



December 10, 2023

### Pastor Note:

I've spent way too much time trying to fix the lights on our Christmas tree, the kind that has the lights already installed, and still, there is an entire section that's not lighting up. Maybe I'll designate that section the "Bethlehem Zone," after all, they didn't have any electric lights in Bethlehem back when Jesus was born. It's bugging me though, so I'll probably work on it some more, even though my fingertips are sore from pulling out more than a hundred burnt-out light bulbs, fixing them, and putting them back in. I just don't like broken things, especially the ones staring me straight in the face.

Maybe though, I just needed a distraction because I am too overwhelmed with other broken things, like broken people, hurting families, things in my own heart, soul, and body. Awful pictures and reports of wars, of people scrambling to find a better and safer place, of the unwanted, of the ones we can't seem to find a way to help. The broken rhetoric, villainizing anyone who disagrees, constantly pitting people against each other, legitimizing hate, justifying outright wrong and evil, abandoning civility and listening. The twisting of truth, normalizing of lying, abandoning common sense, and the rejection of godly wisdom (James 3:17-18). ...

Maybe, that's what being a pastor for forty years does to you, having been on call for too long, or getting older, or having seen, heard, or experienced too much. Settling for and fixating on Christmas tree lights maybe a brokenness of its own, a weariness that has morphed into distraction, or hopelessness, or apathy, or the Hezekiah syndrome, who no longer gave a damn for the generations after him, "At least there will be peace and security in my lifetime" (2 Kings 20:19).

The great thing about Christmas is that it is a fully lit up, "the glory of God shone all around them" (Luke 2:9), reminder that God still gives a damn. God still cares, that despite witnessing the thousands of years of our brokenness and sinful darkness, He remains on call, He still searches for just one lost sheep, His watchfulness and hopefulness are undiminished. Even the "I couldn't give a damn" prophet Jonah understood this (Jonah 4:2). He knew that even a damning message from God, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed" (Jonah 3:4), hoped for repentance, gave mercy a chance.

If I keep focusing on those damn Christmas tree lights that are out, I will have little chance of getting into the spirit of Christmas, the Spirit of Christ. I might even figure out what ails that last strand of lights and get everything just right, exactly the way I want it, enjoy the family, wear my MAGA or BIDEN24 hat, enjoy the church services, and feel very blessed, and just be a little Jonah in the belly of a very comfortable whale.

In the glow of the first and most glorious Christmas light ever, the Angel of the Lord announced, "**I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord**" Luke 2:10-11 (NASB).

Good news! God cares!

Great Joy! God sent the Savior, Christ the Lord!

Good news! God cares for all people.

Great Joy! God sent His Son to save Jew and Gentile, Israeli and Palestinian, natural born citizen and illegal alien, Muslim and atheist, those to the far-left, far-right, leaners, and the politically checked out, the vile and villains, the smug and sinners, straight and LGBTQ+, great and small, our friends and enemies, those with most the lights working (have it together) and those with most of the lights burned out - all people, Hallelujah! That even and mercifully includes you and me.

The news is still good, the joy is still great, and Christ is no less needed! However, the light accompanying it and the herald declaring it has changed, it has been passed on to all who have heard God's good news, received the Savior Jesus Christ, and are filled with His Spirit.

May you and I be lit up with the real spirit of Christmas.

Pastor Hans



# Lord Hear Our Prayers

## PRAYER REQUEST

Mabel Mayes, Julie Ebel, Carolyn Jeffers,  
Jack (Brother in-law to Judy Mahar, Foster Children and  
those who foster, And that we do “SHARE”.

If you notice someone has been absent from Small Group or  
Worship Services for awhile, why not call them or stop by to  
let him/her know that they have been missed. A kindness that  
cost you nothing could mean everything to someone who is  
suffering in the silence of self-exile.

## Military And Those Serving

Michael Berger, Austin Downing,  
Noah Martin, John Michael Chavez,  
Chris Kelly, Austin Kroeker, Brian Sula,  
Thomas Hoffman, Joel Thelen,  
Clayton Brown, Jonathan Grinols, Joshua Grabowski,  
Christopher Sula

## CARD & FLOWER MINISTRY

If you know of anyone who is ill or hospitalized, please let us  
know by calling: **Lynnette Barrera** – (559)400-1862 and  
Rachel Aratin - (209)206-5236  
Prayer Request e-mail to: **Judy Mahar** [ldpbepayer@gmail.com](mailto:ldpbepayer@gmail.com)

## **Church Board Members:**

Hans Frei - Pastor . Richard Mayes - Head Deacon ,  
Dan Hankemeier . Sue Kluding .  
Gabi Cox . Chuck Arndt

# Christmas

## Calendar of Events for December



- **Annual Church Business Meeting**  
December 3rd, following the service  
(*All* members are encouraged to attend)
- **Christmas Baskets**  
**by the Food Ministry -**  
Saturday, December 16th (9 AM - 12 noon)  
Per-registration required, Contact Leslie Farrow, 852-2481
- **Christmas Caroling -**  
Saturday, Dec. 16th (Meet at the Church at 4:30 P.M.)
- **Candlelight Communion Service -**  
Sunday, Dec. 24th (6:30 P.M.)
- **Christmas Sunday Worship -**  
Monday, Dec. 25th (10:30 A.M.)

Sermon Notes:

# December Announcements

## Upcoming Events

- Men's Gathering - Tuesdays @ 6:00 P.M.
- Women's Morning Bible Study— Wed. @ 10:00 AM
- Wednesday Night Bible Study for all ages - 7:00 P.M.
- Food Ministry - 1st Wed. & 3rd Tues. @ 9:00 AM - 11:00 A.M.
- Grief Share - Wed. @ 6:30 P.M.

**Church Board Meeting Dec. 11 at 6:30 PM**

Fellowship Time Snacks were provided  
By - "Hans' Class"

**Thank you**

*Next week Dan's Class is up!!*



## Election Results:

### Deacons

Matt Garcia

Merle Martin

### Church Board

Barb Deibler

Sue Hankemeier

**Giving**

*November 26, 2023*

**Offering:**  
\$5,457.50

**Food Basket:**  
\$85.00

**Lottie Moon:**  
\$705.00

**World Hunger:**  
\$379.00

**Attendance:**  
89

**Weekly Events**

**Sunday School/Small Groups:**

9:00 AM

**Sunday Morning Worship Service:**

10:30 AM

**Sunday Evening Worship Service:**

6:00 PM

**Tuesday:** Men's Gathering: 6:00 PM

**1st Wednesday & 3rd Tuesday**

**Food Ministry:**

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**Wednesday:**

Women's Bible Study - 10:00 AM

Bible Study/Small Group - 7:00 PM

Grief Share - 6:30 PM

**Thursday:** Chicken Foot - 1:00 PM

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**S H A R E**



*1 Timothy 6:18*



**December 11th - December 17th**

DAY 1 - Matt. 15  
(Prov. 11)

DAY 2 - Matt. 16  
(Prov. 12)

DAY 3 - Matt. 17  
(Prov. 13)

DAY 4 - Matt. 18  
(Prov. 14)

DAY 5 - Matt. 19  
(Prov. 15)

DAY 6 - (Prov. 16)

DAY 7 - (Prov. 17)

**Welcome all of you who are guests with us today. Our desire is for you to relax and be blessed by worship, God's Word, and fellowship. We, the members, have committed ourselves to underwrite the church financially. We do not expect you to contribute to the offering, but you are free to participate. We would like to get to know you and for you to know us better.**