

Living Water *Living Way*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF *CENTRAL MICHIGAN FREE METHODIST CHURCH* | DECEMBER 2017 – VOLUME 4
6012 S. MISSION RD. MOUNT PLEASANT, MI 48858 (989) 772-2414 WWW.CMFMFC.COM

In the Christmas Season Remember, **God is For You** by Rick Warren

“But the angel reassured them. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people’” (Luke 2:10 NLT).

Knowing God is for you will change your whole perspective on life. You’ll stop thinking of God as someone looking down from Heaven, ready to yell “Gotcha!” any time you mess up.

God is for your success in life; he created you for a purpose, and he wants you to succeed. It is God, your Creator, who will measure your success in life, and no one else.

This is extremely good news!

It means you don’t need to be afraid of God because God is for you. Yet some people are so afraid of God they get nervous just talking about him. Do you know why? They feel guilty, and then they start thinking, “If I get close to God, he’s going to lecture me. He’s going to remind me of all the things I’ve done wrong, and then I’ll feel even worse!”

Nothing could be further from the truth of God. Jesus said, “I did not come into the world to condemn it, but to save it.” In effect, Jesus is saying, “I didn’t come to scold you, I came to save you.”

And if God is for us, who can be against us?

Jesus came to save us, not to scare us. That’s why when the angel was telling the shepherds about the birth of Jesus, the first thing he said was, “Don’t be afraid!”

In fact, when God sends a message to people in the Bible, it’s not unusual for the first words to be: “Don’t be afraid.” There are 365 messages from God in the Bible that begin with a phrase like “Fear not!” In other words, every single day of the year you can read a message from God that says, in effect, “You don’t need to be afraid. I am for you; I am with you; I love you.”

We celebrate Christmas because of this Good News from God!

Ministry Events

- Dec 2 – Christmas Parade
- Dec 6 – Family Fun Night
- Dec 8-9 – Christmas

Outreach

- Dec 9 – Men’s Breakfast
w/spouses

- Dec 10 – KMotion
Christmas Program

- Dec 17 – Society Meeting
- Dec 24 – Christmas Eve
Worship Celebration
at 10:45am

- Dec 24 – Traditional
Christmas Eve
Service at 6:00pm

5 Things to Teach Your Children This Christmas

“Mom, I need to add something to my Christmas wish list.”

by Christina Fox (Churchleaders.com)

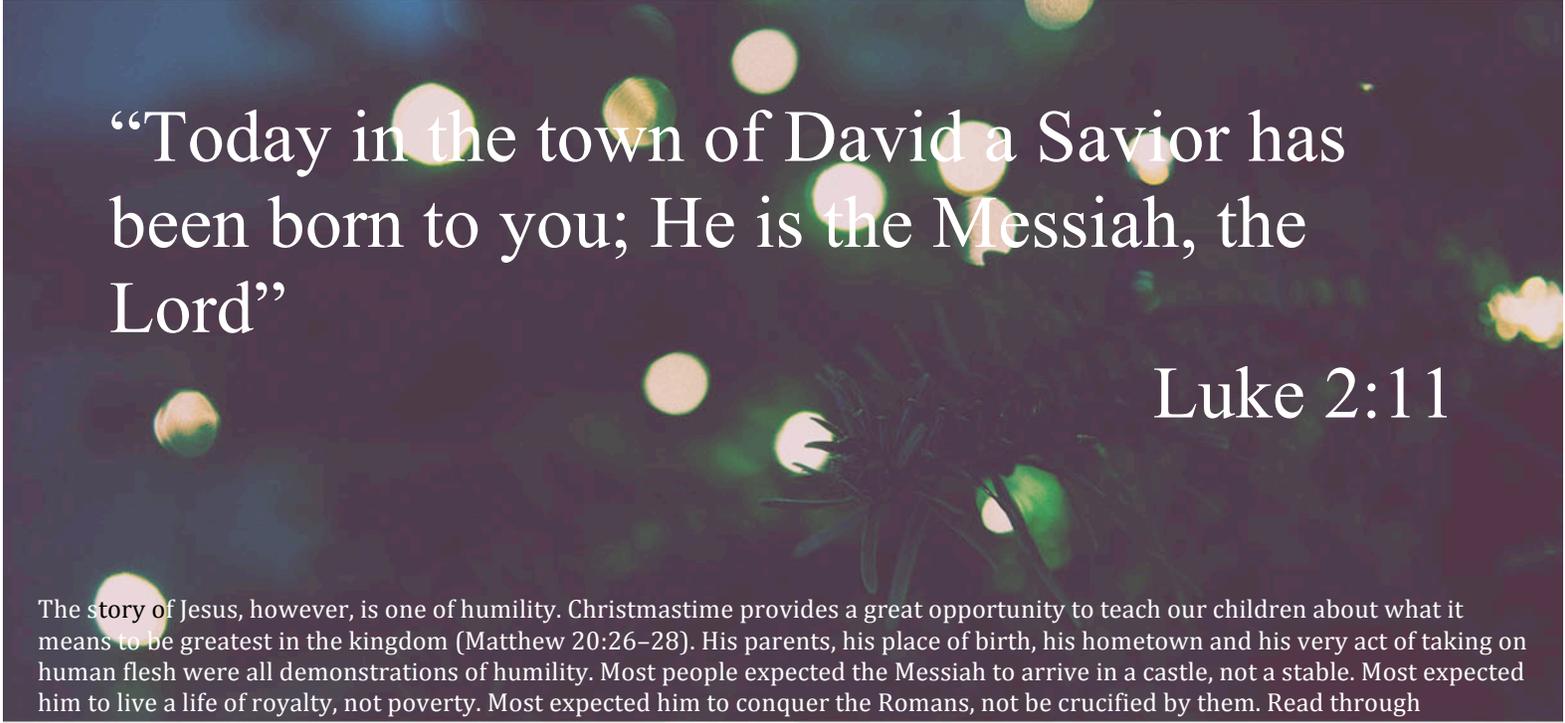
It's that time of year again. The stores are adorned with all things red and green. Mailboxes and inboxes are filled with ads, sales and catalogs. Prettily wrapped packages are at the forefront of nearly everyone's minds—especially kids'.

Christmas provides a wonderful opportunity to pour the truths of the gospel into the hearts of our children. It's an ideal time to show them the greatest gift they could ever receive, the gift of Jesus Christ.

Below is a list of important truths to teach our children this Christmas:

1. The Story of Redemption - During Advent, with the anticipation of the 25, we can teach and prepare our children for the celebration in Scripture of Jesus' birth. In our family, we like to begin with the story of Creation and daily walk through the story of redemption until we get to Christ's birth on Christmas day. We talk about the fall and God's promise of a Savior in Genesis 3:15. We read about his promise to Abraham that he reaffirms throughout the Old Testament. We discuss Moses and the “one greater than Moses” who would come. We read the prophecies in Isaiah. We look at how all of the Bible points to our Redeemer.

2. Humility of Christ - For the world, the holiday season is about extravagance, opulence and making every detail picture-perfect.



“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord”

Luke 2:11

The story of Jesus, however, is one of humility. Christmastime provides a great opportunity to teach our children about what it means to be greatest in the kingdom (Matthew 20:26–28). His parents, his place of birth, his hometown and his very act of taking on human flesh were all demonstrations of humility. Most people expected the Messiah to arrive in a castle, not a stable. Most expected him to live a life of royalty, not poverty. Most expected him to conquer the Romans, not be crucified by them. Read through Philipians 2:1–11 and show your children the humility of Christ.

3. God Works Through Weakness - In a similar vein, teaching our children how God works through weakness is another topic to teach at Christmas. God often chooses the unlikely and the weak to use in his story of redemption. Mary was a simple, poor girl from an insignificant town. Peter was an uneducated fisherman. God's glory is displayed when he works through our weaknesses. This is seen most dramatically in Jesus' death on the cross in our place and his resurrection on the third day, securing our victory over sin and death.

4. God Keeps His Promises - Another important truth we can emphasize with our children during this season is that God keeps his promises. We can begin with the promise of a Savior after the fall and go throughout the Old Testament, looking at God's promise to redeem his people, culminating in the fulfilled promise in Christ.

5. The Names of Christ - Last year, my children learned a different name for Jesus each day during Advent. We studied names such as Messiah, Lamb of God, Immanuel, Alpha and Omega, and Prince of Peace. Teaching children the names of Jesus and what they mean helps them know more about Jesus, his character and what he has done. We made a chain link out of paper with a different name printed out on each one. Another way to learn the names might be to create a Christmas ornament for each one and hang them on a Christmas tree each time you study a name.

Take advantage of this time of year to teach your children about the Christ-child. Spend time in the word, showing them the promised Messiah and how that promise was fulfilled in the baby born in Bethlehem. Help them see that Jesus is the greatest gift they could ever receive and the greatest gift they could share with others.



On the Journey

with Pastor Gordy

*I read an article this week that really challenged me about Christmas and our family, called **Craziness, Consumerism, and Making Christmas Awesome** by Brandon Cox. I hope you glean as much as I did!*

December is crazy. It's chaos for most American families. We're rushing from one party to the next, getting the shopping done, and wrapping up the year at work and at home, hopefully before we have all the kids in the house full-time for their two weeks off. December also tends to highlight our consumeristic tendencies.

We go from celebrating thankfulness and contentment on Thanksgiving to the mad dash for cheap stuff on Black Friday. If you don't think consumerism is that much of a problem for us, consider some (*of these statistics*).

There are 300,000 items in the average American home (LA Times). The average American throws away 65 pounds of clothing per year (Huffington Post).

Americans donate 1.9 percent of their income to charitable causes (NCCS/IRS) while 6 billion people worldwide live on less than \$13,000/year (National Geographic).

Women will spend more than eight years of their lives shopping (The Daily Mail).

Here's my conclusion... We have too much going on, but keep stuffing our schedules. We have too much stuff, and still want (i.e., "need") more. We have created a pace of increase in our standard of living that might be unsustainable for the long term. This isn't a bah humbug post. I'm not merely writing to complain about how we are. I think there's actually a lot to celebrate about our culture. And there's also a lot we can work on together. Here are a few of my personal suggestions on how to create some space and some peace in the midst of a hurried, consumeristic culture:

1. Schedule what is most vital. - You probably have school musicals, office parties, and various functions with family and friends to attend. So put it all on the calendar, and also slot some non-negotiable time for some other things. Each day I will have a half-hour for prayer and quiet reflection. I will have a date night or three with my spouse. We will have some time as a family to drive around and look at all the pretty lights.

2. Whatever you buy, shed at least that much of what you have. We try to get our kids about five gifts each. To some, that's a lot. To others, it isn't much. It's all relative, but we've decided that our kids stop remembering what they just opened after the fifth gift. It's enough. Plus, they usually receive from other family members and friends as well. Then we give stuff away. We box things up and give them to charity for two reasons. First, the item that is now boring and uninteresting to us may be new and exciting to someone who has never had it before. And second, we want to de-clutter as much as possible to create a peaceful space.

3. Practice generosity. - It's imperative that we find ways to give away our time, our talent and our treasure. But let's be honest: Giving away our treasure is probably the toughest part. Giving money away, to church, to charity or to someone going through a tough season—it stretches our budgets. And ultimately, that's good for our faith. It's also wise to force our focus away from receiving and onto giving. I won't lie: It's fun to get neat stuff, new gadgets, and even cash and gift cards. That's human. But Jesus taught us that it's even more fun (more blessed, more joy-producing) to give!

4. Remember the reason for the season. - Yep. Jesus. You may not be a Jesus-follower yet, but if you are, it's a good time to celebrate what the church has traditionally called Advent. With your family or friends, talk about the four gifts of hope, peace, joy and love, and talk about how Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of each one. I would highly encourage you, if you're a Christian or are at least open to the possibility of becoming one, to spend each Sunday morning (or Saturday nights in a few churches) gathering with Christ-followers to celebrate Jesus as the virgin-born Savior and King. It's a great way to not shop and run around like crazy and instead pause, praise and pray while hearing some encouraging truth for your life from God's Word, the Bible.

Announcements

- **Mount Pleasant Christmas Parade**
Saturday, December 2nd
Come join us as we walk in the parade (or ride on the float) and hand out candy canes! Please contact Heather Houser (469) 338-8199, or the church office, for more information.
- **Adult Street Hockey League**
Mondays and Thursdays beginning on Dec 4th at 5:00pm
Come out to the Family Life Center and play some street hockey – have some fun, get to know some new people, and get to know some people you already think you know. This league is for adults only (18+) and is for the month of December. *The cost is \$20/month or \$5/day for drop-in.* Sticks are available for use, however, other equipment is recommended (eye protection, shin guards, etc) but is up to the player to furnish.
- **Family Fun Night**
Wednesday, Dec 6th beginning at 6:00pm
Bring your favorite cookie(s) as we have a “cookie exchange”. Then stay for some fun as we play some Christmas Minute to Win It games.
- **Christmas Outreach**
Friday, Dec 8th – Saturday, Dec 9th
Friday (9am-4:30pm), Saturday (9am-2:30pm)
Finch Fieldhouse at Central Michigan University Campus
Come serve our community as we hand out clothing and other items to those in need this Christmas season!
- **Men’s Breakfast – with spouses**
Saturday, Dec 9th at 7:30am @ Big Boy (Mission Rd.)
Men, you are invited to come out to breakfast at Big Boy for fellowship, male bonding, and Bible Study as we dive

in to God’s call for us to be Godly men. This month our spouses are welcome to attend – we will NOT be going through the book *The Resolution* – we will pick that back up in January.

- **KMotion Christmas Program**
Sunday, Dec 10th at 10:45am
Come join us on this Sunday morning as KMotion (CMFMC’s Children’s Ministry) performs their Christmas Program during the morning Worship Service.
- **Society Meeting**
Sunday, Dec 17th at 11:45am
Immediately after service – we will be having an All-church society meeting.
- **Christmas Eve Services**
Sunday, Dec 24th

Christmas Eve Worship Celebration at 10:45am
Make sure to invite friends and family to our Christmas Eve morning Worship Service at 10:45am. There will be something for everyone – from young children to adults!

Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6:00pm
Our traditional Christmas Eve service with carols, candles, and the message of Christmas.

Invitation cards will be on the welcome center (as well as in the bulletin) beginning Sunday, December 3rd.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, January 7th

WINTER JAM in Grand Rapids, MI. The cost is \$15 at the door.

Saturday, January 20th

SLIDE AND GLIDE PARTY at Brookens’ Farm. Please pray for SNOW – alternate date of Saturday, January 27th

January 2018

We are looking to hold a membership class beginning mid-January for those that are interested. Please call the church office (989) 772-2414 or see Pastor Gordy for more details!

Sunday, February 4th 2018 – Superbowl Party at CMFMC

