

# On the Same Page

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.” (Isaiah 9:2 ESV)

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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 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.**

## Getting out of the Gloom

Sunday, January 22, 2017

I guess it's kind of gloomy around here. If you have only lived in Michigan, perhaps you don't know. We have more gray than most any other state. During the (long) winter, we may not see the sun for days on end. We may need to get our Vitamin D in pill form from November to March. It can affect our mood. We get gloomy.

But there is hope of a sunrise. I'm not referring to a change in weather. There is something that has happened that can change the gloominess of our souls, no matter if we live in some sun-baked state, or one surrounded by water and covered with clouds. Jesus is come, and [Zecharias sings out](#) from the midst of these events and says, **“the Sunrise from on high will visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.”**

These words were not original to Zecharias. He was quoting (Old Testament) Scripture. “The Sunrise from on high” is taken from [Malachi 4](#). This is the last chapter of the last book in the Old Testament. That is, this is the last thing God said through His prophets, followed by 400 silent years in which the people had not heard from God. They lived in darkness and soul-gloom, and could only hope that one day, the Sun would come up. And now, here it is! The Lord is coming! His advance herald, John the Baptist, has just been born, and Jesus, the Sun Himself, is six months from birth. The gloomy fog is about to be cleared away!

This must have an affect on followers of Jesus. We are not to be gloomy, because we do not live in darkness. Another Old Testament passage, [Daniel 12](#), says this: **“And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”** It is not that we, in our brightness, become *sources* of light. No, we become the *reflectors* of the Light that has shined upon us: **“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life””** ([John 8:12](#)).

Paul teaches us in [Philippians 2](#) to **“do all things without grumbling and disputing.”** Don't be gloomy. Why? Because we live in the light. We live as children of God in a world that does not know God, **“among whom you shine as lights in the world.”**

Tired of the darkness? Come to the Light. Living in darkness? Get out of the shadows, and notice that Jesus has paid us a visit.

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**Martin Luther, A Treatise on Christian Liberty (The Freedom of the Christian)** Luther shows clearly how we do not strive to earn God's favor, but having been given that favor freely, we are free to respond. Here are words that we could all repeat with benefit.

**He ought to think: "Although I am an unworthy and condemned man, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believes that this is true. Why should I not therefore freely, joyfully, with all my heart, and with an eager will do all things which I know are pleasing and acceptable to such a Father who has overwhelmed me with his inestimable riches?"**

The Essence of the Reformation, by Kirsten Birkett. Matthias Media, 2009, p.136.

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## **News and Notes**

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

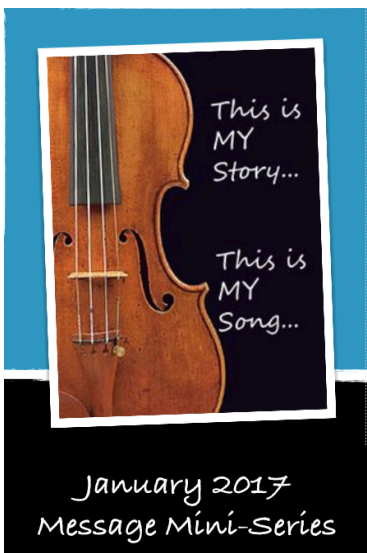
**Ladies Bible Study**, studying 1 Peter, meets each Tuesday, 10 a.m.

**Awana** meets Wednesdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m. - age 3 thru 5th grade.

**Men-of-Action** breakfast meeting is this Saturday, January 21, 7:30 a.m. **Circle of Grace ladies fellowship** is Tuesday night, February 7, 6:15 p.m. at the Swayze home

Our **Annual Meeting is this Sunday, January 22**, immediately following worship. The meeting will be followed by a potluck meal. Please bring a main dish, and either a side dish or dessert.

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## **Weekly Worship @ 11:00 a.m.**

**4 Songs that Tell the Story of the Difference Made when the Savior enters the World, and when Jesus enters your Life - Jan 8, 15, 22, 29**

Last Sunday, January 15, "**Mary's Song**," (Luke 1:46-55), with a message entitled "**Mighty, yet Merciful**." It is a message about God, concerning whom we should think and wonder. In so doing, we will not only know God better, but ourselves as well. [Listen to the message here.](#)

**This Sunday, January 22, "Zecharias' Song,"** entitled "**No More let Sins and Sorrows Grow**." Read [Luke 1:67-79](#)

**Sunday, January 29, "Simeon's Song,"** entitled "**A Weary World Rejoices**."

**Sunday School classes meet on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** Our Adult class will study and engage in discussion on the theme of the morning message.

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