

December 2020

Church Life

- If you are a guest with us today, we want to **WELCOME** you! If you haven't done so already, we invite you to stop by our Guest Reception Center in the lobby at the scooter table following the service. Someone will greet you, answer any questions you may have, and give you a gift as a thank-you for worshipping with us today!
- **Bible Reading Plan** - This year, we are encouraging our entire church to read through the Bible in one year. Every weekend, we will be giving away a \$50 gift card to a person who read the readings for the prior week. So here's how this works, please visit the scooter table **BEFORE** service, write your name on a ticket (if you did the readings for the week), and drop it in the bin. Then, at the end of the service, Pastor Adam will pull out a name, and someone will go home with a gift card(all services). We want to encourage our church to be in their Bibles, happy reading!
- This **Christmas**, we would like to generously bless each of our mission partners with gifts to help them celebrate our Savior's birth. The tree in the lobby is covered in ornaments that list various items that each ministry could use to be more effective in reaching people for Jesus and making disciples. If you would like to help, please take an ornament from the tree, purchase the item listed on the ornament, and bring that gift back to the church anytime before **December 15th**. It is your choice whether or not you wrap the gift, but please tape the ornament to the outside so we know where to deliver it.
- **Parents**, teens are opening back up this Sunday! We have heard loud and clear from our teens and parents that the teens need to be back in worship services designed for them. This will be happening from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at **Ebenezer's Church** in December. This facility has a better set up to accommodate our group's size. They have a parsonage that is converted into a youth house and a ½ court indoor basketball court! The address is 5166 Ottogan St, Holland, MI 49423.
- **Ladies**, the Christmas Gathering scheduled for Friday, December 11th, is canceled. We will let you know when we will meet again!



December 2020

The Gift – Myrrh

Matthew 2: 1-11, After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶ “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.” ⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” ⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

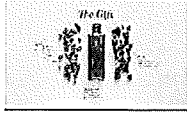
Isaiah 53, Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. ⁴ Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Luke 9: 22-23, And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” ²³ Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Life Application

Take this week to write a note of thankfulness to Jesus for not quitting when things got hard. Thank Him for following through even when we fail to do the same for him. Thank Him for the FREE gift of eternal life.

Please keep this letter to read on Christmas Day.



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The Gift – Myrrh

READ: Matthew 2: 1-11

1. The Magi opened their treasure chest and gave Jesus gifts of, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Have you ever gotten an unusual gift?
2. Myrrh was used 17 times in the Bible, as an antiseptic, and more commonly to embalm the dead. Biblical scholars would say myrrh represents Jesus as the suffering servant who was born to die for the forgiveness of our sins. Before this sermon had you given much thought to the gifts? Did you realize the symbolism of what they represented?

READ: Isaiah 53:1-12

1. Being called sheep is not a compliment.
 - a. They are weak
 - b. They are witless
 - c. They are wayward
 - d. They are defenseless
 - e. They follow the crowd. Why is this a problem and what does it have to do with us?
2. When the prophet Isaiah said we are like sheep he was saying, "You need a lot of help "because you tend to go away from God's path and you tend to choose your own." How does verse six speak to this problem?
3. 700 years before Jesus was born, God gave us a message through Isaiah. It was a bit more than just a message, explain this message like you would to a friend that doesn't know Jesus.
4. Have you ever been hurt, mistreated, rejected, overlooked, unjustly criticized, misunderstood? Jesus understands. Using this passage explain how.
5. We know how badly Jesus was treated even before crucifixion from the New Testament. Isaiah implies that he would be so disfigured that he wasn't even recognizable as a human being. Does this cause a reaction in you?
6. On the cross they offered him wine mixed with myrrh to deaden the agony. Myrrh offered as a symbolic gift at birth and a fulfillment of that symbolism at the end of his life. Discuss.

A Quote from Pastor Adam... What is it that sets Christianity apart from all other world religions? What sets Christianity apart from Islam, from Buddhism, from New Age, from Hinduism, what is it that sets it apart? What separates Christianity from all other world religions is that God would become flesh and he would be pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins, beaten so we could be made whole! So, when you visualize the Wise Men offering him myrrh, the substance used to embalm the dead, you understand God was foreshadowing what was to come. His son was born to die. He was born to sacrifice his life for the sins of the world. Jesus understood this, and he prophesied it of himself.

READ: Luke 9: 22-23

1. What does this tell us about a life truly devoted to Jesus?
2. Following Jesus is not a hobby, an add on, or something that helps us feel good while we celebrate Santa and go to grandma's house! Why do you think we have lost the true meaning of Christmas?
3. This season is all about God becoming flesh, living a perfect life, and giving up His life for you. And when you understand that it overwhelms and overtakes your life. How? Do you see a difference *that shows* in most believer's lives?
4. God sent Kings to give Jesus gold declaring he would be King of Kings. Frankincense to declare He is our great High Priest. And myrrh declaring that this child was born to die. Are these "gifts" taking on new meaning for you?

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