

THE SEBRING CHRISTIAN

December, 2018
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DOC)

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Some things are hard to believe but they are true. It is hard to believe that I have been your pastor for nine months. It is hard to believe the changes in our Florida Region. It is hard to believe we are now days away from 2019. It is hard to believe the changes we have experienced this past year. It is hard to believe the Christmas season means as much to us now as ever before.

There is only one word I can convey to you...BELIEVE!

I was always moved close to tears at the end of the movie "Miracle on 34th St." You know the story. Susan's mother does not believe in Santa Claus or Christmas. Susan wishes at least for a house, with hopes of a home. After the Christmas parade and Christmas celebration she seems not to have gotten the present of her dreams for Christmas. As Doris, Fred, and Susan ride through the town and country, Susan continues to say over and over again "I believe, I believe." It is then in her belief that she sees her dream appear right before her very eyes. As she yells "stop the car" she enters the house. The clear sign of that dream come true is a simple cane at the corner of the room.

Belief is what makes this such a special Christmas story. Susan was skeptical of the Christmas miracle at least, and unbelieving at most. She went through a time of questioning, but her belief seemed to grow, and hope began to emerge. It was only when she confessed or proclaimed her belief that she could see her hope fulfilled. That fulfillment was marked by a sign that could not be overlooked. Others may not have seen the significance, but she did. A simple cane in the corner of the house.

Susan's story of belief is much like the Christmas story itself. From the skepticism of salvation to the fulfillment of faith and the sign that God is with his people as he came as a baby in a manger. All of that is easily doubted. All is easily questioned. All is easily overlooked. Every sign and symbol is easily explained away. That still does not make it untrue. I have said several times, because I believe it true, what we expect, we receive.

That which we believe in is that which becomes true as we work in our faith and love seeing what others may not see; the star in the sky, the babe in a manger!

May your Christmas be filled with hope and belief and may your dreams and visions come true!

Pastor Alan

Pastor Office Days - 4, 5, 12, 13, 18 P.M., 19, (27?).



NIBBLINGS FROM THE CHURCH MOUSE

Back when I was a young pup living in the old mouse-stead -- whenever we got to feeling poorly my Grand mouse used to say there was nothing better for what ails you than a cup of Grand mouse's Chicken Soup. And, you know it did make you feel better.

So what do I find during my midnight rambles through the Library than a cup of Chicken Soup. Well, actually they were books with the titles such as "Chicken Soup For the Christian Soul, and "... For the Sports Fan", (some Bucs fans might read this one), "... For the Cat and Dog Lovers". So I leafed through several. The short stories and items and occasional cartoons actually do help what might ail you.

If you might be interested in one, I've left several lying by the card catalogue just inside the Library door. Happy Nibbling.

The Mouse



WE ARE DISCIPLES

WOMEN: Our annual Santa's Goodies Walk will be held on Sat. Dec. 1. From 8:30 to 12:30. Come and bring friends to buy cookies by the pound (and other goodies too.)

On Friday, Dec. 7 we will have our annual Christmas luncheon at the church. This catered meal will cost \$8.00 and start at 11:00. Again, bring a friend or more for this time of fellowship. Our speaker will be a local author from Avon Park. Dottie Rexford has written a book read by the Book Club and will bring some inspiring Christmas thoughts to us. We must have an exact count for our caterer so please sign up on the Disciple Women's bulletin board by Sunday Dec. 2 or call Sue Colwell @ 402-4687 no later than Tues.

Christmas stockings will be collected with the money going to SamaritansCare, an organization that provides free health care to those who are needy without insurance. SamaritansCare will be part of the church's outreach in the new year. Read article on bulletin board about them.

MEN: Make plans to attend our next breakfast meeting on Saturday, Dec. 8, at 8 a.m. (And every 2nd Saturday after that). We are not up to full complement with some snow birds still in the process of returning from the frozen north. We recently instituted a Secret Prayer Pal program. Names were drawn and members were encouraged to pray for that person in the months ahead and also contact them anonymously on special days like birthdays, anniversaries, Holidays, etc. with "Thinking of You" messages.

As soon as assistant head chef, Richard Neff returns in a couple of weeks, we will be making plans for our next money making project to benefit the updating of our kitchen.

Come join us for good food and fellowship.

* * * *

Why do more than 50,000 people a year pay money to run several miles over an obstacle course where they must ascend vertical walls, slog through mud, and climb up inside a vertical pipe with water pouring down on them? Some of them see it personal challenge, for others the attraction is teamwork where competitors help & support each other. The Bible urges us to pursue teamwork as a model of living out our faith in Jesus. Heb. 10:24 says "let us consider how we may spur on one another on toward love and good deeds." Our goal is not to "finish first" in the race of faith, but to reach out in tangible ways of encouragement by setting an example and lending a helping hand along the way. We run together in the race of faith.

Father in heaven, give us eyes to see and strength to help each other in the race of faith today.



FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR CHANCEL CHOIR

November 2018

You have a real treat this month. I have picked several of our favorite anthems from several different Christmas cantatas and we'll be singing one every Sunday. Then on the last Sunday in December I've asked Mark McClary to sing a solo. So come every Sunday. You won't want to miss a thing!!!

Keep in Tune,

Jaquae

A JOYFUL NOISE

A Joyful Noise won't be playing this month but will be back in January. But don't fret 'cause Heavenly Sounds, our quartet will be chiming on Christmas Sunday, Dec. 23rd "Canon In D" by Pachelbel. We've been working on this for a long time and I know you'll receive a blessing by hearing this beautiful piece of music.

For Whom The Bell Tolls,

Jaquae

OUTREACH

It was announced last month in church that we would be participating in the Shoe Box ministry in which shoeboxes are filled to send to children around the world for Christmas. We found this is a project that must be worked on all year and completed by Nov. 12. Thus we are now working on 2019 Shoe Boxes which are under the direction of Samaritans Purse.



There is a list on the bulletin board as well as a leaflet on the table as to what may and may not be included. It is also suggested that a \$9.00 donation be made for each shoe box to cover the cost of shipping. Get started early by looking for toy sales after Christmas, school supplies in the summer. You may purchase shoe boxes from the Samaritans Purse (these are probably sturdier than a regular shoe box) or provide your own shoe box. There will be some available at the church if you cannot supply your own.

Please seriously consider filling a shoe box (or contributing some items) for some needy child around the world that might not get a Christmas present otherwise.



BOOK CLUB

The book club is taking a short break in December. We will be back beginning January 3rd, 2019. Our new book will be “A Family Forever” by Brenda Coulter. For the Jan. 3rd meeting please read the first 9 chapters taking you to page 127. We will finish the book on Jan. 17.

This book is about violinist Shelby Franklin. Her fiancé is killed 3 weeks before their wedding. After the funeral she discovers she is pregnant. Tucker Sharpe, a cyclist and her fiancé’s brother, wants to help and offers to marry her. It would be a marriage of convenience, to keep the unborn child with its loving family. Can this work? Is this what God planned?

Please join us!! There will be a copy in the library for you to read. We meet at 5:30 p.m. in the church library.



DECEMBER CALENDAR

Mondays: Chime Choir in Board Room at 6:30

Tuesdays: Bible Study in Library at 11:00 - studying ACTS

Wednesdays: Chancel Choir at 6:30 in choir room

Sundays: 9:00 Open Door Sunday School in library

9:45 Coffee hour in kitchen

10:30 Worship hour *We have a seat for you*

- Dec. 1** Santa’s Cookie Walk 8:30-12:30 Fellowship Hall
- Dec. 7** Ladies Christmas Luncheon. Fellowship Hall. 11:00. Reservations needed
- Dec. 7** National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- Dec. 8** Disciples Men’s Breakfast 8:00 in kitchen
- Dec. 16** National Chocolate-Covered Anything Day
- Dec. 21** Winter Begins
- Dec. 23** Christmas Eve
- Dec. 25** Christmas Day are you keeping Christ in Christmas?
- Dec. 31** New Year’s Eve



Communion Bread

Bread is considered the “staff of life”. Unleavened bread is mentioned in the Bible about 500 times, both in the Old and New Testaments. Although there are many recipes, it is simply bread without a rising agent. For health reasons, today’s communion bread is usually broken into small pieces; i.e., scored before baking, much as the wine is served in individual cups. Additionally, bread symbolized Jesus the Messiah and the eternal life he offers to those willing to follow him (John 6:32-35, 41, 50-51).



Dec. 2 Elders: Linda Ellis & Teresa Williams
Preparing: Johnny Kelly & Elaine Milward
Serving: Roger Sands & C.J.Wiggin
Greeting: Elaine Milward

Dec. 23 Elders: Jane Walkington & Wanda Gordon
Preparing: Johnny Kelly & Elaine Milward
Serving: Helen Kelly & Kathy Whitlock
Greeting: Jane & Gordon Walkington

Dec. 9 Elders: Wanda Gordon & Sandy Laufer
Preparing: Bill & Caroline Hinline
Serving: Todd & Robin Martin
Greeting: Bill & Caroline Hinline

Dec. 30 Elders: Diane Beidler & Rich Campton
Preparing: Johnny & Helen Kelly
Serving: Todd & Robin Martin
Greeting: Todd & Robin Martin
Acolyte: Sue Colwell

Preparing: Bill & Caroline Hinline
Serving: Richard Neff & Sue Colwell
Greeting: Donna Ross



BIRTHDAYS

Dec. 4 Teresa Williams
Dec. 4 Sue Colwell
Dec. 6 Iverne Turnbull
Dec. 7 Effie Simmonds

Dec. 11 Helen Kelly
Dec. 12 Peggy Cousins
Dec. 26 Mearlyn Hill

A NEW THING TO TRY



Try this this month and maybe all of 2019. Each evening before going to bed, write down at least one thing that you are grateful for that day and then add it to your prayer time. You will be surprised that even on our bad days we have many things to be grateful for. Amen

OUR PRAYER REQUESTS FOR DEC 2, 2018

Our prayers this morning are for all who are in need, be it physical, financial or spiritual.

FROM OUR CONGREGATION

RICH CAMPTON - daughter Deanna has personal struggles
BOB & PAT RHODES - knee problems
JANET JOHNS - had thyroid surgery in November
KATHY BROWN - neck problems
BOB RHODES - working to get his strength back
JAYNE WELDY
BETTY McCLEARY - health in general

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF OUR CONGREGATION

DAVID CAMPBELL - not doing well
JANET RUSKOV - had surgery on Oct. 31st for breast cancer- Sandi's friend
CHRISTA MARTIN - in the hospital- Franny's roommate
DEBBIE LEITNER - breast cancer - friend of Sandi Laufer
BRUCE GORDON - car trouble - Wanda's son
BILL ROBERDS - recovering at home - Jaquae's brother
CHRISTINA and daughter JANICE (6/17) unspoken - niece of Liz Malady
TRINA DOW-PUGH (7-1) - stage 3 kidney failure
BILL TIMMONS - health issues
BUDDY WHITLOCK - health issues
GARY MUSSELMAN - cancer
ANGELO MORITA- on the list for a heart transplant
MICK ST.CLAIR
BETTY HAMMON AND FAMILY
SHELLY ASH and children JACOB and MARGO
FRANK GLINSKI (7-1)- cancer
ROBERT MARRE - health issues
From Linda Johnson:
Brenda Johnson - health issues - sister in-law to Linda
Sister-In-Law, Kris Vaught - is responding well to new treatment
Sister-in-law Dorothy Deal - health issues
Claus, Amy & Ashley Zimmerman - medical issues
Eddie Johnson - diagnosed with cancer - nephew of Linda & Red Johnson
Judy Knofel - cancer - friend of Linda Johnson
Kay Jacobs, cousin of Linda's has cancer
Linda is very grateful for all of the prayer for her family and friends

CHUCKLES AND THOUGHTS



WHAT "I LOVE YOU" MEANS "I love you" means "You're my other half", and therefore I can never be more than half sad if you're happy, or more than half happy if you're sad.

ABSENT-MINDED PEOPLE So-called absent-minded people are often thinking about things like death, God, and the meaning of life while others are thinking about checkbooks, grocery lists, and plans for corporate strategy. Which are the absent-minded?

AGAINST REVOLUTIONS Most revolutions overthrow bad regimes only to enthrone worse ones. The French exchanged a king for an emperor, the Russians exchanged a czar for a Party, and Adam exchanged a Tree for an apple.

WHY GOD DOESN'T FALL IN LOVE God can't fall in love for the same reason water can't get wet.

Mood Surfing Moods are like waves; wonderful to ride on but impossible to build on.

FROM "LIFE'S LITTLE INSTRUCTION BOOK:

Remember that almost everything looks better after a good night's sleep.

Before going to bed on Christmas Eve, join hands with your family and sing "Silent Night."

Surprise an old friend with a phone call.

Every so often, let your spirit of adventure triumph over your good senses.

Use favorite picture of a loved one as a bookmark.

Remember that a good example is the best sermon.

When you say, "I'm sorry," look the person in the eye.

Age is merely the number of years the world has been enjoying you

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