



On the Same Page

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

(2 Corinthians 8:9 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.**

Mercenary Ministry

Sunday, December 25, 2016

There is a cryptic story [late in the Book of Judges](#) of the Old Testament Scriptures that describes a priest, a Levite, on the road, looking for work. He had left home, “Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,” in search of another spot. Evidently the “church” that he left wasn’t doing too well. Perhaps the mutual admiration between pastor and people had soured. Maybe a new assembly had started up in town, and a bunch of sheep opted for greener pastures and stiller waters.

In his travels, this wandering priest meets up with Micah (not the prophet). This Micah had stolen money from his mother, but then returned it, and when he did, she was so pleased she gave him some silver and they made an idol out of it. He decided to build a church around it, and now all he needed was a pastor/priest. The Levite enters, stage left, and they strike a deal. “You work for me, I’ll take care of your expenses; I’ll call you ‘father, so long as you do what I say.” It sounded like too good a deal not to pass up.

Things went well until [a gaggle of Danites](#) passed through looking for a place to live. They were seeking new digs, because they had not been able to clear the original territory allotted them by Joshua. We are not sure how hard they tried. They also were looking for greener pastures, and, they knew they would need a priest when they got there. So they struck a deal with Micah’s Levite, and promised him something bigger and better.

This doesn’t sound much like a Christmas story for a newsletter dated December 25. But the connection is this mercenary minister from the same town where one day, centuries later, a baby would be born who would be more than a priest - he himself would be the sacrifice, for all our sins, once and forever.

This baby born in Bethlehem was no mercenary minister. Jesus, in contrast to our Levite, departed the heights to live and die in the depths. He left behind the riches of heaven for the poverty of homelessness and false accusation. He sacrificed the love of the Father for the hate of mankind.

Followers of Jesus are fellow-servants; fellow-ministers. And following Jesus’ pattern, it’s not about what we get; it’s about what we give. It is not a pursuit of bigger and better, but how we can serve best.

A Christmas Quote: from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German Lutheran pastor who continued to minister to the people of his homeland while standing against the evils of the Nazi terror. He was imprisoned by the Nazis and put to death shortly before Allied forces reached his location.

For the great and powerful of this world, there are only two places in which their courage fails them, of which they are afraid deep down in their souls, from which they shy away. These are the manger and the cross of Jesus Christ.

News and Notes

Our quotes (above, and on the back side of our Sunday bulletins) will spend **2017 with Martin Luther**. This coming year is the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting of the 95 theses on the Wittenberg door, which popularly marks the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. My goal is to spend 2017 reading about Luther, and his writings, and to share bits of this with you.

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

Christmas Worship Dates:

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

American House service, Sunday, January 1, 3 p.m.

Ladies Bible Study, studying 1 Peter, resumes on Tuesday, December 10, 10 a.m.

Awana meets Wednesdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m. - age 3 thru 5th grade. **Awana resumes after their Christmas break on Wednesday, January 11.**

Weekly Worship @ 11:00 a.m.

This Sunday, December 25, we will think about the shepherds experience of Jesus' birth, from Luke 2. We regard it a privilege to be able to worship together on the day of Jesus' birth, truly "the Lord's Day."



Last Sunday, December 18, we reviewed the texts that teach the mystery of the virgin birth, and realized that the import of the Holy Spirit's visitation was not for the purpose of Mary's subjective experience, but rather the objective result. So it is to be with us, as the Holy Spirit works in the life of the believer.

[Listen to the message here.](#)

Next Sunday, January 1, we will gather for Lord's Table, and will kick off our 2017 theme, "Prayer and Purity."

No Sunday School classes will meet on Christmas Day or New Year's Day. Classes will resume at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 8.

[Milford Baptist Website](#)

[Milford Baptist Facebook](#)