

BRIDGING THE GAP

FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS CHURCH OF GOD
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"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

From the Pastor's Desk

'Tis The Season to be Busy!

Christmas is always a busy season of the year when we are trying to find the right gift for that person who has everything and needs nothing. It is the time to bake cookies, time for decorating the tree, cleaning the house for the guests, attending musical programs at school, taking a crash course in accounting to see if there is enough money to pay the Visa bill when it comes in February, and staying up late the night before Christmas to assemble bikes and insert batteries. Is it any wonder we are so tired in December? Our theme this year is from the Women of The Church of God: "Visions of The Father"

Advent marks the start of the Christmas season. It begins on the Sunday nearest to November 30 and lasts until Christmas Eve. The word *advent* means coming or the arrival. The purpose of the season is to celebrate the birth of Jesus. These weeks enable us to prepare our hearts and minds to embrace the wonderful new that we can celebrate the Incarnation which is God coming to us in human flesh. God came to the world in the person of Jesus as a baby.

Although a humble child, Jesus was the Messiah, the savior to the world. I pray that we will not be too busy this year to really worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! These are the times when we need to recapture what we have misplaced and learn once again to hold on to the one who has brought us this far. We all need to realize our connection to Jesus. We need to realize our need for Jesus. We need to realize that Jesus is our savior. We all get busy this time of the year! Slow down and enjoy the season! There are great things happening in the life of our church, and we need to thank God for it. The world is changing, but God's word never changes. We need to slow down, take time to tell others about the reason we celebrate Christmas, make some new friends, help others to slow down, and see that the season is not about buying gifts; it is in giving of yourself. If you have been blessed then be a blessing. Take time to "Recognize the work of the Father" this Christmas.

Enjoy The Journey,
Pastor Clayton

Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.

Norman Vincent Peale

Worship and Service Outline December, 2008

Theme: "Visions of The Father"

"If you had known Me, you would have know My Father also, and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." John 14:7

Dec. 7 Children's Hand Bells and Five Star Sunday

AM Service: "The Vision Revealed"
John 1:1-18 Pastor Clayton

PM Service: All Church Christmas Dinner starting at 5:00 PM

Dec. 14

AM Service: "Refreshment Through Vision"
Luke 4:14-30 Pastor Clayton

PM Service: Children's Christmas Program starting at 6:00 PM

Dec. 21 Christ Birthday Offering!

AM Service: "Realize What The Vision Means"
John 20:10-18 Pastor Clayton

PM Service: Praise, Worship, Sharing your Christmas Memory starting at 6:00 PM

Dec 28

AM Service: "The Cure, Controversy, Confession"
John 9 Pastor Clayton

PM Service: Christmas Film "The Nativity Story"
Fellowship Hall 6:00 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 17 Project Prayer WCG starting at 7:00 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve come and go Communion from 4-6 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 31 New Year's Service, starting at 8:00 PM

The magi, as you know, were wise men - wonderfully wise men who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents.
O. Henry

Sermon Notes from November

Nov 9th

Caleb's Apology

Burning Question: Is un-forgiveness hindering your relationship with God...or someone else?

There are many reasons for hanging on to hurts, but in the end this quote from a Beth Moore study says it all, "Bitterness (un-forgiveness) is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die".

Scriptures have a lot to say about forgiveness including our Lord's Prayer (Mathew 6:12-15). Also Mark 11:25, Luke 6:37, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13 and The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant found in Mathew 18:21-35.

When we look at the Greek words translated as *forgive* in these passages, we find three different Greek words being used; they provide deeper insight to forgiveness.

- Aphemi (Mathew 6:12-15 and Mark 11:25) means to pardon, cancel a debt, send away.

Apoluo (Luke 6:37) means to release, set free, to let go

Charizomai (Eph 4:32 and Col 3:13) to give graciously, to give freely

The sum is that we are to forgive in the way that Christ has already done for us. Forgiveness is not a feeling but an act of will. Christ chose to forgive us and we are to choose to forgive others.

Questions to ask:

How has God shown forgiveness to you?

Is there an area of unforgiveness in your life? Are you drinking the poison and expecting someone else to die?

What are you going to do with God's word? Be obedient or rebel?

Candy Neimeyer

November 16th

Unforgettable Sunday

In case you missed this service be sure and listen on the web site to the answers to these questions:

1. When people choose to follow God...why don't they really follow and stay with Him?
2. How do you really get to know the Lord better and to know for sure you are saved?
3. Why does the Catholic Bible have more books?
4. How do we grow without losing who and what we are?

5. How do you save a failing Marriage and when should you divorce?

6. How do you know when God is talking to me?

7. Do miracles really happen?

8. Should we fear the government?

Candy and I tried to answer these questions in a discussion type form. Everyone seem to like the service, so we will do it again in a few weeks, because we still have a lot of question that you have asked us to answer.

Pastor Clayton

November 23rd

Are You on a Course for Home? Matthew 16:16-30

Five Important Questions:

1. What good thing can I do?
2. Which commandments are the most important?
3. What do I still lack?
4. Who can be saved?
5. What do I get?

Five Things to Watch For: Colossians 3:12-17

1. Motives
2. Attitudes
3. Values
4. Testimony
5. Stewardship

Life Questions

Do you have a purpose?

Are you right with God?

Are you going to heaven?

The greatest question: What will you do with Jesus?

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Discover Your Gifts

Starting in January 2009, we will be having our small groups again. I will be leading a group on the discussion of the book Discovering your Gifts. The book was written by Charles Shumate and Sherrill Hales. It has six study modules: Definition and Description, Biblical Foundations, Discovering My Gifts, Confirming My Gifts, Exploring Unused Gifts, and Finding My Place in the Body. We will be answering questions such as: Do women have the same gifts as men? Can Satan counterfeit Spiritual gifts? Why do I need to know My Spiritual Gifts? What happens when a church ignores Spiritual Gifts? We will have a sign up list for all the small groups sometime this month.

Pastor Clayton

Christmas Travelers

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Christmas recalls the story of travelers propelled by the unhurried rhythm of their animals:

*We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain
Following yonder star.*

Why did these wisemen undertake such a journey?

A tall astronomer, advisor to the Persian king, springs from his midnight vigil in the palace courtyard. "Casper, come! Look along the rod I've sighted toward the constellation of the Jews." Casper peers into the blackness. "Do you see it? That brilliant star

is new tonight! It must signify the birth of a mighty king."

A soft whistle escapes him as he spots it. "There it is!" He's talking rapidly now. "I've read ancient Hebrew scriptures which tell of this ruler's star." [1] Rising, he announces, "We must see him. We must go!"

Traversing the caravan routes of Persia, Babylon, and Syria for 1,200 miles, they ford broad rivers, pass ancient cities, cross barren deserts. Three months they trek westward, day after day, "following yonder star."

In Jerusalem they inquire, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." [2] Worship? So the Babe is more than a king!

Now they follow the shining star till it rests over a simple Bethlehem home. At early dawn neighbors gather to watch the richly-robed travelers dismount. Joseph meets them at the door.

"We've come to see the child, the King." The wise men fall before the Babe, faces to the floor, royal counselors doing homage, worshipping the Christ child. Outside, their servants unload weighty chests from the camels and set gifts before the King. Heavy fragrances of frankincense and myrrh mingle to fill the room as one by one the boxes are opened.



A touch of the boy-

The Wisemen (c. 1925), by Australian woodcut artist John Hall Thorpe (1847-1947), color woodcut, 7-7/8"x7-1/2"

child's tiny fingers, a final longing look, and the men rise to go. Camel bells soon fade in the brisk morning air.

We, too, travel at Christmas, visiting family and friends. Yet, like the wisemen, the most important journey we make these hectic holidays is to draw nigh Jesus himself with the gift of our hearts.

SMALL GROUPS

I know that some of you really loved and enjoyed the past session of our small groups. And then there are others that I don't think will ever really enjoy them. But you know, we are going to try and make you change your mind about small groups! They do work. You are blessed. You do grow. You do learn. The key is you have to come and be a part to get all of these things. So we are planning on starting the groups again in January. My prayer is that if you have not yet joined a small group, you will sign up for one this coming new year! There will be more information available in the following weeks.

Darla Clayton

FHCOG.ORG

Have you checked out our web page lately? Over the last couple of months there have been many changes and additions as well as a whole new look! A few things you might want to check out include:

Sermons - You can listen to the sermon every week from the web site, AND you can listen to past sermons.

Prayer Requests -- you can go to this page and put in a prayer request. You can select whether you want it to be posted on the web page or not, or whether you want just the

Pastor to get the information. There is also an option if you want to be contacted by someone.

Praises & Testimonies - this works the same ways as prayer requests, except it is for any praises or testimonies you might want to share.

The new **NiCE Guys & NiCE Gals** site is where there is a short explanation of what each group does, and a few pictures of them in action as well as pictures of the new NiCE foundation warehouse.

Sunday School site - fresh pictures of all classes and teacher information is available.

Youth Page - many changes are to still come, but check out the parent's page where you will find information on what the current study is, as well as some informational web sites you can go to. You can also print off a permission slip when needed. The calendar with all upcoming events / meetings is available.

These are just some of the changes. Just about every page has been revised in some way in the recent past so be sure to check it out!!! If you have any suggestions or requests for the web page, please let either Pastor or David Floyd know.

David Floyd
WebMaster
guitarmandf@yahoo.com

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on Earth, good will to men!
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

W.C.G. News

Women of the Church of God

THANKS for all of the support you have given us this past month with the Walk-A-Thon and our first time "Picture Contest". It was a lot of fun even if Bud's picture didn't win. Remember #4...how could we even forget! The month of December is always a busy month for all of us. We have our annual Christmas Party planned on Friday, December 5th at 6:00 PM. We have a guest speaker, Del Blunch, coming from New Beginnings Pregnancy Center. We are asking everyone attending to bring a gift for a mother or child. Come and be a blessing to others. Then Sunday, December 21st will be our annual Christ Birthday offering. The theme this year is *Visions of the Father*. The national group depends on this offering. We "need" this offering to do the special things that need to be done to help our missionaries through out the world. Like I stated this past Sunday, we always seem to find the time and money to make room for everyone at Christmas. "Please" don't leave Jesus' Birthday out. Give Jesus a gift through this offering.

Darla Clayton

Why Jesus is Better Than Santa Claus

Santa lives at the North Pole...

JESUS is everywhere.

Santa rides in a sleigh...

JESUS rides on the wind and walks on the water.

Santa comes but once a year...

JESUS is an ever present help.

Santa fills your stockings with goodies...

JESUS supplies all your needs.

Santa comes down your chimney uninvited...

JESUS stands at your door and knocks, and then enters your heart when invited.

You have to wait in line to see Santa...

JESUS is as close as the mention of His name.

Santa lets you sit on his lap...

JESUS lets you rest in His arms.

Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi little boy or girl, what's your name?"...

JESUS knew our name before we were born. Not only does He know our name, He knows our address too. He knows our history and future and He even knows how many hairs are on our heads.

Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly...

JESUS has a heart full of love

All Santa can offer is HO HO HO...

JESUS offers health, help and hope.

Santa says "You better not cry"...

JESUS says "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you."

Santa's little helpers make toys...

JESUS makes new life, mends wounded hearts, repairs broken homes and builds mansions.

Santa may make you chuckle but...

JESUS gives you joy that is your strength.

While Santa puts gifts under your tree...

JESUS became our gift and died on a tree...the cross.

We need to put Christ back in

CHRISTmas, Jesus is still the reason for the season.