

# PVBC Youth Ministry

*Worship Him completely*

*Walk with Him consistently*

*Witness for Him compassionately*

←  
December 2014



## ← Upcoming Schedule

**Dec. 5:** FNF @ 7:00 PM

**Dec. 12:** Youth Christmas Party & Dinner @ 6:00 PM

**Dec. 14:** All-Church Christmas Dinner @ 6:00 PM

**Dec. 19 :** FNF @ 7:00 PM

**Dec. 21:** Christmas Sunday Service

**Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>:** NO FNF – Happy Winter Break!

## “Going Public” In Baptism

This past November, we concluded our Romans 12 all-church series with three events: an outreach, a celebration dinner, and a baptism service—all in the span of one week! If you think about it, the Romans 12 series as a whole, topped off by these three events, pretty effectively covered all of what our youth ministry is all about—“Worshipping Him Completely, Walking With Him Consistently, and Witnessing for Him Compassionately”. These three values can be thought of as looking “upward” (towards God),



Feel free to e-mail Ben at [benfriedman@pvbc.com](mailto:benfriedman@pvbc.com), call/text (856)-577-8609, or contact one of our awesome Youth Leaders!



Worship Him completely



Walk with Him consistently



Witness for Him compassionately



(cont'd) inward (towards each other, in the church), and outward (towards our community). We will always strive to improve how well we worship upwardly, disciple inwardly, and evangelize outwardly, but that formula itself—"upward, inward, outward"—is a formula that *cannot* be improved upon!

It was a great joy, then, to see four of our youth, Matthew A., Nick C., Natalie L., and Jessica N. (as well as one adult, Sam W.), step forward to publicly declare their faith through baptism. Each one prepared and delivered a personal testimony of their conversion and of God's working in their lives.

Baptism is an outward symbol of the internal cleansing Jesus has brought about in our lives, and is a powerful, one-time public declaration of our faith. In **Matthew 10:33 (NLT)**, Jesus says *"Everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven."* I think it can be implied that the opposite is also true—whenever recognizes him here on earth, he will recognize before God in heaven. However fashionable it might be today, there is simply no such thing as being a "private Christian". We must be tactful and strategic in how we speak of and represent Jesus in public, of course, but not representing him at all is not an option.

As Protestants, we are strong in recognizing the



difference between outward forms and inward worship. Thus, we are quick to realize that the act of baptism itself doesn't actually save us. We recognize that what matters is the position of the heart towards God and what matters is trusting Jesus in faith. However, our fault may be that we can often value symbols like baptism too *little*. Baptism is a powerful event in our lives that we can look back on to remember that God saves and to remember our commitment to him. We are so happy that Nick, Matthew, Natalie, and Jessica have said "yes" to baptism!

## Upcoming Events

### - **December 12: Youth Christmas Party, 6:00 PM**

All are welcome, and encouraged to bring your friends to our Youth Christmas Party, starting at 6:00 PM. There will be dinner provided, Christmas songs, games, and a gift exchange. Bring a wrapped gift under \$15 in value to participate!

### - **December 14: All-Church Christmas Dinner, 6:00-9:00**

We highly encourage you to get to know our church family more and celebrate Christmas with our all-church Christmas Dinner! Dinner will be catered by Cherrystones. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 10 years old. RSVP via SignUpGenius by 12/10. Sharon N. and Lynn Y. will collect money at church.

### — **December 5, 12, & 19: →**

#### **"One Great Light" Christmas Message Series**

Come to FNF and dig deeply into the word of God to see the wonders of the Christmas exposed anew. Come hear why the Christmas story is the most revolutionary story ever told!



## “An Upside-Down Christmas?”

fact, it was unheard of.

We need to fight to maintain the freshness, the sense of daring, and the revolutionary new-ness of Christmas. The fact that the Bible pictures two absolute opposite pictures—the eternally-existent, universe creating, DNA-sustaining, author of galaxies and a completely dependent, limited, and even impoverished infant—and combines them into one image, or, better put, one *person*, is mind-bending. And he did it because he loves us. We all know that Jesus was born of Mary, but how many of us have considered that, in a real way, Mary was born—and born again—of Jesus? After all, “All things were made through him, and apart from him was not one thing made that has been made” (**John 1:3**)! G.K. Chesterton says this story is “much too good to be true, except that it is true.”

Or, consider the fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a hard-working, but blue-collar town, off the beaten path. Wouldn't it have been more fitting for the King of the World to have been born in Rome? Even in Bethlehem, though, there was no room to house the Son of God, so they put him in a feeding trough. It is at least comforting to remember he had visitors at his birth—even if they were the pagan practitioners of the cultic arts we call the three wise men.

Sometimes, I like to picture the angels in heaven waiting eagerly to hear God announce his plans for entering into planet earth: “And my Son will be born in...(drumroll): The dumpster behind the 7/11 in San Pedro! But hold up, the Wicca people get to see him first!...and then you may deck the halls with boughs of holly.”

My prayer for us this Christmas is that we would worship Jesus with a sense of newness and awe as we contemplate the endless wonders of God!

### Most of us can name our favorite Christmas traditions, yearly

activities and foods that never seem to get old. For the Friedman family in New Jersey, Christmas started with putting up the tree in our living room and candles in our windows, usually about two weeks before Christmas day. My sister and I would put all of the ornaments on the lower third of the tree (because of our height) and my Mom would take them all and move them up on the tree overnight. We would bake gingerbread cookies the week before Christmas and eat Pillsbury Doughboy cinnamon buns on Christmas morning.

The best part of Christmas was the presents (of course), and anyone who still clung to the old maxim “tis better to give than to receive” had obviously never received a Lego train set. Fifteen minutes with that kid-engineered beauty of a steam engine would put any of that moralistic nonsense to rest!

All of this goes to say that our Christmas was, as most of yours probably are, steeped in tradition. Now, there is nothing wrong with this, of course, but one negative result of such traditions is that they can carry over to our perceptions of the Biblical Christmas story—the wise men, the manger, the Virgin Mary, Bethlehem—all are elements of an old and time-honored story. The thing about Christmas, however, is that what happened at Jesus' birth was absolutely *un-traditional*—in

## Prayer Points: How to be a “Persistent Widow” in December (Luke 18:1-8)

This December, please join us in prayer:

- 1) For the **Bible story of Jesus' coming to earth** to be **thrilling in our eyes**.
- 2) For December to be a month where we seize the opportunity to show and experience that “it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).
- 3) For **one new person** to attend FNF and meet God, as a result of our Christmas Party on Friday, 12/12.