

From the Pastor

Do you have the holiday blues? (Part 2)



We know that our focus should be on the excitement of the Christ child, but honestly, when a loved one has died, or a marriage has ended, we feel like the words of the popular song, "Christmas just ain't Christmas, without the one you love." The holiday blues are real and must be addressed, if we are to be emotionally healthy Christians. There is no shame for being blue this time of year.

Loss of any type can be depressing. It will be a shame if we do not admit our feelings and do something about them. As I mentioned in Sunday service last week, I am sad this holiday season as I reflect on the absence of my mom and dad. I feel your pain.

Experts tell us that coping strategies are needed. Prayer is at the top of the list. The Bible is filled with verses to comfort us in times of desolation. Here are a few.

Matthew 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Revelation 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Other coping strategies include; giving a special prayer for your loved one before the holiday dinner, about your loved one, lighting a candle for your loved one, or tell a funny story about your loved ones to friends and family. In the face of death and divorce, you may decide to celebrate Christmas in new ways. Change can be a refreshing thing. Instead of cooking a big meal, maybe this year you have a meal at a restaurant.

Grief has a unique way of giving us the permission to really evaluate what parts of the holidays we enjoy and what parts we don't. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to handle the Holidays in grief. You have to decide what is right for you and do it. You have every right to change your mind, even a few times.

Your pastor,

Dr. Sheron C. Patterson

The Park Welcomes Kathy Griffith on board!

Church Family, it is my honor to introduce our new Director of Children and Youth Ministry- Ms. Kathy Griffith. She grew up in Grand Prairie and Plano. Serving 'The Park' begins her 30th year in Ministry with children and their families. Kathy has two adult children, Brandon and Amanda, a daughter in law, Katy, and her precious grandson, Matthew. She sat down with me for a Q & A session to help us all get to know her.



What was your previous job?

I served as the Director of Children's Ministries at Christ United Methodist Church. That church had 90 teachers, greeters and drama team members, most of whom were parent volunteers to 175-250 students. I plan to use my large church experience to enlist, encourage and empower volunteers at The Park. Together, we will enrich the current ministries to our children and youth, while growing exciting new ministries that will encourage attendance and participation with children and youth in our community. I want our children and youth to be super excited about church and inviting their friends.

I have served as a Sunday School Teacher, VBS Teacher and Director, Division Director of Sunday School, Curriculum Writer, Mother's Day Out Teacher, Program Ministries Coordinator, Preschool Ministry Associate, Director of Mother's Day Out and Director of Children's Ministries.

What are your impression of The Park so far?

My first experience at The Park was in 2009, when we brought our Confirmation Class from Creekwood United Methodist church in Allen. This amazing congregation greeted our children, mentors and parents with a warm hospitality that still holds a special place in my heart. The Park is a loving and welcoming breath of fresh air! Everybody is so happy, genuine and inclusive. I love all the positive energy! I'm blessed by the opportunity to serve our church family and hope to enrich our ministry of children and youth while celebrating the culture of The Park. I'm looking forward to growing social awareness and building bridges in the name of Jesus.

What excites you about ministry with children and teens?

I have a passion for teaching about the love and grace of God through His son, Jesus Christ and am super excited about being in Ministry with our Hamilton Park Family. I so enjoy young people because they are filled with joy, energy and hope and are so eager to learn about God.

How will you build a strong volunteer base at The Park?

Dedicated volunteers are crucial to the success of all ministries. The Park currently has some very dedicated volunteers, but we need to add more team members. Our Children and Youth are watching us as we lead by example. We want them to be Christian Leaders in our churches, communities, schools, workplaces and nation. It is my goal to enlist dedicated and energetic volunteers who strive to make a difference. I am currently praying that God will prepare the hearts of those special leaders who will respond to His call. I will be visiting with members of our church family about how they can join our important ministry to His Children, Youth and their families. We all have gifts provided by the Holy Spirit that we can share and there is a place for all to serve. I enjoy serving alongside gifted volunteers and planning Special Events that encourage family participation and fellowship. I've been meeting some wonderful folks and am looking forward to doing great things for God's family.

Tell us about the education conferences that you led?

I've been honored to lead conferences that instruct others in effective and meaningful ways to teach and make Bible learning fun through Sunday School and VBS. I have attended numerous spiritual education and ministerial conferences, but the majority of my ministerial training has come as gifts from God by serving alongside some amazing saints who taught me how to share the Love of God with His children.

What do you do for fun?

I enjoy Ladies Bible Studies, Gardening, Concerts, Dancing, Loving on my Grandbaby and time with my family and friends. I'm trying to learn to play the electric bass, although I won't be surprised if I'm not invited to join any bands! LOL

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Children and youth will worship with their families on Dec.24th and Dec. 31st.

Chrysalis is scheduled for January 13-15. Registration is now open and necessary to be submitted no later than Jan 31st. See Kathy Griffith for registration forms.



Confirmation registration begins on Sunday, Dec. 17 in the CLC. Our 2018 Confirmation Class begins on Sunday, Jan. 28th at 9:30am. Parents will meet on January 7, 2018 at 12:15 in the Justin Blaylock Room.

Children and Youth Christmas Parties are next Sunday, Dec. 17th. If you haven't received information for these upcoming events, please contact Kathy Griffith.



DECEMBER SERMON SERIES

"JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON"

DEC 3RD "That's What I Want for Christmas"

DEC 17TH "Mary, Mary"

DEC 31ST "New Year, New You"

DEC 10TH "Are You Ready for Christmas?"

DEC 24th "Oh, What a Night"