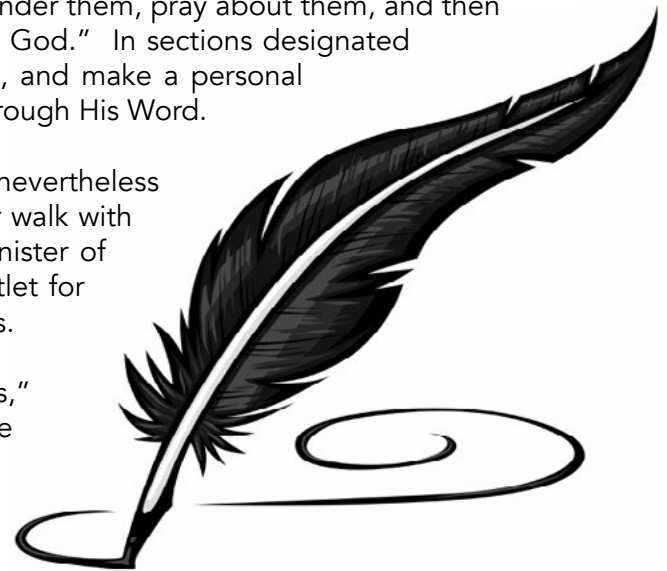
For over 50 years, James Long has read, written, conversed, preached, and taught about matters of faith. He's studied the Scriptures, listened to sermons, attended conferences, and meditated on what he learned. Along the way, he made and collected countless notes from no telling how many sources. Then one day, after years of family and friends encouraging him to do so, he sat down, sorted through his notes, and began to write a book. The result is a three-dimensional (past, present, future) look at the concept of discipleship called Essential Discipleship Preparation.

Long characterizes his book as a "long" (see what he did there?) love letter written for the glory of God. It's intended as a tool for believers interested in taking personal discipleship to the next level in their own lives, as well as in nurturing discipleship in the lives of others. "It has been designed as an interactive workbook throughout," he explained. "It can easily be used as a training manual."

The chapters, he said, may be studied individually or as part of a study of the entire book. Each one reflects Long's ability to take Scripture and lead his reader to discover how it applies to his or her life. He challenges the reader to not just read the points he makes throughout the book but to "ponder them, pray about them, and then respond to them in faith in ways that will bring the most glory to God." In sections designated "CONNECT THE DOTS", readers are encouraged to stop, think, and make a personal connection between their lives and what God is saying to them through His Word.

Though Long never meant for his book to be autobiographical, it nevertheless reveals the lifelong path he's taken in his pursuit of an ever-closer walk with God. Along the way, his service to four Alabama churches as Minister of Education (including First Baptist Trussville) has been a fitting outlet for his passion to guide other believers as they pursue their own walks.

"The growth toward spiritual maturity is a process, a slow process," Long wrote. "There is always room for more growth." But, he cautioned, "It is a lifelong journey. It is a marathon and not a sprint."



**Congratulations to Sally Murray on her book "When You Take A Cow On A Train," written by Sally and illustrated by Abigail Banks Brandenburg.**

Both ladies were interviewed on ABC33/40's Talk of Alabama in early December.



# REMEMBER WHEN ...

We used to go to Shoney's Drive-In for strawberry pie or wasn't there some sort of chocolate thing we all loved too?! Some 80 of us SAMers were reminded of this on our Nashville Christmas at Gaylord Opryland Resort trip November 30 – December 2. An old Shoney's poster hung inside the Ryman Theatre amongst other museum photos and art in the Rock 'n Roll section. Can you guess how many times Elvis actually performed at the Grand Ole Opry?



We enjoyed the luxury double-decker bus; had a great bus driver and appreciated his sense of humor! Elaine Copham overheard this short back/forth between our folks sitting at the front of the bus, on the top level with big glass windows and the bus driver from his seat on the bottom level. "This is our first time to have a double decker bus. I'd like to drive this bus! Then shortly...Wow! That was close! Bus driver on speaker says, "Is your heart still beating?" Reply, "It just restarted." Bus driver, "We can do compressions!"

## Here's just a thumbnail of what we experienced on this wonderful trip.

- We stopped at Buc-ees both enroute and on the return home. Who doesn't like Buc-ees!
- Besides all the beautiful Christmas flora, trees and décor, we were greeted with a magnificent life-sized glass sculpture in the hotel lobby. The piece was created by Ludek Hroch of the Czech Republic and is tagged "Resurgence."
- We didn't miss a thing at the ICE display. It was COLLDDDDD. But that didn't stop our stellar group of brave oldsters who slid down the ice slides ... yep, Betty Stovall, Mike Mathews, Jane Beasley, and Jerry Bryant, just to name of few! I think I heard one of them say they felt like a kid again! And may I remind you ... it was COLLDDDDD.
- The Grand Ole Opry show "Opry Country Christmas" did not disappoint. Larry Gatlin and his brothers, Rhonda Vincent, Charlie McCoy, Lauren Alaina and others were great.
- Our bus tour of downtown Nashville was enlightening ... this certainly is a growing city. We referred to it as "Nashville under construction"!
- We ate... oh, did we eat! We visited some of the best restaurants in town!
- We had plenty of opportunity to make new friends and reacquaint with others, including Joe Estes who now lives in the Nashville area and joined us one night for a little get-to-know you time. We even enjoyed a Bob Smith/Joe Estes duet. What a treat!
- Oh, and there was ice cream!



**P.S. If you guessed one, you are correct. Elvis actually sang only once at the Grand Ole Opry / Ryman Theatre in his career!**

**Not receiving our SAM newsletters?** How do you prefer to receive our newsletters each month? By email and/or paper copy mailed to you? If you haven't already or you need to update your preference, please contact Debbie Arrington in the SAM Office at 205-228-1006 or email at [debbie@fbctrussville.org](mailto:debbie@fbctrussville.org). Everyone for whom we have an up-to-date email address will receive the newsletters by email; however, if you prefer to have a paper copy mailed to you each month, let Debbie know. We will be happy to mail one to you!