

## A Christmas Update....A Look Back at 2022!

Luke 2:16-20 – “And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”

“Christmas Gift!” My grandfather would annually proclaim this as he entered the door of my house on each Christmas morning of my childhood as he came to celebrate Christmas with us! Here on this Christmas of 2022 I want to celebrate with you God’s ultimate Christmas Gift in the giving of His Son Jesus and to also “return, glorifying and praising God” for all His goodness and provision for us! I am thankful to each of you as His shepherds (and for your families) as you faithfully proclaim that good news and minister to God’s flock here in our county! Thank you and Merry Christmas!

We have experienced much and have much to be thankful for over the year of 2022! Wow! What a year of seeing God’s hand working in our area and through all of our churches as we experienced the move of the Holy Spirit! I wanted to list some of the things that YOU DID through this year that make this year so memorable! I am sorry if I miss some events but just know that we praise the Lord for how He worked through your church and ministry!

1. Thank you WMU ladies! Each year our WMU leaders do an excellent job of leading out in missions and teaching a missional lifestyle. Brenda Kinsey, Mary Ann Ellington, Teresa Sellers and a host of other WMU leaders did a great job this year! Here are some great highlights!
  - a. Children’s Mission Day - Feb. 26 - Was a great day to introduce missions to children! 13 children were saved in this years event held at Hazel Creek Baptist!
  - b. Habersham Annual Prayer Tour of Schools – First Wednesday of August – was a great way of showing support for our schools with around 20 churches participating with tours to north and south schools in the county!
  - c. WMU Missions Night (Training time) – August - Rev. Bill Barker did a great job in talking about missions and particularly the Christmas Backpack ministry. There was a great turnout of mission leaders from our churches.
  - d. Christmas Backpacks 2022 - On Nov 3-5 our churches of Habersham (and Liberty) associations collected over 630 backpacks and sent them to Rabun county. They became a part of over 1200 that went to minister to children and families in West Virginia and Sevierville, Tennessee! Thanks to WMU and Clarkesville Baptist for collecting and processing these gifts!
  - e. Operation Christmas Child 2022 - Our brothers from Bethlehem Baptist again hosted and collected the Christmas Shoeboxes (Samaritan’s Purse ministries) during the week of Nov. 14-21 with 9815 shoeboxes collected! They did a great job in collection of these!
2. Local churches from around the area participated in Acts 1:8 missions throughout the year with many missions projects and partnerships!

- a. In May we had a team of men from Columbus Baptist Association working with our local men to carry out renovations at Glade Creek Baptist (electrical renovations) and Camp Hawkins (camp readiness). These folks did a great job. Our brothers from Bethlehem Baptist came back to Camp Hawkins several times to do further renovations and preparations for campers.
  - b. Summer 2022 was an active period with churches in our area carrying out “Samaria” type projects within the US. Level Grove Baptist (Boston), Mt. Airy Baptist (TN), Hillside Baptist (KY), Hills Crossing (VT), and many others reached out in ministry to our nation!
  - c. Summer 2022 saw the beginnings of our Judea Partnership with Columbus Baptist Association as teams came to our area from 7 churches and worked in our region to carry out VBS and Backyard Bible Club ministries in our local churches and ministry sites with almost 50 children and adults being saved during those times! Plans are already being laid for summer of 2023 when these groups and more return and work together with our local churches again!
  - d. September 2022 saw the Chattahoochee Mountain Fair return with 12 churches from Habersham and Liberty Associations working together to share and show Christ during the fair! Over a thousand contacts were made with families attending the fair!
  - e. December 10 saw the return of our Columbus Baptist brothers coming into the area working with Hills Crossing Baptist leaders and Tates Creek Baptist leaders to host a Toy Drive for families in three trailer parks in Cornelia. Over 200 persons attended that Toy distribution event (45 families) with 25 persons being saved!
  - f. December 13 saw the celebration time of Pastors and Spouses attending the first annual Pastors/Wives Christmas Fellowship (at the Grays house) with 25 attending this celebration!
3. VBS Events by our local churches...
    - a. We are so thankful for four leaders from Habersham and Liberty who attended the VBS Leadership Training down in McDonough, Georgia on March 26 and then...
    - b. Again thankful for those leaders leading out in our Area VBS Training Event at Mt. Airy Baptist on May 7<sup>th</sup>. We had great training and a great turnout. We are excited that many of our area churches were able to have VBS events this past summer after not having them for several years during the pandemic!
  4. Beginning steps in new ministries!
    - a. We are excited about steps taken in getting our local churches involved in..
      - i. Children’s Bible Drills (more information to come in this next year...)
      - ii. Foster Care Ministry
      - iii. A Local Disaster Relief Team Training (Certification and Re-certification to happen in 2023) to take place and team constructed!
      - iv. Ministry Safe and Child Protection certification to happen in 2023.

Yes, 2022 has been an great and active year for lives being touched! Let’s see what the Father can do through us in this next year! Blessings to you and your church and Merry Christmas!

Bro Tony

