

The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH, JANUARY 2017

From the Pastor's Perspective

"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." -John 1:14



When we celebrated Christmas, we celebrated that God was born in Jesus as a baby, a human, as a real person.

- This means that our religion is not just a bunch of stories that stir us and prompt a response from us: it is about a real God, who actually exists, and who broke into history.
- This means that our faith is not just a system of beliefs that we think about or hold: it is a relationship with our God.
- This means that our God is not a being that we just acknowledge or know about: we know Him personally, intimately.
- This means that our God does not stay distant or far off: He comes to us, where we are at.
- This means that our God is not just wanting us to be good people and doing right: He wants us to love Him and live for Him by loving others, too.
- Christmas means that our God, and our faith relationship with Him, is grounded: grounded in actual history, grounded in a God who came as a person made from dirt, and grounded in our lives resting securely in Him

At Christmas, Jesus was born as a physical human person. Cried, slept, ate, and pooped! He grew up as a child, running and playing games, grumbling about having to come in for dinner, and procrastinated in doing His lessons. As a teenager, He noticed girls, wondered about His purpose and meaning in life, and wanted to hang out with His friends past midnight. He went to work, went to school, and went to worship.

Now, the Bible actually doesn't say each of these things, but it does say that He grew up fully human like the rest of us. For example, Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus "was tempted in every way that we are, except without sin." Jesus was an average human person (see Isaiah 53:2). From now through Easter, we're going to be tracing the earthly life of Jesus. This is the second part of our "Grounded" series. The first was Jesus' pre-existence (Jesus' life before His physical birth), which we followed from Thanksgiving until Christmas. We called that "Dirty Hands," because God created all things through Jesus (think dirty hands of a sculptor).

In January and February we're going to follow Jesus' life and ministry as a wandering teacher, miracle worker, and rabbi. We're calling this "Dirty Feet" as we follow Jesus around the dusty, dirty roads. Then, in March and April we'll walk with Jesus through the abuse, death, and resurrection of His physical body as a sufficient sacrifice for our human sin. This we're going to call "Dirty Faith," as our faith of salvation comes in our Jesus suffering so badly.

Monthly Church Events

* For weekly events see the calendar

Jan 2	Office Closed
Jan 8	12 pm History of the Holy Land Seminar
Jan 12	1 pm United Methodist Women
Jan 13 & 14	8 pm—8 am Skiing & Lock-in
Jan 14	6 pm Adult Fellowship
Jan 15	11:30 am ASP Meeting
Jan 16	6:30 pm Trustees Meeting
Jan 17	10 am Rebecca Circle
Jan 18	11:30 am Romeos & Juliets 6:30 pm W.O.W
Jan 19	6:30 pm MLT Meeting
Jan 21	6 am Community Care Set- Up 8 am Community Care
Jan 28	10 am Red Rock Bible Camp Board Meeting
Jan 29	11:30 am Bluegrass Festival fundraiser lunch-in

Continued ...

Pastor's Perspective Cont...

Finally, in April and May we'll see Jesus go back to heaven, but also see Him coming back at the end of time. We will call this "Dirty Heaven" as we look forward to Jesus re-creating all things, and so heaven will be on earth (heaven will have dirt!). Heaven is Eden restored!

Grounding our faith in the actual history of Jesus doesn't just anchor our religion. It also anchors us as Christians. Because our God is a grounded God (who creates and works in and is born into and comes back to *dirt*) we have the hope of a life centered and fixed firmly in the salvation that transforms us. We have a hope of a life eternal "on the ground" of heaven on earth. We have a hope for us and our world, because God re-creates dirt. We have hope from Christmas that gives us solid hope in the new year. We are not overcome with fear or worry. We have a grounded hope and peace.

Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year!
Pastor David

Worship's Word

Why is Jesus such a big deal? Why do we talk about him every Sunday? Why is he so central to our faith?

These are basic questions, so much so that we may have never answered them for ourselves. In many ways we take Jesus for granted. For some of us, we have known stories about Jesus and his teachings since before we can remember! His presence is simply assumed and his call on our lives becomes stale. We forget the true meaning of his work in this world and worse, we often lack compelling reasons for having faith in the first place.

In light of some of these tendencies, I want to go into the Worship Leader's Vault, way back to 1999, and pull out a song that reminds us of the much needed answers to these questions. It is called "That's Why We Praise Him":



He came to live, live a perfect life
He came to be the living word, our light
He came to die so we'd be reconciled
He came to rise to show His power and might

And that's why we praise Him
That's why we sing
That's why we offer Him our everything
That's why we bow down and worship this King
'Cause He gave His everything

He came to live, live again in us
He came to be our conquering King and friend
He came to heal and show the lost ones His love
He came to go prepare a place for us

In the bridge of the song, we respond with a simple "Hallelujah!" It's all we can manage to utter in the light of his glory and grace. As we sing through this song together in the coming weeks, I hope that it will be a blessing to you and help you engage some of the easily overlooked questions of our faith!

For the King,
-Andrew

Scott's Script

So what is Visual Media all about?

The short answer to the question is because that is the way our culture now communicates.

The not so short answer is that there has been a fundamental shift in the way we, as humans, process information. We have arrived at a point where we learn really well through video and media instead of written or spoken form!

Think about the last movie you watched. The chances are high that you can recall almost all of the important information! If someone read the script out loud to you, you might be able to remember half the information.

By embracing visual media, we feel as though we will be able to communicate with the larger community in brand new ways! There are so many stories that are just waiting to be told, and who knows what kind of impact those stories could have! The power of storytelling, visual media, and the Gospel can have immeasurable impact on lives all around us!

Grace and Peace,

Scott Van Daalen



Events and Info

Bluegrass festival Fundraiser lunch—in

Sunday Jan. 29th after worship in the fellowship hall,
More details to come, watch for it in the bulletin!

Romeo's and Juliet's

Will be Nov. 18th at 11:30 a.m. More details to come; Watch for updates on locations.

Skiing and Lock-in

Friday, Jan. 13, there will be another community youth event sponsored by the same group that hosted the Christmas party! This event will be late night skiing at Trollhaugen, then a lock in at Elim Lutheran Church. We will meet at Forest Hills at 7:15 pm. The lock in will conclude at 8 am on Saturday morning, so you will be able to pick your kids up at 8 am at Elim. Skiing will cost \$36 which will cover the lift ticket and rentals for skis or snowboard. Please let me know by Jan. 9 if your youth would like to join!

Adult Fellowship

Will be Dec 14th at 5:45 pm.
Sign up sheet will be located in the lobby

ASP Mission Trip Meeting

Will be Jan. 15th after worship. This meeting will focus on finalizing a week to go and planning fundraising.

"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.

2-hour sessions, (Bring a bag lunch). Free @ Forest Hills Church, everyone is welcome! *Dates: Jan 8, and Feb 12*

Kid's Korner

It seems as of late that whenever I look upon my 5 and 3 year old sons, it never fails that they have some sort of smudge or smear or something sticky somewhere on their face. Part of me doesn't really mind their unkempt nature, but a bigger part hauls them into the restroom to remedy the blight. I can't help but care how my children appear. I like when people can look upon them and not have to wince or wonder about their current living conditions. More than likely, this desire for presentable children is a symptom of a raging egoism within. I want them to look good so that I, in turn, look good.

I don't think I am strange in this need for approval granted vicariously through my children. Most parents want their progeny to reflect well on them. But isn't interesting to compare my paternal preferences with those of God Almighty?

Christmas is over and a new year is just beginning. We naturally gaze into the future but I think it can be dangerous to too quickly move on from the stinky stable housing a mealy manger. Into the muck and filth was born our Savior, the King of kings...the Son of God.

The Son of God...conceived by miracle and born into the dust of the earth. Jesus lived a life covered in dirt, and smudges, stains and blemishes. Surely God would have wanted to spruce Jesus up a bit...maybe remove a few warts, trim up his hair, help him in some way appear a little more perfect. But our God is a God of love and not vanity. Jesus came as an undiluted perfect image of God, a humble God. Dirt does not bother him. People living outside of a relationship with him is his concern.

I hate to mention Meatloaf unless I am talking about dinner, but in the early 90's he belted out, "I would do anything for love, I'd run right into hell and back...and I would do anything for love, but I won't do that." For Meatloaf, "running into hell" is but an empty gesture, but Christ left his throne to do it for us. As humans we love with conditions. We draw lines and hold out. God does not function with such reservations. He will and has done anything and everything for the sake of loving us. There is no vanity in the Fatherly love of God. He sent Jesus to wear the filth of humanity in order to redeem it. And all the while the Father beamed with pride.

As the new year dawns, let's linger a little while longer in the stable. Let's consider the high cost of God's love. He would do anything for it...would we?

- Andrew-



Dulac Mission Trip

February 20th—24th



Forest Hills United Methodist Church's involvement as a mission trip began in the mid 90's and crews have been going yearly to Dulac and Chauvin ever since. Our hearts broke when we learned of the devastation that hurricanes that destroyed much of the area. Seven major hurricanes in the last 25 years like Katrina, Rita and Ike tore these communities apart. So much of our initial work was rebuilding homes, roofs, and churches destroyed in those hurricanes.

Since then, we have done construction work on individual homes, and helping to update the Community Center and church who hosted us. In 2003, the Kasson United Methodist Church joined us in the ministry. In 2016, **of** us went to share our gifts. What gifts and talents can you share? Construction is not the only work we do! Many do sewing for curtains, drapes, and alter clothing that the Dulac residents provide. And have you ever tried to feed 22 people three meals a day for five days? It is a day long job making sure we are fed. So another team prepares, cleans up and also prepares snacks for our breaks on other work sites. Another team does electrical and plumbing work. Yet another team became "gophers" bringing building supplies, tools, and food we need during the week.

We are hosted on property owned by the National Division of the United Methodist Women. The complex began in 1932 by two missionary women who had a vision of bringing education to the children of Houma, a larger town near Dulac. Since then, many buildings, mobile homes used as dormitories, and a church have been built in Dulac. During our stay, we are housed in two buildings. One is a dormitory for men and women with ten bunk beds and a common bathroom and shower facilities in each section. It has a common meeting room where lots of hot Domino and cribbage games take place in the evening. Many are so tired in the evening that we sit around and just get to know each other better. . . and sometimes go to bed earlier than we normally do! The second facility is our cafeteria in the administration building. It is also the room where all of the sewing ministries take place.

Some volunteers choose to work the whole week. Others of us, though, for a break during the week, have a "field trip". We have visited Sager Brown, the huge supply depot and dormitories operated by UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) in Baldwin, Louisiana. That's where all of our school bags, cleaning supplies, health kits and bedding and birthing kits are stored for when catastrophes hit world wide. In a moment's notice, our church can deliver hundreds of supplies for those in need. It's an incredible site to see. You will appreciate the world wide ministry our church has through all of our churches. Along the way we see antebellum homes that are magnificent! Other times we have gone to see a Coast Guard facility on the Gulf Coast an easy drive from Dulac.

Call Kay Bergerson at (612)590-8354 for more information!

(On the back is the "School Kit" list for the UMCOR kits, you can also visit their website at www.umcor.org)

DULAC MISSION TRIP



School Kits

1 pair blunt scissors

Rounded tip only;

No plastic scissors, please.

3 pads of paper

Spiral- or top-bound pads;

150 sheets or less of loose-leaf paper can be substituted for 1 pad;

Combination of spiral, top-bound, side-bound, or loose-leaf paper is acceptable;

No composition books, please.

1 hand-held pencil sharpener

Must be at least 1 inch long;

Remove from packaging.

1 30-centimeter ruler

Hard or flexible;

Cartoon characters are acceptable;

No advertisements please.

6 unsharpened pencils

No advertisements, religious, patriotic, military, or camouflage symbols, please;

Cartoon characters are acceptable.

1 2-inch or larger-size eraser

No advertisements, religious, patriotic, military, or camouflage symbols, please;

Cartoon characters are acceptable.

1 24-count box of crayons

Only 24-count boxes, please.

1 14x16 inch cloth bag

Homemade or purchased bags are both acceptable;

Heavy-duty fabric only, such as denim, corduroy, drapery fabric, etc.;

No advertisements, religious, patriotic, military, or camouflage symbols, please;

Closures are optional but must be buttons, snaps, or Velcro sewn in middle of opening, if used.

