



December, 2017

**FROM PASTOR CHAMBERS:** Christmas is an exciting time of year at Spring Hill Baptist Church! We have an incredible December upon us as we finish out 2017 strong! This month our focus on Sunday mornings is a series entitled “Advent Adventures” looking at 6 journeys of the Christmas story with the thought that just as the birth of Christ was an adventure by faith, the Christian life is also an adventure by faith. On the evening of **Sunday, December 10**, our youth will be presenting the play “The Best Christmas Present Ever,” followed by a “finger food” fellowship in the fellowship hall. On **Sunday morning, December 17**, we will have a baptism service. If you have recently become a believer in Jesus Christ but never been baptized and desire to follow the Lord in believer’s baptism, I want to encourage you to contact me by **Wednesday, December 14**. On **Sunday evening, December 17**, the choir will be presenting the cantata, “Sing Joy to All the World.” On **Sunday evening, December 24**, we are moving the service to 7 pm and having a Christmas Eve Candlelight service for any who would like to attend. The “Joyful Ringers” handbell choir will be performing some favorite Christmas carols, narrating the very first Christmas followed by a challenge from God’s Word. **Sunday, December 31** is New Year’s Eve, and we will only be having Sunday morning service and Sunday School that Sunday with no Sunday evening service. I want to thank each and every person for all their labor and work for the Lord this year as well as getting together this Christmas season at Spring Hill Baptist Church. It is a joy to be your pastor and looking forward to what the Lord has in store for our church in 2018!

P.S. - Thank you to all who filled shoe boxes this year for Operation Christmas Child! We had a record year for our church with 87 shoe boxes and it thrills my heart that 87 boys and girls around the world will have something for Christmas as well as the gospel message presented to them!

**ENJOY THE FESTIVE ASPECT...BUT REMEMBER THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF CHRISTMAS:** C.S. Lewis once said, “There is a stage in a child’s life at which it cannot separate the **religious** from the merely **festal character of Christmas or Easter**. I have been told of a very small and very devout boy who was heard murmuring to himself on Christmas morning a poem of his own composition which began ‘lights, presents, and Jesus born.’ This seems to me, for his age, both admirable poetry and admirable piety. **But of course the time will soon come when such a child can no longer effortlessly and spontaneously enjoy that unity**. He will become able to **DISTINGUISH** the spiritual from the ritual and festal aspect of Christmas; presents and lights will no longer seem sacramental. **And once he has distinguished he must put one or the other first**. If he puts the spiritual first he can still taste something of Christmas in the presents and lights; if he puts the presents and lights first they will soon be no more than any other thing. They will have taken on an independent, and therefore a soon withering, life.” Christmas, as we celebrate it today, has a **FESTIVE NATURE** and a **SPIRITUAL NATURE**.



The world celebrates Christmas in its “**festive nature**,” meaning it carries with it the traditions of family, decorations, lights, Christmas Trees, Christmas carols, Christmas cards, Christmas bells, ivy, holly, candles, wreaths, mistletoe, evergreens, presents, and most importantly Santa Claus... Christmas also has a “**spiritual nature**,” that of the birth of a Baby – a Baby named JESUS who was God in flesh, who came to earth to die for the sins of the world. Christmas is a time where we should take time and reflect on this awesome occurrence in history, for without this event, the world is doomed because of sin! For centuries, Christians and all of Christendom celebrated the festive with the spiritual, which the festive evolving into spiritual meanings over time. Today, however, Christmas, like Halloween and Easter is so commercialized that they take the meaning out of it! Americans now celebrate the festive and forget the spiritual aspect of Christmas, for now the “Spiritual” is deemed “politically incorrect”

- Merry Christmas is now “Happy Holidays,” due to the many cultures in our nation “under God”
- Christmas Trees are now “Holiday Trees,” etc.
- The point of Christmas is now greed, materialism, money making, time off, and parties!
- There is NO emphases on Christianity, and it seems as if Christmas has evolved from Yuletide to Christmas back to “Yuletide” of the pagans.

**The Christian must learn to separate the festive from the spiritual** – we must enjoy the festive part of it while we consistently remember the spiritual aspect of it and use it to be a witness and to bring glory and honor to God. If not, we place our trust in things and traditions rather than the giver of Christmas and what the season is about. It all goes back to Romans 1:21, “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, **neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” We forget the spiritual when we forget to be thankful for God’s ultimate gift in Jesus Christ. Remember the very essence of Christmas is John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, **THAT HE GAVE...**”



- **WHAT DID HE GIVE?** His only begotten Son...Jesus
- **WHY?** That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life...

At the end of your life, this is all that matters – What you have done with Jesus – Have you accepted it or rejected it? (by Pastor Dean C. Chambers, December 12, 2011)

**BOOKS THAT HAVE IMPACTED MY LIFE:** Last month I recommended some books that I had recently read. This month I want to continue this thought and share with you some books that have impacted my life over the years...

- ***How Should We Then Live?*** - by Dr. Francis Shaffer - In my 10th grade World History Class, Mr. Don Crews used this book and the video series accompanying it as part of his curriculum, and little would I know this book got me to thinking about life, about having the right foundation for life. In this book, Dr. Schaffer (from a 20th Century perspective), using history and the arts, traced the degeneration of society without a proper Biblical foundation from Rome all the way to the present day (for him the 1970s). The book is based on the question posed in Ezekiel 33:10. I love this book so much that my copy is completely worn out I have read it so many times over the last 20+ years.
- ***Disciplines of a Godly Man*** - by R. Kent Hughes - When I began teaching school out of college, Dan Delong (my boss at the time) gave me a copy of this book which gave various areas in which to discipline your life for leadership based upon the principle of 1 Timothy 4:7, "Exercise thyself unto godliness."
- ***Changed into His Image*** - by Jim Berg - I first read this book while in school at Tennessee Temple, and we used it for our Bible curriculum for the senior class where I taught school. I bought an extra copy along with the senior class my second year teaching and when Stephanie and I started dating, we went through that book together. The idea of the book is "Biblical change," allowing God to renew your mind and transform you from the inside out as a Christian.
- ***A Resilient Life*** - by Gordon MacDonald - Using Hebrews 12:1-2 and the illustration of his years of running track, Gordon MacDonald gives 5 principles of resilient people. As a young man I learned that life is like a race, and like any race, you cannot win on the first lap. You must pace yourself with patience if the Lord is to use you effectively. I read this book over and over as a constant reminder that "slow and steady wins the race."
- ***When the Game is Over it all Goes Back in the Box*** - by John Ortberg - This is probably one of the best books about life I have ever read - the humorous stories, and the illustrations all really resonate with me. This book is great for the "type A" personality. This book challenged and convicted me. Through reading and applying the principles of this book based on the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:16-21, I have learned to live life knowing that one day everything I have or worked for goes "back in the box" once I pass away. Thus I must focus on things that matter eternally more than things that are temporal.
- ***Twelve Ordinary Men*** - by John MacArthur - This book uses biographical sketches of the 12 disciples showing how ordinary they were and how Jesus taught them and molded them for His purpose. This book inspires me because I can identify with a couple of the disciples and their failures and how the Lord's strength and direction was evident in their life.
- ***The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*** - by Edmund Morris - This book, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, is the first of a three book trilogy about Roosevelt (I have read all three - great reads!) the early life of Roosevelt from birth until the day he was sworn in as President in 1901. It is an incredible biography of all the obstacles he had to overcome in the early part of his life which along with Abraham Lincoln inspire me to overcome in life. I highly recommended this book and the whole trilogy!
- ***The Way of the Shepherd*** - by Dr. Kevin Leman and Bill Pentak - I mentioned this book last month and want to again this month, because I am currently digesting the principles of this book (special thanks for my friend Jack Reiss who gave me a copy). This is one of the best books I've ever read and if you are in a position of leadership or management, I highly recommend the principles of this book. This book, a business book but filled with biblical principles has helped me reevaluate my calling as pastor and given me a fresh set of eyes upon the task at hand.

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**CHURCH EVENTS FOR DECEMBER:** The official "church calendar" is located in the church office and on [www.shbcwv.com](http://www.shbcwv.com) If you lead a ministry and desire to plan an activity not yet on the calendar and need it announced for Sunday, please let us know by **Friday morning** so that it can be announced in the bulletin each week.

**Sunday, December 3** - Annual Business Meeting (to elect officers/approve 2018 budget) followed by Lord's Supper - pm service

**Wednesday, December 6** - Teen Christmas Play Rehearsal - 6 pm/Shut in Committee Meeting - 8 pm

**Thursday, December 7** - Sunshine Seniors Christmas Dinner at Glen Ferris Inn

**Saturday, December 9** - Teen Christmas Play Dress Rehearsal

**Sunday, December 10** - Teen Christmas Play - 6 pm, Finger food fellowship afterward in the Fellowship Hall.

**Monday, December 11** - Advisory Council Meeting - 7 pm

**Wednesday, December 13** - Teen Christmas Play for AWANA

**Thursday, December 14** - Sunshine Seniors going to "Jolly Seniors" at Cross Lanes Christian School for service and lunch - leave church at 10:00 am

**Friday, December 15** - CURE Youth Group - Christmas Party Progressive Dinner - TBA

**Sunday, December 17** - Baptism Service - am service; Christmas Cantata - pm service

**Tuesday, December 19** - Christmas Caroling - TBA

**Wednesday, December 20** - CURE Youth Group - Caroling at Hospice House - 7 pm

**Thursday, December 24** - Candlelight Service - 7 pm

**Wednesday, December 27** - No AWANA/No Youth Group - regular Bible Study upstairs

**Sunday, December 31** - No Sunday evening service



\*Handbell Practice - every Monday evening @ 5:45 pm (except Dec. 25)

\*Choir Practice - every Sunday evening @ 4:00 pm (except Dec. 24, 31)

\*Good News Club - every Wednesday afternoon @ 3:00 pm - Bridgeview Elementary

\*CURE Youth Group/AWANA - every Wednesday evening @ 7:00 pm (except Dec. 27)

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**NOTE TO ALL LEADERS OF MINISTRY** - The 2018 Calendar is currently being planned for next year. If you lead a ministry, please consult the church calendar as you plan winter/spring/summer activities. Submit your activities to the church office so they may be placed on the website and announced in the bulletins. Thank you for all you do to help our church move forward for the Lord!