



North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene Messenger

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The Year We Change Christmas

We had such a wonderful time celebrating Pastor Van's 60th birthday in November. Our daughter, Amanda did a terrific job planning and executing a great surprise party for him. As part of the special surprises she planned for that evening, she created a poster framed with a large mat so people could sign their names and offer a special greeting to remember his special day. The poster in the middle had the words "60 Years ago. Back in 1958," and listed hit songs, popular books, hit TV shows, top films, stars born in 1958, what things cost and other bits of trivia about that year. It's fun and kind of interesting to learn what life was like when you were still too young to know about the world around you past your cradle.

We don't often place ourselves in the annals of history just because we happened to be born in a specific year or country. But somehow, historic events can become a part of our story when we take the time to trace our heritage as it relates to historical events.

For instance, if you had been born in the year 1809, you would have been born into a turbulent time in world history. At that time, the emperor Napoleon was waging a bloody war across Austria, where estimates say that nearly 400,000 people died, in that country alone. Because of the high rates of infant mortality at that time, no one really paid much attention to births or babies born. But because of the world's focus on the terrible wars being waged across Europe, there were several very significant births occurring, but going unnoticed.

For example, William Gladstone, who would become one of England's finest statesmen, was born that year. That same year, Alfred Tennyson was born to an obscure minister and his wife. Tennyson, would go on to become the Poet Laureate of Great Britain and Ireland during much of Queen Victoria's reign, and remains one of the most popular British poets to this day. In America, Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Holmes would become an acclaimed jurist who served as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. It was in that same year that a physician named

Darwin and his wife bore a son and named him Charles Robert. Charles Darwin would go on to become the world's most noted naturalist, and would, of course, call into question the origin of mankind, forever casting doubt in the eyes of countless people, the Bible's claims of creation. That same year produced the cries of a newborn infant in a rugged log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky, named Abraham Lincoln.

If there had been television news broadcasts in 1809, the headlines would have certainly shouted, "*The destiny of the world is being shaped on an Austrian battlefield.*" But how many people alive at that time suspected that in reality history was being shaped in the cradles of England and America.

In the same way, the year Jesus was born, the headlines would probably have been filled with word of a new tax and census that had been decreed across the land by Caesar Augustus. But the real news of the day – in fact, the biggest news story in the history of our world – took place that year. It took place in a manger, in a stable in Bethlehem, where a young Jewish girl gave birth to the world's greatest citizen ever – Jesus.

We can sure miss the important stuff of life, can't we? We focus our attention on the headlines and the latest breaking news. This Christmas, what would have to happen for us to force our attention onto what really matters and what is happening in our world that truly deserves our notice and our attention? What kind of change would have to come into our way of thinking and our "important" traditions in order for the concentration of our time to rest upon what the Christ child would point us to?

What would it take for all of us to be able to look back when we remember 2018, and remember it as the year we determined to make Christmas all about returning to the world around us the gifts GOD gave us in order to offer to the world what they need the most? Salvation, compassion, grace, mercy, peace – whatever Christ has birthed in your heart today might be just what it takes to make all the difference in the world to someone else's heart this Christmas. And it might just change the world.

Prayer Needs:

Dick & Janet VanSkyver	Laurel Chapman	Carl Baxter	Jerry Parker & Family
Mark Woodby	Patrick Lindsey	Craig Smith	Dorothy Chapman
Michael Romano	Ryan Woodby	Nick Kiser	Dan Bowker
Paul & Grace Boling	Matthew Morgan	Ida Chaplow	Ardyth Eldridge
Orion Predko	Phoebe Barr	Beth Kurland	Mark & Kim Barr
Sheryl Colie & Family	Joseph Groves	Eileen Massett	Louis Perez
Ernie Rybold	Regina Williams	Alice Daugherty	Phyllis Obney
Kenny & Gail Goodman	Bonnie Rose	Eileen Jennings	Vanessa Hinckley
Annie Krapu	Ken Vandelinde	Cody Church	Country of Ukraine
Steven Leo	Janice O'Lynn	Jeff Werling	Betty Retter
Sandy Reedy	Pearl Buchkoski	Jerry & Deane Werling	The Nation of Israel
Marlene Ryan	Kitty Baxter	George Smith	Janet VanSkyver
House of James Ministries	A Youth Pastor	Unserved Loved Ones	Our Church Leaders
Our military, our leaders & our nation			



Harry Chapin Food Bank
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope

We need volunteers to help with the distribution on Wednesday, December 12, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, to help with a variety of tasks. Please spread the word to anyone you think could benefit from this special outreach and join us as we partner to help those in need. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus in North Fort Myers.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 01 – James Boye
- 05 – Jean Monroe
- 11 – Jay Adams
- 14 – Lee & Jean Monroe
- 17 – Paul Bolling
Brenda Loubier
- 18 – Tim & Carole Dillehay
- 19 – Marie Haddad
Doug Haiflich
Jerry Parker
- 20 – Russell & Cloie Hall
- 31 – Nancy Bastin



LAMB'S Christmas Party

Monday, Dec. 17

6:30 P.M.

*Bring a \$10 wrapped gift
and a finger food or
Christmas dessert to share.*

*Bring a friend and
plan to have lots of fun!*

December Calendar

- 16 – All Church Christmas Dinner
- 17 – LAMB's Christmas Party
- 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight
Communion Service – 6:00 P.M.
- 25 – Christmas Day





ALL-CHURCH CHRISTMAS DINNER

**Sunday, December 16 – sign up in the
foyer**

A Call to Prayer and Fasting

We have focused a lot recently about our church, country and world's need for revival and spiritual awakening, and how much we are all longing to experience spiritual renewal personally and corporately.

Believing in the power of prayer and fasting as it relates to the release of power from the Holy Spirit and believing it to be a powerful weapon given to us by the Lord to destroy the strongholds of evil that currently hold our world captive, and believing in its power to usher in revival, renewal and release, and to bring a great spiritual harvest of souls, we are calling our church to invest the first 21 days of 2019 to a concentrated time of prayer and fasting.

We are asking each of you to begin asking the Lord what he would have you sacrifice as you concentrate your time and attention on Him during these 21 days. It may be that you will want to fast all meals on a certain day each week, or a specific meal each day, or you may want to fast from watching television or from doing any unnecessary shopping or activity that you regularly do for recreation during that time period. The goal is to move into a more intimate relationship with GOD by eliminating distractions and making the denial of self a priority in order to hear from Him more clearly and honor Him more fully. What we are seeking is deeper fellowship with our Creator in order to do whatever we must to see revival released in our church and land.

We will be opening the church each day of those 21 days from 8 A.M. to noon, with the hope that as many of our people as possible will take the time to gather together and spend a concentrated time in prayer each day, seeking the Lord in His sanctuary. You can, of course choose to spend time in concentrated prayer at home or gathered with neighbors or friends. But our goal is to offer this time to the Lord in a collective effort to bring revival and spiritual awakening to our church and this country.

The Best Church Sign

“Honk if you love Jesus. Text if you want to meet Him.”

“Don’t let worries kill you. Let the church help.”

“Whoever stole our AC units, keep one. It’s hot where you’re going.”

We’ve probably all seen church signs like these, some funny, some trying to be profound. Our church happens to be privileged to have Bud Barr, who has dedicated himself to making sure to post something worth reading on our church marquis every week. I guess church signs play a role in helping our world stay informed that a church exists in a certain neighborhood or on a certain street.

In my first year as a youth pastor I met a student from Trevecca named Matt Hastings. He was in one of their PR groups; and we struck up a friendship that is strong to this day. Matt is now married, with five children – three amazing children of his own, and two just as amazing adopted children – and he is also serving as senior pastor at Estill Springs Church of the Nazarene in Tennessee.

Matt writes a short blog each Tuesday, and this week’s post seemed so poignant I thought I would share it with you. So, with Matt’s permission, here is his November 27 *“Tuesday’s Good Word.”*

“In my very first pastorate, I met a man named Bob Tuggle. Bob was a self-described ‘simple man’ who never got more than an 8th grade education. However, Bob was one of the wisest men I knew. He was kind and generous to this rookie pastor. During my time there, he shared something that has forever shaped me.

Bob served on the church board during a time when the church was relocating and building on new property. The leaders were researching church signs (cost, style, etc.), and a bit of a heated discussion ensued about the structure. The opinions divided the room. “Most of the time they talked about things that I didn’t know much about. Usually I just sat quietly and listened,” he said, “until that meeting. I decided to say something. I said, ‘I think

everybody here knows I used to be a drunk. Since I got saved, I don’t drink no more but you know what, I still know where all the moonshiners are. In fact, they’re all over these hills, all around us. But there ain’t one sign to point to ‘em. Now, I ain’t got more than a junior high education, but it seems to me that if the people that come to this church are as excited about Jesus as those drunks are about their liquor, well, they wouldn’t need no sign to tell ‘em where the church is...the people would show ‘em.” The room fell silent. All their faces relaxed and the tension seemed to dissipate. The pastor said softly, “Ok...meeting adjourned.” Everyone agreed. And for quite some time, that church existed without a church sign.

Beloved, you are the best church sign, more authentic than any clever saying that we’ll affix to a billboard. This is such a fun time of the year. It’s a great time to talk about your church and be excited about what’s happening. I guess what I’m saying is, be the church. In doing this, you live out a resurrection life for all to see.

Matt

“In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and will praise your Father in heaven.”

- Matthew 5:16 (NCV)

Thank you, Matt, for reminding us that, for many people, we, who call ourselves believers, are the only “promotion” the church ever receives. This Christmas, the people around you may never step foot inside a church. Do your best to be, for the people who know where to find what the world has to offer, the sign that points to what Christ has to offer.

Blessings for a Christ-filled Christmas. Pastor Van



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