

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

December 1, 2024

You Are The Light

"God grant you the light in Christmas, which is faith; the warmth of Christmas, which is love; the radiance of Christmas, which is purity; the righteousness of Christmas, which is justice; the belief in Christmas, which is truth; the all of Christmas, which is Christ." (Wilda English)

Christmas time is a great moment for evangelism because it is unquestionably a time that celebrates the birth of Christ. Even in the time of Christ, His birth brought Magi from a distant country, shepherds from the fields, and it caused Simeon and Anna to declare; "My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all the peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32). Today the world knows the truth, but seeks to call Christmas, the holidays, X-mas, a time to party and get drunk. I don't expect people who do not know Christ to do any different but we who are saved should be like Simeon and Anna and declare the truth. How can we celebrate Christmas so that it is a testimony of Christ's birth, that can lead to a gospel message?

There is a legend of a village in Southern Europe that boasted of a church called "The House of Many Lamps." When it was built in the sixteenth century, the architect provided for no light except for a receptacle at every seat for the placing of a lamp. Each Sunday night, as the people gathered, they would bring their lanterns and slip them into the bracket at their seat. When someone stayed away, his place would be dark; and if very many stayed away, the darkness became greater for the whole. It was the regular presence of each person that lit up the church (Morgan, R. J., 2000). *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes (electronic ed., p. 127) Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers).*

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16; NASU).

What can we do when our house lights up; can our decorations and ornaments represent Christ and therefore be a witness? How can we function when people are in need after Beryl and are struggling to make Christmas work for their children so that at least their kids can enjoy Christmas?

We must "let our light shine before men". It's CHRISTmas!



UPCOMING Events



CHRISTMAS SNEAKER BALL
Are you ready for some family Christmas fun! Living Word Family join us for a Christmas Sneaker Ball on Saturday, December 14th at 6:00 p.m. in the Legacy Sanctuary. \$15 for Adults, \$10 for Youth & \$5 for Children Under 12 years-old. Register at <https://bit.ly/ChristmasSneakerBall2024> For more information contact Terry or Sherri Randle at lwfcmarriagemin@gmail.com



LWFC KIDZ COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY
Join the LWFC Kidz and Angel Tree for a community-wide Christmas Party on Saturday, December 14, 2024 from 10 am—12 pm. Donate Toys in the foyer and the Children's Wing. For more information contact Sylvia Edwards at sedwards@lwfellowshipchurch.org



December Connection Sundays
Dec. 1st —Candy Canes & Wear Red & White
Dec. 8th —Donuts & Hot Chocolate & Wear Scarfs & Hats
Dec. 15th —Ugly Christmas Sweater Sunday
Dec. 22nd—Cookies & Milk for Christmas Sunday & Wear Christmas Colors
Dec. 24th —Christmas Eve Service at 6 p.m.
Take Photos & Post With Hashtag #LWFCChristmas2024



JOIN THE NET TEAM
Join our NET Evangelism Team that goes out to spread the gospel in the community. We have opportunities for you to serve on the street team that goes out, on the hospitality team that provides refreshments, and the phone team that makes phone calls to spread the good news of Christ. For more information sign up on the events page of the website or contact **Pastor Duane Lawrence or Omari Dawson.**



LWCA/ABC AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
LWCA/ABC has a dynamic after school program available for \$89 per week with a \$55 Registration fee. The program focuses on the four cornerstones of child development: Academic, Physical, Emotional and Spiritual. Activities include robotics, karate, arts and crafts, outside play, academic enrichment, cooking classes, sports & more. Register at <https://bit.ly/LWCARegister> or call (281) 445-9673.



ORDER OF WORSHIP

- Announcements
- Communion
- Worship In Giving
 - Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses
- Special Music
 - "Eternal Optimist"
 - Philippians 1:12-14
 - Pierre Cannings, Ph.D.
- Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website
- Call to Discipleship
 - Please remain seated at this time
- Visitor's Welcome
- Benediction



Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.
Infants—6th grade



LEGACY
EFFECTING TODAY FOR TOMMORROW
youth ministry of LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP

MIDDLE SCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL

2:30 4:00 & TUESDAY NIGHTS
SUNDAY e 7:30 PM

Eternal Optimist
Philippians 1:12-14

I. Circumstantially Good v. 12

- a. Circumstances
 - i. When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and shut away in prison in Caesarea (Acts 23–24), one could easily imagine that this was the end of his ministry, especially as his imprisonment dragged on month after month (Acts 24:27). But in the providence of God both the place of his imprisonment, the Praetorium of Herod (Acts 23:35), and the length of his imprisonment served to thrust the gospel up into higher levels of Roman society than it had ever reached before. Roman military officers, chiliarchs, and centurions (Acts 23:24, 26), as well as Roman soldiers, heard the gospel in Jerusalem and Caesarea. Two Roman governors, Felix and Festus, along with King Herod Agrippa and their wives heard Paul speak about faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 24:24–27; 25:1–26:32). One of these governors, over a span of two years, often sent for Paul to converse with him (Acts 24:26). News of this celebrated prisoner and his teaching must have spread through the Praetorium, the barracks, and out into the surrounding community.
- b. Greater Progress
 - i. The gospel advanced. The term “advanced” (prokopēn) was used in the Greek-speaking world to describe blazing a trail before an army
 - ii. Thus, what appeared at first to be the fatal blow to the Christian mission, the arrest of Paul, turned out to be the means of its revitalization, the key to preaching the gospel before governors and kings (cf. Mark 13:9) and their staff personnel.
 - iii. “progress,” is a metaphorical word that pictures “pioneers cutting a way before an army and so furthering its march”

II. Greater Good v. 13

- a. Imprisonment
 - i. Cause of Christ
 - 1. In Eph 3:1, he referred to himself as the prisoner of Christ. Surely he intended a similar meaning here, though neither passage is determinative.
 - 2. These results are: (1) It has now become clear that Paul is a prisoner, not for any crime he committed, political or otherwise, but simply because he is a Christian (v 13).
- b. Well Known
 - i. Whole Praetorium
 - 1. The advance came partly because the whole palace guard, as well as others, were hearing about Christ (vv. 12–13). The “palace guard” (praitōriō) likely refers to the praetorian guard, made up of Roman soldiers. Though Paul resided in his own rented facility (Acts 28:30), he was guarded by these soldiers all the time. The custom was for a prisoner to be chained at the wrist to a soldier.
 - 2. They took Paul into contact with a select group of people, soldiers and Roman officials, who otherwise would have had no relationship to him, and they also prompted a renewed evangelistic effort in the city. While others may have seen the end of missionary activity, Paul saw the new ways the gospel could advance. The events which seemed to inhibit the freedom of the gospel became its springboard. Paul did not say “in spite of” these events, but rather “through them.”
 - 3. the soldiers relieving each other in mounting guard over him in his private lodging.
 - 4. Vitellius increased their number to sixteen thousand.
 - 5. They were ten thousand in number, picked men, originally of Italian birth, but drawn later from Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain
 - ii. Everyone Else
 - 1. His imprisonment as a Christian became known beyond the limits of the guard, in the city at large. Immediately upon his arrival he addressed the chief of the Jews (Acts 28:17), and later a larger number (vs. 23), and for two years received all that came to him (vs. 30).

III. Everyone’s Good v. 14

- a. Brethren
- b. Spread the Word
 - i. More Courage
 - 1. Paul’s incarceration had another effect: it encouraged those who had been reluctant about speaking for Christ (v. 14).
 - 2. His use of περισσotέρως, “all the more,” merely indicates that their courage and efforts, while continuing, were now heightened to a much greater degree.
 - 3. somehow gained confidence in the Lord or were infused with courage by the Lord because of Paul’s imprisonment.
 - ii. Without Fear
 - 1. In actuality, the church at Rome had two different reactions. Some members were encouraged by Paul and preached out of sympathy; others hoped to get Paul into more trouble with the Roman officials.

Donate Toys
By Dec. 13th

Donate Unwrapped Toys for the
LWFC Community Christmas Party
by Dec. 13th in the Children’s Wing
or in the foyers

Contact Mrs. Sylvia Edwards
for more information

Connection Sundays

2024 December Events

December 1st
December 8th

Candy Canes in the Foyer | Wear Your Candy Cane Red & White
Donuts & Hot Chocolate in the Foyer | Wear Scarfs and Hats

December 14th

LWFC Kidz Community Christmas Party | Legacy Sanctuary
Silver Stars Christmas Event | Off Campus
Christmas Sneaker Ball | Dress Up With Tennis Shoes
LWFC Drama Ministry Fellowship

December 15th
December 22nd
December 24th

Ugly Sweater Sunday | Wear Your Ugliest Christmas Outfits
Christmas Cookies and Milk | Wear Christmas Colors
Christmas Eve Service | “The Gift of Hope”

www.lwfellowshipchurch.org/events

Use Hashtag #LWFCChristmas2024

PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Patsy Getterson & family, Lucretia Lewis & family, and Vicki Wilson & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Tanisha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, Patrina Johnson, Elvis Anderson, Cheryl Walker, Walter Banks, Carolyn Hadnot, Angeliqye Hudson, Sheryle Crowe, Arnie Glover, Clarence Coleman, Diana Doyle, Vivian Phillips, Shannon Rice, Freddie Reid, Janie Buchanan, Yolanda Barnes, Rochelle Carter Brown, Terrance Ford, Robert Edwards, Beatrice Williams, Jessie Austin, and Evelyn Harvey.

ETERNAL
OPTIMIST

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-14

WWW.LWFELLOWSHIPCHURCH.ORG | @lwfchouston |

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