

CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



A Collection of Christmas Devotions
from Area Ministry Leaders

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A Christmas Miracle...

That's what we were all calling it – A Christmas Miracle! Snow in South Texas is something many children don't get to experience, but on Christmas Eve 2004 the atmosphere provided everything we needed to get a beautiful snow that left our little part of the world looking like a most unique Christmas wonderland. Children were more excited to go outside and play in the snow than to open their presents.

Nearly twenty years later I find myself celebrating another miracle that is changing the landscape of Texas. I was not sure I would see this in my lifetime, but praise God unborn children in Texas have been granted the right to life. To be sure the work is not done. There are those who are seeking to remove this protection for little ones, and we will continue to fight for them, but for right now during this Christmas season I am rejoicing in the miracle of life cherished and protected.

Once again this year, the Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend has collected a series of devotions written by area pastors and ministry leaders. I hope these beautiful writings will encourage you and your family as we rejoice in life and celebrate the greatest gift ever given – Jesus Christ!

Jana Pinson

Executive Director



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Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend

2022 E-Devotional Contributing Authors

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November 27th

The Nativity Scene

Jonathan Leftwich, Pastor

Hope Church, Rockport

As people celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas season, there is no other image more meaningful than the nativity scene. Baby Jesus is lying in a manger, surrounded by His father and mother, Joseph and Mary, cattle and sheep, wise men, and shepherds. It is truly a strange and beautiful scene.

To bring the lowly shepherds to the town of Bethlehem, the Bible says an angel announced to the shepherds: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). To bring the wise men to the town of Bethlehem, the stars proclaimed the coming of a new King; one who was worthy of worship. When they arrived in Israel, they asked: "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him" (Matthew 2:2).

From lowly shepherds to the great wise men of the east, they recognized Jesus as a Savior for the world, as the Promised One of God (the Christ) - foretold for more than 1,000 years before His birth, and as the true King of God's chosen people. Jesus truly is the light of the world! The wise men and shepherds experienced this light as they gathered around Jesus.

How did God bring this light into the world? Through birth. Millions of women would give birth to babies before Mary gave birth to Jesus, and millions of women would give birth to babies after Mary gave birth to Jesus. But on this night, God chose to bring the light of the world to the earth through birth.

Birth has always been an incredible symbol of life: something brand new enters into the world! On that night in Bethlehem so many years ago, a new life entered into the world through Jesus, unlike anything the world had ever seen. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

The picture of the nativity scene is simple: Jesus is the life and light of the world to all who would gather around Him. He can be the life and light for you as well. Take a few moments today to pause and think about life brought into the world through Jesus. There is room around the manger for you.



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November 28th

With God Nothing is Impossible

Dr. Grover Pinson, Pastor

Windsor Park Baptist Church

Why was Jesus “born of a woman?” (Galatians 4) Why was God’s son “made in the likeness of men?” (Philippians 2) Jesus was growing in Mary’s womb for about 9 months. He was going through all the various “stages of growth” that my wife, Jana, and I read about in “What to Expect when You Are Expecting.” Jesus was totally dependent upon his mother and upon God – upon Joseph and His mother’s cousin, Elizabeth, and others who were caring for Mary. Why did God want His Son to humble himself this way? Why go through all the normal, routine things that we all go through?

About 300 years after Jesus’ life on earth, a guy named Athanasius wrote a little book called, “On the Incarnation.” At one point he wondered out loud, “Why didn’t Jesus come to earth in a more spectacular way? Why didn’t He shine like the sun - or dazzle us like the stars in the sky?” This was Athan’s answer: “The Lord did not come to make a display. He came to heal and to teach suffering human beings.” And Jesus needed to be a real human being to do that.

And that is what Jesus had been doing for 300 years – healing and teaching suffering human beings. Athan reflected upon the miracles that Jesus was doing in his day in the Roman Empire as Constantine died. He was amazed that the savage barbarians, who were tearing Rome apart, were throwing their idols away and giving up the rage that they lived upon. “But when they hear the teaching of Christ, forthwith they turn from fighting to farming, and instead of arming themselves with swords, they extend their hands in prayer.”

A very young and faithful mother-to-be, Mary, wondered how God could do what He said He was about to do. And the angel Gabriel told Mary that “with God nothing shall be impossible” – you can even ask Elizabeth! (Luke 1) Are your prayers for our world so big that only God can answer them? He often starts in small ways . . . in a mother’s womb.



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November 29th

Expecting

Rev. John Hardie, Elder and Teaching Pastor

City Church

My wife, Melanie and I recently entered the hallowed realm of grandparenting. Two precious one-year olds now populate the “Photos” folder in our phones—a boy and girl. Fisher and Kylie.

Before they were born, our daughters loved to stand side by side, comparing their protruding bellies, imagining how important the two cousins would be to each other. “They’ll be life-long friends!” Oh, happy expectation!

In his gospel, Luke tells us about two other babies and what happened when Mary was expecting. “In those days Mary arose and went to a town in Judah. As she entered the house of Zechariah she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit.” Luke 1:39-41

John and Jesus were cousins. Moreover, each were a vital part of God’s plan for salvation. Even before they were born, they changed their mother’s lives. Elizabeth had felt old and empty. Now she’s expecting a child! When Mary walked through her door, baby John did a backflip, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit.

When the babes became men, they didn’t minister together, but each was ever in the other’s thoughts, for each of their ministries depended on the other’s.

A few weeks ago, our grandbabies came to our house for a visit. When Fisher’s parents put him in his car seat to leave, Kylie’s parents carried her over to “say goodbye”. Neither of these children can talk, but Kylie looked intently at Fisher and suddenly leaned way over—almost out of her father’s arms—reaching out to Fisher as if to say, “We belong to each other.” It was so touching. We all saw it and were moved.

The stories of John and Jesus and Kylie and Fisher make me marvel at the mystery of who God brings into our lives. We never know who is going to come, or when, and become a profoundly important person to us.

Expecting is good—especially as we prepare for Christmas. We don’t have to be pregnant to be expectant. Jesus came into the world to reconcile man to God, and people to people. Only in Him do we find the grace to heal our terrible estrangements and live as the family of God.

This is what God wants. This is what God has planned. Bursting through the door of our life just might be a person sent to us from God Himself. This is what it means to be expecting.



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November 30th

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Rita Lawson, Advancement Manager

Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star how I wonder what you are...

For many of us this lullaby/rhyme was one of the first we learned or taught our children. You can't help but hum the tune as you gaze upon a starry night. Over the years, the Christmas Star or Star of Bethlehem has become an important part of Christmas tradition. Many have "wondered" about this star that is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. Matthew 2:1-2, 9

Many have tried to explain the star as a super nova, comet, or a conjunction of planets. It seems no one is certain what star the Wise Men or Magi followed, or whether it was a star at all. The Greek word "aster" translated to "star" usually means a star or celestial body, but it is also used in some places in the Bible to refer to angels (for example in Revelation 12:4). Some suggest it was not actually a star, but an angel or manifestation of God's Shekinah Glory.

I tend to lean more toward the angel or manifestation of God's Glory theory, but more important than the "what" is the "why". The Star of Bethlehem reminds us that the Gospel is for everyone. The Father announced His Son's birth to the most unlikely candidates, showing His love for ALL humanity. The star did not appear to the scholars and scribes of Jerusalem. Instead, it was shown to Gentile Magi, outsiders who would have been scorned by devout Jews as pagans.

This Christmas as you place the star on top of your tree or above the stable of your nativity scene, thank God that the salvation provided through His Son Jesus is for ALL mankind!



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December 1st

Jesus, the Prince of Peace!

Jon Warren, Lead Pastor

GracePoint Church, Portland

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6, ESV).

What a great passage! And what great names given in this prophecy to the One coming as the Savior of the world! All these names stand out, but let's take a look at the name, Prince of Peace. When you think of Jesus as Prince of Peace, what do you think of?

Three things come to my mind. First, one of the most beautiful things of all is that through faith in Jesus Christ, we can have peace with God (Romans 5:1). That this peace is even available is amazing to me! No one deserves it, but because God loves us, He made it available to all who believe.

Secondly, although we live in a troubled world filled with all kinds of confusion, chaos, and pain, we can have peace in the midst of it because of our relationship with Jesus. Jesus said that He made peace available to us, and then said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). That's incredibly encouraging during times like these.

Thirdly, in a world that offers all kinds of coping mechanisms to find peace in this troubled world, we find a true peace in Jesus that trumps them all. Jesus said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." That's one of my favorite verses because it reminds me that the peace that Jesus offers is a peace of another kind. It's so radically different from what the world can produce. There is a deceiver called "the prince of the power of the air". He is doing all he can do to offer counterfeits of peace, but he will always be eclipsed by the true peace that is found only in Jesus. That's good news! Let this Christmas be a time where we thank God for the Prince of Peace and let us thank Him for giving us a peace that is out of this world!





December 2nd

The Promise of Hope

Wes Bevly, Family & Discipleship Pastor
Yorktown Baptist Church

As Christ followers, we know there will be a day when we live in fellowship with God. We know that because God has promised it to us, and it is in God's promises that we find hope. And our hope is in God's promises because we can be confident that they are always kept.

We see this proof in the message the shepherds revealed to everyone that first Christmas. They shared the fulfillment of a promise that we see in Isaiah 9:6, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." The news that the angels delivered that evening to shepherds in a field outside of Bethlehem was the fulfillment of a promise that God had made some 700 years before. And that is where we find hope... in God's promises that He always keeps.

And the shepherds knew what would be required of this young child in order to fulfill the subsequent promises of God. The fulfillment of a promise like that seen in Isaiah 53:7 which says, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth." These shepherds knew the significance of the price that young child would eventually pay because these shepherds were in charge of the flock that was used for sacrifice. They were in charge of a flock whose sole purpose would be replaced by this young child, which is where we find hope, in God's promises that He keeps.

Promises like that seen in Hosea 6:2 which says, "After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him." And there we see Him on the third day, alive as He presents himself to Mary and gives her hope in the fulfillment of yet another promise.

God keeps His promises, and that is why we can be confident in yet another promise found in John 14:3 which says, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

Yes, the shepherds knew exactly what they encountered that day. It was the precious life of a newborn baby, but it was not just any baby, He was our savior, the One who would fulfill God's greatest promise and through whom we realize our hope.



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December 3rd

God's Plans Contain Your Blessings

Robert Simmons, Pastor

Annaville Baptist Churchh

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. Matthew 1:19

I awoke on May 19, 2021 to the gentle patter of rain on the roof and the occasional flash of lightning. Looking to my right and seeing my wife beginning to stir from sleep I developed a plan. My plan was to open the blinds, lay down next to my wife, snuggle up next to her, and take in the early morning beauty of the light display that God was putting on outside of our window. My plan started off well but was quickly obliterated as a lightning bolt shook our house and our world. Within seconds fire alarms were going off and smoke rapidly filled the house. Yes, my plans were obliterated within seconds, but God had better plans. God turned my broken plans into overwhelming blessings that we are still reaping to this day.

That was the way Joseph must have felt when he heard that the woman he loved was pregnant. His original plans now lay wrecked on the rocks of infidelity. The new plan came sharply into focus. He would put Mary away privately and not make a spectacle of her publicly. That's when the angel of God showed up. God had better plans for Joseph, plans that would send him on the adventure of a lifetime and bless him in unimaginable ways.

It happens to all of us. We have plans and those plans seem to be working out quite well when the unexpected suddenly shatters our plans. We didn't plan to get cancer. We didn't plan to get pregnant. We didn't plan to lose our job. We didn't plan to have someone we love killed in a car wreck. But it happened, and now our plans are nothing more than a heap of broken dreams. Doesn't God care? How could he have let this happen? Doesn't he know what this is going to do to our plans?

Has your world come crashing down around you? Have your plans been shattered into small shards of broken memories? If so, look to the source of everything and trust Him completely. If you will line your life up with Him and His Word, He has a blessing that He wants to bring out of those broken pieces. To get to His plan you will have to do it His way, even if it doesn't make sense to you. Never forget, God's plans are always better than your plans.

Trust in the LORD with all our heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11



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December 4th

God Showed Up

Ricky Sparks, Metro Director

South Texas Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Would it be impactful to you if Jesus Christ himself walked up to you and said, “hello” as you are reading this? Yes, I mean that literally! Imagine if Jesus LITERALLY walked up to you and said, “hello.” Regardless of how strong or weak your faith is, I’m betting it would be pretty impactful. I encounter this thought every Christmas season.

Throughout the Bible, God’s people were promised a Messiah, a Savior, and we can read story after story about God’s people waiting on that Savior. Waiting. For thousands of years, waiting!! Then something truly miraculous happened: God showed up. When Jesus was born, it wasn’t just a story and a promise of a Messiah anymore!! Jesus had quite literally entered the room!

This is something I want to never lose grasp of. To me, Christmas means that Jesus showed up, for real. This time of year, I sometimes find myself picturing Jesus in the room with me. He talks, eats, and walks. He has breath, He has warmth, He even has a smell! For me, imagining what it must have been like for God to show up in the flesh serves as a great reminder that Jesus is just as real today as He was the day he was born. This thought helps my faith stay strong. God isn’t an idea; our Savior isn’t just a promise or a concept. Jesus truly showed up, and He is coming back again.

This Christmas season I would encourage you to reflect on how it would impact you if Jesus entered the room. Would it strengthen your faith? Would it spur you on to love others and grow His Kingdom? How would it impact you? Remember in this season that God showed up, believe it, and allow it to impact your life.



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December 5th

Faith in the One Who is to Come

Scott McDonald, Lead Pastor
Corpus Christi Community Church

In Luke chapter 1, Mary, while pregnant, went to visit some of her relatives, Zechariah and Elizabeth. Upon hearing the greeting of Mary, Luke reports that Elizabeth, who was also pregnant, felt her baby leap in her womb. Filled with the Spirit, Elizabeth exclaimed,

“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ... For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.” (Luke 1:42-44)

The son growing inside of Elizabeth was John the Baptist, the prophet who would prepare the way for the Lord, and the same man whom Jesus proclaimed was the greatest of all the prophets. What an incredible implication this is for the sanctity of human life in the womb! A child in the womb moved by the Spirit of God leaps for joy at the sound of the voice of the mother of Jesus. That child had a great purpose to point many people to Jesus.

Fast forward toward the end of his life. John was in a dark and filthy prison of Herod Antipas waiting to be executed. While in prison, John called two of his disciples and sent them to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”

This was a surprising question coming from John the Baptist, the man who had baptized Jesus and heard the Heavenly Father’s thunderous voice identify Jesus as His Son. The thought of being executed for the sake of truth and justice he could handle, but John could not bear the thought that he might have been wrong about Jesus.

But even in John’s doubts, there remained a deep and abiding faith in Jesus. He just needed to hear it from Jesus one more time. When John’s disciples had come to Him, Jesus invited them to watch Him heal many, cast out demons, and give sight to the blind. He instructed them to go and tell John what they had seen and heard (Luke 7:22). John would recognize Isaiah’s prophecy in the words of Jesus, and the confirmed promise of God would bring the peace that John needed to sustain him in those final days.

This Christmas season, put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, the One who is to come. And let the promise of Christ’ return bring you peace that passes all understanding.



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December 6th

God Has Not Forgotten You

Kevin Burr, Discipleship Minister

Kings Crossing Church of Christ

Have you ever tried something really big and failed? Sometimes we try big things and fail because someone else didn't help us. Sometimes we try and fail because we made a mistake. And sometimes we try, and it just doesn't work out, and we may never know why. Or, what about this: has somebody ever asked you to do something you thought was impossible? Maybe we aren't ready for it, maybe we've never tried it before, or maybe we feel too afraid. In the Gospel of Luke, we meet two women whose dedication and loyalty to God have inspired generations of Christians. There's just one catch though: both of these women do not at all seem qualified to do what God asks of them.

The first woman we meet is Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-7). Her husband Zechariah is a respected priest. They are both quite old and have no children because for one reason or another Elizabeth cannot get pregnant. One day Zechariah is serving in the temple and an angel appears to him and tells him the most beautiful news, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son" (Luke 1:13). After many long years, they will finally have a child! This is incredible news, but it seems really unlikely, and Zechariah doesn't believe it. After that, Zechariah goes home, Elizabeth gets pregnant, and she praises God. "'The Lord has done this for me,' she said. 'In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people'" (Luke 1:25). God did not forget Elizabeth.

Next, we meet Mary. She is probably in her late teens, and although she is engaged, she has never slept with anyone. An angel appears to her and says she will have God's own son! This is incredible news, but even though it seems impossible, she believes God can do anything.

Elizabeth and her husband tried many times to have kids and failed. She felt shame and sadness, but God remembered her. Mary was a virgin and never expected God would ask her to carry His own son, but He did. The people God works most closely with are the ones that others consider weak and unimportant. If at any point you believe yourself to be unqualified to serve God because, like Elizabeth, you've tried and failed or because, like Mary, you've never tried at all let me encourage you to keep trusting God and stay faithful to Him. Let Him surprise you with His power to bring goodness and beauty into even the darkest situations.



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December 7th

Love Never Fails

Bonnie Fehlauer, Pastoral Team

New Life Church, Corpus Christi

“Love never fails” is a phrase we may have heard many times and it can become passé — just a cute saying that we see on a plaque at Hobby Lobby and then hang on our wall at home. But, it possesses an amazing evergreen quality. We can revisit the life of this mighty phrase, draw strength from it, and then wield its power over and over and over again throughout a lifetime.

Love had its genesis in the depths of the heart of the God of the Universe. It is awe-inspiring to know that He could not resist love’s compelling urge, moving Him to act and send His only Son to rescue His creation from certain death (John 3:16).

This love that never fails is not human, but Divine. He loves because HE IS love. When He put His all on the line for us, He had no guarantee of our acceptance of Him. But, He did it anyway! We can allow His Spirit to transform us to be like Him in giving love, no matter the response. When we come to the end of our affections, we are just beginning to wade into the depths of His. Our hearts can truly become receptacles of the overflow of His compassionate heart.

That’s when we can choose to go beyond our human strength and limitations to intervene for the lives of others. That’s when we so love the world, our neighbor, the unborn and his mother, the confused baby daddy, and struggling grandparents. That’s when we find ourselves pouring out into hurting lives, JUST BECAUSE we love them, as our good Father has poured out into us.

Thank You, Father, for loving us and sending your Son. Thank You, Jesus, for leaving your place in glory, becoming one of us, and loving us to the very end (John 13:1). Thank You, Holy Spirit, for pouring THIS love that never fails into our hearts, so that we may never give up on loving the ones Your burning zeal seeks to save (Romans 5:5; Isaiah 9:7).

God’s love — working and bubbling and filling and flowing through us — will never fail!

“[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” I Corinthians 13:7-8a NKJV



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December 8th

A Precious Child

Pastor Alston Kirk, Vacancy Pastor

Trinity Our Savior Lutheran Church

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. [Luke 2: 11-12 KJV]

A child was born that night, a very special child. His birth was an extraordinary event, the result of a vision of God proclaimed to the prophet Habakkuk. He drew divine DNA from the Holy Spirit and human DNA from an earthly mother. In every cell of his body, he was both God and human. Can you imagine shepherds approaching that night? Did one extend a grimy hand to touch the child and then suddenly withdraw it in fright. Hearing again the words of the angel, did he think “I have touched God?” This child would give his life for all.

My wife and I met at a camp for inter-city children outside of Washington, DC. The first meal for these children upon their arrival was a disaster in the making. Children stood on the benches grabbing everything in reach. It took some time to get them to sit down and understand that there was enough food for all. If there wasn't enough on the table, we would bring more from the kitchen. Their stories made clear the hardships they faced. Their mother was the most important person in their lives, often the only parent they knew. These are the children for whom the Christmas Child gave his life.

Children were precious to the Lord. In spite of His disciples attempt to protect His time, and possibly His robe from accidents, he gathered even infants to himself and gave them His blessing. To His followers He said “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father.”

As I finish the chapel service for the preschool each week, many of the children come forward to hug and be hugged. In that moment, I remember how precious each of these children is to me and to our Lord.



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December 9th

A Living Hope

Greg A. Isaacs, Lead Pastor

Oso Creek Church

1 Peter 1:3, 20-21

Today the world seems devoid of hope. The continual news cycle today projects that we are surrounded by hopelessness. There is division all around us; racial, political, economic. The season of Christmas brings such warmth, joy, and happiness for many, but at the same time there are many people who feel alone, fearful, anxious, unsure about tomorrow, and even a hovering feeling of hopelessness that surrounds them day and night. Life is difficult at best for them.

One of the greatest things that the Christmas season brings us is hope in the person of Jesus Christ. The nation of Israel needed hope as well at the time of Christ's birth. They were in the throes of what is considered the dark period in Israel's history. They were in the Intertestamental period that lasted approximately 400 years. Israel's time between the Old Testament and New Testament is called the 'silent' period because there were no words from God, from prophets, and no God-inspired writings. To make matters worse, the Romans had conquered the known world and ruled very oppressively with a strong hand of military might. You can imagine the hopeless thoughts that might have been going through an Israelite's mind; "Is God finished with us?"; "It has been hundreds of years...", "What about the Messiah, will He ever arrive?" They seemed to be living in a hopeless existence far from the glory days of their conquest of conquering the Promised Land and later the glorious kingdom of King David. Yet on that Christmas morning, hope arrived in the person of Jesus Christ and everything changed. The wonderful refrain from 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' alludes to this: 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight'.

We are surrounded by hopelessness through violence, destruction, corruption, evil, disease, and aimless living. The good news is that Jesus came to give us hope. His birth brings a gift of hope to all mankind. We have hope because we receive God's mercy through Jesus (Lamentations 3:22-23, Titus 3:3-5). We have hope because we get a new life in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17, John 3:3,7, 16-17). We have hope because Jesus conquered death on the cross and through the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:13-18). Whatever we are faced with or the circumstances we find ourselves in, we can stand with confident hope that Christ is for us, and if He is for us nothing can be against us (Romans 8:31). We can live a hope filled life every day because of Christ. This hope sustains us through the hopeless world around us." Do you need hope today? Allow Christ to arrive in your heart and bring you lasting hope, a living hope.



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December 10th

What is Christmas About to You?

Chris Skoglund, Family/Recreation Pastor

First Baptist Church, Corpus Christi

Luke 2:8-20

In households around America every year the same question is generally asked, “What do you want for Christmas this year?” As parents we know that can be a dangerous question because you may end up with a list that is multiple pages long or it may consist of just a couple of things. We all look forward to Christmas morning and opening presents, no matter what our age. If we are younger, we can’t wait to see what the presents are, but as I have gotten older I can’t wait to see the reaction to the gifts that I have given others. Typically, after Christmas you bump into people and everyone asks, “What did you get this year?” We usually rattle off a few of our favorite presents and then we end up packing all our decorations for next year.

I am afraid that at Christmas we lose sight of what the season is truly about. In Luke 2:8-20 we see the interaction of the shepherds and the angels. The angels appear to the shepherds to let them know about the birth of our Savior. The verses to really focus on are verses 17-20 because it says that after they had seen the baby, they spread the word concerning what they had been told about the baby. They couldn’t wait to tell others about the Lord. It goes on to say others were amazed at what they were told. Then at the end of verse 20 it says they returned glorifying and praising God.

This season don’t lose sight of what we should truly celebrate. The presents are a great thing to receive, but don’t lose sight of the greatest present we received in the birth of our Savior. I want to challenge you this season to truly celebrate what God has done for us by sending his Son for us. Also, go and tell others about Him and why you celebrate the birth of our Savior. Let this Christmas not be overshadowed by what the world wants us to celebrate but, celebrate the birth of Christ. Each day take time to thank God for sending his Son for us and the unconditional love he shows us.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 11th

Forever Thankful

Colby Wiltse, State Director

County Citizens Defending Freedom

When I was growing up, I always looked forward to Christmas because it meant several weeks off from school, spending time with family, eating tasty desserts, watching “A Charlie Brown Christmas” (which I now do with my kids), and the best part of all was opening presents! And what kid wouldn’t love that?

Now that I am older my perspective has shifted. I no longer care about what is in it for me. I’ve found I now care more about being thankful for the blessings God has brought into my life.

I’m thankful for my family and friends; those who have invested in me and been there for me even on my worst days. The gift of family and friends is a rare treasure that should never be taken for granted.

I’m thankful that I get to live in America and despite the current state of our nation there is still so much for which to be thankful. We still enjoy the gifts of freedom, peace, and prosperity more than any other people in the world.

I’m thankful for my wife and my children whom I consider the most precious gifts in my life. I can still remember when my wife and I were expecting our first child. I was driving home from work talking to my dad and before I hung up, I told him I loved him. He responded by saying, “I love you too son and soon you will understand what it means when I say it.”

Boy was he right! The love I have for my children is a love only a father can understand. Which is why above all I am thankful to our Heavenly Father for the gift of His Son Jesus! There is no greater gift to the world than salvation through the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Romans 5:15

This Christmas visit your family, call that friend you haven’t spoken to in a while, thank a veteran, hug your spouse a little tighter, play with your kids a little longer and in the midst of it all, thank God for His many blessings in your life.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 12th

The Fullness of Time - Galatians 4:4

Jim Ward, Pastor

First Baptist Church Taft, TX

This time of year, we see the sights of Christmas and hear the sounds of Christmas so prevalent in our culture, and with them expectations of joy and merriment. But some two thousand years ago that was not the case. In fact, this time of year was just another season in Judea, when joy and merriment were seldom found. But the world was about to be changed with the seemingly impossible birth of a child to a teenaged virgin. And with this birth, the promised hope of an entire people was delivered. The gift of the Messiah (Savior) from God the Father to the nation of Israel and then also to all people who would believe in His Son, our Savior.

Galatians 4:4 says, "When the fullness of time had come..." What a great line; sounds like the beginning of a best seller. Remember the opening to A Tale of Two Cities; "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." A Christmas Carol by Dickens opens with; "Marly was dead." Great opening lines intrigue us and draw us in. In the book of Galatians God speaks to us through Paul and says, "When the fullness of time had come..." Stop and let that sink in. The FULLNESS of TIME had come! Who's time? Well, of course, God's time. His perfect timing which was when He had everything set in place and all was complete to reveal His plan of redemption, available for all of humankind. God's way of salvation was born; a son born to a young woman and to be raised as any other Hebrew child. But He wasn't just any Hebrew child - He is the Son of God, the Messiah/Savior born that night, which we so commonly call Christmas night. But I pray you see and always remember it was not a common night, it was the fullness of Gods time, the beginning of hope, the way of salvation became flesh. So, when you see the sights and hear the sounds of Christmas so common in our time, remember it began, "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son."



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 13th

All Little Ones Are Important to God

Kenny de Koning, Pastor
Waldron Road Baptist Church

There was a pharaoh in Egypt who loved Joseph, but when Joseph died a new king arose, who did not know Joseph, and he was jealous and scared at the same time as to the number of Israelites living in his country. This led to an order from the new king to the Hebrew midwives to kill the male babies; female babies live, male babies die.

But the midwives feared God. It is amazing what can happen when people fear God, when people take God seriously, they do what God would have them do, and God will bless them. Certainly, the God-fearing midwives were not going to kill the male babies, and many were saved.

Then the king charged all the people that every male child born must be cast into the river. Moses was born, and his mother thought that he was a beautiful child, as every mother has the God-given “eyes” to see the beauty in their child. She hid him for three months and the time came that she could no longer hide him. By faith, believing that God would rescue her son, Moses’ mother put him in a float and set him in the river close to where the daughter of Pharaoh would bathe.

You know the story. Pharaoh’s daughter discovered the float with the beautiful little boy in it. As it turned out, Moses’ mother ultimately became his nurse and she got paid for doing that job. Now, Moses became one of the most important and significant people in the history of Israel and the scriptures. His name is mentioned more than anyone else, besides Jesus Christ. What a gift of life he was.

If you know someone facing an unplanned pregnancy, would you point them to God and ask them to consider trusting Him take care of them and their baby? Of course, you cannot promise that the baby will be an important person to a nation, but you can promise the baby will be an important person to God and to many people including them. That baby will not only be a gift of physical life, but also a gift of emotional and spiritual life.

The One Who was born 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ, the Giver of life, loves you and has so much joy and victory in mind for you and yours. Merry Christmas.





December 14th

Like Christmas Morning

Scott Lawson, Director of Online Journey Groups

Influencers Global Ministries

“It’s like Christmas morning!” The phrase is a metaphor for all things anticipated with glee and excitement. You hear it spoken and you instantly feel the expectancy of wishes come true. Maybe your favorite team is about to take the field or court. Your boss called you in after you nailed it. The caller ID reveals that a dear friend from yesteryear is on the line. You can’t know exactly how the next moment will play out, but the prospects are promising. Your life could change. It is indeed like Christmas morning.

It is fitting that you associate that joyful emotion with the birth of our Savior. After hundreds of years of prophecy and anticipation it finally happened: “for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11, NASB).

But do you often feel a little disappointed after the gift is unwrapped, the team plays poorly, the boss offered yet another assignment instead of a promotion, the conversation was not fun like in your college days? Do you wonder whether this is all there is? Was that experience really worth all the suspense?

How about with Jesus? Do you sometimes feel disappointment that your life after meeting Him isn’t what you expected? Did that glorious gift to the world, awaited for centuries and changing history forever, fall short for you? Did you expect a full life that contrasts with the one you are living? Maybe you are happy for that child peeking under the tree. You even live a bit vicariously through them, in their hope of delight. You ponder the possibility that you will never again savor such ecstasy.

Rejoice! The Lord provided for not only salvation, but a full and abundant life. He said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b, NASB). How, though? In the next few verses, He describes Himself as “The Good Shepherd” leading us into that abundant and joyful life (think Psalm 23). A few chapters later, He said, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, NASB).

Abide in Him, pray, dig into God’s Word, hear His voice, always. Your life will be abundant. Hey, it’s like Christmas morning!



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 15th

An Invitation of Love

Rev. Joshua Segundo, Pastor

City Church

One starry night, Nicodemus, a Pharisee, ventured out into the darkness to meet with Jesus. During their intimate conversation, Jesus reveals the heart of God the Father with these beautiful words,

“For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Nicodemus was shocked to hear these words because his view of God’s love was an exclusive love meant only for the nation of Israel rather than an inclusive love for all people of the world. What was Nicodemus to do with these words? Does God truly love the Gentile as He loves Israel? Little did Nicodemus know that he was standing before God the Son and not just a teacher of God as he saw him. Jesus spoke the truth of God’s great love because He was God.

God’s love is an intense love. His love is demonstrated through the giving of His precious Son, Jesus Christ. God loves the world, He loves people, and He loves you. I, like Nicodemus, was perplexed to hear of God’s love for me. Doesn’t God only love those who are good? Doesn’t he only care for those who have not made a mess of their lives? I discovered through scripture that God most certainly loves those kinds of people. He loves the broken, the hurting, and the lost. He loves people just like me and just like you. Whatever you are struggling with, there is nothing in this world that can fill the emptiness. The only answer is God, and He has made himself known through his son, Jesus.

The Apostle Matthew declares Jesus as “Immanuel, God with us.” God’s love is truly more than an expression. His love is action. God took the initiative to be in a loving relationship with us.

I encourage you to accept Christ’s beautiful invitation to be in relationship with God. As the Christmas season approaches, we remember God’s great gift to humanity. I pray you remember that God loves you, and that He made a way to be with you not only because He loves you but because He is love.

May the hope of Christ, Immanuel, God with us, bring you joy, peace, and love this Christmas. Christ truly is the only reason for this season.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 16th

Cheap Grace vs Costly Grace

Rob Bailey, Pastor

Southside Community Church, Corpus Christi

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor and theologian who stood against the Nazi regime in the 1930s. Only 20% of German churches joined him in signing “The Barmen Declaration,” which proclaimed Jesus Christ, not Adolf Hitler, was head of the Church. As he saw the decline of Christianity in his country, Bonhoeffer wrote “The Cost of Discipleship” in 1937 comparing “Cheap Grace” to “Costly Grace.” Eventually he was arrested for his resistance to the Nazis and executed in 1945.

Bonhoeffer’s words and ministry are very relevant today. As you read his message below, ask, “What is my proper response to the Father’s grace in sending His Son and Christ’s grace in dying for us while we were enemies?” (Romans 5:10) May God bless you richly as you consider His claim as Lord over all.

From Chapter One of “The Cost of Discipleship”:

Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace.

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the Cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy for which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ for which a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble. It is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple will leave his nets and follow Him.

Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner.

Above all, it is costly because it costs God the life of His Son: “You were bought at a price,” and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon His Son too dear a price to pay for our life but delivered Him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 17th

The Hope in the Unknown

Moses Camacho, Pastoral Resident

First Presbyterian Church, Corpus Christi

Imagine a ship that has been tossed around the sea, beaten and battered by a storm. The captain, for the sake of the ship and its crew, commands to lower the anchor to hold the ship steady. They pray all night, hoping the anchor will hold them fast through the storm, not knowing what comes next or for how long. Imagine their joy when daylight breaks and the ship and their lives have been saved. The Bible says in Hebrews 6:19, that our Lord is like “a firm and secure anchor for the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain.” The place referred to is the temple of the Lord, the inner place behind the curtain was where the presence of God would dwell.

The high priest of Israel would go in there one day of the year to present the people before God, and so many would have to wait and see if their sins would be forgiven. Our lives will reflect the pain and fear and doubt of a captain and crew beaten around in a storm. The ship which is our life will be tossed about and we will seek hope in the midst of hopelessness. The truth is that in our lowest moments, especially when we feel most alone, our hope is most secure in Jesus Christ the Son of God. We call him “Lord” because He is the head, the God-man in charge, nothing is greater or bigger than he is. Jesus, because of his death and resurrection, has paid the debt for our sins. He has made the invaluable presence of God available every single day to us, not just for one day of the year.

When you feel like you are lost at sea, praying this “Jesus” will be a solid anchor to hold you fast, TAKE HEART! Nothing is more solid than Him, and you can be sure that your hope in the unknown will not return empty handed.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 18th

Treasuring Moments

Mathew Moreno, Campus Pastor

BT.Church

“They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger. After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told.” Luke 2:16-20

Have you ever found yourself caught up in the whirlwind of life? Caught up in the whirlwind of the Christmas season? Do you find yourself running from store to store, from party to party, from event to event, stressing about the perfect outfit or the perfect gift for each person in your family? Often, we get so consumed with everything going on around us that we forget about the true reason for the season and that it is the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Christmas is such a beautiful, yet chaotic season and the Christmas story is such a beautiful, yet chaotic story. My favorite account is in the book of Luke. Luke is so detailed and captures the emotions and the smallest details in the Christmas story especially when it comes to Mary. A lot of times we can focus on the wise men, the shepherds, baby Jesus, and even the gifts but no one really focuses on the lady who just gave birth.

Mary was nine months pregnant and had just traveled over 70 miles on a donkey...read that again...on a donkey...9 months pregnant...they couldn't find anywhere to stay or sleep so now they are in a stable and then to top it off she goes into labor! Talk about getting caught up in the whirlwind of life and everything taking place here in this moment.

But we see Mary still taking time to stop and “treasure up all these things in her heart.” What a powerful action in the midst of such chaos. Mary pauses, looks around, and treasures what's taking place.

When is the last time you paused, looked around, and treasured those around you? This Christmas season let's take some time to PAUSE + TREASURE moments taking place.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 19th

What Does This Rock Mean to You?

Michael Colton, Pastor

West Shore Baptist Church

As we are walking through this journey called life, we often come to what seems like impassable obstacles. There is a Jordan we cannot cross over, an impasse to the promises from God we seek to possess. From the book of Joshua, we can read about the nation of Israel's journey in their quest to claim the promise they believed their God for. They had hope to claim the promise that they could only imagine. Their thoughts of this promise kept them going day after day until they came to an impasse, the Jordan river, at its fullest point.

I am sure they had no idea how they were to cross this great river and claim the promise from their God. Just like so many of us in our quest to claim the promises from God we come to impasses in life. Yet, like the Israelites, God has a plan and knows what we need. God desires for us to trust Him for our life and like God's people so long ago He knew they would need a reminder of what He brought them through to give them confidence to stay faithful to Him.

It is in the midst of the impasse, the conflict that they could not go through, that God wanted them to gather a stone to build a memorial of His faithfulness. That this may be a sign for us so that when your children ask in time to come, "What do these stones mean to you?" then you shall tell them. (Jos.3:6)

The LORD Jesus is our rock that we build a lasting memorial upon, as He delivers us each day from the "Jordans" in our life. Take time to reflect on how our LORD and Savior has taken you through the impasse before you, for Jesus is faithful to His Word. He wants us to trust Him, know Him in all situations of life, and know He is God. He will lead us through life on our way to the Promised Land and know that Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. (John 14:6) We are to reflect on our salvation and the love that our Savior Jesus has for us.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 20th

Unmet Expectations

Pastor Joseph Henderson, Central Student Pastor
Church Unlimited

Every holiday season, my family's tradition was to make mountains of sugar cookies. I remember sharing laughs and sipping hot cocoa as I learned how to carefully ice cookies. It wasn't truly Christmas until we made our special sugar cookies. And then the day finally came where I was going to be able to share this cherished holiday tradition with my own son. However, I quickly realized that baking with a 2-year-old didn't result in mountains of cookies, but a dusting of flour scattered throughout my kitchen. Carefully decorating cookies looked more like sprinkles flying violently through the air. And hot cocoa wasn't even a possibility with a hyperactive, injury prone toddler. It wasn't quite what I expected.

I often wonder what it must have been like to be a Jew during the 400 years between the Old and New Testament time-periods. I can imagine that after years of oppression and opposition, I would read the words of the prophets and be expecting the day my king would come in power and finally make all the wrongs right. I would be waiting for him to topple nations. I would be expecting the Messiah.

I wouldn't have expected Jesus.

Hebrews 2:17-18 tells us "Therefore it was necessary for Him to be made in every respect like us, His brothers and sisters, so that He could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then He could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. Since He himself has gone through suffering and testing, He is able to help us when we are being tested."

He came not so that we'd be ruled, but so that we'd be known.
He came not to shame our weakness, but to share His strength.
He came not to demand allegiance, but to serve in love.
He came not for the applause of crowds, but to wipe tears from the eyes of the lonely.
He came not to condemn, but to save.

How gracious was our God to not come as "God over us", but as "God with us".
Our Immanuel.

I certainly had my expectations on how my beloved holiday tradition would play out. Even though my kitchen was a mess and our cookies looked like they'd been trampled by reindeer, I'm grateful for my son's contagious joy in the process.

I'm grateful for unmet expectations.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 21st

A Season of Light

Dr. James Pruitt

Squared Away Ministries

Light is an important symbol of the Christmas season and lights are seemingly everywhere. We light up our Christmas trees. We hang lights from our homes, our landscape, and our office buildings. Our churches hold special candle-light services. Even our downtowns and public squares beam with light. The warm glow of light and warmth and fellowship permeates almost everything during the season. We almost feel an instinctual need to pierce the darkness with light, to proclaim hope in the midst of despair.

Ironically, the fascination with light stems from our own darkness. Created in the image of God to walk in the light of fellowship with God (Genesis 1-2), mankind has instead walked in darkness since the Fall (Genesis 3). Sin brought not only physical death but a darkening of our mind and spirit. Thinking ourselves to be wise, we became fools – darkened in our understanding and alienated from the life of God. (Ephesians 4:18) But God did not plan to leave us in darkness.

In the Old Testament, God walked with man in many ways. He gave his people the Law and the Word of God. He gave them priests and kings and even prophets to guide them. Above all, He promised a redeemer, a Messiah, who would one day restore fellowship with God. Speaking through the Prophet Isaiah over 700 years before the birth of the Jesus, God promised that the “people who walked in darkness [will see] a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them [a light will shine].” (Isaiah 9:2) The Apostle Matthew recorded the fulfillment of that prophesy when Jesus began his public ministry. (Matthew 4:12-17)

Our desire for light reflects our longing – even if we sometimes deny it – for fellowship with God. It reflects our desire to move beyond the vanity of this world, to see clearly once again, and to grasp eternity because God “has put eternity into the hearts of man.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11) Ultimately, the light represents the promise of Jesus – the light of the world who would bring light and life to all men who received Him. The Apostle John wrote, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:4-5)

As we enter the season of light, remember in the midst of the holiday rush to let your own “light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 22nd

The Outrageous Christmas Gift

Donald Kinner, MA, LPC, LMFT

Association for Christian Family Counseling

God invaded our world by fulfilling His promises to send Messiah Jesus, and once again this year we get to celebrate this priceless, outrageous gift.

As we ponder this world and the mystery of our human condition, we experience both our capacity for goodness, love, and truth, and our struggle with temptation, sin, and evil. God saw our struggle and sent Jesus to offer this outrageous gift of Himself. He became sin for us, that by faith we could receive His perfect righteousness and become adopted sons and daughters of God!

Let us take comfort that God's Holy Spirit will be with us through all that comes our way. We are not alone! The Bible, God's love letter to us, calls us to honesty about who God is, who we are, and our need for His help and mercy. This results in appropriate humility and grace being extended to us.

But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." James 4:6

Even though we can get caught up in the activities of the Christmas season, it is important to make time to reflect on all that God is. As we ponder His many amazing attributes, two things will happen. Our spirit will be moved to awe for our triune God which brings us joy and gratitude, and God is honored for all that He is.

As we exchange gifts with loved ones this year, let's remember the one eternal gift, the gift that changed the world and continues to change individuals.

May His love and peace bring joy to our hearts and minds as we celebrate God becoming man.



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 23rd

Just Be Still

Jonathan Stubbs, Men's Ministry Manager

Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend

As a child I often climbed trees, jumped over fences to get balls, or even climbed to the roof of our house to get a better jump off the trampoline. While sitting I would constantly be moving a leg, hand, arm, or whatever just so I didn't sit still, often to the point of annoying my brother. Looking back now, I realize that I was full of life and had decided to live it to the fullest. If I was not experiencing life at a fast pace and constantly moving, I felt as if I might cease to exist.

To this day I find myself uncomfortable with stillness, often crossing or uncrossing my legs to find a comfortable spot. Sometimes I even need to get up and walk around because my legs begin to ache in the stillness. I readily volunteer to do anything, so I don't have to sit at a desk. I always feel better when I am in motion.

Regardless of who we are or what we grew up doing, we all have a version of life we think is "life to the fullest." But the truth is that everything this world has to offer can only partially sustain us. No matter how much I move around or even do, it will never fulfill my life. In John 10:10 we read that Jesus came so we could have life and have it abundantly. Our life comes from God AND He desires that we have abundant life. The only way we are able to have a fulfilled life is through Jesus Christ. Nothing of this world can bring us to that place other than Christ.

This Christmas, in all the hustle and bustle of the season, take just a few moments to JUST BE STILL. Remember the Messiah who was supposed to come as a mighty warrior to defeat the Roman Empire, instead came as a baby, the most beautiful picture of life, and showed us how to live abundantly!



CELEBRATING THE

Gift of Life



December 24th

What to Expect

Anthony Aquino, Sr. Pastor

Calallen Baptist Church

The book “What to Expect When You Are Expecting” is considered the bible for pregnant mothers. Parents attest to the hope found in its pages due to the prescient accuracy regarding what can be a daunting nine months. The following is a tagline found on the cover of early editions: “Everything you need to know from conception to birth and beyond.” If sales are any indication “What to Expect When You Are Expecting” delivered (pun intended). It can be surmised that knowing what will happen both calms the nerves and increases the excited anticipation of new parents – especially mothers.

In the simplest terms Christmas is a celebration of a baby. The baby is the Savior of the world – God in The Flesh. The Bible contains everything you need to know about this baby from conception to birth and beyond... and before. Before conception? Yes. But first consider the often-overlooked pro-life truth found in the Biblical account of Christmas:

Conception Equals Life

Luke 1 contains the account of Mary being told she would miraculously conceive and carry God’s Son. The same chapter confirms the truth that a child though unborn is a miraculous example of full sentient life: And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb... Luke 1:41. Did you catch that? John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, while in his mother’s womb was so excited about being in the presence of Jesus Christ, also in His mother’s womb, that he began jumping for joy!

Before Conception

The birth of Jesus Christ was so important that God wanted all those living before the nativity to know what to expect while expecting the coming King. God spoke and prophets recorded prophecies about the coming Savior. Many of these predictions were about His birth and early life. And Jesus’ birth fulfilled all these prophecies (including some that could only be miracles)!

Here are just a few:

Where: Micah 4:8; 5:2

His Mother: Isaiah 7:14

His Ancestors: Genesis 22:18

He would be a King: Zechariah 9:9

Beyond

This Christmas consider these and many other prophecies about the first coming of Christ. Doing this will inspire hope and testify to the faithfulness of God’s Word regarding His return: And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Acts 1:10,11

There you have it! The Bible is the Bible for what to expect whenever one is expecting the coming of Jesus Christ – from before conception to birth and beyond!

