



The Epistle



COMING SOON:

- Dec. 18—Christmas Program (6:00pm)
- Dec. 22—Women's Christmas Party (6:30pm)
- Dec. 24—Christmas Eve Service (11:00pm)
- Dec. 25—Christmas Morning Worship (10:40am)
- Dec. 29-30—Youth Encounter
- Jan. 4—AWANA resumes
- Jan. 12—Bible Pizza Party (6:30pm)

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The Message of Christmas

By Pastor Michael J. Frazier
The Apostle Paul declared, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4-5). The Apostle wrote these words during a very difficult time in the church. Jewish legalists, who held to the Law of Moses, had infiltrated the church at Galatia. These Jewish teachers were trying to force Christian to undergo circumcision and come under the authority of the law.

First, we note Paul's words "when the fullness of time had come." The word "fullness" (πλήρωμα) refers to the totality of time or a period of completion. It means that the time of waiting for the Messiah was complete. The world stage was now set for



"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." - Luke 2:11

the arrival of the long awaited King-Deliverer. God had orchestrated events leading up to this point in history: (1) Rome had built new road systems which made travel easy. (2) The Roman world was at peace. (3) Greek was the universal language. (4) A census was order by Caesar Augustus requiring people to return to their place of birth to be registered (Luke 2:1). This meant that Joseph and Mary had

to travel to Bethlehem. This was also the fulfillment of Micah 5:2 "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days." There were simply too many events surrounding the birth of Christ to call it a coincidence. It was clearly the hand of God!

Missions Team Update

By Karen Motsinger

The Missions team thanks all who contributed to FBCT's "Sharing God's Love: Warmth for the Winter" warm clothing drive. We collected over thirty articles of warm clothing for distribution through Empty Tomb! Thank you for making a difference!



We would also like to say thanks to all who have volunteered to purchase items for the family at Restoration Urban Ministries that FBCT has "adopted" to provide blessings at Christmas. The family includes a mother with four children. Please bring the gifts to the church by December 18. If you are not purchasing a specific item but would still like to bless



this family, you may either give money to Courtney Street to purchase other items for the family or bring food items to the church on December 18 for the Missions team to take to the family along with their presents. Thank you for helping to show God's love for this family!

Through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering we can participate as "His heart,

His Hands, His voice" in reaching out to others through the support of Southern Baptist Missionaries. Please pray about what you can give to help support Southern Baptist missionaries serving throughout the world. Every penny of this offering goes to the International Mission Board's overseas budget to support our missionaries and their work.

One complete food pantry pack only costs about \$25

FBCT Food Pantry List

Packs for the food pantry should include the following items:

- Tuna (1 5oz can)
- Peanut Butter (1 18oz jar)
- Saltine Crackers (1 box)
- Corn (1 15oz can)
- Green Beans (1 15oz can)
- Tomato Soup (1-2 cans)
- Vegetable Beef Soup (1-2 cans)
- Chicken Noodle Soup (1-2 cans)
- Peaches (1 29oz can)
- Applesauce (1 24oz jar)
- Spaghetti Sauce w/ Meat (1 24oz jar)
- Spaghetti (1 2lb box)
- Macaroni & Cheese (3 boxes)

- Instant Potatoes (1 13oz box)
- Cheerios (1 14oz box)
- Rice Krispies (1 12oz box)
- Pancake Mix (1 32oz box)

Donations to the food pantry will be handled by the Hospitality & Mercy Team. Monetary donations should be designated to the FBCT Food Pantry.



The Message of Christmas (continued from page 1)

It was at this critical moment in history that God “sent forth his Son.” The words “sent forth” (ἐξαπέστειλεν) literally means to send out a message. The message God sent was his Son, Jesus Christ the redeemer of mankind. This Messiah was “born of a woman.” That is, he was fully human with all the characteristics a baby. But, he was also “born under the law.” This is important, not only for the church at Galatia, but for us. The word “born” (γίνομαι) refers to the specific circumstances surrounding his birth. The word “under” (ὑπὸ) meant under the control of the

law with an obligation to fulfill the requirements of the law.

So, which “law” are we talking about here? We are talking about the Law of Moses (cf. Galatians 4:21-27). Therefore, the Messiah had an obligation to fulfill the entire Law of Moses. In short, Christ had to live the law perfectly. But, why did he have to do this? Well, the Messiah had to “redeem those who were under the law” (Galatians 4:5). The Greek word for “redeem” (ἐξαγοράζω) means to deliver and pay a price for something. In this case, it refers to paying the price for those who sinned against the Law of Moses and God.

The ultimate goal of all this is that “we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:5). Here is the heartbeat of the gospel. This “adoption” (υιοθεσία) means that God formally and legally declares those who were not his children to be his children. Notice, this adoption is not something that is earned by human effort, but is “received” by faith. This is the true message of Christmas! Yes, that is right. God sent his Son into this world and he went to the Cross to pay for our sins in order to adopt us into his family!

In Christ,
Pastor Mike

The message God sent was his Son, Jesus Christ the redeemer of mankind.

Recipe Corner—Evan’s Winning Chili

By Evan Simpson

I’m a fan of the short-lived TV series *Firefly*. I’ve collected the DVDs, commentaries, soundtracks, piano music, and even a *Firefly*-themed cookbook. When last year’s chili cook-off came around, I decided it would be the perfect time to try out a recipe. I had no idea that simply trying a chili recipe from a cookbook themed on a TV series I like would lead to me winning the chili cook-off not once, but twice. So, now that you know the story behind it, here’s the actual recipe:

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs ground beef
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp ground oregano
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 Tbsp ground garlic
- 4 Tbsp chili pepper
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 (15oz) cans of tomato sauce
- 1 (10oz) can of Rotel
- 2 cans of chili beans

Preparation:

- 1) Brown ground beef with onions & garlic
- 2) Add remaining ingredients into a large pot and cook for 4 hours on medium heat, stirring often.





**Come Worship
with Us!**

Sunday:

Sunday School—9:30am

Morning Service—10:40am

Evening Service—
6:00pm

Youth Group—
6:30pm

Wednesday:

Prayer Meeting—
6:00pm

AWANA—
6:30-8:15pm

**First Baptist
Church of Tolono**

204 W. Holden
PO Box 247
Tolono, IL 61880

**Pastor
Michael J. Frazier**
pastor@fbct.net

Women's Christmas Party

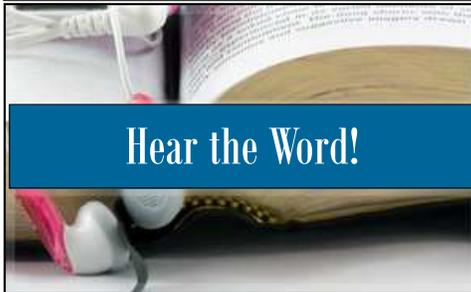
At 6:30pm on Thursday, December 22, let your holiday hair down and jingle on over to Carrie's house for a Women's Christmas Party! There will be reindeer games to join in and lots of food to feast on!

If you would like to participate, there will be a grab-bag gift exchange (\$10-\$15 limit). Will you be naughty or nice? While we celebrate, let's also give to those in need. Please bring an item for baby layettes or a monetary donation for Empty Tomb.

-Merry Christmas from Adult Ministry!



Bible Pizza Party



By Evan Simpson

Several members of the congregation pledged to listen to the entire New Testament between August 1-October 31. CD sets of 14

discs each were created and distributed using the church's new CD-copier to those interested in accepting the challenge.

To celebrate the completion of hearing the New Testament, the Media Team has planned a pizza party for Thursday, January 12 at 6:30pm. Everyone who completed their listening goal is welcome to attend.

If you missed out or got too busy the first time around, it's not too late to complete the challenge. CD sets are still available. Just finish by January 12!

Those that preferred to read the New Testament are also invited to join in the fellowship. A sign-up sheet will be put out as the date nears so we know how much pizza to order.

Letter from the Editor

I truly believe God answers all prayer. Sometimes the answer may not be what we want or expect. Many times the answer may even be no. That said, I also know that in other instances His answers can also be far greater than we could ever hope to fathom.

God answers prayer in accordance to His will and His timeline—not ours. In my opinion, this simple truth gets overlooked far too often. Not keeping this in mind can lead people to question whether God is there or if He is even listening to us in the first place.

If it ever seems like God is

not listening or isn't answering our prayers, our instinct should not be to doubt Him, but to continue to trust in Him. We've surely all heard the phrase "father knows best." In times of doubt, take comfort that indeed our Father does know best.

Recently my thoughts wandered toward the Israelite's time spent in the desert after being freed from Egypt. Their journey to the Promised Land surely did not require them to wander the desert for forty years. No, I think God used that time for the Israelites to learn to trust and depend upon Him.

I believe God does the same

thing in all of our lives—just on a smaller scale. God can answer prayer and bless us any way He sees fit. It may be sooner or it may be later.

Nevertheless, I think it's important to never stop trusting in Him, to continue praying, and to let God work within His timeline in accordance with His will for us.

Have you been praying about something lately, but doubt God is listening? Stay the course and continue to trust Him. Perhaps you're just in the middle of a desert time and He's preparing you to receive bountiful blessings...