

FIRST EDITION

Newsletter of First Baptist Church, San Mateo

DECEMBER 2019

PASTOR'S LETTER

As the holidays rapidly approach, I find myself becoming very excited! Why, you may ask? Is it because I love to give & receive presents? Or I'm looking forward to special times with friends & family? Is it because I love all the delicious foods & treats that are so abundant during the holidays? No.

As much as I enjoy all those things, as well as the many treasured & precious memories that Christmas holds for me, those memories & special times, pale in comparison to the true meaning of Christmas. Yes, Christmas is a special time of the year. But Jesus Christ is the true reason we have something to celebrate! He is the main event! Therefore, what we ought to celebrate first & foremost this Christmas is the fact that God so loved you & I that He sent His only begotten Son to redeem us. In Jesus, the Father sent the greatest & most precious gift ever given. A gift of inestimable worth & value. A gift that we could all receive, understand, appreciate, & share.

Christmas also gives us a unique opportunity to share God's gift, Jesus Christ, with family, friends, & with our community. We have been given the privilege of explaining the true meaning of Christmas to a world that is lost & will perish apart from saving faith in Christ. We are surrounded by people desperately searching for love, for meaning, & for peace. And Christmas gives us a wonderful opportunity to share the good news that God so loves the world, that long ago He sent His precious Son to bring life, hope, & meaning to all.

As I thought about it, I began to wonder, if you remove Jesus Christ from Christmas, what in the world do you have left? What do you have to rejoice in? I mean what is this season really all about? As a

PASTOR MARC HEINZ

society are we honestly that attached to mythology? You know to the elves & red hats & reindeer & all this sort of thing. Is that really what drives us?

But when you celebrate the main event, when Christ mass is exactly that, a celebration of Jesus Christ, everything changes. You can go ballistic, because of all that He has done for you. God chose to send His Only begotten Son whose birth we celebrate on Christmas & because of that reality your failures & sin can be forgiven. Moreover, you can face each day with absolute certainty, knowing that your future is fixed, it is set in stone & you can have a peace & security in your life that no one else can touch. And that is something truly exciting & worth celebrating!

During this special season it is my hope that you will be encouraged by God's incredible love for you, & that you will be reminded of the true meaning of Christmas. I know that you will be busy this season & that many things will clamor for your time & attention. But amidst the flurry of activities in which you find yourself, I encourage you to make time to think about that holy night that changed the world. Take time to reflect on the fact that the One who came long ago as a babe will one day return to take you home. Above all make time to remember & thank God with all your heart, soul & mind that He so loved the world that He gave & He came.

Finally, as you celebrate His birth may you remember the hope that is yours because He lives! May your Christmas be blessed in a multitude of ways by Him who is worthy of all your praise! Have a joyous Christmas & New Year!

The Women's Ministry is looking forward to the Christmas season! Please mark your calendars for the following activities.

First, we wanted to let you know that we'll be organizing a gift tree for the children of Teen Challenge in San Jose. Stay tuned for additional details.

We also invite the ladies of the church to a Christmas Sock Party and Ornament Exchange on December 11 at 6:30-8:00. All young girls from middle school age and up are also invited.

Please bring two pair of Christmas socks (the kind you can wear, not the kind you hang on the mantle) as noted below:

- First pair of socks: In one of the socks, insert a Christmas ornament (\$10 or less). Insert the second sock of the pair in the top of the of the first sock containing the ornament. and tie it off with a Christmas ribbon. This will be given away during our ornament exchange game.
- Second pair of socks: Leave these empty, as we will stuff that pair with goodies for the women at the Teen Challenge Center in San Jose.

Socks can be purchased at places like the Hallmark Store, CVS, and Target. In the past, they've also been available at the dollar store.

May you all have a very merry Christmas and experience the blessings of our Lord throughout the season.

YOUTH EVENTS

Christmas Fun Events

Tuesday Nights in December, 7:00-9:00 pm

Youth Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 17 · 7:00-9:00 pm

Youth Winter Retreat

January 1-4

Youth Service

Sundays, 11:00 am-12:15 pm

College/Young Adult Fellowship

Alt. Sundays, 12:30-2:00 pm

Youth Group (Junior High & High School)

Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 pm

DECEMBER EVENTS

Last Bible Study Until the New Year

Wednesday, December 4 · 6:30 pm

Women's Ministry Sock Party

Wednesday, December 11 · 6:30 pm

Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, December 24 · 4:00 pm

Christmas

Wednesday, December 25

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 4 Regina Coffey

December 10 Stenya Strang

December 10 Tami Strang

December 14 Javier Morales

December 17 Lucretia-del Broussard