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To all who are weary and need rest ...  
To all who mourn and long for comfort ...  
To all who feel worthless and wonder if God cares ...  
To all who struggle and desire strength ...  
To all who sin and need a Savior ...  
We do, too.

Welcome in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our great Hope and Joy, the reason we gather to celebrate and worship. Southwood opens wide our doors, our hearts, and our lives as our God has done for us.

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**December 10, 2023**  
**8:45 AM** Prayer Gathering  
**9:30 AM** Worship Service  
**11:00 AM** Connect Hour

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# Worship Service

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We contemplate who God is and who we are as we gather to worship.

## MEDITATION

“Those who believe in God can never in a way be sure of him again. Once they have seen him in a stable, they can never be sure where he will appear or to what lengths he will go or to what ludicrous depths of self-humiliation he will descend in his wild pursuit of man. If holiness and the awful power and majesty of God were present in this least auspicious of all events, this birth of a peasant’s child, then there is no place where we can hide from God, no place where we are safe from his power to break in two and recreate the human heart because it is just where he seems most helpless that he is most strong, and just where we least expect him that he comes most fully.”

Frederick Buechner, *The Hungering Dark*

God welcomes us into his presence and reorients our hearts to Him and each other.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

LEADER: “For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out.

PEOPLE: *As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.*

LEADER: I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak.

ALL: *But we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise.*

Ezekiel 34:11-15; Psalm 79:13

We express the worth of our God and the emotions of our hearts to Him.

## SONGS

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”  
“Angels We Have Heard On High”

### Helping Lead Today’s Worship Service

- Will Spink Senior Pastor
- Bill Harritt Associate Pastor
- Yo-Pro Grace Group Advent Reading
- Elisabeth Enchelmayer Announcements
- DJ Baptiste Director, Music Ministry
- Newt Johnson Piano
- Tim Adcock Organ
- Michael Babin Acoustic Guitar
- Nick Walker Bass Guitar
- Ron Poteat Electric Guitar
- Patrick Bogui Violin
- Michael Athey Drums
- Kathryn Jones Vocals
- Jarrett Kaempfer Audio
- Steve Long Livestream
- Padya Pearson Slides

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# Worship Service

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God reminds us from his Word of his promises to his waiting people centuries ago.

## ADVENT SCRIPTURE READING

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:2,6-7

We talk honestly with our Father about our need for Him.

## CONFESSION OF SIN

God reminds us of his grace and forgiveness as the foundation of our relationship.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:5-9

## SONG

"What Child Is This?"

God places the sign of his promises on the child of parents who place their trust in Him.

## BAPTISM

*Nora Reid Elmore*

Daughter of Adam and Lisa Elmore

## SONG

"Away in a Manger"

We celebrate how God's grace flows through us in our relationships.

## GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## OFFERTORY SONG

"O Holy Night"

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# Worship Service

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God speaks to us from the Bible explained and applied to our lives.

## CHILDREN'S MOMENT

*Parents may escort K-1st grade out after Children's Moment.*

## PREACHING OF THE WORD

Luke 19:1-10  
"Hide and Seek"

God invites us to taste and see his goodness in the bread and cup that represent the body and blood of Jesus for us.

## LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is the family meal of Christians. We invite all those who trust in Jesus and are baptized members in good standing of any church that preaches the good news of Jesus to partake in the meal with us. Children not yet received as members themselves or others not partaking today are encouraged to observe and/or ask an elder to pray with you after the service.

*\* Gluten-free bread is available in center front and back.*

*\* Grape juice is in clear cups in the outer ring of each tray, while wine is in purple cups in the inner rings.*

## SONG OF RESPONSE

"What Child Is This?"

God sends us on his mission with his blessing.

## BENEDICTION

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26



### Following the Worship Service

Pastor Will will greet and pray with people at the front of the sanctuary.

Join us for Connect Hour, relating with God and each other around his Word.

**Adults:** Gather in rooms on hallway across from the Nursery

**High-Life Connects:** Jr./Sr. High classes in the Lodge across the street

**Kids Connect:** Birth-5th grade classes in Nursery and upstairs

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# Sermon Notes

**Why Christmas?** Jesus came to SEEK the hiding, FIND the lost, SAVE the sinners.

## 1. Hiding and Seeking in the Bible's Story

## 2. How Do We Hide?

## 3. Whom Does Jesus Seek?

Luke 19:10 –

Mark 2:17 –

John 12:46 –

## 4. Whom Do We Seek?

### **Grace Group Questions** *(for fuller discussion guide, visit [southwood.org](http://southwood.org))*

1. What biblical example of hiding or seeking do you particularly appreciate? How do you relate to the one hiding? How do you rejoice in God's seeking love?

2. Why do we struggle to see ourselves as lost, sinners, or in the dark? What helps us be honest about these struggles?

3. What are some small ways your life could look different if you were following Jesus in seeking the lost?

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# Announcements

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## Hark the Herald Southwood Sings!

Join us tonight at 6:00pm for our annual musical Christmas celebration for the whole church family.

## Adult Connect Communities

During today's Adult Connect Communities, Southwood elders will be sharing their own Stories of Grace. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about your church leadership and hear how God is working in their lives. Next Sunday, December 17, all adults will gather in the Connecting Spaces for a casual Christmas celebration during the Connect Hour. Plan to bring a favorite Christmas treat to share.

## Christmas Eve Worship Services

On Christmas Eve, our regular worship service with Children's Moment begins at 9:30am. That evening, our traditional candlelight service with the Lord's Supper is at 6:00pm. Nursery is provided at both services.

## Worship at Fleming Farms Today

Join us at Fleming Farms Senior Living today at 2:30pm as Southwood leads a special Christmas service for the residents.

## Lost and Found Items

Take a moment to stop by the tables set up near the Guest Center to claim any personal belongings that have been left at the church over the last several months. Remaining items will be donated after December 17.

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## This Week @ Southwood Sunday, December 10

8:45am – Prayer Gathering

9:30am – Worship Service

11:00am – Connect Hour (all ages)

2:30pm – Worship at Fleming Farms

6:00pm – Hark the Herald SW Sings!

## Tuesday, December 12

6:00pm – Deacons Meeting

*Join us in pursuing God's mission together by becoming part of a smaller community through Grace Groups. Sign up anytime at [southwood.org/grace-groups](https://southwood.org/grace-groups).*

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## Deacon/Finance Update

### 2023 Budget

\$2,555,912

### Weekly Budget Need

\$49,152

### Last Week's Giving

\$62,486

### Year to Date Giving

\$1,932,149



Scan this QR code to give electronically.

**Learn more, see full event calendars, and give electronically at [southwood.org](https://southwood.org).**

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# Prayer Guide

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## Core Commitment

**We seek the restoration of all creation in Huntsville and beyond.**

Ask that Holy Spirit would work especially in our kids during this Christmas season that the joy of their Savior would be rich and full.

Pray for our global mission partners as many battle additional struggles during this season and also have unique opportunities for the gospel to be shared.

Ask God to give us a renewed zeal for the people and places He has called us to Monday through Saturday.

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## Missions Partner Requests

### Second Mile Development

*Second Mile Development serves alongside Huntsville's Terry Heights and Hillandale neighbors. This ministry supports and encourages parents through initiatives like Pride for Parents and Santa's Secret Shop. Remember to pray for them this week!*

Praise God with us for opportunities to teach our preschool students about thankfulness during November.

Pray that we will have an ample supply of toys for Santa's Secret Shop throughout the month of December.

Ask that God would use our new parenting curriculum to impact many families in this community.

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## Specific Needs

Pray for Mickey Plott and Burns Accardi as they recover from shoulder surgery this week.

Pray for Laura Wolfson as she has further heart surgery Thursday (December 7).

Pray for our Sunday night musical celebration of Christmas to be a help to the hearts of young and old in celebrating our Savior.

Pray for this afternoon's Christmas worship service at Fleming Farms to be full of comfort and joy.

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## Senior Member

**Elaine Looney**

4670 Bellewood Dr. SE, Apt 229  
Huntsville, AL 35802

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## Expectant Mothers

**Libby Potts** — December 2023

**Beth Patton** — February 2024

**Lauren Taylor** — May 2024

**Sarah Nell Compton** — May 2024

**Email [prayer@southwood.org](mailto:prayer@southwood.org)  
to be included in this Prayer Guide.**

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### **Southwood's Mission**

Southwood exists to experience and express grace in relationships that impact eternity.

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### **Southwood's Core Commitments**

We are committed to being Christ-centered.

We recognize our deep dependence and need for prayer.

We are driven by relationships.

We strive to love the least, the lost, the littlest, the lonely, and the left-out.

We seek the restoration of all creation in Huntsville and beyond.

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[southwood.org](http://southwood.org)



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Experience & Express  
*Grace*