From the Senior Pastor’s Desk

By Freddy Fritz

Jesus Came to Seek and to Save the Lost

For more than two years I have been preaching through The Gospel of Luke in a series of sermons I have called, “To Seek and To Save the Lost.” This, of course, reflects Jesus’ own purpose in coming to earth. He said this in His meeting with Zacchaeus in Jericho in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

As we enter the Advent Season for 2015 and anticipate celebrating the birth of Jesus, let us remember that Jesus’ own stated purpose for coming to earth was to seek and to save the lost. He did not come simply to improve education, or to heal, or to demonstrate power. No, He came primarily to seek and to save those who were spiritually estranged and separated from God.

All people are born estranged and separated from God because of our sin. We are naturally cut off from Him and have no relationship with Him. But the good news of the gospel is that Jesus came to reconcile lost sinners with a holy God. And no one is beyond His salvation!

You may feel discouraged, disappointed, defeated, or despair over your situation. However, whatever you think may be the cause of your discouragement, disappointment, defeat, or despair, please know that at the root of it all is sin. We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

And only God can remedy our sin. He does so in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. So, this Advent and Christmas, I invite you to turn to Jesus. Believe that He is the Savior of sinners, and repent of your sin. You will discover Jesus to be a merciful Savior who is able to save to the uttermost.
**Special Events:**

- December 5 - 9a
  Ladies' Christmas Brunch
- December 12 - 5:30p
  Night in Bethlehem
- December 24 - 7p
  Christmas Eve Service

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**TBPC Trumpet**

Staff—
Rev. Freddy Fritz  
*Editor-in-Chief*  
John and Melissa McNulty  
*Editors*

It is the goal of the Trumpet staff to provide articles for learning and growing, news for connecting with our church family, and information on opportunities for service and participation.

The views and opinions expressed in the Trumpet have not been reviewed or endorsed by the Session.

Please forward articles, ministry reports and calendar items for the next edition of the Trumpet to dr.melissamcnulty@gmail.com by January 23, 2016. All articles received after the 23rd will be held for the following month's newsletter.

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**Financial Update**

As you know, the Session and Diaconate informed the congregation about our church’s financial condition at the beginning of November. Giving to our various funds was down, and it had been necessary to use savings to offset the shortfall. To that end, the congregation was encouraged to give any additional end-of-year gifts to the General Fund.

We want to thank the congregation for the good response so far. We have not had to use any further savings in November, and that is good. However, we want to encourage the congregation to continue giving additional funds to the General Fund, so that we can get back in to the black.

Apparently, there is some misunderstanding regarding the various funds of the church. So, here is a brief explanation.

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church has a number of different funds. In fact, there are five major funds. They are as follows:

- **General Fund:** This account funds all the church ministries, all operating expenses (such utilities), staff compensation, and so on.
- **Missions Fund:** This account funds all our missionaries, as well as our missions conference.
- **Benevolence Fund:** This account funds people, both members and non-members, who have a financial need.
- **By His Grace, For His Glory II Fund:** This account funds the loan on the West Wing Expansion.
- **Designated Funds:** There are all kinds of specific designation in this account. It includes special offerings, payments for events, and so on.

It is helpful to keep in mind the following points:

- All giving that comes in to the church that is not designated for a specific fund goes into the General Fund.
- The Benevolence Fund and the Designated Fund have no required budget amount. In other words, only what comes in to those accounts is spent. So, for example, if $1,000 comes in to the Benevolence Fund, then once $1,000 is spent no more may be spent because there is no money in the Benevolence Fund.
- However, the General Fund, Missions Fund, and BHG,FHG II Fund each have a required monthly amount that needs to come in for the account to remain in the black. This past year we have had to use savings in order to meet obligations. While that is the purpose of savings, we want the congregation to be fully informed so that we can remain in the black and not have to use savings.

Again, the Session and Diaconate would like to thank you for your strong financial support so far this month. We pray that it continues. Please feel free to talk to any church officer regarding the church finances if you have any questions. We believe that an informed congregation is a praying congregation. And a praying congregation is a giving congregation.
Thoughts from the Associate Pastor  
By Rev. James Nichols  
Live, Work, Play

As a way to help us think through how we can live out the outreach team’s vision of “Ordinary People Living Ordinary Lives with Gospel Intentionality” we are talking about how we can bring the gospel in the places that we live, work and play. We are called to be God’s children wherever we are: in our neighborhoods, at our jobs, and wherever we are. How can we do this well? This month we will continue by looking at how we can be an example where we live. It doesn’t matter if we live in an apartment, condo, townhouse, neighborhood, in the suburbs, the country, or the city. Wherever God has put us, and yes he put us there, we are to be his witnesses. So how do we do that?

Today I thought we would talk practically. Last time I mentioned the book The Art of Neighboring by Jay Pathak and Dave Runton. This book helps to see how we can reach our neighbors with the gospel. Here is a simple exercise quoted from the book that they recommend to help get to know neighbors in your area:

Oh, and a warning. This might hurt a little bit. We’ve both done this exercise with hundreds of churches and thousands of people, and a number of them have jokingly referred to this as “the chart of shame.” This exercise might be convicting, and if it is, that’s probably healthy. But the point of the exercise is not to bring shame; it’s to move the Great Commandment from a theory into a real-world context.

To begin, imagine that the middle box in the chart is your house and the other boxes are the eight houses situated nearest to you—the eight households that God has placed closest to where you live. Now, you might live in a community that doesn’t look like a tic-tac-toe board. That’s okay. Whether you live on a greenbelt, a cul-de-sac, a rural lot with five-acre parcels, or in a corner apartment, try to picture the locations of your eight nearest neighbors—the eight who live closest to you—however they might be situated. Then in the middle of the chart, simply write your home address. In the other boxes, fill in the three subpoints within each box— a, b, and c— as follows:

a— Write the names of the people who live in the house represented by the box. If you can give first and last names, that’s great. If it’s only first names, that’s fine too.

b— Write down some relevant information about each person, some data or facts about him or her that you couldn’t see just by standing in your driveway, things you might know if you’ve spoken to the person once or twice. We don’t mean drives a red car or has yellow roses by the sidewalk, because you could see that from your driveway. We mean information you’ve gathered from actually speaking to a neighbor, such as grew up in Idaho, is a lawyer, plays golf, is from Ethiopia, had a father in World War II.

c— Write down some in-depth information you would know after connecting with people. This might include their career plans or dreams of starting a family or anything to do with the purpose of their lives. What motivates them to do what they do? What would they say about God? What do they most fear? What are their spiritual beliefs and practices? Write down anything meaningful that you’ve learned through interacting with them.
As you think through this, remember, the idea is to love your neighbors well and to exemplify Christ to them. Remember, Jesus says to love our neighbors. One of the best ways to do this is to know them well so that we can pray for them and so that we can help them in any way. By listening and knowing our neighbors, we will understand how best the gospel applies to their lives and how you can show the love of Christ to them daily. Once you do this exercise, ask yourself what this exercise reveals about how well you are neighboring and how you can improve. A great goal would be to be able to fill in all of the “a” category, half of the “b” category and at least one “c” by the end of the spring. Remember also that Christmas is a great time to invite people to church. So, go and meet your neighbors, love them well, and seek to glorify the Lord in those relationships!

I have been asked that question on several occasions. The answer is “Yes, I am a Calvinist.” Do you know what is meant by one being a “Calvinist”? (Often the word “Reformed” will be used instead of “Calvinist” – the two terms being nearly synonymous.) You see, “Reformed theology” is a system of Bible interpretation just as there are other systems of Biblical and theological study. Calvinism simply puts its emphasis on the sovereignty of God: our salvation begins, is accomplished by, and ends with the Triune God of the Bible. Other systems put the emphasis on the responsibility of man.

What most people “know” about Calvinism is not what the doctrine espouses at all, and the system has been thus demonized to the point of being totally misunderstood by the unknowing and those unwilling to know the truth. However, some of the greatest Bible scholars, evangelists, and preachers in history have been Calvinists: Augustine, David Brainard, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, Adoniram Judson, J. Gresham Machen, to name a few. Some of the greatest books on theology have been written by Calvinists. Some of the greatest confessions and catechisms of the church have been Calvinistic: The Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession and Catechisms – Presbyterian and Reformed documents from the British Isles and the continent of Europe. The First London Confession (1644) and the Second London Confession (1689) were Calvinistic confessions of the Baptist Church in England. The early Philadelphia Confession (1742) was written by Baptists in the colonies and was Calvinistic. Yes, early Baptists were, for the most part, Calvinists. And, of course, those of the Reformed church on the continent of Europe and the Presbyterians of the British Isles were Calvinists. Many of the denominations began with a Calvinistic Bible basis.

The First Great Awakening of 1740 and the Second Great Awakening of 1830 (some call them “revivals) were both spearheaded by Calvinists in America. And yet, the insistence among the ignorant is that Calvinism kills one’s zeal for missionary activity and interest in witnessing to the lost about salvation in Jesus Christ! Did it kill Spurgeon’s zeal for soul-winning? Or George Whitefield’s zeal? Read the sermons of Edwards and Spurgeon and then tell me that Calvinism killed or stifled their evangelistic zeal! On the contrary, Calvinism gives a much greater reason to evangelize than any other system of Biblical interpretation.

So, am I a Calvinist? Yes, but I have to guard against emphasizing that position instead of my God-given call to evangelize the lost. Consider the following statements:

When I become more interested in getting a soul to Calvin than I am in getting him to Christ, there is something wrong with my theology – and I am not guilty!

When I become more interested in the word “Reformed” than I am in repentance, there is something wrong with my theology – and I am not guilty!

When I become more interested in Geneva (Switzerland – Calvin’s home) than I am in Golgotha (where Christ died for sinners), there is something wrong with my theology – and I am not guilty!

When the “t” in “Tulip” becomes more important than the “t” in tears when weeping over lost souls and from weeping in repentance over my own sins, there is something wrong with my theology – and I am not guilty!
When the “Tulip” of Reformed theology becomes more important to me than the “Rose of Sharon” and the “Lily of the Valley,” there is something wrong with my theology – and I am not guilty!

When I become more interested in the doctrine of “unconditional election” than I am in my duty of proclaiming God's Word to those whom He has indeed elected [my duty is to preach the gospel of salvation to everyone and let God call His elect from among them], then there is something wrong with my theology – and I am not guilty!

When I become more interested in discussing the perseverance of the saints than I am in getting sinners to Christ to become saints, then there is something wrong with my theology – and I am not guilty!

Yes, I am Reformed; I am a Calvinist. God has ordained one way of saving men and women, boys and girls from their sin: by the preaching of His Word. He has not only ordained those whom He will save (Acts 13:48), but He has ordained the means of saving them: through the proclamation of His Word (1 Corinthians 1:21). He has made me His ambassador, and I intend to fulfill my role as an ambassador of the God of heaven. God has given all of His elect children the responsibility of being His ambassadors: “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). We should all attempt to fulfill our God-given roles in that regard, and let God fulfill His divine role. And then our theology will Biblical.

And most of the Calvinists – the Reformed – I have known have had this same attitude toward God and their own divine appointment.
Missionaries Supported by TBPC

Mission to the World
Peter & Lauren Dishman
Esaie & Natacha Etienne
Ken & Tammie Matlack
Carla Stevens

Reformed University Fellowship
Jeff & Jenny Lee

New Harvest Missions International
Nathaniel & Cherita Adawonu

Serving In Missions
Rene & Lili Palacio
Wycliffe Bible Translators
Don & Judy Vander Ploeg
Kevin & Gertrude Nicholas

Ven Con Nosotros Church
Dr. Oscar & Elizabeth Alvarez

PRCC
Chaplain Ted Hamm
Chaplain James Cochell

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1—Bob McQueen
1—Joelle Nobles
1—Conner Turpen
3—Jessica Rotolo
4—Rachel Coffey
5—Jennifer Isaac
7—Julia Chew
8—Pete Rotolo
10—Jerry Higby
10—Dee Kaiser
11—Elijah Jeffries
11—Isabel Lugo
12—Margi Rivera
13—Wendy Jones
14—Betty Pothoven
17—Anna-Kristen Noren
20—Melissa Bayley
24—Emalin Henry
25—Krystal Allison
25—Chelsea Pfannenstiel
27—Melody Barber
28—Graham Barber

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

5 — Mr. & Mrs. Rock Roque
14 — Mr. & Mrs. Joe Cozzolino
14 — Rev. & Mrs. Freddy Fritz
22 — Mr. & Mrs. Pete Rotolo
23 — Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Nobles
27 — Mr. & Mrs. Doug Knox
27 — Mr. & Mrs. Ed Kociela
28 — Mr. & Mrs. Bill Campbell
28 — Mr. & Mrs. Drew Jeffries
Thank You

Thank you to Lillian Barquin and everyone who participated in the “Hanging of the Greens” in order to beautify the church and bring glory to God. Your willing hands were a big help.

Thank you also to everyone who sponsored a memorial poinsettia to brighten the sanctuary through the Advent season. Please remember to take your plant home after the Christmas Eve service.

December Events

Women’s Ministry will have their 27th Annual Christmas Brunch on Saturday December 5th. I hope everyone has their ticket and is looking forward to this annual event. The brunch is an excellent way to focus on the true meaning of Christmas and to prepare your heart with the love and gratitude you have for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Looking Ahead

We will be having our January “Soup’s On” Sister to Sister on Saturday, January 9th at TBPC. Plan to attend for food, fellowship, games, a devotional, and a chance to choose a new prayer partner. Please bring a salad, sandwiches, fruit or dessert to add to the buffet table. We look forward to having a fellowship time with our sisters in Christ.

We will have our next WM 15 on December 13th in room 23 following worship. Please attend to share ideas and to help plan future events.

Good News

Suzanne Swenson had been led to take over the coordinator position of the Women’s Ministry some time in early 2016. She will be working alongside me for several months until she is comfortable with all the responsibilities. Praise the Lord for providing for the needs of our ministry.
As with every year, there is an air of excitement as the holidays approach. With all hustle and bustle and family gatherings, we all are going at top speed. As we press on, I’d like to ask you to be mindful of the true meaning of these holidays. This might be your friends, relatives, and neighbors only glimpse of Christ and the Joy and Peace only He can bring. We have the opportunity to participate in the church’s rendition of “A Night in Bethlehem” which is heavily attended by the public. This is a great way to proclaim to our community the Gospel of Christ.

As we come to the first of the year, we will be starting to gear up for the missions trip this summer. This trip is to the American Indian reservation in Cherokee, North Carolina to do community works and teach vacation Bible School to the Native American children. If you are even remotely interested please see myself (Ted Jeffries) or any other Missions Team Member and we can and would love to give you detailed information.

One of the Big events that we have is the Annual Missions Conference and this year we are going to have the banquet in a different way. The missions committee is sponsoring the first annual Barbeque contest. This year’s primary ingredient will be pulled pork. The judges will be some of our missionaries and the guest speaker of the event in a blind taste test. All proceeds will go to help fund the trips. I’m asking all of you to sign up and come out to a great night of barbeque and refreshment. Now that having been said, we get to the fun part. The missions committee is asking for some to volunteer to enter the contest and cook. The winner will have bragging rights until next year at the next contest. Currently, Doug Knox and I have entered. Please see me and enter by Jan 15, 2016. I’ve heard a few names bandied about who can cook, so I’m raising the challenge to any one that wants to compete. Take this as the gauntlet being thrown down.

In closing, I would also like to personally thank all of you that support the Missions Fund. Most of you will never see the blessing your time, effort, and money give to the needy, both spiritually and physically. For those who are not currently active in supporting the Missions Ministry, please keep it in your prayers before the throne of God, and if you feel led to do so—support it.
Thanksgiving Feast with an International Flair

By Karen Guest

Talk about a multicultural party! To celebrate Thanksgiving, the most American of holidays, the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes met at church on Tuesday morning, November 17. Our party was quite a feast – delicious foods from many foreign lands.

We have thirty adults registered in three classes – levels 1, 2 and 3. The countries represented are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Iraq, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Syria, Venezuela, and Vietnam. Think about the languages these students are trying not to speak—Arabic, Chinese, Indian, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, as well as the individual dialects they are used to conversing in their native countries.

These folks are expending a lot of effort to socialize with one another, and us. They are so earnest! As each one spoke in English in front of the large group, we learned where they were from and what the food they brought was, how they made it, and for what they were most thankful. We Americans recalled what we were thankful for—that we live in a country where religious freedom is for all, and that our church can provide ESL along with Christianity Explored to so many. Many of the students were thankful to be in America, for their love for God and Jesus Christ, their families, and their ESL class.

Pastor James blessed the food and gathering and we feasted. Afterward, Heather Tomasello encouraged readers to take a paragraph to read aloud about the history of our Thanksgiving in America. Then we had two highly competitive teams play Pictionary. What a hoot this contest was! One could say that fun and laughter is the universal language.

Our church has been blessed to be able to present ESL classes to so many people this school year—September 2015 to May 2016. Rich Jackson and Earl Myers teach Level 3; Kerry Roys and Gertrude Hunter teach Level 2; Heather Tomasello, Bob Guest and I Level 1. Starting in January, Sherry Kaw and Holly Hawkes will join us in Level 1 and 2, respectively. A challenging component for all of us is to ever so slowly wade through Mark’s Gospel. Our intent is to lovingly draw each student into a close relationship with the Lord. We are exploring three questions about Jesus Christ – who He is, why He came, and what does it mean to follow Him.

We American Christians have so much to be thankful for as we realize how God has blessed us at TBPC. May we continue to spread the Gospel message to others who come to TBPC to worship and participate in our church’s ministries. ESL is a perfect opportunity for those who have already participated in Christianity Explored and want to share it with the ESL students. The sessions are designed to be universally accessible with a special emphasis on clear and simple English. If you would like to be part of the ESL ministry, please contact Heather Tomasello.
What Paris Teaches Us...About Us

“The terrible events in Paris were a terrible and sickening setback”

-President Barrack Obama, three days after terrorists attacked Paris

1Sir Isaac Newton’s Third Law of Motion is quite simple, really: “For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction” This profound principal applies to most things in life—but not everything.

1Consider a particular Paris night in mid-November. It’s 9:20 PM local time when an explosion interrupts the focus of French President François Hollande and 80,000 other fans in the Stade de France who are watching a soccer game. That explosion is followed by a synchronized flow of attacks at other Paris landmarks: 9:25, 9:30, 9:32, 9:36, 9:40, 9:53. The last, like the first, is an explosion at the Stade de France, where a suicide bomber takes his final breath as he triggers his explosive vest.1 By the time the shooting and explosions end, nearly 140 in France’s capital are dead and hundreds more injured.

Now what?

So severe is the attack and great the concern that it may happen again, President Hollande declares a state of1 emergency across the country and closes France’s borders. President Obama and scores of leaders across the globe condemn the attacks and offer condolences to the French people. Our president rightly adds “This is an attack not just on Paris, it’s an attack not just on the people of France, but this is an attack on all of humanity and the universal values that we share.” Very true, just as it has been in every previous attack by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). That’s the nature of asymmetric warfare. If you’re not powerful enough or large enough to take on your enemies using conventional weapons and tactics, you simply instill fear—terror—in the hearts and minds of those you oppose via vicious, gruesome attacks in places that offer the greatest number of witnesses. By doing so, you’re able to instill a lingering state of fear and vulnerability, not just in your target location but in every locale large and small around the globe.

So now what?

Should we take the natural course described by Newton’s Law, or stand fast? Our nation chose the latter in the matter of the tragedy that President Obama described in sterile terms as a “setback”. His remarks during a press conference in Turkey three days after Paris was awash with death, pain, destruction and fear made clear he saw no need to adjust course. He repeated his oft-spoken goal—“to degrade and ultimately destroy this barbaric terrorist organization”—while itemizing the many features of his strategy toward that goal1:

“On the military front, our coalition is intensifying our airstrikes -- more than 8,000 to date”. And yet, ISIS bookended the Paris attacks by downing a Russian airliner in October and killing all 224 passengers and crew1 and executing a deadly attack in Mali exactly one week after Paris.1

“We’re taking out ISIL leaders, commanders, their killers.” Parisians would testify that ISIS has ample backup leaders and killers.

We’ve seen that when we have an effective partner on the ground, ISIL can and is pushed back. Perhaps so, geographically, but asymmetric warfare doesn’t necessarily focus on geographic gains and is not dependent on them.

As he wrapped up his prepared remarks, President Obama said this: “Finally, we’ve begun to see some modest progress on the diplomatic front, which is critical because a political solution is the only way to end the war in Syria and unite the Syrian people and the world against ISIL.” That conclusion doesn’t fit well. Wouldn’t that ultimately require some sort of negotiated settlement with ISIL terrorists? Why would we negotiate with terrorists?

Because worldviews matter. Especially so if you’re the leader of the most powerful nation on the planet. President Obama’s view of the world has several prominent features that played into this crisis. His worldview is one that sees moral equivalence among all nations and actors. It’s this sort of ideology that enables
adherents to justify negotiations with the world’s most dangerous nations and people in an environment of parity. How else could he justify, defend and celebrate a disastrous nuclear agreement which dramatically increases—possibly guarantees—the chances that the world’s leading sponsor of global terrorism, Iran will join the ranks of nuclear nations. The president’s view of the world sincerely asks ‘What’s wrong with that?’

Our Secretary of State appears to share Mr. Obama’s mushy-morality worldview as he unwittingly exposed during remarks to the Staff and Families of U.S. Embassy in Paris last month. Keep in mind, those remarks came just three days after the capital of America’s oldest ally was savaged by terrorists:

“...There’s something different about what happened from Charlie Hebo, and I think everybody would feel that. There was a sort of particularized focus and perhaps even a legitimacy in terms of – not a legitimacy, but a rationale that you could attach yourself to somehow and say, okay, they’re really angry because of this and that. This Friday was absolutely indiscriminate. It wasn’t to aggrieve one particular sense of wrong. It was to terrorize people.”

In other words, are some terrorist attacks more justified than others? Terrorist attacks committed in response to a narrow, specific event are somewhat less heinous? Do you remember Charlie Hebo? Ten months ago, twelve employees of the satirical French magazine Charlie Hebo were executed in the magazine’s Paris offices by offended terrorists for daring to include caricatures of the prophet Mohammed in a recent issue? It seems certain that the loved ones of those who died would disagree with our Secretary of State regarding whether or not the terrorists were in any way justified in killing people who simply expressed opinions that sharply diverged with their executioners.

Legitimize the enemies of your oldest ally; celebrate a deadly agreement with a worldwide pariah. Such are the outcomes of the worldview of those Americans who believe our country is the source of what’s wrong with the world, that the way to fix that wrong is to take care not to reflexively judge evil as evil or intercede on the side of their victims who, it seems from the remarks of Secretary Kerry, may very well have deserved what they got. Rather, this worldview suggests, we should stop flexing our holier-than-thou muscles, realize that we are in fact the root of the world’s problems due to the reaction of others to our arrogant, self-righteous, hypocritical, irresponsible attitudes, actions and words.

That’s not the worldview America was founded on nor the one that prompted our forefathers to bleed and die on foreign shores and battlefields. They were prompted by something much less tangible but much more powerful than mere weapons or words. Consider these comments from one of President François Hollande’s predecessors. During a speech before a joint session of Congress November 5, 2007, President Nicolas Sarkozy described how those of his generation were schooled on how America sacrificed so much for the world in war after war to ensure freedom around the globe. President Sarkozy summarized our motivation this way: “America's strength is not only a material strength, it is first and foremost a spiritual and moral strength.”

Sustaining that sort of strength requires regular exercise, especially when facing those with a dearth of it.

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How to Get Involved

Volunteer!

Volunteers are needed to respond in short-term and long-term recovery efforts after a disaster. You can serve in many different ways:

**General Volunteers** – Workers, both skilled and unskilled are needed to serve in disaster response. Immediately after a disaster the work of volunteers may include tree and debris removal, chainsaw work tarping roofs, handing out blankets and helping provide warm meals.

**Disaster Response Key Leaders** – These volunteer leaders serve as the first responders to an affected site to assess the situation after a disaster. Disaster Response Key Leaders coordinate practical assistance to those affected by natural or man-made disasters. Training provided by MNA Disaster Response.

**Site Managers** – These volunteer key leaders manage daily relief operations at host sites, coordinating volunteers, supplies, and daily work projects. Site managers usually serve from one week to a month or longer, depending upon their availability.

Partner!

You can partner with MNA Disaster Response and become a part of the team!

Pray:

- that the Kingdom of God will grow through this ministry
- for God to meet all of the needs of MNA Disaster Response
- that more churches and presbyteries will partner with MNA Disaster Response to both prepare for and respond to the inevitable disasters

Go:

- Participate in a MNA Disaster Response training event for disaster preparedness and response
- Register as a disaster response volunteer
- When a disaster event occurs, be ready to answer the call!

Give:

- MNA Disaster Response is dependent upon churches and individuals who are willing to partner through giving.
Humility of Understanding

Scripture Reading

“As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.” - Ecclesiastes 11:5

Devotional

Without a doubt, we live in an era that possesses more knowledge about the world than any other previous era. In fact, our understanding is growing so fast that some thinkers have said the sum total of human knowledge is doubling every twelve months or so. Many others have suggested that it will not be too long before our knowledge is doubling every twelve hours.

We should be amazed at and grateful for the advances in science and technology that have made it possible to gain more insight into the world and how it works. At the same time, however, we must recognize that this increase in understanding has had a downside. We have seen a sharp downgrade in ethical wisdom; many people today know a lot of facts but often have shallow and pliable ethical standards. Moreover, we have seen a tendency to forget the wisdom of the past. Our culture often acts as if we are morally and intellectually superior to the generations that came before us simply because we have a greater number of known facts at our disposal. One must look high and low to find humility of understanding—the recognition of human limitations in what we know and the affirmation that human beings will never know everything that can be known.

Such recognition can occur only when we remember the “God who makes everything” is incomprehensible (Eccl. 11:5). We “do not know [His] work,” not in the sense that we are completely ignorant of what He does or who He is; rather, the true knowledge we have of the Lord is always limited by our finitude. Authentic understanding of Him and His ways in this world is possible, but this knowledge will never be comprehensive. We know this both from God’s Word (Rom. 11:33) and from the natural world. After all, though science has made many discoveries, with every discovery we learn just how much we do not yet know about creation. Even our understanding of human development in the womb, though it has increased since the Preacher’s day, continues to present mysteries to us (Eccl. 11:5).

The good news is that we do not need comprehensive knowledge of God and His ways to trust Him. His Word is sure and His covenantal promises must come to pass. Matthew Henry comments on today’s passage, “We doubt not of the birth of the child that is conceived, though we know not how it is formed; nor need we doubt of the performance of the promise, though we perceive not how things work towards it.”

Coram Deo

The only sure way to gain humility of understanding is to know the character of God. When we begin to grasp the immensity and incomprehensibility of the Lord, we begin to see our place in this world and we are forced to acknowledge our limitations, and acknowledging our limitations is part and parcel of true humility. If we want to cultivate the virtue of humility, we must know the character of God.

Passages for Further Study  Job 11:7-9; Psalm 145:3; 2 Corinthians 2:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:13-16

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<th>MONDAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 9:30a ESL; 7p Outreach Team Meeting and Missions Committee Meeting</td>
<td>2 5:30p Sewing Group; 6:15p Dare 2 Declare Rehearsal; 6:30p Kids of the King Rehearsal and Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 7:45a Men’s Bible Study; 9a Ladies’ Christmas Brunch 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 8:45 Adult CEF, Youth &amp; Children’s Sunday School; 10:30a Worship Service; 12p A Cappella Chorale Rehearsal</td>
<td>7 11a Staff Meeting; 5:30p Sewing Group</td>
<td>8 9:30a ESL; 7p NTCA Board Meeting 2015</td>
<td>9 5:30p Sewing Group; 6:15p Dare 2 Declare Rehearsal; 6:30p Kids of the King Rehearsal and Prayer Meeting; 7:15p Adult Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11 6:30p Leaders and Staff Christmas Party</td>
<td>12 12a Men’s Breakfast; 5:20p Night in Bethlehem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 8:45 Adult CEF, Youth &amp; Children’s Sunday School; 10:30a Worship Service; 12p A Cappella Rehearsal; 12:30p Welcome Lunch; 5p PHOS Youth Dinner</td>
<td>14 9a NTCA Christmas Program; 11a Staff Meeting; 5:30p Sewing Group</td>
<td>15 9a NTCA Christmas Program; 9:30a ESL</td>
<td>16 9a NTCA Christmas Program; 5:30p Sewing Group; 6:15p Dare 2 Declare Rehearsal; 6:30p Kids of the King Rehearsal and Prayer Meeting; 7:15p Adult Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>17 9a NTCA Christmas Program; 7p Session and Diaconate Meetings</td>
<td>18 9a NTCA Christmas Program</td>
<td>19 7:45a Men’s Bible Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 8:45 Adult CEF, Youth &amp; Children's Sunday School; 10:30a Worship Service; 12p A Cappella Rehearsal; 5p PHOS Dinner and Meeting; 5p PHOS Youth Dinner</td>
<td>21 9a Sewing Group; 11a Staff Meeting</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23 6:15p Dare 2 Declare Rehearsal; 6:30p Kids of the King Rehearsal and Prayer Meeting; 7:15p Adult Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>24 7p Christmas Eve Service</td>
<td>25 Christmas Day; Offices Closed</td>
<td>26 7:45a Men’s Bible Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 10:30a Worship Service; 5p PHOS Dinner and Meeting</td>
<td>28 Offices Closed</td>
<td>29 10:30a Staff Meeting</td>
<td>30 6:30p Prayer Meeting</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1 Offices Closed</td>
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The Sunday Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sunday School for Children</th>
<th>Christian Education &amp; Fellowship for Adults</th>
<th>Worship Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45 AM</td>
<td>Classroom Wing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
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</table>

Inside This Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Fritz</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts from the Associate Pastor</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministries</td>
<td>5-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship Times</td>
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</table>

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