

# NEWSLETTER

Loving God, Loving Others, Serving Christ



Holidays 2009

October-November-December

## *The Joy of Less Money* From Pastor Joe

Christmas is a time of excitement, lights, decorations and presents. Stockings hanging at the fire place, a tree reaching to the ceiling, and special winter scenes of figurines, miniature buildings, and cotton snow. Christmas carols fill the air as shopping malls are crowded by shoppers completing their gift list purchases. A true holiday extravaganza!

But wait, can it be? No gifts this year? Bills to pay! It's a recession! How can the Christmas season be enjoyed without those affluent trappings that we've become so accustomed to!

Perhaps you've found this scenario to be all too real for you this Christmas season. Let me relate the story of Patrick Borders as his family faced such a situation not too long ago. (Copied from "In Touch" magazine, December, 2004).

As my family sat down for dinner, I lit the first candle on our advent wreath. My young children, Lauren and Jared, smiled with Christmas anticipation, but I lacked the energy to smile back. Memories of past Christmases haunted me.

My six-figure income had purchased material happiness, something I thought we needed and deserved. My wife Tonya and I would buy nice gifts for the kids, and we'd spend vacations shopping, eating out, or relaxing on the beach. But those times were gone. The recession hit, and I'd lost my job. Debts piled up. Tonya returned to teaching, but her job would never afford us the lifestyle we considered acceptable. I wondered, will we ever be happy again?

At church, we began sitting in a back pew. People had heard about our financial struggles, and I didn't want to discuss it. I hoped nobody would notice us. After worship one Sunday, I was rushing my family out when I heard, "Patrick, wait up!" My pastor was smiling and holding an envelope, "Someone left this on my desk for you."

Inside I found a \$50 grocery store gift certificate and a note that read, "Merry Christmas! From a friend."

My face burned with embarrassment. Tonya and I treasured our self-reliance. I never asked other people for help—I rarely even asked God.

"I can't accept this," I said. "You have to," the pastor replied. "I don't know who it's from."

I stared at the gift certificate for a moment and sighed. We did need the help. I slid it into my pocket.

Over the years, we'd joyfully supported our church and other charities. But I relished accepting that gift certificate as much as a punch in the stomach. The old adage seemed true: it's better to give than receive. On the way home, I gazed out the window as a wave of humiliation rushed over me.

Throughout December, our children's excitement grew. Lauren bounded in the door after her last day of school before

Christmas. "Let's go out for pizza!" "Sweetheart," I said, almost whispering, "we can't afford that anymore." "But I want to do something special," she glanced at Tonya. "We always go out for pizza and a movie."

Lauren was right. Normally, we loved to celebrate special occasions by eating out and seeing a show. It seemed unfair that we could no longer enjoy the fun things in life. "Tell you what," Tonya proposed. "Why don't we make home made pizza together?" Lauren beamed "that'd be great!"

The four of us gathered around the table and made pizza from scratch—kneading the dough, cooking the sauce, and adding the toppings. When dinner was ready, we dimmed the light and ate by candlelight. Afterward, we all cuddled on the sofa and watched a movie borrowed from the library

"This was awesome!" Jared said as the movie finished. "Let's do this every week."

Christmas morning, Lauren and Jared raced downstairs and found two scooters under the tree. My wife bought them using money she had received as a Christmas gift. Tonya and I had agreed not to exchange gifts that year.

As I watched the kids admire their presents, I thought of the Magi bringing gifts to Jesus, He was born into the most humble of circumstances. My income level had once made me proud—I'd thought I could create happiness from my salary. But Jesus preached that we must be humble if we are to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 18:3-4).

I started to realize that self-reliance separated me from the kingdom. If I was to discover real happiness, I needed to depend on Jesus and appreciate His gifts. But to experience how He takes care of us, I'd have to die to my self and draw closer to Him. During the next weeks, friends continued sending us anonymous gift certificates or cash—either through our pastor or the mail. We were blessed by other surprises as well, like an overdue rebate and a long forgotten inheritance check. With the help, we chipped away at our debts.

"God's taking care of us," Tonya commented one evening, smiling. "We're going to be okay."

A growing confidence in God's provision gave us peace. New possessions had once excited us; now saving money brought us a special kind of joy. We took Jared's advice: most Fridays, we made pizza and watched a library movie. And we bought generic groceries, clipped coupons, and shopped for clothes at thrift stores. Each dollar saved deepened our relationship with our Provider. By the next December, I'd adjusted to our new lifestyle. Reflecting on my earlier anxiety, I realized God had given me a Christmas gift: "the secret...both of abundance and suffering need. (Phil 4).

## COME WORSHIP WITH US

SUNDAY SCHOOL	9:00 a.m. Sunday (Children, Youth, and Adult Studies)
WORSHIP	10:00 a.m. Sunday (Children's Church Provided)
CELEBRATE RECOVERY	7:00 p.m. Monday (Christ Centered Recovery...Counts as AA or NA)
TEAMKIDZ	6:30 p.m. Wednesday (Children's Bible Club)

## CALENDAR

### Regular Schedule

Celebrate Recovery (Each Monday) 7:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.  
 Shepard Place Study (Each Tuesday) 9:30 a.m.  
 Prayer Group at Clousers (Each Tues.) 6:30 p.m.  
 Local Pastors Prayer at FBC (Each First Wednesday) 11:30 a.m.  
 WMU Meeting (Each First Thursday) 2:00 p.m.  
 Heart Links (Each First Friday) 7:00 p.m.  
 Shepard Place Service (each third Sunday) 2:00 p.m.  
 Needleworks Club (Second and Fourth Friday) 10:00 a.m.  
 Senior Lunch ( Third Thursday) 12:00 noon



Nov 11	Veterans Day	
Nov 12	Needleworks Club (2nd & 4th Thurs)	10:00 a.m.
Nov 14	Holiday Fair (at FBC)	9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.
Nov 15	Shoe Boxes due Operation Christmas Child	
Nov 15	Shepard Place Service	2:00 p.m.
Nov 20	Senior BBQ at FBC (Pastor Joe's Treat)	Noon
Nov 25-27	Thanksgiving Vacation (School Holiday)	
Dec 7	Executive Committee Meeting	6:00 p.m.
Dec 12	Church Christmas Dinner & School Play	5:00 p.m. (Play starts 6:30 p.m.)
Dec 18	Christmas Caroling (Shepard Place)	6:30 p.m.
Dec 20	Christmas Choral Program	10:00 a.m.
Dec 21-Jan 8	School Christmas Break	
Dec 24	Christmas Eve Candle Light Service	5:00 p.m.
Dec 31	New Year Eve Service	7:00 p.m.



### THANKSGIVING

**Spend time with Family and Friends.  
 And Thank God!**

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## *Holiday Birthdays!!*

Nov. 6 Mary Lou Dodson  
Nov. 7 Betty Delk  
Nov. 8 Laurie Foster  
Nov. 16 Flora Robertson  
Nov. 28 Peter Mullins

Dec. 8 Ilene Terry  
Dec. 23 Hannah Wood  
Dec. 27 Frank Heath

**BBQ FOR SENIORS**  
**Cooked by Pastor Joe**  
**November 20th at Noon**  
**Fun—Food—Fellowship**  
**Our School Kids will perform**



**HOLIDAY FAIR**  
**SPONSORED BY OUR SCHOOL (CCS)**  
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14**  
**9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**  
**COME AND PURCHASE YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFTS**



**OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER**  
**IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM**  
**SATURDAY DECEMBER 12, 5:00 PM**  
**FOLLOWING THE DINNER THE SCHOOL WILL**  
**PRESENT THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PLAY**



**CHRISTMAS CAROLING**  
**FRIDAY DECEMBER 18, 5:00 PM**  
**SHEPARD'S PLACE**  
**HOT CIDER AND FELLOWSHIP TO FOLLOW IN THE CLUBHOUSE**

**CHRISTMAS CANTADA**  
**"The Colors of Christmas"**  
**FIRST BAPTIST CHOIR, SUNDAY DEC. 20 AT 10:00 A.M.**  
**(DURING WORSHIP SERVICE—FELLOWSHIP TO FOLLOW)**



**CANDLE LIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**  
**MONDAY, DEC. 24 AT 5:00 P.M.**



**Enjoy this special service with your entire family as you Celebrate Christmas Eve**



**A Family In Christ**

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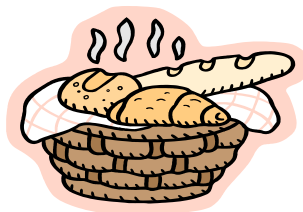
**Tuesday Night Prayer & Bible Study**



**6:30 PM Prayer and Praise and Devotion from the Book of Luke. Led by Pastor Jerry**

**Senior Lunch Program**

The Senior Lunch is held every third Thursday at FBC, in the Fire side Room. We enjoy great fellowship, songs, door prizes and of course, a tasty homemade lunch.



**Operation Christmas Child**

Make a shoebox gift for a needy child around the world. Shoeboxes are due by Nov 15th. Brochures are available in the church office.

**Lottie Moon Offering**

Churchwide Christmas International  
Missions Giving Begins Dec 6

**Needleworks Club**

The Needleworks Club meets every second and fourth Friday at 10:00 am. The ladies get together for fellowship while they sew and work on special projects.



**Tech Team**

Pastor Joe will be teaching about the sound, lighting, and computer operation of the technical system during the Praise Team practice on Thursday afternoons at 3 pm.