



# On the Same Page

“The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 NAS95)

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## A Developing Direction

Forever-Family Fellowship

**We will teach and practice truth-and-love relationships with brothers-sisters in Christ that must survive/thrive in the present because we believe that these relationships will last forever**

All-Week-Long Worship

As the local body of believers gathers each Sunday for worship, **we will inspire a worship experience for all age groups that will travel with you all week long.** What we do on Sunday will assist you in your singing, in your praying, in your devotion, and in your witness.

Conversely, it is as you worship all-week-long that you will be prepared to enter into gathered worship on Sunday.

Day-to-Day Discipleship

As followers of Christ, we are disciples every single day. Respect for and commitment to Scripture is essential. **We will show you how to interact with and respond to God's Word, both as individuals, and in groups.**

Moment-by-Moment Mission

God, the Architect of the world and of our lives arranges appointments and interruptions. Each of us is called to representative His Son for the glory of His Name. **We will cultivate a mind-set for moment-by-moment mission, whether close to home, or far away.**

## Passing Through

Sunday, December 23, 2012

As we conclude the year known as 2012, it is not as though we merely walked through an art gallery, noticing and enjoying the various displays. In that case, the gallery knows not that we were even there. Nor was the journey through 2012 like visiting one of our national parks, where we are encouraged to leave “only our footprints” behind. Our time and spheres were much more interactive. We made a difference, for good or ill. We had an effect, whether in prospering or damaging, and we ourselves were changed. We are not the same as we were at the beginning of this year, nor is our world the same. As theologians wrote and sang, “we will never pass this way again.”

Wise men and women will learn from the past, and make plans accordingly for the future. We will learn to avoid the damages and lay hold of the opportunities. We will think carefully about what is lacking, and we will choose not to discard what is profitable, even though it yields slow, stubborn results. We will invest with our time and treasure and trouble, or, we will cut our losses on ventures that are unworthy. 2013 will not but like 2012, but also, it must not, it dare not be like 2012. Jesus is walking onward, and we dare not, like Lot's wife, turn back.

**Prayer must be a staple of our lives, not an accessory.**

**We must earnestly seek to see lives laid hold of by God's saving grace in Christ, evidenced by baptism.**

**We must function as a church family intentionally, not accidentally. We must learn to follow the Spirit's leading, together.**

**We must unite together in mission that breaks our hearts and engages our lives.**

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## The 'John' Project: Excerpts from John Bunyan

John Bunyan had a power and grace in his preaching that was rare. The distinguished Puritan, John Owen, said that he would trade all of his learning for the ability to preach like poor and simple Bunyan. But what grabs me is the sense of responsibility and accountability for having been so richly graced by God: "I dare not but exercise the gift which God hath given me."

**Besides, when I see that the Lord, through grace, hath in some measure blessed my labour, I dare not but exercise that gift which God hath given me for the good of the people.**

Bunyan, John (2012-05-12). *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (p. 112). . Kindle Edition.

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## Notes and Notices

- Thank you to all who participated and attended our Christmas services. It was a joy to have so many visitors, and to see some old friends on Sunday morning and Monday evening. Also, the Swayze family thanks the congregation for their extravagant kindness, which you have shown time and again, individually, and as a congregation.
- A memorial service for Vince Hinzman's father, Paul, will take place on Saturday, December 29, at the church, at 3 p.m.
- American House Service on Sunday, January 6, 3 p.m.
- Awana will begin again on Wednesday, January 9, 6:45-8:15 p.m.



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## Sermon Wrap



During our Christmas worship on Sundays, we thought about what makes "**A Christian Christmas.**" We studied "[The Spirit of Christmas.](#)" "The Gift of Christmas" (audio unavailable), and "[The Child of Christmas.](#)" On Christmas Eve, we contrasted the gift of divine love with O.Henry's story of human love in "The Gift of the Magi."

We find ourselves now in this rather strange time between the 'holidays.' On Sunday, we will introduce a devotional theme for 2013, called "the wisdom project," in which you may choose to immerse yourself in the book of Proverbs for the year.

Also, we will talk a bit about "the John project," and the simple-yet-profound

writings of John Bunyan, English tinker-turned-preacher during the 1600's.

On Sunday, January 6, we gather for Lord's Table in a service structured around prayer.

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