

Inside Journey

Why celebrate Christmas?

It's a question that, without fail, gets batted around by Christians of differing opinions every year. Pagans celebrated the rebirth of the sun near winter solstice. Christians eventually took that celebration and geared it towards Jesus, celebrating the birth of God's Son. No, we don't know the exact date of Jesus' birth. No, we don't have any command in scripture to celebrate Jesus' birth. So back to the original question, why do it? There's a simple answer to that. We do it because we can. Remember Galatians 5:1 - "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." Jesus made it abundantly clear, as did Paul, that the measuring bar we use to determine what is good is love. So we always ask - "Am I loving God? Am I loving my neighbor?" Do my actions show love or not? So when it comes to Christmas, "Am I free to celebrate Jesus' birth?" Absolutely! "Am I free to choose not to celebrate Christmas if I don't want to?" Absolutely! "Am I free to judge people who think differently than I do about Christmas?" Absolutely not! Why? Because we are free.

At Journey we'll be having our last Wednesday evening worship of the year on December 6th which will be Christmas themed, and we'll have Journey Family Christmas on Sunday December 17th. We hope you can make it. Merry Christmas! I'm so grateful to call you my family.

Mike

HOLD ME, JESUS

There's so much to do! So many places we need to go, so many people to care for, so many opportunities to serve and love, so much responsibility, not to mention going to work and making a home and loving our families and seeking God in prayer and the word. It's all good, and it's the most satisfying lifestyle (as opposed to selfishness and materialism). But really, there are times when it's overwhelming to body and spirit. It's in those times that we need to purposely remind ourselves that God's grace is what brought us to Him, and that same grace is what keeps us close to Him. An old Rich Mullins song says,

"Hold me, Jesus. I'm shaking like a leaf.
You have been king of my glory; won't you be my Prince of Peace?"

As we enter into the Christmas season with its endless invitations and opportunities to be like Jesus, let's remember to set aside time, to simply breathe in His grace and breathe out His praise in quiet worship. Let's lean into Him, our Prince of Peace. He already loves us, no matter how much we've gotten done for Him, and His love is our rock and hiding place. Take a break, and rest in Him.

Carol

DECEMBER 2017

A JOURNEY CHURCH PUBLICATION
Volume 2 Issue 12

Merry Christmas



December Reminders

Volleyball on Fridays

6pm to 9pm

December 1st and 8th

Women's

Ornament Exchange

December 2nd 10am to 12pm
Janet Cunningham's Home

Out to Lunch

December 11th—11am
Mancino's—Anderson

Coffee at Panera

Saturday December 2nd—9am

Journey Family Sunday

Normally the 5th Sunday
Look and Listen for More Info
December 17th



There are some exciting things coming to Journey Church in the coming weeks. Be on the lookout for these new ways to connect.

Online giving is getting a face lift. We will be using a new system for online giving that helps to simplify our record keeping. It also gives us some amazing options like the following.

- **Text to check-in**

You will be able to check your kids in using a text message. Stickers will print out in the children's wing for teachers to apply and you will receive a parent pick-up code right on your phone

- **Text to give**

You will be able to send a text message with a dollar amount to send your tithe.

You will continue to be able to give online also if you choose

- **Text to sign-up**

You will be able to send a text to the church to sign up for retreats, events, even singing up to volunteer can be done via text.

- **Website, integration**

All of these text features will be available on the website as well. We will be able to better use our website to communicate with you and for you to communicate with us.

Not only do we get all of these features, but we may even save a little money with this new system. It's our goal to make connecting with you and each other as easy as possible. We know that these new options will allow for that. Please check the Sunday Morning announcement slides, future bulletins and newsletters for information about all of these options.

As we wade through these new and exciting opportunities, please be patient with us. 2018 is going to be an amazing year at Journey Church!

Jared

A Shepherd's Note . . .

When reading II Kings Chapter 6:8-11 recently, I realized ultimate victory is not to destroy our enemies, ultimate victory is to turn our enemies into our friends and allies. That's what Elisha does here. Please read this passage for yourself.

The plot of the story is about two sets of blind people. The first set is a believer the other is a group of unbelievers. First the believer. Elisha's servant was so terrified of the size of the army that surrounded them that he was blind to the presence of God who is fighting for him and the size of the army God brings to the battle. He doubted two things about God. The steadfastness of God's love towards him and the strength of God for him.

He thought God had abandoned them. He sees no hope. That's easy for us to see in a nonbeliever. They reject God's ways and they go their own way. Unbelievers are not convinced of God's goodness or wisdom. But this story shows the believer is just as blind as the unbelieving. We doubt his love and His control over our lives. This is why we are anxious, fearful, and afraid.

Elisha prays for his servant that God would open his eyes so he could see the army of God's love. When the servant does, it's bigger than anything on earth. *Psalms 34:7-8*

To the unbeliever God gives the delusion. They think they can see but only vaguely. That's the whole life of the unbeliever. God confounds them and puts them in a state of vulnerability. *1st Corinthians 1:27* It is at this point that Elisha leads

them to what they think is their death (Judgment). But instead he gives them grace. This is Christ our God. I pray that Christ opens your eyes more and more each day.

Christ servant,

Rick



A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS
and Happy New Year!

