

The Sentinel

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STAND
WATCH

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December, 2024
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The Holiday Remains!

By Pastor Troy Bassham

Christmas is coming. Even the most unaware and least religious person cannot miss this fact. As soon as October ends, signs for Christmas sales begin popping up everywhere.

Lights begin to adorn neighborhood houses, and retail stores and shopping malls begin to play Christmas songs.

As we approach the 25th of December, this trend only increases in breadth and intensity.

Strange Traditions

Many of these heralds of the holiday are strange traditions that have no apparent connection to the original reason for the day's celebration. Wreaths are placed on doors,

cookies are frosted and trees are brought indoors. Images of reindeer, snowmen, and nutcrackers appear in yards and on rooftops. Mistletoe, holly, and evergreen branches decorate homes and offices. And

there is a great assortment food and beverages: peppermint candies, apple cider, and fudge as well as roast turkey, glazed ham, and Christmas beef.

Lots Happening!

There's quite a bit going on. Even in this rapid accounting of holiday traditions and confections, I've probably left out several of your personal favorites.

→ Please see "Holiday!" on page 2.



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Deadline for January, 2025 ISSUE is:
Monday, December 30, 2024
@ 5:00 pm

know. grow. go.



Holiday!

← (Continued from page 1.)

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Now, all of this decorative and celebratory excess can seem excessive.

Missing the Point?

Valid concerns have been raised that we are missing the reason for the celebration, reducing Jesus to an accessory item on the day set aside to commemorate His birth. When this happens something in us pushes back. Like Charlie Brown in the Peanuts® Christmas Special, we want to yell out, *“Doesn’t anyone know what Christmas is all about?”*

I share some of these concerns and have even written about them. But at the same time, there is still something amazing about the lights, song, and celebration.

Drifting Further Away

In a culture that is drifting further and further from Christianity and its influence on our society, Christmas remains. It has been commercialized, electrified, and—too often—the creche has been replaced by Santa and his elves. ***But ... the holiday remains.***

Sitting down to write an article for December, I thought about this. Large numbers of irreligious skeptics and hardened doubters join with people of no Christian heritage or faith to celebrate the day. *It is almost as if they can’t help themselves.*

.....
But for now, at this moment, I see Christmas as a great opportunity to reintroduce our culture to Jesus.

Too Big a Deal

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, His disciples sang loud songs of praise announcing His coming. Angrily, the Pharisees told our Lord to rebuke His disciples. ***“But Jesus answered and said, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones will cry out!” (Luke 19:40, LSB).***

Maybe, *just maybe*—this is a little bit of the stones crying out. To many individuals, Jesus is forgotten but the incarnation of Christ, is too big of a deal to **NOT** be celebrated. So the masses join in with the stars, rocks, and the rest of creation, even without knowing why they do so.

An Opportunity

Maybe I’m incorrect. Perhaps the day will come when the message of Jesus’ birth is no longer remembered, and the holiday is completely reappropriated. ***But for now***, at this moment, I see Christmas as a great opportunity to reintroduce our culture to Jesus.

Our nation has been on a downward trend: each generation has had a lower percentage of believers than the previous one. Church attendance and positive cultural influence has been in steady decline. But the hunger for truth, the need for Jesus, remains. We have the chance to remind our friends and neighbors *why* we celebrate—*what this holiday is truly about.*

That a great light has come into the darkness, that Jesus came to save people from their sins. ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten***

Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NKJV)

Reason to Celebrate!

That is a great reason to celebrate and a great reason to reach out. Let’s pray for opportunities to share Jesus, the greatest gift that has ever been given. ✝

Harvest of THANKS!

By Vicky Walker & Cheryl Loewen

The Harvest Meal on Sunday, November 11, 2024 was a huge success **AND** so much fun! We served 390 meals *(including take-outs).*

The church kitchen was a flurry of activity starting the Friday night before. Saturday morning we had about 20 ladies in the kitchen peeling 125 pounds of russet potatoes, 75 pounds of sweet potatoes, and making a side dish with 17 #10 cans of green beans *(onions and bacon added)*. We also prepared 78 boxes of stuffing!

Tables, chairs, and place settings set for 400 guests. The youth did an awesome job keeping coffee and water on the tables as well as assisting those needing help with their plates.

THANK YOU, again, to everyone who helped make this successful. ✝



Pixabay



Being Content at Christmas

By Greg Sykora



Christmas is a time to celebrate Jesus Christ! Giving gifts is a part of Christmas, and is a tradition

many children and adults look forward to each year.

While giving gifts is a good thing to do, the presents themselves should not become the focus of Christmas. Christians are to be content, and not get caught-up in greed and other worldly desires. Personally, I think gift exchanges should be a very small part of Christmas traditions.

1 Timothy 6:6-9 (NKJV) tells us, ***“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.”***

Decorations and Stuff

While I was strolling through

the aisles at our local Walmart, I couldn't help notice the Christmas decorations were put onto the shelves in October, *right next to the Halloween decor.*

Why, I wonder? For the CEOs in the world, Christmas is a time when you can sell a lot more stuff than usual. During the month of December, there are countless display stands with more gifts you can buy. The corporate world knows that Christmas is a time for profit.

A Way to Show Our Love

Now don't get me wrong, giving gifts to people is a great way to show our love for others, and I look forward to gift exchanges year after year. *However,* we must guard our hearts to avoid letting the desire to give turn into the desire to get.



Greg, Olivia, and children (L to R) Dana and Lois.

The Greatest Gift!

While we share our special holiday traditions, let's remember the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ.

John 15:13 (NKJV) tells us, ***“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.”***

God shows us His love for us by sending us His Son. So when your second favorite aunt gives you a mega-jumbo pack of socks for the fourth year in a row, *remember that you should be content.* It is much more important to thank the Lord for sacrificing Christ than it is to give and receive tangible gifts.

Stand alongside your family this year and praise the Lord for sending us Christ! ✝



“...to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:11

Christians are to be content, and not get caught-up in greed and other worldly desires.

Points to Ponder:

"Proclaiming the Good News of Christmas"

By Pastor Mike Fast

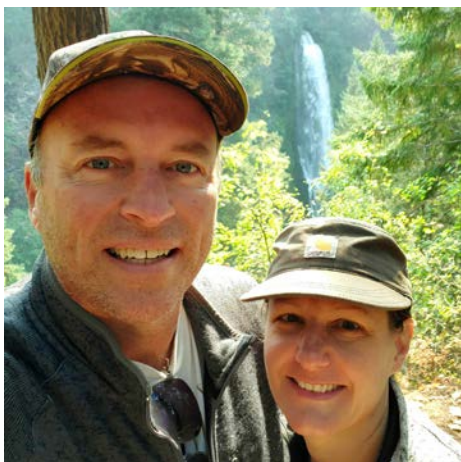
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There is so much to celebrate at Christmas, not the least of which is the story of Jesus!

Every Christmas season we hear the story of Jesus from **Luke 2**, as we read of Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem where Jesus is born, and then the angels announce His birth to the shepherds. We know it well. Maybe we know it too well, because we don't pause long enough on the simple phrase tucked away in the middle of verse 11: **"a Savior has been born to you."**

Only a TRUE Savior ...

Dr. Larry Moyer, a frequent speaker at evangelistic conferences, pointed out that people often read that phrase and think of the Savior as an *example*, **but an example cannot save you.** They also think of the Savior as a *prophet*, **but just being a prophet cannot save us.**



They think of a *leader or a teacher*, **but the same is true again.**

Only a true Savior can save us. And He has been born "to you."

PROCLAIM!

The gospel message of Christmas to everyone we meet is that a Savior came for them, a Savior was born to you. **Every single believer has tremendously good news to proclaim to others.**

And if the concept of proclaiming this good news to others makes you anxious or fearful, then let me put your mind at ease and remind you of a few things that Dr. Moyer shared at one of the recent conferences I attended.

- ✦ We need to have the perspective that we are not bringing people to Christ, but are bringing Christ to people.

- ✦ Our job is *not* converting, that's God's job. Our job *is* conversing.

- ✦ We have a message that needs to be shared, and the message is very simple: Christ died for *our* sins and rose from the dead (*only 10 words*).

SHARE!

We have a great story to share, and it is *not* just the job of missionaries or pastors. It is the commission for every follower of Christ (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

And, interestingly, how followers of Christ in a local church prioritize

Only a true Savior can save us. And He has been born "to you."

this will reflect the health of that local church. Allow me to share some observations **Dr. Gary McIntosh**, President of Church Growth Network, made

in his book Building the Body.

Maybe ... IF ...

You *might* be a fit and outward-focused church *if*...

- ✦ You designate 20% of your church budget for local outreach.
- ✦ You hold events in locations other than on your church property.
- ✦ You discuss in all your board meetings how to reach your community.
- ✦ You talk about fulfilling the Great Commission more than about the property and facility issues.

➔ Please see **"Proclaim"** on page 5.

Proclaim

← (Continued from page 4.)

AND ...

You *might* be a fit and effectively-evangelizing church *if...*

- ✦ You train and mobilize members to share their faith.
- ✦ Your primary source of numerical growth is conversions.
- ✦ You identify and target unreached people in your community.

A GREAT Story—Share It!

We have a great story to share, a story of a Savior born to you, and to you, and you...

“But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?” (Romans 10:14, NLT).



Plan to Attend! 2024 Christmas Program

By Sophie Lyman

Come join us on **December 14!** Matinee showing is at **4:00 pm** and the evening showing is at **6:00 pm**.

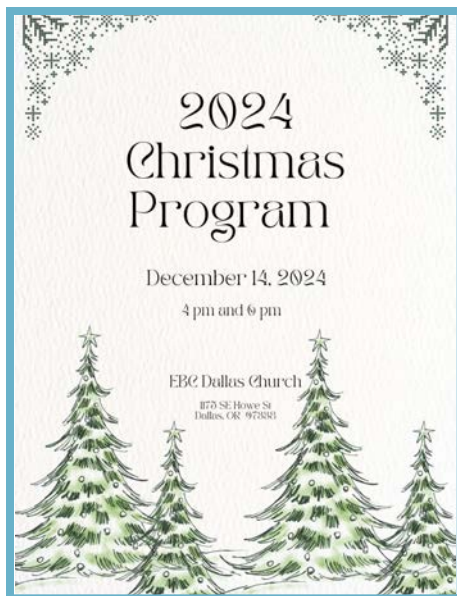
Core Elements of the Nativity

This Christmas program focuses on core elements of the nativity story, bringing to life the birth of Jesus through the innocence and joy of young performers. Thanks to our church musicians, we have

an enhanced atmosphere with carols and instrumental pieces that underscore Christ's message of peace and goodwill.

This production emphasizes simplicity and sincerity, allowing the congregation to reflect on the reason for the season.

We hope to see you all there! ✦



Photos by Sophia Lyman.

A Message from Skyler

A Heart for Worship

By Skyler Lovell
EBC Worship Leader

Hello EBC Family!

I hope this finds you well! For my first church newsletter entry, I thought I'd write something to introduce myself and talk about the worship ministry.

Well, between my current Bible reading and the topics I've encountered on some recent podcasts, my thoughts find themselves elsewhere. So, I will introduce myself formally next month, and for now I hope you enjoy a glimpse into my mind as I try to understand what the Spirit is prompting within.

What Sort of People ...

Near the end of Peter's second epistle, he asks his readers a question in light of his discourse on the coming end of the present heavens and the earth by fire. "...
what sort of people ought



you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God..." (2 Peter 3:11-12, ESV).

Interestingly in the text there is *no question mark*, and that made me ponder. Recently our family spent a day with one of the families here at EBC, we had a great time, and over the course of that day we ate amazing food, worked hard, and had sweet conversation. At one point the concept of what a rhetorical question is came up.

Rhetorical Questions

A *rhetorical question* isn't a question to be answered so much as it is a statement that asks the hearer to think, ponder. Peter's question here isn't intended to garner a verbal response, *it forces the reader to reflect in light of the information being received.*

Let's leave that for a moment and look to the 14th chapter of John's gospel. Here at another end, the end of Christ's earthly ministry, Jesus delivers the news of the coming "Helper," the promised Holy Spirit.

Leaving?

The disciples were struggling to wrap their heads around the idea that Christ would be leaving them, *murdered on a cross no less.* No longer

to be counted as mere slaves of the Master, but as friends, they would be given the task of carrying to all the nations the message Christ had delivered to His chosen people in Galilee.

No longer are we eternally separated from God the Father, Christ is the way, the truth, the life. Believe and be set free, abide in Christ and He will abide in you.

The gospel message of *hope*, that Christ the Messiah had come fulfilling the law and breaking the bonds of sin. No longer are we eternally separated from God the Father, **Christ is the way, the truth, the life.** Believe and be set free, abide in Christ and He will abide in you.

Perhaps my favorite section of all scripture for what life should look as a believer is **Ephesians 5:15-21.**

→ Please see "Worship!" on page 7.



We are known by the Creator of the universe, and we know Him!

I believe this section on Christian living described by Paul is precisely Peter's rhetorical intention.

In fact, Peter references Paul's writings in the next paragraph. Paul urges us to walk carefully and with wisdom. Also, do not be foolish, but know the will of the Lord. Don't be drunk with wine, but be so filled by the Spirit (*so that the effect is obvious*). Speak to one another in songs, hymns, and spiritual songs so that our hearts make melody as we are unified by the pure love of Christ.

Who Am I?

Bringing all of this together, I find myself wondering, *who am I in the eyes of the world around me*. Am I a Spirit-filled Christian, set apart, a light to the world shining in the darkness so prevalent and pervasive with each new day? *Or*, am I non-descript, unknown, just another "good" human going about life occasionally making my belief in God visible when it feels safe to do so? I know my aim is to be the

former. I also know I so often fall short, *terribly short*.

Grace

Ah, but grace! What a wonderful God we serve who, as promised, sent the Spirit to guide us, prompt us, and show us the will of the Father. Each day we are given is a new day to be led into the unknown with courage and confidence. We are known by the Creator of the universe, and we know Him!

Our failures are *not* permanent, they are moments from which to grow, to persevere. To go to the world around us and tell of the glorious love of the Father without shame, to bring peace and hope and joy and love to our neighbors fearlessly.

So let us be diligent to hasten the day, to walk in holiness, to be found awake and ready to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

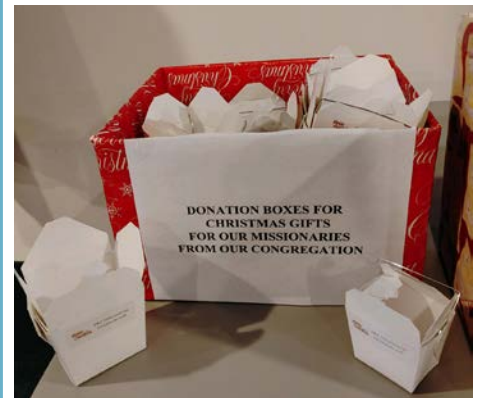
Amen. †



Erin, Skyler, Isabelle, and Elijah Lovell.

Missionary Christmas Boxes

By Kay Whitney
Gift Box Coordinator



Once again the EBC family has the opportunity to donate money for a special Christmas gift to missionaries we, as a congregation, support.

As in past years, we will use little "take-out" boxes for this purpose. These boxes were available for pick up in the foyer starting on Sunday, November 10 and **are due back by Tuesday, December 10.**

You can include checks, loose change, and cash—whatever you have available and are led to donate. Please keep in mind that these donations are *NOT* tax deductible.

†



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Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Acts 20:28 (NIV) †



Elders' Epistle

By Nat Thomas
Chairman, Board of Elders

The Bible is clear that we as disciples are to pray, and to pray **"without ceasing"** (1 Thessalonians 5:17, ESV). The first 12 disciples asked Jesus **"teach us to pray"** (Luke 11:1, ESV).

I am still asking "teach me how to pray" even though I have been walking on the **Highway of Holiness** (Isaiah 35:8) for over 50 years.

In our walk with the Lord there is always something new to learn! Over the past year the elder team has been learning to greater degrees the importance of prayer both individually and corporately.

Pray Without Ceasing

✠ **First ...** we are praying over the church membership roster as individuals, each elder having a portion of the roster to use as a guide.

✠ **Second ...** we are ready to pray together for special needs as we hear of them in our monthly meetings.

✠ **Third ...** we are ready to visit folks in their homes or the hospital and pray with them there.



For the congregation there are several opportunities to gather for corporate prayer.

Justin Ensz and **David Rand** facilitate the Wednesday evening prayer meeting which starts at 6:30 in the Youth Center classroom. The meeting has a wide range of prayer needs and lasts about 60 to 90 minutes.

What the Bible Says

The Bible calls us to pray for our government, so we pray for that; the Bible calls us to pray for the sick, so we pray for those we know of with health problems. Paul tells us **"in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"**

(Philippians 4:6, NKJV)

so we put other needs before the **Throne of Grace**.

It is a great time of fellowship and prayer! **Thank you, Justin and David!** Another time of corporate prayer is facilitated by **Kathy Reynolds** between the two services



in the old choir room. Several folks pray for the Lord's blessings on the church, its time of worship as well as other needs. **Thank you, Kathy and others** for taking the lead for that prayer time!

DRV's "Upper Room" Gathering

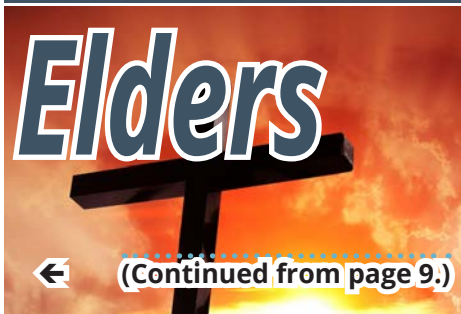
On November 7, the elder team met at the "upper room" at the Dallas Retirement Village (DRV) for an hour of fellowship and encouragement with the EBC members that live there.

The "upper room" is literally a glass atrium on the third floor that is very pleasant to fellowship in. The residents have an opportunity to catch up on EBC news from the pastor team and elders. This time, on the 7th, I shared about **Sylvia's** and my work in Romania. We had been overseas from mid-September to the end of October and it was a good time of teaching, planning, counseling, and encouragement.

Sometimes we have a Bible trivia quiz time at DRV and it is hard to stump the residents there! Other times we introduce new staff or share about projects coming up. Visiting DRV is always a blessed time.

In our walk with the Lord there is always something new to learn! Over the past year the elder team has been learning to greater degrees the importance of prayer both individually and corporately.

→ Please see "Elders" on page 10.



Gift Bags for the Sheriffs

Our current project as elders is to sponsor gift bags of treats and a coffee card for the Sheriff's office, which is 72 strong! The elders will write a note to each deputy and staff member with an invitation to call EBC with any prayer requests they might have. It is an opportunity to let each deputy, administrator, and staff know about EBC and of our support for their work. We have note cards with a Scripture verse on them as a point of encouragement. We did this same thing for the city Police Department, which is 26 strong.

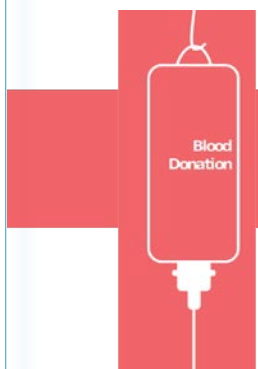
THANK YOU, Mike!

Lastly, but not least, I want to give a big **THANK YOU** to **Pastor Mike** for taking the time to custom design a great training program for our elder team. He met with us monthly to go over the materials he developed and gave us insightful homework to reinforce the leadership principles he had for us that month. *As always—nice work Mike!* †



Blood Drive Coming Soon!

By Sherri Fobert
EBC Healthcare Committee



Once again EBC and our community are invited to take part in our next blood drive. The date for this will be on Monday, January 6, 2025. **Mark your calendars NOW!**

Participants will donate blood for hospital patients in our local area and across the nation. The need for blood is constant, but only 3 percent of the U.S. population donates. By rolling up a sleeve, donors can play a critical role in the treatment of accident and burn victims,

heart surgery, and organ transplant patients, and those receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer, or sickle cell disease.

Watch Your Diet and Rest BEFORE Donating!

When you donate whole blood or double red cells, your body loses some iron contained in red blood cells. Eat plenty of iron rich food ahead of time to replace these cells. Foods rich in iron include: Red meat, fish, poultry, beans, iron-fortified cereal, broccoli, spinach, raisins, and prunes.

Suggestions before you donate: Sleep well, especially the night before you donate. Eat a good breakfast or lunch. Maintain a nutritious, well-balanced diet with foods rich in iron and high in vitamin C. **Make sure you are feeling well.**

Great Impact

Remember, each donation impacts the life of 3 individuals. Our last blood drive was amazing so let's try to match or exceed the number of scheduled donors. *(37 appointments were scheduled.)*

So get out your 2025 calendars and mark down **EBC Blood Drive on January 6**. Reminders and sign up will begin in December. There is no better way to start the new year than making the difference in the lives of those facing a serious or life changing health issue. †

Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches

News from FEBC!

By Kevin Stone
President, FEBC



December 1, 2024

Christmas is associated with wonder—like the wonder of a child as he or she unwraps a special gift, or the wonder we experience as our neighborhood is transformed into a beautiful light show. We wonder when snow covers a landscape, making it look pure and clean. We wonder that, at Christmas, *even those who don't believe celebrate peace on earth and goodwill to men.*

I love Christmas, and I get warm fuzzies wondering at all these things, but what really gets me is the wonder that must have been felt that first Christmas. One day in a dirty, lowly stable, a baby was born. It was probably smelly and crowded. The air was likely filled with the sounds of animals and (*contrary to the famous carol*) the cries of a baby. And in that inauspicious place, the most wonderous thing happened. God came down wrapped in human flesh. The Messiah had finally arrived—Immanuel, God with us.

Worship is our natural response to God's revelation. God revealed himself in the most amazing way, and those who witnessed it responded. Joseph and Mary responded in obedience – going through with their marriage despite ridicule and shame. The angels responded in song, singing ***"Glory to God in the highest!"*** The shepherds responded by sharing the good news with others. The wise men responded by sacrificing their time and energy for a long journey, and by sacrificing financially in the form of valuable gifts.

Each of them was stricken with wonder, and they responded. They worshiped. This is our task every Christmas—to be stricken with fresh wonder, and to respond. Perhaps your response will be obedience when God calls you to minister to someone who is not easy to be with. Perhaps your response will be singing hearty praises. Perhaps God is calling you to share the Gospel with someone in your community this Christmas. Or perhaps he needs your time or your resources to support your local church's ministry.

Let's pray together that God will use each of our Fellowship churches to inspire fresh wonder this Christmas—within our congregations and within our communities. The morality of our society is crumbling around us, but I believe we can make a difference—one person at a time.



Thank you for supporting your church and this Fellowship. May God bless you richly this Christmas, and may he fill you with wonder!

Kevin Stone
President, FEBC †

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Women's Ministries

Christmas by Candlelight

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By Alison Johnson
Co-Chairwoman, Women's Ministries

Several months ago when I started praying about and thinking ahead to our annual Candlelight Dessert event, the theme or word that kept coming to mind was light.

How to incorporate *light* to our theme for this event. Light as a word can be so many things and used in so many ways. My heart was reflecting on the word and I spent time in the Word to learn and reflect more clearly on it.

Team Consensus

The Women's Ministry team voted to use the theme of **Christmas by Candlelight** and we talked about several passages of Scripture to go along with it. I wanted to share a little more of my heart about it this month as my last month as co-chairwoman of the Women's Ministry team.

The Meaning of Light

I spent several weeks in prayer about light and what it means at Christmas and to us believers.



Adobe Stock

For me, Christmas is just such an awesome time of year. There is so much joy and excitement around this time. As a kid, it meant time with the extended family and seeing all of my cousins. It also meant gifts.

I loved shopping for and making gifts for those I loved. As an adult and a mother, it changed to being so excited to share the joy with my kids. Doing advent calendars and reading the Christmas story from the Bible and teaching them about the awesome gift that God gave us and celebrating the true meaning of Christmas. I do love getting them gifts as well, but seeing them excited about the reason behind the joy we have is even better.

The Coming Light

John 1:9 (NIV) says **"The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world."**

Light is used *twice*. Jesus is the true light that gives light to everyone. It reminded me of one of my favorite quotes from **C.S. Lewis** that says *"I believe in Christ—like I believe in the sun—not because I can see it but because by it I can see everything else."*

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we are made lighter. He carried our burdens and sins. We can be in Heaven one day because of Him. How exciting to know we do not have to carry the heavy load of sin any longer.

Overwhelmed With Joy

The next passage that I kept returning to was Matthew 2:10.

"When they (the wise men) saw the star they were filled with joy." Some translations

say they were *overwhelmed with joy*. How thrilling to know the long-awaited Savior of the world was finally here on earth.



As believers, we are told this from a young age.

But could you imagine the relief and joy they would have felt being older and finally seeing the promise be fulfilled?

I imagine how it feels now even for adults that are walking around and carrying heavy burdens of guilt and shame because they do not know the joy of walking with the Lord. They are *not* bad people, but just have yet to be told and shared with about

→ Please see **"Light"** on page 13.



the peace and joy that comes from letting Jesus carry those for them.

I often think about how much worse I would feel about my mess-ups and sin if I did not know the Lord. There would be a helpless, hopeless feeling. Knowing I can confess my sins to the Lord and that Jesus paid the price for me is such a peace-giving feeling.

Share the Good News!

As we head into the Christmas season and all the excitement and joy that it brings, know that in some people the season is just stressful. Share the good news that we have because we know why we celebrate Christmas.

In **Romans 15:13 (NIV)** says **"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."**

There should be something about us that is different. We step a little lighter, look at things a little brighter, and have more joy.

Office Update

By Alison Johnson
EBC Office Manager



We have made it to December! It's been a fun, productive, and busy year. While the holiday season is almost upon us, we still have a lot going on. There are several dates and things to note from the office.

Room Reservations

Most of the weekends are booked pretty full this month with events so be aware if you are coming in after hours that many rooms are occupied on the main levels. If you are here for a private event, please be aware of the other groups in the building at the same time.

Office Closed

The office will be **closed on December 24 & 25 for Christmas**. However we will be having a **Christmas Eve Candlelight** service on the **Tuesday, December 24, at 6:00 pm**.

2024 Contributions

The last day to turn in 2024 contributions is December 31 and we will be open until 4 that day. Any mailed contributions must be postmarked by that day to be counted towards this year.

UN-Decorate the Holidays

Christmas decorations are so much fun to look at and enjoy but they do eventually have to come down. If you are interested in helping us take them down, we need your help. We will be taking decor down December 30th at 10 am.

As always, you all make this job such a pleasure and I am so blessed to be working here. I pray that you all have a very Merry Christmas and enjoy celebrating the birth of our savior. ✝

The good news of the light of the world coming to us on earth and the joy that comes with his arrival is no small thing. God has given us this good news of great joy to share with others. We are called to be *salt* and *light*. Share the message of Christ to those around us and farther away. There should be something about us that is different. We step

a little lighter, look at things a little brighter, *and have more joy*.

Looking Forward!

I have enjoyed my time spent on the Women's Ministry team and am excited to see what comes in the next year as **Erin Lovell** takes over and prayerfully leads this group of women and the ministry. ✝

Spiritual Disciplines:

Speaking Truth

By Gwen Griffiths

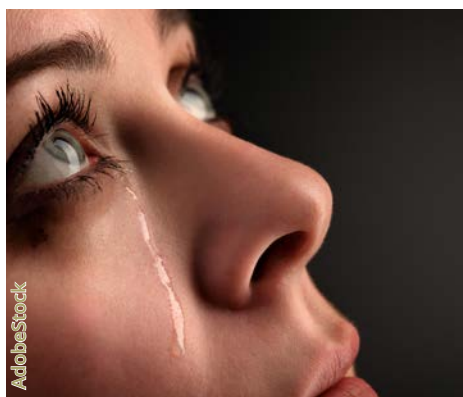
A witness sits across a small table from a detective in a TV-show interrogation room. As question after question pokes holes in his story, he realizes that his only option is to confess.

On another show, a woman quietly steps into a small cubicle and says, “Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been two weeks since my last confession.”

While these may be the most common depictions of confession, they fail to capture the essence of this spiritual discipline. And here’s a confession of my own: I’ve been pondering this discipline for months, even shifting the order in which I planned to write, to give myself more time to try to better understand it.

What Is Confession?

For me, the ideas surrounding the discipline of confession boil down to this one thing: *confession is*



speaking truth. **Biblestudytools.com** elaborates that confession is a willingness to explain actions with honesty and openness. **Stephanie Boyles** (*The Daily Grace Co*) says, “*Confession is a powerful means of growing in Christlikeness as we acknowledge our sins, seek forgiveness, and continue to repentance.*”

It is only when we accept responsibility for the wrong we have done that we can begin to make things right.

Now, we most often view confession as admitting to a wrong, and I do believe this is the largest part of the discipline. But I think we can consider a few other aspects of this discipline along the way.

The Importance of Confession

First, why is confession important? Well, if reconciliation is the path that reunites offender and offended, then confession is the first step along that path. It is only when we accept responsibility for the wrong we have done that we can begin to make things right.

Confession requires **repentance**; a heart that is not truly remorseful and repentant is not likely to confess. And confession requires

humility—the biggest reason we fail to confess our wrongdoings is our desire to look good to others.

Finally, confession depends on **vulnerability**. Stephanie Boyles tells us that confessions reveal our hearts—to God and to each other.

When we admit to sin in our life, we open ourselves up to potential criticism and judgment from those who hear our confession. There’s a responsibility, then, for the body to respond well when hearing confession—not sweeping the wrong-doing under the rug but loving the offender well as we help

to restore them in their walk.

That vulnerability, while difficult, allows for accountability and restoration of the relationship.

The Parties Involved in Confession

We next ask, to whom should we confess? I picture circles of confession, each one a little larger than the last:

✦ Some things need only to be confessed to God: unloving or prideful thoughts, attitudes that honor self rather than God, etc. When we confess to God and experience His continual forgiveness, we experience some of His

→ Please see “Confessions” on page 15.

Confessions

← (Continued from page 14.)

characteristics (*mercy, grace, justice, holiness*) in new ways.

✠ Some things need to be confessed to one person: when we have hurt that person or have a recurring struggle and need accountability to help us turn away.

✠ Some things need to be confessed to the entire body: when we have committed an offense that hurts or impacts the entire body of believers.

Another Angle for Confession

If confession is speaking truth, then perhaps we participate in confession as we recount truth through corporate singing, congregational readings and prayer, and reading the Scriptures together. When we speak truth together, we should then encourage each other and hold each other accountable to live by that truth.

It's here that we once again see accountability play a part in confession. We should ask, *"If you speak (or sing) these words with me on Sunday, why are you not living by them on Monday?"*

Practicing Confession

We want to hide things, to keep our sins in the dark. Confession reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the world, and that only through Him can our sins be turned into victory.

Next Steps:

✠ Read **Stephanie Boyles'** post, *Rhythms of Confessions (and Why It's Good)* at thedailygrace.com/blogs/the-daily-grace-blog/rhythms-of-confession-and-why-its-good.

Mom to Mom

By Gwen Grriffiths

While it might look like a social club where ladies gather to enjoy breakfast and conversation, Mom to Mom offers much more. The group meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month (*if school is in session*) from 9 to 11 am and childcare is provided. Moms from all over the Dallas community (*and as far away as Keizer*) attend, and many do not attend EBC.

Providing Support

Lately, one of the biggest needs we see Mom to Mom meet is **support**. We host moms from all walks of life, with children of all ages. Some are dealing with marital issues while others face financial challenges or find themselves trying to understand new developmental stages. Mom to Mom provides spiritual and emotional support as the ladies talk and pray about their problems. Since they sit at the same table with the same **Titus 2** Mentor Mom from week to week, they can grow closer together as they share and pray for each other throughout the month.

Encouragement

Another resource Mom to Mom offers is related to support: **encouragement and ideas**. As the women share about the joys and challenges they experience, others are able to share advice, ideas, and encouragement. Other special events, like our recent education fair, dad panel, and upcoming medical fair bring in perspectives that can help each mom in her parenting journey.

Relevant Speakers

Throughout the year, Mom to Mom arranges speakers to share spiritual truths. We follow the Mom to Mom curriculum

so that each session builds upon the last; ladies from EBC and other churches use the curriculum outline, filling it out with their own stories and experiences. While many of the attendees attend a church, some do not, and this program offers spiritual teaching they might not otherwise receive.

→ Please see "Moms" on page 16.

✠ Spend some time in prayer, considering if there is anything you need to confess—to God or to someone else?

✠ Read **Psalm 32** and seek to better understand how the psalmist

felt when he tried to keep his sins a secret and how he found relief and joy after confessing to God. †



One of the strengths of Mom to Mom is time for women to interact with each other and with seasoned moms who can offer advice and encouragement.

Focus on Missions

Meet Jake and Moriah!



By Jake and Moriah Michalovich
Area Director for Young Life
in Polk County

Moriah and I got married, moved to Dallas, and started serving with Young Life all in the summer of 2022.

After working at the college Moriah and I graduated from for two years, I was itching to do something that felt more meaningful than selling our college to new students. I wished I could know students longer than the application process and invest in their lives in a more meaningful way.

Moriah was helping me brainstorm new job ideas and thought of Young Life. She still acknowledges it as a complete God thing. Neither of us grew up involved with Young Life and she doesn't know why or how she would have thought of that other than God bringing it to mind.

As I progressed through the interview process, I was hoping to end up in a larger city. Moriah is from the Portland area and I grew up near San Diego, so I thought that's where we would fit in and be able to serve best. However, God had a smaller town and better things in mind!

As much as we feel called to serve this community, we have been so touched by the way God has used

this community to care for us back. As many of you know, Jake and I were expecting to have our first baby this summer. Heartbreakingly,



our son died a few days before his due date and was stillborn. It has been amazing comparing how lost we would have felt in a big city to the love and support that has carried us through the past few months. We are so grateful to be a part of the community here in Dallas and are so moved to see how God placed us here both for His work and to care for us as well.

We covet your prayers as we continue to navigate this grief. For Young Life, please join us in praying for this ministry to grow in whichever ways God sees fit and the community needs. For us to hear His discernment, set our own ideas aside, and humbly, yet confidently, walk in His plan for this ministry and the kids we get to serve.



Thank you again and again for your care, investment, and prayers! We are so grateful for our church family.



Moms

← (Continued from page 15.)

Monthly Craft Time

About once a month, Mom to Mom has a craft for women to create if they desire. Sometimes these are decorative items; other times they are resources to use in parenting. It can be hard for moms of young children to find time to sit down and just be creative, so Mom to Mom offers that creative outlet.

Growing Members ... AND Needs

Because the group is growing, so are the needs. Child care workers make up an integral part of this ministry, and we would love to have more. We need more people who would like to hold babies, wrangle toddlers or preschoolers, or help with the programming in the homeschool room. The time commitment would be about 3 hours once or twice a month, but the return on investment is eternal. If you think you could help make a difference for the 30-40 moms who attend each week, contact **Lena Calef** or the church office. *We have a place for you!* †



Moms work on a seasonal craft. Many appreciate the opportunity to do something "crafty" and just for them without their children underfoot.



Four dads (Matt Calef, Rod Dunham, Darrel Hiebenthal, Seth West) answered questions about fatherhood.

Stories from the FIELDS

Editor's Note: Stories from the FIELDS is produced monthly by Village Missions. They contain inspirational accounts from many of those supported by Village Missions who are currently working in the mission field.

If you would like to receive your copy directly from Village Missions or desire more information on this organization, please contact Tim Griffiths at:

tgriffiths@villagemissions.org

Local Partnership

Pam and I assisted our local pumpkin patch on Sunday afternoons for several weekends. On the last Sunday of the month, they hosted a Trunk or Treat followed by a hayrack ride to the church for a chili competition and meal. We gave out about 75 gospel-themed projects the kids could work on with their parents. Over 180 participated in the Trunk or Treat, and more than 120 came to our church for the chili feed. We are delighted with how this partnership is opening doors in the community.

Jim & Pam Canady
Sheridan Lake, CO †

Team Effort

Several Village Missionaries, coordinated by Peacehaven, joined a team to refresh the parsonage in Corinth, Vermont. People came from fields in Vermont and New York to help replace floor joists and siding and repair the HVAC and electrical systems. Missionary Dennis Burke reported: "The camaraderie with other missionaries was so special. Their skill and joyful service made an impression on our son, who commented on the caliber of the young men in Village Missions."

Dennis & Leslie Burke
Amsterdam, NY †

Problem Solved

Local churches and Christian ministries partnered to raise the funds to replace a community member's leaky roof. This was a faith-building endeavor for the churches in our area! We're thankful for the generosity of God's people and praying for more opportunities to meet the needs of a hurting community.

Dan & Kimberly Waide
Formoso, KS †

Missionaries & Ministries EBC Supports!

The focus of the Mission Committee is to follow the mandate Jesus gave to go into the world for the advancement of evangelism, discipleship and Christian education in a manner effective for the culture being reached. The committee exists to be a supportive and evaluative conduit between EBC and the work on the mission field that the congregation supports, maintaining an attitude of advocacy for missionaries and corresponding projects.

Note: EBC is committed to supporting missionaries. Some information and/or supported missionaries are purposefully omitted from this page to protect their safety in hostile political or social climates.



Tim and Mallory Brooks

Missionary Aviation Fellowship
tbrooks@maf.org

- ✘ Serving in Winema, Indonesia
- ✘ Tim is a mechanic for MAF planes on the base
- ✘ Both Tim and Mallory are studying to gain proficiency in the language
- ✘ Support for team members on the MAF base



Joshue and Diana Bulande

SIM
dianaafrica@gmail.com

- ✘ Serving in Lichinga, Mozambique
- ✘ Church planting, discipleship training
- ✘ Women's Bible training
- ✘ Children's ministry and tutoring



Dan and Judy Burke

Ethnos 360 (formerly New Tribes Missions)
dan_burke@ntm.org

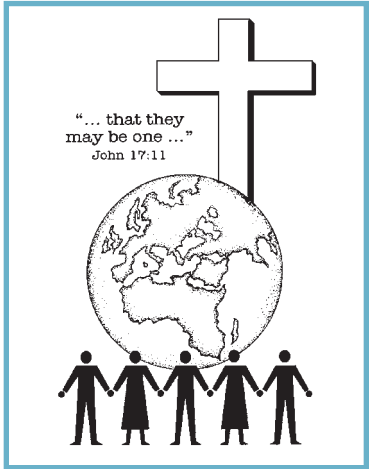
- ✘ Serve in Bolivia in Cochabamba and San Borja
- ✘ Development of a discipleship center in northwestern Bolivia
- ✘ Work with the Chimane people group
- ✘ Write and produce books and commentaries in Chimane for the tribal people
- ✘ Teaching, construction, leadership development



Kevin and Jennifer Domes

IN FAITH
kjdomes.ministry@yahoo.com

- ✘ Work at Bethel Bible Camp in Wellfleet, Nebraska
- ✘ Involved in youth ministry, maintaining the camp facility
- ✘ Teach in the Awana program, lead a high school youth ministry
- ✘ Administrative retreats
- ✘ Jennifer also works in food preparation for the summer camps



➔ Please see "EBC Supports" on page 19.

EBC Supports

← (Continued from page 18.)



Ivan and Mary Goossen
Avant Ministries
ivary@avmi.org

- ✦ Serve in Mucambo, Brazil
- ✦ Involved in evangelism and discipleship
- ✦ Administrate programs such as a coffee shop outreach
- ✦ Long time involvement with a Christian radio ministry



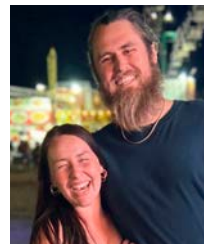
Eric and Judith Hedeem
Ethnos 360
eric_hedeem@ntm.org

- ✦ Serve in Papua, New Guinea
- ✦ Mentoring new missionaries to the field
- ✦ Translation work
- ✦ Judith works in the medical clinic and member care
- ✦ Leadership development among the indigenous people



Paul and Leslie Lanquist
Village Missions at Tanwax
Country Chapel, Washington
360.832.3584
pastorpaulanquist@gmail.com

- ✦ Developing outreach programs for the homeless in their area
- ✦ Starting a women's ministry program
- ✦ Leading the church in new directions after COVID divisions and other issues left the church without a senior pastor for nearly a year



Jake and Moriah Michalovich
Living in Dallas and serving
Polk County, Oregon
jmichalovich1@gmail.com

- ✦ Jake is the Area Director for Young Life in Polk County.
- ✦ Moriah serves as a Young Life leader.
- ✦ Sharing the Word of God and discipling youth.



Steve and Mikki Schmidt
SIM Missionaries
steve.schmidt@sim.org
mikki.schmidt@sim.org

- ✦ Steve is the SIM regional Director for West Africa
- ✦ Supervises country directors in 11 countries
- ✦ Both Steve and Mikki work in SIM's Global Leader Development Program
- ✦ Mikki does educational consulting work, and also works in the Paths to School Improvement program which trains Christian school leaders throughout Africa.



Other Outreach Ministries We Support:

- ◆ Awana
- ◆ Crisis Pregnancy
- ◆ Prison Ministry
- ◆ Village Missions
- ◆ CEF
- ◆ River of Life
- ◆ SAT-7 (Dennis & Cindy Wiens)
- ◆ Weekday School of the Bible
- ◆ Mission Connexion
- ◆ The Gate

Sunday Worship Services:

9:00 & 10:30 am Sunday Morning
Worship Services
10:00 am Coffee Time!

Awana: (September through April)

Wednesdays 6:30 to 8:00 pm

**Please check the Sunday Bulletin and
the EBC website for updated calendar
items as they are announced.**

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of the content and layout of this publication are
encouraged. Please use one of the following:

Text: 503.931.8239

Email: bob.disher@charter.net

The opinions expressed herein are
those of the author of the articles and
are not necessarily endorsed by the
leadership of EBC.

**Thank
you!** ✝



THANK YOU, Alison Johnson, for providing the calendar graphic.



Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)