

# Have a Blessed Christmas

As we celebrate a season of remembering the birth of God's only son Jesus Christ, we hope and pray you will find joy and peace knowing this gift to the world offers life abundant and eternal life. May you and all your family be blessed.

**Francis and Pam**



**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL**

Draw closer to God this Christmas season as the birth of Christ changed the world. Your eternal life was purchased by Him. He went from the cradle to the cross, to show Love to the world and cleanse our sin and give us the hope of eternal life.

## **Here are some ideas**

John 15:1-4 Remember to abide in Christ and bear fruit for Him

Philippians 2:5-11 Humble yourself and strive for the mind of Christ. What would He want for me to do?

II Corinthians 9:6-15 Be generous in all things, your talent, money and time.

Galatians 6:2-10 Let us be constant in Doing Good.

II Peter 1:2-11 Your Faith is shown by your virtue. Examine yourself

Matthew 28:16-20 Dedicate ourselves to making disciples at home and in every nation.

# BAPTISM

People have asked, "Why do you mention baptism when talking about salvation, hardly anyone else does?" While you may not hear it spoken of in the televangelism circles, the Bible has plenty to say about it and we talk about it, to restore baptism to its rightful place in the life of the Church. Baptism is only for believers, as the New Testament reveals. It is for those who have believed in Jesus and repented of their sins. It is the last act of the new birth or regeneration process. As in natural birth, this process begins with the planting of the seed, which is the hearing of the word of God, and climaxes in a new person. Baptism is part of the response to God's grace that we refer to as Faith. Faith is believing in Jesus and then trusting completely in Him. Baptism is not a human work, but a working of God on us, to transfer us, as a new creation, into His kingdom, to cleanse us of our sins, and place us in Christ. \*Mk 16:15,16, Mt 28:18-20, Gal. 3:27, I Pet. 3:21, Acts 22:16, Titus 3:5, Col. 2:11-13. Baptism is an expression of the Christian hope of the resurrection and a reenactment, in symbolic fashion, of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior. \*Rom 6:1-9.. In baptism, we follow the example of Jesus, who came to the Jordan River to submit to John and fulfill all righteousness. We obey His command to be baptized. We follow the precedent set by those who received the gospel invitation of salvation through Christ as recorded in the book of Acts. After the initial presentation of the gospel by Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, he stated very clearly what the response to the message must be- " **Acts 2:38** The account of that day shows us that as many as received the message were baptized and added to the number of disciples. Baptism is the ultimate demonstration of unity for Christians. It unites us with Christ and with one another. Paul mentions "one baptism" in his great unity passage- Eph 4, because while we may come from different social and economic backgrounds and have different abilities, everyone is the same in the baptismal pool, humbly submitting to God. It is the common act that binds us together in Christ's spirit and makes us a " Christian." It is a New Birth. Baptism has been ( for the remission of sins) for 1500 years until changed by people like Zwingli and Calvin in the Protestant Reformation.. It is pretty hard to misunderstand Peter in that the first gospel sermon on Pentecost after Jesus ascension . Peter responded, *Repent and be baptized each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* It is impossible to not understand that if you want to be forgiven of your sins, you should repent (change) and be immersed to have your sins forgiven and have the Holy Spirit in your life. Conversions in the book of Acts confirms this as well as early church history. Nicea Council in 315 AD stated that *we believe in one baptism for the remission of sins.* The problem today is that many denominations and popular evangelists call on people to say a "sinners prayer" or come to an altar and pray and confess. God then grants salvation. You can then schedule a baptism but few know it's purpose. Some see it as entering their church, others simply say it is to "show you are a believer in Christ." It has nothing to do with salvation , they claim, ignoring the New Testament scriptures. Study the Word. We need to Restore the early church commands and practices. The ordinances of the church were baptism and the Lord's supper.

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Paul writes —Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking

of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church; <sup>2</sup>

<sup>5</sup>whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me for your benefit, to fulfill the word of God, <sup>26</sup>even the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints, <sup>27</sup>**to whom God was pleased**

**to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: <sup>28</sup>whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and**

**teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ;**

<sup>29</sup>**whereunto I labor also, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily. (Col 1)**

This season of the year, we have great news for people. While most are thinking about or hoping about what they want for the Christmas season, the church has the ultimate Hope. That we proclaim to every person.

. This is our mission, He is our eternal hope.