

From Your Pastor's Heart

LAST YEAR—The Lord has so richly blessed St. Clair Southern this past year! With so many new members and a record number of baptisms, we are grateful for God's gracious hand to bring us new brothers and sisters to add to our church family. Brenda, Ryan and I are also personally thankful for all the kindness and thoughtfulness shown to our family with every Christmas card and gift along with a very generous love offering. Thank you all so very much! We continue to be blessed as we serve our Lord with you. Also, thanks to everyone who rang the bells for the Salvation Army, who sang Christmas carols to the shut-ins and who gave so much to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

THIS YEAR—What about the new year of 2016? The Bible is clear that as time passes evil "*will grow worse and worse*" (II Timothy 3:13). So while last year's Supreme Court decision legalizing homosexual marriage was very disappointing, it really wasn't that surprising.

But what has been surprising is how fast the moral slide has accelerated in recent years in the United States and how hostility toward Christians has become so noticeable in such a short time. Normally, a culture changes so slowly you can barely see the change. Not so now—the changes in our society have been swift and catastrophic.

As a result, Christians are feeling pressures we've never before experienced and we are facing mockery and abuse just because of what we believe. Our gospel, our values, our priorities, our doctrine and our entire lives are irreversibly at odds with the world. As challenging as the situation is, it will get worse. Even a few years ago, many Christians would have laughed at the idea of hostility toward Christians in America turning into full-blown persecution. No one is laughing now.

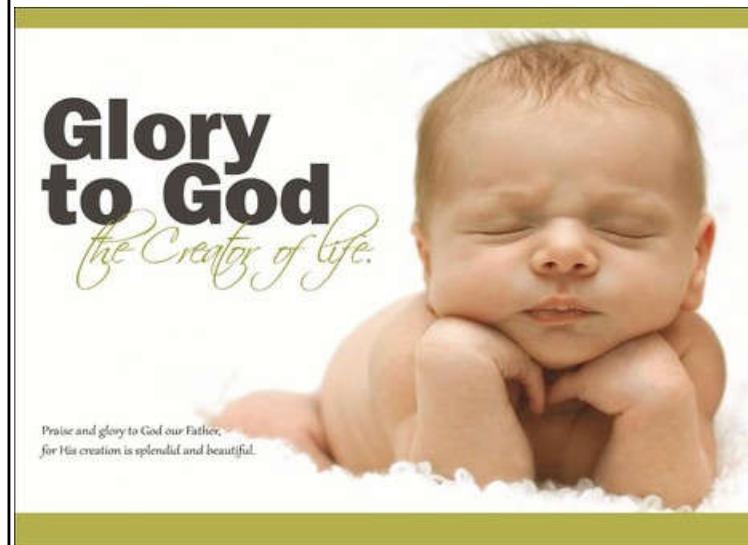
What should our response be to these new realities? First of all, we should be supremely **hopeful**. God has not been surprised by the moral decay we are witnessing nor have His good and loving purposes been defeated by it. He sovereignly rules over everything, from the smallest details of individual lives to the massive acts of

rebellion and sin of a nation. While He is offended by sin, He is neither a victim of it nor a helpless bystander. He is patient and merciful to many while storing up wrath for His ultimate day of righteous judgment. We can rejoice in His mercy and in the knowledge that He will someday make things right.

We must also stay focused on Jesus and the mission to which He has called us—to **live and proclaim the gospel**. While Romans 1 gives a bleak diagnosis of the world's lost condition, it also promises us that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), and that we must preach it and share it without ever being ashamed. Outside circumstances have no real power over us. Instead of being fearful or discouraged, we must fix our eyes on Christ, walk in obedience, and trust Him. He will not disappoint us. Now is not a time for fear and shrinking back, but for trust, obedience and, yes, joyful hope in Him.

Bro. Bill

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 17



January 24, 2016
Church-wide Breakfast
8:30 a.m.
Fellowship Hall

If church services are cancelled because of inclement weather, power outages, etc., please check the websites of the local TV stations: KTVI (Channel 2), KMOV, (Channel 4), and KSDK, (Channel 5). Information will also be posted on the church's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/stclairsouthern.



PARKING LOT



At the December business meeting, the Trustees recommended to the church that a love offering be started to reseal and stripe the remainder of the parking lot. A goal of \$3,000 was set to cover the needed repairs. If you want to give to this fund, please write "Parking Lot" on the "Other" line on the blue envelopes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS—It is time to take down the decorations. Please help us on Wednesday, January 6, at 7:00 p.m.

2015 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS—are available for you on the foyer table. If you are unable to pick it up in person, please let the church office know and it will be mailed to you.

BIBLE READING RECORDS—are available on the foyer table to help you read through the Bible this year. A simple plan is to read three chapters a day for six days of the week and read five chapters on the seventh day (whatever day you choose). Daily Bible reading helps you stay connected in God's Word and will strengthen and encourage you in your daily walk with the Lord.

2016 BUDGET—The amount needed each week to meet this year's budget is **\$2,962.03**, a decrease of \$176.06 per week. Our regular and faithful giving provides assistance to various ministries in our local area, in our state, and around the world and also provides the resources needed to help reach the lost for Christ. God has been very generous to us—let's be generous to Him and His kingdom.

FOOD DONATIONS—Please continue to bring food items for Agape House to the table in the foyer.

PRAISE—Thanks to your generous giving, **\$2,822** was received for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering! Our goal was \$2,500.

VBS 2016—The dates have been set for July 24-29. Please pray for workers, vacations, etc. as plans are made in the next few months for SonWorld Adventure Park.



Sunday

- 9:00 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:40 a.m. Morning Worship & Children's Church
- 6:00 p.m. Evening Worship

Wednesday

- 7:00 p.m. Bible Study



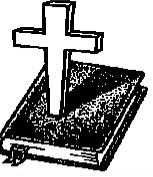
The St. Clair Southern family would like to express their deepest sympathy to Jan and Darrell Kern in the recent passing of Jan's sister, Elaine Hyatt.



Lord's Supper
January 3, 2016
6:00 p.m.

St. Clair Southern Baptist Church

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William L. Savage, Pastor

"Sharing God's Life-Changing Love"

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