

## Meridian Baptist Church

6513 Chapman Highway  
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**ITEMS FOR EVANGEL DEADLINE: MONDAY NOON**

**Meridian Prayer Line**  
865-579-6632

**CALL IN YOUR PRAYER REQUEST**

**WORKERS FOR SUNDAY**  
March 15, 2026

**DEACONS OF THE WEEK**

Gerald Blake Arthur Kirkland Mike Colquitt \*

**NURSERY WORKERS DURING WORSHIP**

Starlene Williams Aubrey Martin

**SAFETY TEAM – TEAM ONE**

Randy Burgin Roger Long  
Jack Oody Chrissy Johnson

**VAN DRIVER**

Joe Fielden

**PRAYERS: IN THE HOSPITAL**

Sara Abrams, Vanderbilt  
Jerry Bates, U.T. Hospital

**Senior Adult Bible Study**  
March 24 at 10:30

**Women of Joy 2026 Conference**

October 9-11, Pigeon Forge  
\$25 deposit due March 29

Periodical  
Postage  
PAID

OR CURRENT OCCUPANT

## THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

### SUNDAY, MARCH 15

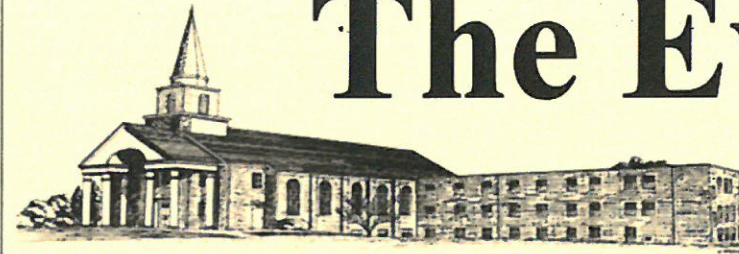
8:30am—Deacons Meeting  
9:30am—Sunday School  
10:50am—Morning Worship

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

5:00pm—Meal  
6:00pm—TeamKid  
6:00pm—Students "The Upper Room"  
6:15pm—Prayer Meeting/Bible Study  
7:15pm—Choir Practice

### VBS 2026

**"Illumination Station"**  
Shine bright in a dark world!  
July 12-16 Sunday-Thursday  
Time: 6:00-8:30  
**Family Fun Night: Friday, July 17**  
Sign up how you can help in VBS!



Michael Martin, Pastor

# The Evangel

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VOLUME 72, NO. 10

March 13, 2026



Sermon Series on the  
Book of Ecclesiastes



Wednesday Night Verse by Verse Bible  
Study On the Book of Ephesians

Wednesday Meal, March 18 at 5:00

Spaghetti, Green Beans, Tossed Salad,  
Garlic Bread, Cherry Crisp  
Cost: \$6 Adults/\$4 Children  
Sign up in the Sanctuary foyer or call  
the office by Monday, March 16.

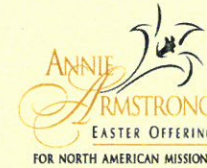


**"Game Night" 5th Sunday**  
March 29 at 6 pm  
in the Fellowship Hall  
Invite a friend!

**Women on Mission March Project**  
Collect money for Mobile Meals  
Make checks payable to Meridian



Senior Adults Travel on the  
Dogwood Trail, Thursday April 16  
Leaving at 10am. Lunch to follow  
at Shoney's. Call the office if  
you plan to attend.



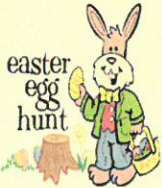
**Annie Armstrong  
Easter Offering**  
Our Goal: \$3,000  
Given to Date: \$2,825



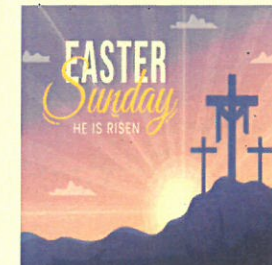
Observance of the  
Lord's Supper on  
Palm Sunday, March 29

**Children's Easter Egg Hunt**  
Saturday, April 4, 11am  
Lunch provided!

If you can help in any way,  
please contact Patti Kelley  
at 599-1325



**Easter Sunrise Service**  
Sunday, April 5th,  
7:15 am at the  
Meridian Cemetery



Join us  
**Easter Sunday**  
April 5th  
Sunday School-9:30  
Worship Service-10:50

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." — Ecclesiastes 3:1

**Winter is perhaps the most difficult season of the soul.** It is the season when warmth disappears, growth seems to stop, and the landscapes of life feel barren. Winter can feel like absence, unanswered prayers, opportunities closed, and the familiar evidence of God's activity seemingly withdrawn. There are seasons when faith feels vibrant and visible, but winter is not one of them. In winter the sky feels silent, the ground appears frozen, and the work of God feels beneath the surface. We must know that scripture does not ignore these experiences. In fact, it gives language to them - the psalmist cries out:

*"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?"* —Psalm 13:1

This is not the language of unbelief but the language of honest faith. The psalms often teach us that lament is not rebellion, but it is often the truest depths of our relationship. Only those who truly trust God feel the weight of His apparent distance. However, scripture repeatedly reminds us that God is often most active when He appears most silent. Consider Joseph, who spent years forgotten in prison before God elevated him to leadership. Consider David, who endured long seasons of exile before ascending to the throne. Consider the decades of quiet preparation in the wilderness before Moses led Israel. The wintry seasons of life teach perseverance. James writes:

*"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."*—James 1:2-3 (ESV)

The visible fruit of summer grows above ground, but the strength that sustains that fruit grows below it. In winter, roots grow deeper, faith moves from emotion to conviction - from enthusiasm to endurance. C.S. Lewis captured this reality when he wrote in *The Problem of Pain* that God whispers to us in our pleasures but shouts in our pains. Pain, he argued, acts as God's "megaphone" to awaken a sleeping world. Winter seasons strip away illusions and force us to confront what we truly believe about God. When comfort disappears, superficial faith cannot survive. Winter removes the supports we did not realize we were leaning on. Reputation, productivity, affirmation, and certainty may all fade, leaving us with a single question: *"Is God still good when I cannot see His hand?"* Lewis believed that God sometimes withdraws the felt sense of His presence not out of cruelty, but out of love. He compared it to a teacher who steps back during an exam—not because the student has been abandoned, but because the student must now demonstrate what has been learned.

## Attendance

### March 8 - Sunday School

Preschool	5
Children	7
Youth	8
Adults	79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>99</b>
Visitors	1

**Worship Service: 129**

Contacts for the week of 3/2-3/8 Total: 96  
4 & 5 Years—20 Adult 3—5 Adult 4—71

## Giving

### Giving For March 8

General Budget Fund	\$ 7,791.00
Capital Improvements	10.00
Kitchen Fund	6.00
Reimb. WMU	10.00
Reimb. Church Envelopes	1.00
Annie Armstrong	595.00
Non-Budget Designated	100.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 8,513.00</b>
Online Giving	\$ 1,000.00
Monthly Budget Requirement	\$51,083.00
March Budget Giving	\$18,636.00

### Memorials & Honorariums

A gift was given to Annie Armstrong Offering in honor of Mary Johnson from the Winsome Class.  
A gift was given to the Music Ministry in memory of Dennis Johnson's mother from Anne Ballenger.

Winter teaches us that weakness is not an obstacle to God's work—it is often the very place where His power becomes visible. And yet, winter is never permanent. Even when the landscape looks lifeless, life is quietly preparing beneath the surface. What appears dormant is actually being prepared. Scripture assures us:

*"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."*—Galatians 6:9 (ESV)

Notice the promise: in due season. God works according to His timing, not ours. Winter prepares the soil for spring. It humbles the heart. It deepens trust and it reminds us that God is not only the God of visible blessings but also the God of silent faithfulness. And when spring eventually returns—as it always does for those who belong to Him—the roots formed in winter will sustain a deeper, stronger life than before. For the believer, winter is never wasted. Christopher S. Milligan

## Noteworthy News

YOU NEED A GOOD LAUGH...what is your laugh index these days? Are you laughing a lot, a little, not at all? It may seem that there is not a whole lot to laugh about these days. Violence in our world, violence in our cities, violence in our schools. Headlines that read of missile strikes. Random acts of upheaval and confusion. Weird circumstances that make us pause. (Did you hear about the berserk camel that killed 2 people in West Tennessee? Yes, it really did happen!)

Is it OK to laugh these days? The Bible has something to say about that. Proverbs 17:22 says, "a merry heart is like a good medicine..." So let's spend a little time reflecting on a few things the Bible has to say.

Genesis 21:6: "And Sarah declared, 'God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me.'"

Job 8:21: "He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy."

Psalms 30:11: "You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy."

Psalms 126:2: "We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy."

Proverbs 15:13: "A glad heart makes a happy face."

It's OK to laugh in sad, troublesome times! So...laugh at yourself, sometimes you do silly things. Play with a child or a pet; they often do silly things! Listen to a silly song! Watch a silly movie! Tell a joke or two. Lighten up! And remember God has the last laugh! Psalm 2:4: "But the one who rules in heaven laughs."

Joyful blessings!

*Brs. Dennis*



**Women & Girls "Spring Tea"**  
**Saturday, April 25, 11am-1pm**  
**in the fellowship hall.**  
**More details later!**

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Meridian family,

Do you remember the cliff hanging event that unfolded on July 24, 2002 at Quecreek Mine in southwest Pennsylvania for a group of coal miners? Nine of them were trapped underground for a period of three days in an old mining shaft. When the accident occurred, they were working 240 feet within the earth as the mine flooded. The nation watched for three days on television to see if these men would be saved. When they were finally rescued, they emerged in various states of hypothermia, weakness, dehydration and near starvation. But praise be to the Lord, all nine were alive and were expected to recover from their horrific ordeal. The newspapers across the nation listed the names of these miners. Their names were Thomas Foy, Randall Fogle, Ronald Hileman, Blaine Mayhew, David Mullen, John Phillippi, Mark Popernack, Robert Pugh, and John Unger. These miners were real people with real names. Though they were only numbered at nine, which is just a drop in the bucket when it comes to the entire population of the world, people still cared for them, and were concerned for their deliverance and well-being. Think about all the time spent to locate them. Think about all the energy and resources used to save nine people. Why was all of this done for only nine people, when thousands upon thousands of people die every day; it was done because they were not just another number to the rescue team. They were valuable to someone.

In the same way, we are valuable to God. He is willing that none should perish, but that all come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). My dear Meridian friend; you are not just a dust particle in God's vast creation. Rather, you are a valuable individual, and you are especially valuable to God! He bought you with a price, the price of his only begotten Son.

By his grace and for his glory,  
Pastor Michael