

MVCC Voices

The Monthly Newsletter Of
Moraine Valley Community Church

For the Month of December 2015

From The Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Derek Mason

Watching the news now days can be quite depressing and disheartening. It feels as though we have a crystal ball view of our world as it is being sucked into the darkness. Although these times can be extremely discouraging, we must remember that it is in these places that the LORD has continually revealed Himself most dynamically in Scripture. The Exodus was born out of great darkness and violence. The Davidic dynasty was a result of chaos and an absence of godly leadership. The arrival of the prophets Elijah and Elisha was the divine response to Israel's national abandonment to Yahweh. And the birth of the promised Messiah was in a time overflowing with false: prophets, priests and kings (deception/darkness). When the Christ was born, Israel was under an oppressive rule from Rome. There were violent divisions among the people of Israel. And like the first Exodus, the LORD had not spoken to His people for over four hundred years! In each of these situations hope was very slim and evil appeared to be dominantly prevailing.

However, it is important for us to remember how the first chapter of **the Book of John** begins. The Word (who is God/Jesus and through whom all things were made) was coming into the world. He became flesh and dwelt among us. *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.

Because our world and country continues to turn its back on the LORD, things will continue to get darker. But the LORD says that He will preserve a remnant for Himself, on the earth (Gen 45:7; 2 Kings 19:31; Isa 10:20-22; Jer 23:3; Rom 9:27). The LORD loved the world so much that He gave His only Son

(sacrificially) as a pathway into His salvation and mercy (John 3:16-18). Those who love the Son will listen/follow Him (believe) and will have eternal life (John 3:16-21; 14:15-24).

Why does the LORD continually show up in these extremely challenging places? Because He has a covenant with His servants - to not abandon them and that their faithfulness to Him will not be put to shame (they will not regret it). These days are not hopeless but should remind us that the Light came into the darkness before, it lives in His people now and the Light will come again to eliminate the darkness for good - because this is what the LORD promised. Let this Christmas be a season which reminds us of the steadfast love and faithfulness of our LORD and Savior and His sovereignty. May we share these things with those who lack in hope, who are filled with anxiety and who do not know Jesus Christ. May the good news of the Christ speak loudly into the dark news of this world and breathe light/life into it! Amen.

Many Blessings and
Merry Christmas,
Pastor Derek Mason

Birthdays Etc.

Joyce Kohn	Dec. 7
David Skowronski	Dec. 8
Sergio Sostre	Dec. 12
Robert Thompson	Dec. 14
Sandi Sinclair	Dec. 17
Virginia Beehn	Dec. 18
Ernest Kohn	Dec. 21
Joyce Skowronski	Dec. 25

Murphy's Laws and Other Truths

- If anything can go wrong, it will and at the worst possible time. If there is a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will cause the most damage will be the one to go wrong.
- If anything just cannot go wrong, it will anyway.
- If you perceive that there are four possible ways in which something can go wrong, and circumvent these, then a fifth way, unprepared for, will promptly develop.
Corollary: It will be impossible to fix the fifth fault, without breaking the fix on one or more of the others.



I WANT TO GET GOD SOMETHING AWESOME FOR CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR, BUT WHAT DO YOU GET THE GUY WHO MADE EVERYTHING?

Food For Thought

This is how it happened...I just finished the household chores for the night and was preparing to go to bed, when I heard a noise in the front of the house. I opened the door to the front room and to my surprise, Santa himself stepped out from behind the Christmas tree.

He placed his finger over his mouth so I would not cry out. "What are you doing?" I started to ask. The words choked up in my throat, and I saw he had tears in his eyes. His usual jolly manner was gone. Gone was the eager, boisterous soul we all know.

He then answered me with a simple statement.

"TEACH THE CHILDREN!"

I was puzzled; what did he mean? He anticipated my question, and with one quick movement brought forth a miniature toy bag from behind the tree. As I stood bewildered, Santa said, "Teach the children! Teach them the old meaning of Christmas. The meaning that now-a-days Christmas has forgotten."

Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a FIR TREE and placed it before the mantle. "Teach the children that the pure green color of the stately fir tree remains green all year round, depicting the everlasting hope of mankind, all the needles point heavenward, making it a symbol of man's thoughts turning toward heaven."

He again reached into his bag and pulled out a brilliant STAR.

"Teach the children that the star was the heavenly sign of promises long ago. God promised a Savior for the world, and the star was the sign of fulfillment of His promise."

He then reached into his bag and pulled out a CANDLE.

"Teach the children that the candle symbolizes that Christ is the light of the world, and when we see this great light we are reminded of He who displaces the darkness."

Once again he reached into his bag and removed a WREATH and placed it on the tree.

"Teach the children that the wreath symbolizes the real nature of love. Real love never ceases. Love is one continuous round of affection."

He then pulled from his bag an ornament of himself.

"Teach the children that I, St. Nick, (Santa Claus) symbolize the generosity and good will we feel during the month of December."

He then brought out a HOLLY LEAF.

"Teach the children that the holly plant represents immortality. It represents the crown of thorns worn by our Savior. The red holly represents the blood shed by Him."

Next he pulled from his bag a GIFT and said,

"Teach the children that God so loved the world that HE gave HIS only begotten SON..." "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."

"Teach the children that the wise men bowed before the Holy BABE and presented HIM with gold, frankincense and myrrh. We should always give gifts in the same spirit of the wise men."

Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a CANDY CANE and hung it on the tree.

"Teach the children that the candy cane represents the shepherds' crook. The crook on the staff helps to bring back strayed sheep to the flock. The candy cane is the symbol that we are our brother's keeper."

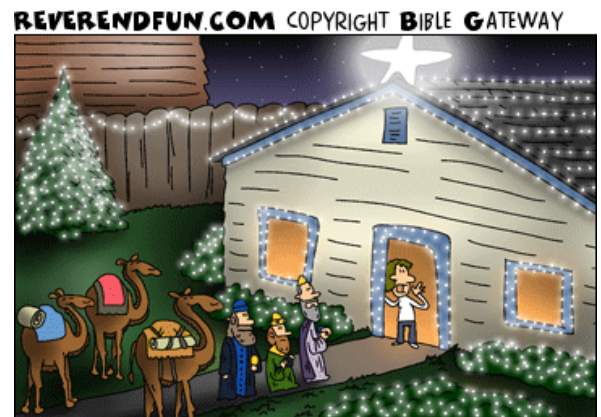
He reached in again and pulled out an ANGEL.

"Teach the children that it was the angels that heralded in the glorious news of the Savior's birth. The angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men.'"

Suddenly I heard a soft twinkling sound, and from his bag he pulled out a BELL.

"Teach the children that as the lost sheep are found by the sound of the bell, it should ring mankind to the fold. The bell symbolizes guidance and return."

Santa looked back and was pleased. He looked back at me and I saw that the twinkle was back in his eyes. He said, "Remember, teach the children the true meaning of Christmas and do not put me in the center, for I am but a humble servant of the One that is, and I bow down to worship HIM, our LORD, our GOD."



I THINK YOUR LIGHTS MIGHT BE TOO BRIGHT THIS YEAR

Church Signs

Fall For Jesus, He Never Leaves

Fight truth decay. Brush up in the Faithbook!

Fight Truth Decay...Study The Bible Daily

FREE bread and juice inside!!!

From The Elder's Table

It seems the conversation around the Elders' Table of late has been all about "building."

- Building a better stronger foundation for our church
- Building community through small groups
- Building leaders
- Building ministries
- Building strengthening relationships with Converge
- Building inner strength through prayer
- And always building the future God has planned for us.

We spent much time this last month considering our stewardship program. Reaching out to our church family to consider carefully how we can each help to build our church through our giving. We are so proud of Pastor Derek's efforts in adding new technology to even the act of giving. Though we are comfortable and grateful for our present church home with Savior Divine, it is always important for us to be looking to the future for a home that can suit our needs as we continue to grow. In the last two years, one hundred and fourteen visitors have passed through our doors. Thirty two of those people are continuing attenders and 18 have become members. Our church family continues to grow and with that growth comes the need to make sure we are meeting the needs of all our church family.

Our newest endeavor will be the beginning of a new program to build community within our church. A new program called **Life Groups** will encourage our Sunday worshippers to develop closer relationships within our church.

Over the past 13 months, Pastor Derek has held a "leadership" class to teach us how to become that needed strength within our

church to lead our various ministries. Over the last year, many new ministries have formed and new ministries are in the works. We are excited about our future.

Our relationship with Converge will give us the much needed help we need by giving us the opportunity to learn from other growing churches. Just this past month Joyce Skowronski, Virginia Beehn, Megan Bustamante and Pastor Derek Mason attended a Converge Conference from which they came back with new enthusiasm and ideas to help develop our church. In December Joyce Skowronski, Bill and Pat Curtis, and Pastor Derek Mason will be attending a financial seminar at Converge to keep our church abreast of what could be changing within the financial realm of the church.

We pray at each meeting that God will give us the vision we need to see the future He has planned for our church. We ask Him to strengthen our resolve, open our minds and hearts, and to lead us to become the church He wants us to be.

We ask all of you to pray for us as we go forward with our LORD in building the future God has planned for us.

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Thanks to Wilma Melendez (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-24-2010

THIS IS LIKE TOTALLY THE COOLEST THING THAT HAS EVEN HAPPENED IN THIS STABLE!

Remember in Prayer...

- Elsie's Food Pantry: provisions/wisdom/protection
- MVCC: wisdom/guidance/protection
 - Hearts to serve – to build our church (formation of ministries)
 - Wisdom and guidance in our new location
 - Discipleship/transformation/leadership
 - Youth and Children's Ministry growth and development
- Tony Zappa – knees/back
- Emmitt Hayes – heart/health/ condo restoration and living arrangements
- Pete Delgado – dementia (Sarah – strength)
- Vi Wagner – hip/arm/eyes/strength
- Mark DeBauche: cancer healing / strength /endurance / Dr's wisdom in treatments
- Doreen (Mark's sister-in-law): cancer healing
- Edith Martinez – Her knee to heal and her Sister for healing
- Dorothy Martin's brother-in-law (Jeff) – cancer
- Roy Beehn – provisions, healing from his open heart surgery
- Tony Juarez – new job closer to his home
- Russ McGurdy – job & insurance situation, surgery and pain relief
- Kim Healy – work challenges, endurance & provisions, blessings
- Megan and Chucho – healthy pregnancy and provisions
- Sheri Clemente – cancer concerns
- Dan Tabert – foot recovery
- Linda Hudecek – lungs healing

- Harriet – strength in her legs, walking
- Becky Lewellen – employment

Great Truths

Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.

Ronald Reagan (1986)

I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts.

Will Rogers

Elsie's Pantry

The Staff at Elsie's Pantry would like to thank you all for the Thanksgiving Offering collected for the pantry. \$455 was collected.

Things have been going so well for the pantry! Food donations have been pouring in from businesses such as KinderCare, Kiwanis, Guaranteed Rate Mortgage Company and the public (through the donation box). Joyce was able to get 5 carts donated from Walmart which will save the pantry \$600.

On November 19th we served 95 families consisting of 654 people! It was non stop the whole two hours. As of 2000, we have served over 52,000.

As Christmas approaches we are happy to say that Kiwanis donated several toys and we are working with Chicagoland Toys for Tots to get a few more donations. We are also thankful that Megan and the Youth Group are having a toy drive.

God abundantly provides for this pantry; He always has.

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