



From the Pastor's Desk...

DECEMBER 2019

Dear Cup Family and Friends,

One of my favorite essays on the topic of preaching the gospel comes from Frederick Buechner, who gave a series of lectures entitled Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy & Fairy Tale. He describes the historical flow of the Bible this way:

It is a world of magic and mystery, of deep darkness and flickering starlight. It is a world where terrible things happen and wonderful things too. It is a world where goodness is pitted against evil, love against hate, order against chaos, in a great struggle where often it is hard to be sure who belongs to which side because appearances are endlessly deceptive. Yet for all its confusion and wildness, it is a world where the battle goes ultimately to the good, who live happily ever after, and where in the long run everybody, good and evil alike, becomes known by his true name.... That is the fairy tale of the Gospel with, of course, one crucial difference from all other fairy tales, which is that the claim made for it is that it is true, that it not only happened once upon a time but has kept on happening ever since and is happening still.

Perhaps there is no clearer place to describe the genre of the Bible as 'true fairy tale' than the opening verses of the Gospel of John.

In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

One might approach John this way – 'Look, you can't have it both ways, friend. Either the Word WAS God, or He was WITH God! If you want me to believe this, you've got to be more straightforward.' (These would be the same critics who might tell Charles Dickens, 'Is it the best of times? Or the worst of time? Make up your mind, or no one will read your book!')

Life is more complex than a basic math equation, and John is able to give us in a few memorable phrases a picture of what the church ultimately came to understand as the glorious Trinity: one God in three persons. Yet instead of presenting us with a systematic theology, John gives us a story: the greatest, truest story of all time.

Nothing in American culture matches our fascination with Christmas. Every hope, fear, desire, longing, and measure of the past, present, and future seems to be wrapped up in its red, green and gold exterior. Traditions and customs seem to be disappearing by the nanosecond in our ever-accelerating time, until we hit, say, November 1. It seems we actually want to stretch Christmas out as long as possible, and somehow linger with the hope that it promises.

We will be spending the five Sundays of Advent looking at John's beautiful, mysterious, true fairy tale in his opening chapter. And I encourage you to bring a friend along to hear this story unfold as well. There is no better time of year to invite an unchurched companion along to listen in to the good news of great joy. Everyone loves a good story – especially when they discover that they have been written into the plot line as well! Add a dramatic, possibly happy ending. . . . and the stage is set for 'the best Christmas ever!'

God bless us every one!

Pastor Scott

Sunday December 22nd at 10:30am



'A Light Still Shines'
The visions of a star, a stable, shepherds, wisemen, a young mother and father and a tiny baby in a manger of hay, are still wreathed in wonder and awe.

The tidings of great joy that reach to us from that time long ago, in that place far away, resound with this great promise and truth... 'The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.'

* **This reminder may be a little early, but** *
* **as we look forward (or not!) to Winter** *
* **weather, please remember that we are** *
* **now linked with WPXI Channel 11 for** *
* **any closings that may occur.** *



**CAROLING TO OUR
SHUT-INS
WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 18TH
LEAVE THE CHURCH
AT 6:30pm**



**CHISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
7pm
PLEASE INVITE YOUR
FAMILY & FRIENDS TO JOIN
US AS WE CELEBRATE THE
BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOR!**

*Christ
is Born!*



**SHINE CHRISTMAS MUSICAL
DECEMBER 15th AT 7pm**

It's 1954, and at Big Bill's Drive-In restaurant, where the waitstaff sings your order and the Christmas decorations stay up all year long, excitement has never been higher. They've just won the network's Christmas at the Drive-In contest and will host the live telecast of the Rock & Roll Christmas TV Special! While the staff gets the drive-in spruced up for the show, the customers don their best leather jackets and poodle skirts, and the TV audience is adjusting the rabbit ears and popping the Jiffy Pop, everyone is about to get a big surprise. How is it that a simple pageant proclaiming the birth of Jesus the Savior replaces the Rock & Roll Special, and who are those singing waitresses who steal the show in place of Rock & Roll's biggest stars? Join us and see for yourself!



Weekly Meetings...

Sunday Evenings 6:00pm (12/1, 12/8)
Parenting Teenagers Group

Monday 1:00pm **Adult Bible Study**
(return TBA in February)

Second Wednesday 12:00pm **Game Day**
(12/11—Christmas Party at Grand Valley Inn
Please see Laura Crawford
with your reservation)

Thursday Morning 9:00am
Women's Small Group (ends 12/19)

3rd Thursday at noon **Lunch Bunch**
(returns in January)

Saturday Morning 7:30am
Men's Group @ Eat 'n Park (ends 12/14)

DECEMBER Calendar

<u>December 3</u>	5:45pm DEACONS 6:00pm Mini's Youth Group Christmas Party 7:00pm WORSHIP 7:30pm TRUSTEES
<u>December 7</u>	10:00am Snapshot with Santa 2:00pm Christmas Tea @ Bixler's 6:00pm Festival of Trees featuring SHINE Christmas Musical Selections
<u>December 11</u>	12:00pm Game Day Christmas Party @ Grand Valley Inn
<u>December 14</u>	9:00am SHINE Dress Rehearsal
<u>December 15</u>	7:00pm SHINE Christmas Musical
<u>December 17</u>	7:00pm SESSION
<u>December 18</u>	6:30pm Caroling to our Shut-Ins
<u>December 21</u>	8:30am Cantata Rehearsal
<u>December 22</u>	6:00pm Crosscurrent Christmas Party
<u>December 24</u>	7:00pm Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols
<u>December 24-26</u>	OFFICE CLOSED
<u>December 29</u>	7:00pm Youth NYE Lock-In
<u>Every Monday</u>	1:00pm Adult Bible Study (returns Feb.)
<u>Back—Tuesdays in January</u>	7:00pm Mini's Youth Group
<u>Every Wednesday</u>	3:30pm SHINE After School Program followed by Family Dinner at 6:00pm (Christmas Party 12/18, returns 1/22)
<u>Every Thursday</u>	9:00am Women's Small Group (ends 12/19) 7:00pm Choir Practice
<u>Every Saturday</u>	7:30am Men's Breakfast @ Eat 'n Park (ends 12/14)
<u>Every Sunday</u>	6:00pm Crosscurrent (12/8, 12/22) 6:00pm Parenting Teenagers Group (12/1, 12/8)



CUP Christmas Tea

Saturday

December 7th
from 2:00-4:00pm

At the Bixler's

138 Emmett Drive, Beaver Falls

Please RSVP Judy Bixler



CROSSCURRENT
Christmas Party

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 22ND
AT 6:30PM

Don't forget your
White Elephant Gift

SNAPSHOT WITH SANTA

December 7th from 10am—Noon

An event initiated by Alexis McCowin, specifically for children with special needs who would like to get their picture taken with Santa. A biblical story to go along with a craft will be told to highlight the real "Christ" in Christmas. If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Alexis.



CUP LIBRARY NEWS

Two books that have recently been added to our church library are "The Trouble with Jesus" by Joseph M. Stowell and "The Divine Conspiracy" another book by Dallas Willard.

Joseph Stowell is the seventh president of Moody Bible Institute and has written more than ten books. In this book Stowell presents the viewpoint that following 9/11 God was (at least temporarily) back in a position of importance in American society. Since then however, many have resumed the attitude that all religions are equal. In this practical, and passionate book the author offers an antidote for the problem. And that antidote is Jesus! This book provides wise principles for making Jesus known in our culture today.

In the "The Divine Conspiracy" Willard, well-known theologian, teacher and writer, offers a timely and challenging call back to the true meaning of Christian discipleship. He calls us into a more authentic faith and offers practical advice to help each of us become more Christ-like. These and many other books and videos are available for anyone to check out anytime the church is open and the library isn't in use for a meeting. We have fiction and non-fiction, children's books and books for teens. Of particular interest this Christmas season is "Star Of Bethlehem" DVD.

Paula Keefer, Cup Librarian



Merry Christmas!

Good news has come in the form of a baby! I love this time of year, it's so fun to share time with family and friends! The past month the children and youth at CUP Church have been busy preparing their hearts for the arrival of the Christmas season! The youth have had fun with an awesome night of prayer and just recently we shared a meal at our 3rd Annual Friendsgiving Dinner. We are so excited to kick off Advent together as we continue to grow in our journey together! Youth Winter Retreat is January 31-Feb 2nd. Cost is \$100 a student. We will be having a few fundraisers to help defer the cost of the retreat. The first is a "Cookie Walk" at the Shine Musical, December 15th. You can buy a box of homemade cookies to take home and add to your table this Christmas. The second is a luncheon after church on January 12th in fellowship hall. We are grateful for all your support helping get our kids to activities such as this! All donations welcome!

Mini's Youth Group has been having a great time this past month as well. We just had a fun Movie Night and are looking forward to sharing a fun evening for our upcoming Christmas Party December 3rd 6:00-7:30pm! Mini's will resume January 14th.

Shine is in full Musical mode and we are excited to share the story of Jesus' Birth on December 15th at 7pm. All

are welcome to this free event!

As always I ask you please continue to keep both our Children and Youth as well as our community in prayer! There are so many great and wonderful things happening!

