

Dec. 1, 2024 **Faith Builders** Issue 23

A Faith Chapel Newsletter - *Special Christmas Edition*

Faith Chapel

Mission - "Culture Like Christ" + Vision - "Jesus."

Scripture of the Month

"They shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."

Matthew 1:23

This Month

- December 1 - Meet the Need 1:00-3:00pm
Community Christmas Celebration
- December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 - Sunday Service
- December 2 & 16 - Food Distribution
- December 4, 11 - Midweek Encounter
No Encounters Dec. 18 & 25
- December 6 - Legacy Thanksgiving Potluck
- December 7 - Women's Ministry Brunch
- December 13-15 - Community Christmas
- December 24 - Christmas Eve Service 5:00pm
- December 29 - Communion & Baptism
- December 31 - New Years Midnight Hour

Note: Men's Core will not occur this month and the church offices will be closed December 24th & January 1st.

Pastor's Perspective

It's the holidays! I treasure this time of year because there's so much sweetness in the air. It's a season of appreciating family and celebrating Jesus — especially for us as believers. It's also quite reasonable to say that Jesus is more on the minds of society during this season perhaps than any other season throughout the year. They're seeing nativity scenes set up in people's yards, churches are celebrating on every corner the birth of the Savior and stores cannot help but display Jesus themselves. No matter which way you turn you're forced with the possibility of the truth of Jesus. Is He who He said He is? What if the Gospel message is actually true? Is Christmas really about the birth of this baby who supposedly saved mankind from their sins? If so, what does that mean for me? Do I have to just believe in Him in

order to be saved? Do I really have to change my life to be a follower of Him or can I just believe He was a good person who lived long ago and that would be enough? Question after question is flooding the minds of our whole culture during this season. My encouragement to you today is that you would be ready to simply share your stance — the truth of God's love to anybody that comes across your path this holiday season. You likely know the basics of the Kingdom and have a testimony yourself of what God has done in you. There's somebody you'll come across this Christmas season who will need to hear that and perhaps God has set it up so that you'll be the one to tell them. It could forever change the trajectory of their life. You don't need to be a scholar, or pastor to do this. What you already have and know is more than enough. I remember when I embarked on a journey of asking the Lord every tough question I could think of. Questions about the Bible and about who He is. It was an honest journey. But if I was truly going to give Him my life, I needed to know with assurance that I'd weighed out this decision carefully. What did I discover? The baby in the manger was indeed God in the flesh. Come to this world to show me how to live in right relationship with God. To ultimately die for me so that I could be free from that bondage of sin. But then, to rise again from the dead three days later and ultimately to commission me to do the very thing we're talking about here, to go into all the world and share the message of His great love to them under the power of the Holy Spirit who He's filled me with. I am equipped with all that I need and what greater time than to share the love of God in a personal and transparent fashion than this holiday

season. There may be one, just one out there that God is going to bring your way this season. Start praying for that encounter now and you'll be ready when it shows up. This is one of the ways we culture like Christ. Happy Thanksgiving & Merry Christmas to you all! I love you dearly.

Pastor Josiah Elias

The True Meaning of Christmas

The true meaning of Christmas is love. John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of this incredible act of love. The real Christmas story is the story of God's becoming a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ. Why did God do such a thing? Because He loves us! Why was Christmas necessary? Because we needed a Savior! Why does God love us so much? Because He is love itself (1 John 4:8). The true meaning of Christmas is love. God loved His own and provided a way—the only Way—for us to spend eternity with Him. He gave His only Son to take our punishment for our sins. He paid the price in full, and we are free from condemnation when we accept that free gift of love. "But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Christians the world over celebrate Christmas in honor of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. Various Christmas traditions have been associated with the celebration of Christmas, and different cultures celebrate different ways. The unifying factor is the historical fact that Jesus was born, c. 5 BC. The angel who appeared to the shepherds the night of Jesus' birth said, "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

Why Do We Celebrate Christmas?

We celebrate Christmas because, as the angel said, the birth of Jesus Christ is "good news."

Good news is meant to be celebrated. In fact, the angel said the news of Jesus' birth would cause "great joy" and would be "for all the people"—the joyful celebration would be universal. People around the globe would be glad for this occasion. We celebrate Christmas because, as the angel said, "A Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord." The three titles the angel applies to Jesus are important. Jesus is the *Savior* who delivers us from sin and death (Matthew 1:21). He is the human *Messiah* (or Christ) who fulfills the Law and the Prophets, showing that God is faithful (see Matthew 5:17). And He is the divine *Lord* who has entered our world: the Almighty has taken on human flesh; God and man have been fused together in an indivisible, eternal bond; God is truly with us (see Matthew 1:23). In celebrating Christmas, we celebrate the Savior, because we needed deliverance. We celebrate the Christ in whom all of God's promises are "Yes" and "Amen" (2 Corinthians 1:20). We celebrate the Lord who in humility took on "the very nature of a servant" for our sakes (see Philippians 2:6-8). We celebrate Christmas with gift-giving because of the "incredible gift" that God gave to us (2 Corinthians 9:15). We celebrate Christmas by stringing lights because the Light of the world has come to us (John 1:4; Isaiah 9:2). We celebrate Christmas with carols and choirs because they are expressive of joy and follow the examples of Mary and Zacharias and Simeon and the angels, all of whom extolled the Lord in poetry (Luke 1-2). We celebrate Christmas by decorating evergreen trees with stars and angels and tinsel because of the eternal life Jesus brings (John 4:14)—and stars and angels and beauty were all associated with Jesus' birth. In celebrating Christmas we celebrate the love and condescension of God. In Texas in 1987, a toddler by the name of Jessica McClure fell into an eight-inch well casing. Down she went, becoming stuck twenty-two feet below ground. Once people discovered that "Baby Jessica" was in the well, they took immediate action. They didn't tell her to find a way to climb back up, and they didn't just shout happy thoughts to encourage her. No, *they went down to where she was and got*

her. They did whatever it took. Rescuers worked nonstop for fifty-eight hours to free her. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve fell. Down they went, dragging all humanity with them into the darkness and death of sin. And what did God do? He did not tell us to find our own way out of the mess we were in, and He did more than shout down happy thoughts to us from heaven. No, *He came down to where we were and got us.* That's what Christmas is all about—God's coming down to rescue us, to do whatever it took to deliver us from sure death. When even one person is in a life-threatening situation, we understand what has to be done. When God looked down at our sinful planet, He saw a whole world of people in mortal danger. We celebrate Christmas because it was at Christmastime that the Rescuer of all mankind came to save us from the hopeless situation we were in. God did not stay in heaven; He came down to where we are.

Meaning of the Word 'Christmas'

The term originates from the Old English Cristes mæsse, or "Christ's Mass," first recorded in historical documents around 1038. This phrase evolved into Middle English as Cristemasse, beautifully capturing the heart of this holiday as a time to honor and remember the birth of Jesus Christ. In Christian tradition, "Mass" refers to the celebration of the Eucharist—an essential and sacred observance commemorating the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. By coming together for "Christ's Mass," early believers celebrated His entrance into the world, setting the stage for a transformative message of hope and salvation. You might have also seen the term "Xmas," which sometimes causes confusion. But "Xmas" has deep roots in the Greek language, as the letter "X" (Chi) is the first letter in Χριστός (Christos), which means "Christ." Far from being a modern abbreviation, "Xmas" holds a rich, historical connection to Christ and reminds us of the enduring message of Christmas: that Jesus came to be with us and bring us closer to God.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

History of Christmas Traditions

Christmas brings many symbols, each one telling a part of the Gospel story.

Evergreen tree - known for its year-round color, it represents eternal life—our promise in Christ. Martin Luther, a leader of the Reformation, was said to have introduced the first Christmas tree in his home as a symbol of endless life in Christ. He adorned it with candles, a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the World (*Isaiah 60:13; John 8*).

Holly - with its pointed leaves, is like the crown of thorns Jesus wore as He carried the burden of our sins (*Matthew 27:29*).

The color red - prominent in Christmas decorations, speaks of His blood and the gift of His sacrifice.

Giving gifts - this tradition harks back to the Magi's offerings, which reflect Jesus' kingship, the sorrow of His death, and His divine role as God's perfect gift to us (*Matthew 2*).

Yule log - carried by the family to burn for twelve days—a symbol of identifying with Christ's sacrifice and finding warmth, unity, and joy in Him.

Mistletoe - has long represented peace. Through Christ, we find true reconciliation with God (*Romans 5:1; Romans 8:1*).

Bells - known for announcing news, remind us that Christ is the Good News, the ultimate message of hope and salvation.

(Captured from an article by Heather Riggelman)

Church Membership

The ministerial staff, elders, board of directors, and existing members of Faith Chapel encourage you to become a member of Faith Chapel. The first step in the membership process is to pray for your decision. We want you to find membership where you believe God is leading you. It is pleasing to the Lord when you follow His direction and find a church home where your roots grow deep. Your next step is to fill out the digital membership application found in the Faith Chapel APP or website. Explanations and

instruction on traveling through the process are included in the APP and website.

Connect Classes / Small Groups

Small groups and connect classes are small gatherings of people who meet in different places around our community to hang out eat talk about life and above all grow their relationships with God. Small groups are where we pray for each other and support each other. These gatherings take place every week. The small groups, small group leaders, and connect classes that are currently meeting are listed below. A small group turns a crowd into a community. A connect class brings people closer together.

Judy Lorenz

Women's Bible Study

"The Daniel Prayer" (Anne Graham Lotz)
Thursdays at 9:30am in the Ruby Room.

Linda Wise

Women's Bible Study

Studying the book of Exodus in the Ruby room.
Tuesdays at 9:30am

John Cohen - Core Men

Studying the book of Leviticus
Wednesday at 5:45pm in room C-214

Bill Lorenz- Core Men

Breaking until the new year.

Erick Madril

Studying the Gospel of John
Sunday at 8:30 in room LL4

Marsha Stricker

Studying Ephesians & Philippians
Sunday at 12:15pm in the Ruby room.

Walt Harrison

Sermon Based Discussion
Legacy Builders in the Choir Suite on Tuesdays
at 10:00am.

Jason Baltzey - Core Men

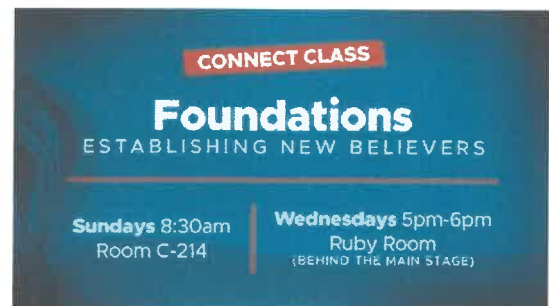
Studying "Unshakable Hope" by Max Lucado
Tuesday nights at 7:00pm on Zoom

George Elias

Studying various Spirit-led topics.
Thursday at 7:00pm in home.



Synergy Small Groups have been in full swing on Monday nights, walking through the book of Philippians! New groups will be kicking off at the start of the new year, so be sure to keep an eye out for more information.



New to the faith or looking for a refreshed foundation? We've got something special for you! Join our Foundations Class either Sunday mornings at 8:30 AM or Wednesday evenings at 5:00 PM to establish biblical foundations for a fortified faith walk. Wednesday nights coincide with our Athletic Discipleship in the Activity Center, so feel free to bring the kiddos to get poured into as well. Come and strengthen your faith with us!

Events and Activities



Our Meet the Need ministry is excited to host a community outreach event for the whole family on December 1st! To help make this event special, we're collecting new or gently used Christmas decorations and décor. If you have any items you'd like to donate, please bring them to the church on November 30th between 8:00 AM and noon (the same day as Operation Christmas). Let's come together to support everyone in celebrating this holiday season!



Friday December 6th at 6:00pm

Join the Faith Chapel Legacy Builders, our 55+ community, for a special Thanksgiving potluck! Let's come together to celebrate the season with good food, heartfelt fellowship, and a spirit of gratitude. As the strong backbone of our church, we thrive on building community through worship, prayer, and shared moments like this. Together, we pursue God wholeheartedly, recognizing that our lives and actions leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Bring your favorite dish to share, and let's make this a time of joy and connection. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

What Should I Be Thankful For

Now what should I be thankful for?
 Now where do I begin?
 Of course the greatest gift of all -
 Is Jesus, my family and friends.

By Patricia A Fleming
 (With a small adjustment.)



Join us for our Women's Ministry Holiday Tea & Brunch this December! This special gathering is for women of all ages and stages of faith, coming together to celebrate the season and deepen connections—with God and with each other. Enjoy a time of fellowship, delicious food, and practical insights on embracing the holidays with purpose and peace. As we reflect on the truth that *"Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world,"* let's lift one another up and root ourselves in His love. We can't wait to celebrate with you! Registration is now open!



Legacy Builder's December Outing

Legacy Builders are going to the East County Community Orchestra Christmas Concert. They will attend lunch first at Outback Steakhouse in El Cajon. (722 Jamacha Rd.) Attendees will leave Faith Chapel at 12:00 to 12:15 PM after church to go to lunch. Lunch has been reserved for 12:45 for the Faith Chapel group. After lunch the group will leave Outback at 2:30 to 2:45 for the Elks Lodge at 1400 E Washington Ave. in El Cajon. The concert starts at 3:00pm and ends by 4:30pm. The cost is \$5 for the van ride plus your lunch choice at Outback. Contact Walt Harrison or sign up at the information booth in the church lobby.



An incredible event also includes a great amount of preparation, and as everyone knows, many hands make light work! Join us for a fun work party and be part of building something quite special for our community!



Community Christmas is right around the corner! From 5pm-8pm there will be festivities for the whole family right here on our campus! Mark your calendars!



Young Adult Christmas Party | December 10th at 7pm in LL1 Come celebrate the holiday season with us at a festive Christmas party full of fun and cheer! Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest: Wear your most outrageously ugly sweater and compete for the title of ugliest sweater of the night!

White Elephant Gift Exchange: Want to join in the gift swap? Bring a wrapped gift valued between \$15-\$20 (no gag gifts, please). Potluck: Let's share the holiday spirit—and some delicious food! Bring a dish to share with everyone. We can't wait to celebrate with you!



On December 17th at 6:30pm, Faith Chapel Young Adults will be joining Foothills Church and other churches for "Christmas at Oma's." Tickets are \$20 each.



Have you heard about our Marriage and Family Ministry yet? Nathan and Nancy would love to see you at their bi-weekly gatherings. If you or someone you know is looking for marriage strengthening and growth, be sure to make this Friday gathering in C215 above the Administrative Offices.



December 31st 8:00 to Midnight Bring in the new year saturated in the presence of the living God! It's going to be a Midnight Hour like no other, and we definitely cannot wait to experience everything He has planned for us!



Coach Justin "Hawk" Hawkins is now in full swing with our thriving Athletics Discipleship ministry! This ministry program combines the excitement of sports with faith and character development, offering holistic discipleship. Coach Hawk, a former professional basketball player, brings a wealth of experience and a heart for mentoring young athletes both on and off the court. Join us on Mondays for Adult Open Gym at 7:00-9:00 PM or Wednesdays for 18 and Under Open Gym from 5:00-6:00 PM at the Faith Chapel Activity Center!

November Paramount Points

A reminder of the important takeaways from Pastor's Messages.

- Nov. 3 - The harvest is ready for us to rep Him right.
- Nov. 10 - Guest Speaker Cesar Ochoa "May we not just read the Scriptures. May we experience the Scriptures. If we do not have the passion of God, we reduce the Scriptures to the mundane."
- Nov. 17 - Guest Speaker Mike Conway "He Makes All Things Beautiful In His Time"
- Nov. 24 - "Authority comes in commissioning; power comes in the encounter."

Flash Back

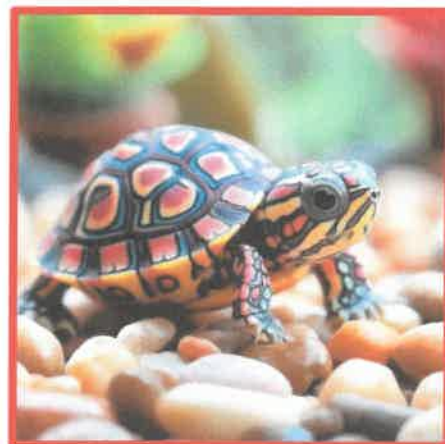
Fruits of the Spirit Spotted in Faith Chapel Saints
Great and marvelous is the Lord. God's word tells us "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree he shall grow like a cedar Lebanon planted in the House of the Lord they shall flourish in the courts

of our God." (Psalm 92:12-13) What great reports come from the 2nd and 3rd grade children's church class where there is the flourishing and growing of God's little Saints. The children of Faith Chapel are not only growing in body but in the things of the Lord. You will find a lot of fruit as you enter their class and it's not bananas apples or Peaches. God's fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control is what you will find. The children have been listening to a record "The Music Machine." Each week they study one of the 9 fruits of the spirit and learn how to make it workable in their daily living. Have you heard your children sing a song about patience? Have they reminded members of your family about self-control? Have they made an effort to show more love to a brother or sister? Music games and situations that could happen in their lives are shared with the children to give an understanding of each of the 9 fruits of the spirit. The record "The Music Machine." is available at Christian bookstores and parents can reinforce lessons learned at church. The young Saints at Faith Chapel are flourishing like a palm tree and growing like a cedar of Lebanon because they are planted in the House of the Lord.

by Rosemary Murphy
January 1979 Faith Builders

Note: This article from 1979 very much describes what is happening in Faith Chapel's children's ministry today.

God's Creations





Hidden in the Misty cloud Forrest, the Monkey Orchid astonishes with its perfect mimicry - a flower that blooms with a face complete with haunting eyes and a nose. This surreal creation of God seems to stare back blurring the line between plant and animal and a mesmerizing botanical illusion

Christmas Trivia

Between 1887-1933 a fishing schooner called the Christmas Ship would tie up at the Clark Street bridge and sell spruce and pine trees from Michigan to Chicagoans.

The much-disputed title for the tallest living Christmas tree likely goes to an allegedly 160-foot Sitka Spruce in Ferndale, California.

Franklin Pierce, the 14th president, is often credited with bringing the Christmas tree tradition to the White House in the early 1850s.

In 1923, President Calvin Coolidge started the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony now held every year on the White House lawn.

Since 1966, the National Christmas Tree Association has given a Christmas tree to the President and first family.

Most Christmas trees are cut weeks before they get to a retail outlet.

In 1912, what were likely the first major community Christmas trees in the United States were erected in Boston, New York City and Hartford, Conn.

Christmas trees generally take six to eight years to mature.

Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states including Hawaii and Alaska.

Ninety-eight percent of all natural Christmas trees are grown on farms.

More than 1,000,000 acres of land have been planted with Christmas trees.

On average, as many as 1,500 Christmas trees are planted per acre.

You should never burn your Christmas tree in the fireplace. It can contribute to creosote buildup.

Other types of trees such as cherry and hawthorns were used as Christmas trees in the past.

Thomas Edison's assistants came up with the idea of electric lights for Christmas trees.

In 1963, the National Christmas Tree was not lit until December 22nd because of a national 30-day period of mourning following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Teddy Roosevelt banned the Christmas tree from the White House, possibly for environmental reasons—but his young son snuck a tree into the house anyway.

In the first week, a tree in your home will consume as much as three quarts of water per day.

Tinsel used to be made with lead foil, but in the early 1970s the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration convinced manufacturers to switch to plastic tinsel.

The best-selling Christmas trees include the Scotch Pine, Douglas Fir, Fraser Fir, Balsam Fir and Blue Spruce.



Our weekly services groups and teams would not happen without the dedicated volunteer base that we enjoy. We believe that serving in the local

church is a vital part of spiritual growth and it is an act of worship unto the Lord. If you would like to join the serve team and make an impact in the lives of the Faith Chapel community, please fill out the "Serve" form on the FC App.

Scan Below to Let Us Know



FC Kids
K - 5th Grade
Sundays @ 10 AM
Wednesdays @ 6:30 PM



FC YOUTH



FC Youth
6th - 12th Grade
Wednesdays @ 6:30 PM
Student Center



FC Young Adults
18 - 35
Tuesdays @ 7:00 PM
Room LL1



CORE
MEN'S MINISTRY



WOMEN'S
MINISTRY



FC Athletics
All Ages
Wednesdays 5-6:00 PM
Activity Center



New Mercy Deaf Ministry
Sundays @ 10:30 AM
Wednesdays @ 6:30 PM
Room LL1



FC Small Groups
Scan for schedule and group listings

Ascending some steps
And across from stage right
Came Pastor Josiah
On this special night

He delivered the message
He received from the Lord
So full of truth
That hearts were restored

Now Christmas is more
More than presents and trees
It's time to reflect
On why we are free

Christmas of course
Is all about Jesus
The birth of God's Son
Who came to redeem us

So, on Christmas Eve
We stop to remember
A Savior was born
On the 25th of December

It's because Jesus
And the sacrifice made
That our life is eternal
Forever paved

So, when you awake
On this Christmas day
Be thankful to God
And for Jesus, The Way

Merry Christmas!!!

FC's Night Before Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas
And all through Faith Chapel
The seats were all filled
With worshipping people

The sanctuary shone
With garland and lights
The Lobby had trees
And wreaths to delight

After the songs
And during the greetings
Blessings were shared
Then on with the evening

Faith Chapel

9400 Campo Rd. Spring Valley, CA 91977
(619) 461-7451

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