



On the Same Page

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6 NAS95)

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 represent 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.**

Christmas Wonder

Sunday, December 11, 2016

What if a person could see Christmas with new eyes? What if a person, shaped and schooled by this world system, all of a sudden found in Jesus forgiveness of sins, and meaning, and love?

If that were to happen, then I would think that this person's approach to the Christmas season would change, dramatically. For instance, what about those angels?

Nobody really believes in angels, do they? I suppose fruitcakes do. But no, the Bible is full of angels - heavenly messengers who break into the program with an important message that one could not possibly know without help. [It happened to Zecharias](#), the father of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus; [it happened to Mary](#), the young maiden who would be plucked from normal life and made the vessel for a divine operation. All of a sudden, our new believer will look around with a sense of new sensibilities - not that most of us, or any of us, will actually be visited by angels - but that God has a plan that is so important, that he sends “angelic alerts” at key times. God actually has a plan, and is working it. Who would have thought?

This new believer will see that the magic of Christmas is not based on a mere myth. He will see that there is a story of which Christmas is ‘only’ the beginning. That this Jesus lived, sinlessly. And then he died, blamelessly. And then, he rose from the dead, miraculously. He seemed crushed at the bottom of the world order, and then he turned that whole world order (of which a key part is this: you live, and then you die), upside down. He was born to die, so that we could be born again, to live, forever. And so it will dawn on this new believer that the ‘magic’ of Christmas is not a sentiment, but a wonder, that God so loved the world, that He sent His Son.

And then, amazingly, he will begin to ponder how it is that the Creator could become a creature; how the King of the Universe would sacrifice His life for unruly subjects; how the High Priest of Heaven actually stoops to become the sacrificial lamb; how the Prophet who knows the mind of the Father actually comes to become the Word, so that this new believer does not just believe what He says - He believes in Him.

The new believer is surprised to learn that this Jesus has been foretold centuries before. But he will not be surprised that the prophet, 600 years in advance, called him [‘Wonderful.’](#)

Augustine and Communication: that the listener be not only pleased, but persuaded, “urging them to do what they already know ought to be done.”

And as he is pleased if you speak with sweetness and elegance, so he is persuaded if he be drawn by your promises, and awed by your threats; if he reject what you condemn, and embrace what you commend; if he grieve when you heap up objects for grief, and rejoice when you point out an object for joy; if he pity those whom you present to him as objects of pity, and shrink from those whom you set before him as men to be feared and shunned.

Augustine, On Christian Doctrine. This edition was printed in 2014, Beloved Publishing, p. 146

News and Notes

Prayer Time: Sundays, 9 a.m., in the sanctuary

Angel Tree gift assignments are due at the church this Sunday, December 11.

Christmas Dates:

Sunday, December 18 in worship gathering - children’s participation

Saturday, December 24, 6 p.m. - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 25, 11 a.m. - worship gathering. There will be no Sunday School on December 25, or on January 1

Our older children’s church (5-7’s) is led this month by Pete and Janice Gallo. In addition to their work, Jenny Donofrio is also working with **both groups of children’s church** to prepare for children’s participation in our worship service just before Christmas, December 18.

Men of Action breakfast meeting is Saturday, Dec 17, 7:30 a.m.

Circle of Grace Ladies Fellowship meets at the Donofrio home on Monday, Dec 19, 6:15 p.m.

Awana meets each Wednesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m. - age 3 thru 5th grade. There are two dates before Christmas: Dec 14 and 21.

Weekly Worship @ 11:00 a.m.

Last Sunday, December 4, during our worship gathering, we answered the question “Should I Bother Being Blameless?”, from Luke 1:5-17. [Listen to the message here.](#)



This Sunday, December 11, we get into the Christmas story, keeping an eye on the broader Bible story - that God is at work in the world, and He graciously informs us of His work. We must “humbly respond,” not as masters of the message, but as “servants of the Word.” Our texts include Luke 1 and Judges 13.

Next Sunday, December 18, many of our children will contribute to our worship through music that they have prepared. We will consider the miracle of the virgin birth, and the oft-times hiddenness of God’s work.

Sunday School classes meet at 9:30, with classes for Adult (studying Matthew’s Gospel), **Youth** (studying Daniel), and **Children** (fruit of the Spirit).