

# The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH, DECEMBER 2016

## From the *Pastor's Perspective*

*John 1:14 "The Word became flesh and made His home among us. We have seen His glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."*

Life is dirty. Literally, I mean. I'm not just talking about all of the unpleasant parts of life, or how we mess up, cause problems, or how things that go wrong. Life is dirty in that virtually everything we live with on a daily basis has come out of the ground. Everything we see, touch, and measure is made up of the stuff of the earth's crust. Even the fanciest car, the smartest device, or the most beautiful painting, essentially, is composed of dirt.

At Christmas, Christians claim that God got dirty, too. There are a lot of beliefs about God in our world. There are a lot of religions, a lot of different spiritual faiths, a lot of ideas. But the good news that Christians cling to is that God is not just idea. Our faith is not a set of beliefs that we hold. Our God is not a far-off being. Our God got down into the dirt.

John puts it this way, "The Word [that's Jesus] became flesh and made His home among us." We celebrate that God did not stay far off and command, "Come to me. Change yourself. Clean yourself up. Become better. And then come to me." After all, that is a great idea, but it is hopeless. We can't get ourselves cleaned up. No matter how hard we try, we are stuck down in the dirt.

No, God did not stay far off. Instead, He came to us. He came down into creation. Yet He didn't just come near to us. He became one of us. He took on a human body. He took on dirt!

Isn't this absolutely amazing? Only Christianity proclaims such a "low" view of God. All other religions keep God "clean" and needing to be appeased (that kind of makes sense to human understanding). Only Christianity reveals that because God is Love itself, God could not stand to be separated from people. God saw that people, dirty in sin, could not clean ourselves up to come to Him. So, compelled by love, He became one like us. He did this so that He could come to where we are and clean us from the dirt of sin.

God came in the person of Jesus to live as a person among us. He "rubbed shoulders" with us. He revealed God to us, for He Himself was God with us ("Emmanuel"). He showed us how to live differently, how to repent and be cleansed from the dirtiness of sin in our lives. He then allowed His hands to be spread apart and

## Monthly Church Events

\* For weekly events see the calendar

Dec 1	12:00 pm Sarah Circle
Dec 2	7 pm YPA Performance
Dec 3	9 am United Methodist Men 3 & 7 pm YPA Performance
Dec 4	2 & 6 pm YPA Performance
Dec 5	6:30 pm LLMT Meeting
Dec 8	1 pm UMW
Dec 9	7 pm Youth Christmas party
Dec 10	10 am Breakfast Club 6 pm Adult Fellowship
Dec 11	10:15 am Celebration Service 12 pm History Of the Holy Land Seminar 6:30 pm Youth Christmas Party
Dec 12	6:30 pm Finance Meeting
Dec 14	11:30 am Romeos & Juliets
Dec 17	7 am Community Care
Dec 19	6:30 pm Trustees Meeting
Dec 20	10 am Rebecca Circle
Dec 21	NO AWANA 6:30 pm W.O.W
Dec 24	7 pm Christmas Eve Service 11:15 pm Candle Light Service
Dec 26	Office Closed
Dec 28-30	8 am Christmas Camp

Continued on page 2...

# Pastor's Perspective Cont...

nailed to a cross, taking upon Himself all the dirty sin of all people. Because of Jesus, our closeness to God is restored.

Jesus got His hands dirty: at creation when He made dirt and all things. Jesus got His hands dirty: when He was born at Christmas with hands of flesh and bone. Jesus got His hands dirty: when they were nailed to a cross and He took on all human sin. Jesus got His hands dirty: when He rose from the dead and showed His hands to His followers. And Jesus continues to get His hands dirty: when He reaches down and takes our made-of-dirt hands in His. Our God does not stay far off, but comes to us, offering a dirt-smearred helping hand. Our relationship with God is restored, and our lives become full of peace and joy.

Christmas celebrates a God who had dirty hands. And because our God got His hands dirty, ours are washed clean! This is something we have to celebrate!

Merry Christmas!  
Pastor David

## YPA Presents: The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

Dec 2nd @ 7 pm, Dec. 3rd @ 3 pm & 7 pm and Dec. 4th @ 2 pm & 6 pm

This holiday season, Youth Performing Arts Presents, "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever." The Herdman's were "the worst" kids in town. They lied, stole and smoked cigars. When they heard that there were snacks at Sunday school, they joined what people believed would be the worst Christmas pageant in history. But it wasn't. Open your hearts and your minds this holiday season by seeing this beloved tale come to life on stage while capturing the true meaning of Christmas.

## Events and Info

### "History of The Holy Land" Seminar

Join Pastor David on a learning journey tracing the history of the lands of the Bible from creation through today. We'll use maps, time lines, and archaeological findings to trace the events, people and stories of the Bible, as well as unpack the historical account after the Bible. Six 2-hour sessions, starting October 2nd at noon (Bring a bag lunch). Free @ Forest Hills Church, everyone is welcome! *Dates: Dec 11, Jan 8, and Feb 12*

### Christmas Camp

Dec 27 - 29 From 8:00 am-5:30 pm

What do you do when Christmas is done?

You have to work, but the kids just want fun. This year you can be a parenting champ. Send your kids over to "Christmas Camp" at Forest Hills Church. 1 year and up. Food will be provided. To register go to [www.foresthillsumc.net](http://www.foresthillsumc.net)

### Youth Christmas Party

All 7th through 12th graders are welcome!  
Fellowship, Music, Games, Service Project and Food.

Friday Dec 9th from 7 - 11 pm @  
Hosanna Lutheran Church.

### Adult Fellowship

Will be Dec 10th at 5:45 pm.  
Sign up sheet will be located in the lobby.

### Romeo's and Juliet's

Will be Dec 14th at 11:30 a.m. More details to come; watch for updates on locations.

# Worship's Word

Emmanuel.

It means "God with us".

It means that the almighty Creator of the entire universe, left the glory of heaven's throne room only to be born into the cold poverty of humanity. The Maker of us all found himself in a place where he could not even lift his own head.

Can you feel the absurdity? The absolute scandal?

"God with us" is not a statement about comradeship, as though God is saying, "I've got your back." He does not communicate his presence from afar. He does not wave to us as we go calling for us to stay in touch. God is not an afterthought or a warm feeling.

God became man. God entered into our existence, felt our pain, laughed at our jokes, bled our blood. God came to us not to be president or potentate, but to be a servant, even to low and filthy fisherman. God was born to obey his mom and dad, to be respectful, to learn and grow. God appeared to share truth, to shape disciples, to be savagely beaten and murdered.

A merry Christmas indeed.

This year, let not shopping and decorating and traveling and partying and eating and preparing and complaining and exchanging and shoveling and wassailing distract you from the earth-shattering truth: God is with us! He is closer than a brother. He dwells within you. He has saved you.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Oh, come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

For the King,

-Andrew Bonsell

## Christmas Events

**December 9th** Youth Christmas Party @ Hosanna Lutheran 7 pm

**December 11th** Celebration Service 10:15 am

**December 24th** Christmas Eve service 7:00 pm

**December 24th** Christmas Eve Candle light service 11:15 pm

**December 25th** Christmas Service 10:15 am

**December 27th, 28th, 29th** Christmas Camp 8am –5 pm

# Scott's Script

According to a study done by Fuller Seminary, seventy percent of the students in youth groups reported that they had doubts in high school about what they believed about God and the Christian faith, and just as many felt like they wanted to talk with their youth leaders about their doubts.

Yet less than half of those students actually talked with leaders. Likewise, less than half talked with their youth group peers about their doubts. Doubt is a natural part of any person's faith journey, and doubt is not just for youth.

As we question and wrestle within the confines of Christianity, we draw nearer to God through a clearer understanding of our own faith. In my experience, it was those questions and doubts that pushed my faith to deeper levels and allowed me to own my faith. One of the beautiful parts of Christianity is that we don't have all the answers, but we can work through the questions together as a community.

As a community, let's embrace the uncertainty and doubt. Not only will we draw closer to God through it, but we will also become closer to each other.

Grace and Peace,

Scott Van Daalen



## Kid's Korner



# Christmas Camp!

Dec. 27th-29th

We are the church.  
We are here to make disciples.  
We are here to love others.  
We are here to meet needs.

This holiday season, let's do all three.  
And as we do so, we will be able to show Jesus in tangible ways.

Every year families enjoy time off to celebrate and spend time together. But every year parents face the same tension: they have to work, but the kids are off for two whole weeks! Some families are fortunate enough to have a system lined up for such situations, but many do not.

At Forest Hills, we are going to help solve that problem by providing a fun alternative that parents can trust. We are going to host Christmas Camp this year and invite absolutely everyone to come! From 8am to 5:30pm for three days straight we will not be a dignified place of worship, we will be a playground, a snack bar, a hangout and a second home to neighborhood kids. We will be a place where kids can meet Jesus.

To make this happen we need EVERYONE to pitch in and get involved. If you have a hidden talent or hobby, please let me know if you would like to share your interest with kids. If you have some time available, come and get to know some kids. If you do not have time, find a way to make some. We even have some leaders taking off work in order to have the opportunity to reveal Jesus to others.

Christmas is a very unique time of year. It is a time when people, especially parents, are inclined to engage with church. The Christmas story is fairly well known, but people are also looking for more. We have an opportunity to come alongside families at a frantic time, to meet their needs and to love them as Jesus would.

