

## Food for Thought

- ❖ Scripture considers repentance a path to liberation, not condemnation. ~ Edward Welch
- ❖ Nothing in the world can take the place of truth. ~ J Gresham Machen
- ❖ We weren't meant to *be* somebody; we were meant to *know* Somebody. ~ John Piper
- ❖ If God is your co-pilot, swap seats! ~ Max Lucado
- ❖ Until you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, you never enjoy the world. ~ Thomas Treherne
- ❖ Bitterness is the price we pay for minimizing our sins against God while maximizing others' sins against us. Bitterness denies the truth by making sins against us larger than our sins against God. ~ Randy Alcorn
- ❖ God's answer for your guilt is not to explain it away by circumstances that have victimized you, but to call you to own your sins fully and to entrust them all to Jesus Christ by faith. ~ Mark Dever



Faith Community Church  
1110 E. Cass Street  
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821

## mission

The mission of our church is to  
glorify Christ,  
proclaim the Gospel,  
reach the lost,  
and train and instruct  
Christians in the faith  
for service and daily living.

*The Voice of Faith* newsletter is a publication of Faith Community Church (an Evangelical Free church). Editor is Sharon Meier. Sunday Worship is at 10:15 a.m. Website is [www.faithchurchpdc.org](http://www.faithchurchpdc.org) Visitors are very much welcome!



THE WISE SEEK HIM  
December 2018

The

# VOICE of Faith

*Speaking the truth in love*

Faith Community Church  
(an Evangelical Free church)

Volume 27 Number 12

DECEMBER 2018

## “Who do men say that I am?”

by Pastor Kevin Dick

My interest was piqued when I read the title of an article, “Do You Believe in a Santa Christ?” At first, I misread the title thinking it was referring only to Santa Claus, but came to realize the theme of the article written by Nathan W. Bingham was dealing with an inaccurate way we look at the person of the Lord Jesus. Bingham based his article on a book by Sinclair Ferguson, [In Christ Alone](#).

The season of Advent (days leading up to Christmas) is important because our thoughts and plans are easily drawn to the commercial parts of the holiday. In some ways Santa Claus can symbolize how we approach the celebration of Jesus' coming as a baby in Bethlehem. We need, however, to review again the truth and validity of Jesus as the Son of God who came as a human child. Carefully, we want to examine our understanding of Jesus so the trappings of a “Santa Christ” are eliminated.

The article mentioned above provides three ways in which the idea of Santa has skewed the biblical understanding of Jesus' coming. First, Santa only asks whether we have been good with the assumption that everyone is naturally good. Following Jesus, then, is a kind of added bonus which makes a good life even better. He is not seen as the Savior of helpless sinners.

Secondly, Santa seeks to give gifts to those who have already done their best they can. His sack is filled with goodies that he dispenses. In error, people think Jesus acts just like Santa where he helps those who help themselves.

Or thirdly, Jesus might be considered a mystical figure, like Santa, who gives out good experiences. So Jesus is mistakenly seen as just giving out good things in the spirit of good will. No, Jesus came to offer us good feelings and experiences, but only as part of a redemptive plan.

The scriptural and real story of Christmas is that Jesus did not come to add to our comforts. He never came to help those who were already helping themselves or to fill life with pleasant experiences. In contrast Jesus came to deliver sinners from their sins and destroy the works of Satan.

The birth of Jesus was not necessarily an easy and pleasurable experience for Mary and Joseph. Nor was it for the shepherds who were frightened and their future potentially changed. Jesus came — disturbing events beyond all proportions expected with the birth of a child. He did not come to add something special to life, but to deal with our spiritual debt of sin. We were far from good enough to expect such an act of love.

This is a great season of the year. We have no reason to believe in a “Santa Christ”, but every reason to believe in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who came to die for our sin and provide the true gift — the gift of salvation.



Candlelight Service  
Christmas Eve  
5:30 p.m.



## Hiding Place

by Dorothea Horsfall

Jesus, my hiding place,  
 the lifter of my head  
 To gaze into His eyes  
 and know we are one  
 Lying at His bosom  
 where darkness flees  
 He is my source of joy and peace  
 that calms my fearful heart  
 Though I am weak,  
 He is strong  
 His arms surround me  
 with eternal love  
 Jesus, my protector, my provider  
 my guide, my hiding place

**Editor's note:** Dear Dorothea entered her home in Heaven the morning of March 15. We have continued to publish her work through the end of 2018 as a tribute to this great woman of generosity, faith, love, and courage. Please pray for her family as they grieve her loss.



*For God so loved  
 the world that He  
 gave His one and  
 only Son ...*

John 3:16



by Carolyn Coon

## “Peace! Good will toward men.”

I always feel that it is somewhat sad that this message is relegated to a specific time period. Perhaps even worse is that we need reminding. Overreacting? Could be but how often do we think about peace and good will? Just as important - how do we define these words... operationally? Would you recognize it if you saw it?

Peace is a state of mind, a mindset; but it is also a choice action. We choose to act and respond this way. Life is not fair, and if we are operating with this belief, then we need to reassess because 'fair' is not in the definition. Trouble is that though we harbor a hope (?), desire (?), need (?) that peace and good will emerge, we also don't believe it will.

But...what if **we** started something new? What if we launch our own attempt to act, speak, and be a carrier of 'peace' and 'good will'? If we do, we can't expect others to always understand, nor can we expect them to jump onto this bandwagon. We can expect to be mocked, even if it's behind our back but does this dissuade or inspire you? Will you go beyond the 'expected' to be that voice of peace?

We are heading into the Christmas season... what if we all acted with peace and good will - even if we don't receive any in return. In doing this, we will be sharing Jesus in our world, and wouldn't that be a wonderful gift to give the Lord?

Think about it.

## Be encouraged!

You can read more of Carolyn's thoughts at <http://yourthoughtsandbeliefs.blogspot.com/>



## Black Sheep

by Sharon Meier

The following words were written by someone I came to know in a prison, whom I will meet again someday in our home in Heaven that Jesus our Good Shepherd purchased for us on the cross long ago.

Let me quote him anonymously although I know his name, his face, his story.

(The following quote is taken from a book published by [thepenproject.org](http://thepenproject.org)):

*"Being a Christian in prison makes me feel like a different kind of 'black sheep' at times because there are things I no longer do. But, I'm okay with that...I encourage all of the 'black sheep' of the world: the rejected, the bullied, the addicts, the prostitutes, the alcoholics, the drop-outs, the hustlers, the abandoned, the lost, the forgotten, the lonely and the hopeless. Seek and find peace with the Good Shepherd.*

*"To my brothers and sisters in Christ, please recall Simon Peter's experience when Jesus asked Him three times if he loved Him (John 21:15-17). Jesus was very clear with His instructions. Please allow me to paraphrase:*

*"Jesus did not exclude felons. 'Feed My lambs.' Jesus did not forget to mention those suffering with a mental illness. 'Tend My sheep.' Jesus did not leave out those who hurt us, or refugees, or those women and men returning from combat and service not quite the same. 'Feed My sheep.' This includes 'black sheep.'"*

This Christmas, let's remember that our Good Shepherd came as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of all of us who are "black sheep". The truth is, we are ALL black sheep.

P.S. Let's also remember that it is our Lord Jesus Christ's birthday we celebrate. Be sure to give Him gifts He dearly wants to receive from you this year. Don't leave His name off your gift list!

<https://www.facebook.com/PrisonFellowshipWisconsin>

## Miracle Star

*"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.'"*

Matthew 2:1-2

What was the star the wise men followed to find the infant Jesus? Some suggest that it was a comet. Others say it was the conjunction of two or more planets or stars. Do any of these theories offer possible explanations?

It's not a very complicated task to evaluate these explanations. All you need is a Bible and a map of the Holy Land. Matthew 2:1 tells us that the wise men came from east of the Holy Land. Verses 2 and 9 further tell us that these men had seen the star indicating His birth in the eastern sky. Despite the pictures on Christmas cards, they had not followed the star to Jerusalem. Once they arrived in Jerusalem, we learn in Matthew 2:9 that the star they had seen in the eastern sky moved to lead them to the Christ Child.

Matthew clearly tells us that the wise men went from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in their search for the child. Bethlehem is due south of Jerusalem. He also tells us that the star moved over where the child was. That movement is very unlike a star. In fact, the movement of the star was even more unstarlike in that it directed them to a specific house!

These wise men from the East were accustomed to the sights of the night sky. They could tell the difference between a conjunction and a comet or a miracle star. This star was clearly created by God to announce the birth of the Savior of the world to the world He came to save!

~ written by Pastor Paul Bartz  
[www.creationmoments.com](http://www.creationmoments.com)



**Duane Dietze**  
 serving the Lord in Japan  
 with ReachGlobal, the  
 missions arm of the  
 Evangelical Free Churches  
 of America.  
[duane.dietze@efca.org](mailto:duane.dietze@efca.org)





## Children's Ministries



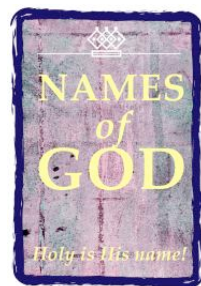
by Jane Collins

One Way Club and The Bridge and youth kids packed 40 boxes for Operation Christmas Child at

their packing party on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Money and shoebox items were collected from One Way Club penny jars, donations from families of One Way Club and our Faith congregation. **Thank you to everyone for your generous gifts.** Many children will be blessed because they receive a shoebox and get to hear the message of hope they have in Jesus.

On December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:15, One Way Club kids will be celebrating Christmas with a special night of music, games, cookie decorating and the Christmas Story. This will be the only night in December that One Way Club/Bridge/Youth will meet.

There will be no Family Night on 12/12, 12/19, 12/26 and 01/02/17... Clubs will resume again on January 9<sup>th</sup> with "Bring a Friend" night.



### El Gadol Gibor Yare

The Great, Mighty, Awesome God For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed.

Deuteronomy 10:17



### Salvation Army wants YOU!

Would you be willing to take a two-hour shift ringing the Salvation Army bell at Walmart this season?

Our church's assigned dates are **November 30 and December 1 and 2.** (You may want to share your shift with family and/or friends.) All the money received in Crawford County stays here to help the needy throughout the coming year.

A sign-up sheet is available at the Information Center. Make it a Christmas tradition to ring the Salvation Army bells and bless this community. See Sharon Meier. Thank you!



### Christmas Caroling

Wednesday, December 12

Meet at the church at 5:00 p.m.

Soup supper served to carolers when they return. Please bring soup or cookies to share.

Bread and beverages will be provided. (Children must be accompanied by an adult.)



by Howard Slotman

Most of you should be wondering what has been happening with the pastor search process. I will try to catch you up a little.

We had a list of names through Minister Connection, a computerized system for providing names to us of men who might match our needs. That initial list was slashed dramatically by God as He closed almost all of the doors for a variety of reasons.

Therefore, Pastor Kevin asked for an updated computer run. That update has provided us with another eight men who have expressed interest in continued contact with us. We have sent each of them a packet of information about the area and our church. (Last time God used this part of the process to close many of the doors.) We have been looking at their online profiles. This requires about 30 minutes per person.

We have also started listening to some of their sermons. This is a relatively time consuming step. Listening to two or three sermons for each candidate results in spiritual blessing, but it requires a commitment of time that can be difficult to squeeze away from the other responsibilities that each committee member has. Pray for God to give discernment to both us and to the potential candidates. We all need to be sensitive to His leading.

Faith Kids' BIRTHDAYS!



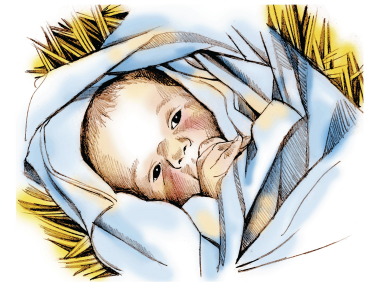
December

25 JJ Barrette



Each year we invite the congregation to join together in providing a monetary gift to our Pastor and his wife. If you would like to contribute to that gift, please see George Schneider, John Goree, or Sharon Meier. Cash is preferred, but if you would like to use a check, please make it out to one of the people named above and not to the church.

**Deadline is Sunday, December 23, before the church service begins.** The gift will be presented during the service.






### Vulnerable love

God throws open the door of this world — and enters as a baby. As the most vulnerable imaginable. Because He wants unimaginable intimacy with you. What religion ever had a God that wanted such intimacy with us that He came with such vulnerability to us? What God ever came so tender we could touch Him? So fragile that we could break Him? So vulnerable that His bare, beating heart could be hurt? Only the One who loves you to death.

~ Ann Voskamp, The Greatest Gift

# December 2018

# Faith Community Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1						Salvation Army Bell Ringing 
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:15 AM Fresh Start Fitness</li> <li>6:30 PM Prayer Time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:00 AM Fellowship Hall reserved until 1:00</li> <li>6:30 PM Trustee Board Meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5:45 PM Family Meal</li> <li>6:15 PM One Way Club Christmas Party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:15 AM Fresh Start Fitness</li> </ul>	7	
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:00 AM Discipleship 101</li> <li>10:15 AM Worship</li> <li>3:00 PM Bible Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:15 AM Fresh Start Fitness</li> <li>6:30 PM Prayer Time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulletin Deadline</li> <li>NO MEAL OR CLUBS</li> <li>5:00 PM CAROLING </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:15 AM Fresh Start Fitness</li> </ul>	14	
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newsletter Deadline</li> <li>9:00 AM Discipleship 101</li> <li>10:15 AM Worship</li> <li>3:00 PM Bible Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:30 PM Prayer Time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulletin Deadline</li> <li>NO MEAL OR CLUBS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:15 AM Fresh Start Fitness</li> </ul>	21	
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:00 AM Discipleship 101</li> <li>10:15 AM Worship</li> <li>3:00 PM Bible Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5:30 PM Candlelight Service</li> <li>Merry Christmas! </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulletin Deadline</li> <li>NO MEAL OR CLUBS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:15 AM Fresh Start Fitness</li> </ul>	28	
24						
25						
26						
27						
28						
29						
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Pantry Sunday</li> <li>9:00 AM Discipleship 101</li> <li>10:15 AM Worship</li> <li>12:00 PM Potluck Lunch</li> <li>3:00 PM Bible Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:30 PM Prayer Time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulletin Deadline</li> <li>NO MEAL OR CLUBS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:15 AM Fresh Start Fitness</li> </ul>	29	
31						

**NOW THANKS BE TO GOD FOR HIS GIFT, PRECIOUS BEYOND TELLING; HIS INDESCRIBABLE, INEXPRESSIBLE, FREE GIFT!**

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 AMPC



# December

Date	Church Cleaning	Fellowship Time	Greeter	Ministry Highlight	Nursery	Trustee Duties	Ushers
2	Part One: Saylor Part Two: Jones	Bob & Sharon	John & Sandy	None	Sandy, Jacob, Katherine	Howard Slotman	Carlyn Erv Mike Howard
9	Part One: Schneider Part Two: Peak	Howard & Diane	John & Sandy	Prayer	Allison Bob	Howard Slotman	Carlyn Erv Mike Howard
16	Part One: Collins Part Two: Slotman	Erv & Mary	John & Sandy	Missions	Shelly Caleb	Howard Slotman	Carlyn Erv Mike Howard
23	Part One: Gruber Part Two: Meier	Donna	John & Sandy	Welcome	Cary Miah	Howard Slotman	Carlyn Erv Mike Howard
30	Part One: Irish Part Two: Mathre*	Sue & Heather	John & Sandy	Outreach	Rachel Merideth	Howard Slotman	Carlyn Erv Mike Howard