



January 8, 2023

Pastor Note:

“Did it just get darker in here?”

“It did.”

“Dad, I think a bunch of your Christmas Tree lights went out.”

“NOooo! Don’t tell me that.”

“It just did it again.”

And that’s what you call the Christmas Tree gut punch. Two days before I had spent an hour and a half fixing those *#&#^@*! lights. Do you know how hard it is to fix the lights on a fully decorated Christmas Tree, especially down at the bottom? And since this is an older model the sockets on each of the lights are different from newer strands, which means you can’t just raid a strand of lights. No, you have to take the tree’s burned-out bulbs out of each socket, take the donor strand’s lights out of their sockets, and then put each one of them back into a socket that fits the tree. Never mind the fused bulbs which are dispersed throughout the tree. It is also impossible to take a strand out of this tree because each one is carefully woven into the darn thing.

Someone suggested forgetting about the burned-out lights and adding a whole new strand. Really! How do think this brilliant idea sounded in the mind of someone who was born in the land (Germany, where things are supposed to be done right or not at all) that produced the Christmas carol “O Tannenbaum” (O Christmas Tree)? “Not so well.” I am glad you understand.

I started to get to work, but my fingers were still too sore from the last fix. Thus, our Christmas tree with its missing lights finished the season early. I took it down, put it in its cardboard box, and determined to postpone fixing it till next Christmas, oh joy. Maybe what I really need is a tree with LED lights.

That’s a lot of fuss about a Christmas tree, which is a nice and even meaningful tradition but isn’t even in the Bible. What we do find in the Bible is the Church, the Ecclesia, the special assembly and community Jesus loves and brought to life by giving His life, “**Jesus loved the church and gave His life for her**” Ephesians 5:25. In many ways each church is like the lights on a Christmas Tree, many individual lights

designed and made to shine together.

One light on my tree decided one day, “There are 250 lights on that tree, so if I no longer participate it won’t make a difference. No one will even notice.” Dark s/he went. Little did s/he realize that now all the other lights had to carry more of the power load, each one had to burn a little brighter than it was designed for, became more vulnerable to burning out.

After a while, five more bulbs decided to ditch their strand as well. Before checking out they made sure to let the rest know that they still believed in Jesus, still prayed, and still read their Bibles. They kind of smiled and shrugged when another light pointed out that the Bible actually says, “**Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of *Jesus’* return is drawing near**” Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT2, italics mine).

Then there was a fuss with the lights that faced the wall who only wanted to shine with those who agreed with their politics. However, the outage at the bottom of my tree was caused because the lower lights felt like it was time for them to get a spot at the top. I wish all of them had remembered, “**We have all been baptized into one body (Jesus’ church) by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.**” “**Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body (the church). We are many parts (lights) of one body (tree), and we all belong to each other.**” 1 Corinthians 12:13b, Romans 12:4-5 (NLT2, parentheses mine).

Just in case you are tempted to think I have gone too far with this Christmas Tree light analogy listen to Jesus instructing His disciples collectively, “**You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father**” Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT2).

The Christian life is a communal life. We are meant to shine together, to worship together, to pray together, to learn and grow together, to serve together, to hurt and laugh together, to share the Jesus-life and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit together, to be Jesus’ fellowship of lights together.

Join, reengage with, recommit to, celebrate, Jesus’ Church, Jesus’ community of lights.

Let’s shine together to the glory of God. Love you, Pastor Hans



Lord Hear Our Prayers

PRAYER REQUEST

Health: Karen Souza, Shirley Wolfenbarger, Mabel Mayes, JoEllen & Ken Allen, Linda Bettencourt, Judi Sayers, Our Church's Ministries, Our community, that we do actually SHARE.

SALVATION

Nick, Greg, David, Phillip, Luke, Skip, Demetrius McCray, Farney, John Boykin, Peter, Mariah Ellis, Jimmy, Shyrlee Stagner, Dan, Josiah, Amanda, Jim

Military And Those Serving

Michael Berger, Austin Downing, Mike Sharland, Noah Martin, Rebekah Wilhelmy, John Michael Chavez, Chris Kelly, Austin Kroeker, Dylan Werner, Brian Sula, Michael Thomasson, 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/or an e-mail to: **BATTprayer@yahoo.com**

PRAYERS:

Order of Service

01-08-22

“How Great is Our God” & “How Great Thou Art”

Prayer

**“God You’re So Good”
“I Exalt Thee”**

Theme and Theme Scripture - 1 Tim. 6:17-19 (NASB)

Welcome

Kids Time

Offering // **“This Little Light of Mine”**

Sermon

Response - Membership Affirmation time -

“This I Believe”

Congregational Prayer

Exit Song - Fellowship Song

Sermon Notes:



January Announcements

Upcoming Events

- Men's Gathering - Tuesdays @ 6:00 P.M.
- **Wednesday Night Bible Study for all ages - 7:00 P.M.**
- Food Ministry - 1st Wed. & 3rd Tues. @ 9:00 AM - 11:00 A.M.
- GriefShare - Wednesdays 6:30 P.M.
- **Affirmation Sunday - Today**
- **Church Board Meeting - Tomorrow, January 9th @ 6:30 P.M.**

Fellowship Time Snacks
were provided
By - Hans' class"

Thank you

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



GriefShare January 18th: Session 13
What Do I Live For Now?

A Bit of
Humor
Corner



Giving

January 1, 2023

Offering:
\$2,639.00

Food
\$60.00

Facilities:
\$50.00

Lottie Moon:
\$100.00

Attendance:
50+

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 PM

Wednesday:

Women's Bible Study - 10:00 PM

Bible Study/Small Group - 7:00 PM

Grief Share - 6:30 PM

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January 9th thru January 15th

DAY 1 - John 6
(Proverbs 9)

DAY 2—John 7
(Proverbs 10)

DAY 3 - John 8
(Proverbs 11)

DAY 4 - John 9
(Proverbs 12)

DAY 5 - John 10
(Proverbs 13)

DAY 6 -(Proverbs 14)
DAY 7 -(Proverbs 15)

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.