

PVBC Youth Ministry

Worship Him completely

Walk with Him consistently

Witness for Him compassionately

← December 2015



← Upcoming Schedule

December 4: FNF @ 7:00 PM

December 11: FNF Christmas Party @ 6:00 PM!

December 13: All-Church Christmas Dinner @ 6:00 PM

December 18: Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Packing @ 6:00 PM

December 20: Christmas Sunday Service @ 9:00 AM

December 25: Merry Christmas! (No FNF)



Re-Writing History in November...

We have written before that thanksgiving is like re-writing history. It's like re-writing history, because when we give thanks to God, from whom "all blessings flow", we are essentially going back in our mental journals, and erasing where we would have attributed our success or our blessings to something or someone other than God: ourselves, our own hard work, other people or even just luck or chance. After erasing, then, we pencil in "God did that" above each blessing we receive. **James 1:17** says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above."

We have a lot to be thankful for, not only this past November, but this year as well, in our Youth Ministry at PVBC. In November, though, I am thankful that two of our youth, Naomi and Matt, stepped forward to be baptized on Sunday, publicly declaring their trust in and

Have any questions, suggestions, or prayer requests?

Feel free to e-mail Ben at benfriedman@pvbc.com, call/text (310)-703-2065, or contact one of our awesome Youth Leaders!



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allegiance to Christ. I am also thankful because over the past month, we finished our year long series on “**The Greatest Story Ever Told**”, wrapping up our look at the grand story of the entire Bible. I am thankful for our **Servant Leadership Team (SLT)** who have continued to serve our youth so well over the past month, from leading and preparing worship to leading games to leading set-up and clean up, to planning and putting on our monthly fellowship



event, the Movie & Game Night, on **November 6**. They also helped make key decisions in the planning of our upcoming **2016 Winter Retreat** at San Marcos Christian Camp, in February. I am thankful for our youth advisors, who faithfully disciple our youth, and our parents as well.

The year is almost over already (crazy, right?) but there is so much to look forward to in December. Because Advent is a time of anticipation, we have much to anticipate, to help us look forward to celebrating Jesus’ birth at Christmas. **December 11** will be our **Youth Christmas Party** at FNF, and **December 13** will be our All-Church Christmas Dinner. The next weekend, then, we will have our Operation Christmas Child shoebox packing on **December 18**, and our church Christmas service on **December 20**. Let’s finish the year strong, and see you there!

Upcoming Events

- **December 11: FNF Christmas Party @ 6:00 PM:** Dinner will be provided, so make sure to come on time! Come, and bring friends for dinner, worship, a devotional led by our youth, and a gift exchange! We suggest that you make your White Elephant Gift by hand, but if you decide to purchase one, our gift limit is \$15. See you there!
- **December 18: Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Packing @ 6:00 PM:** We will spend our last Friday of 2015 reaching out by going to Santa Ana to pack boxes for Operation Christmas Child. These boxes will be shipped overseas, to give not only Christmas gifts, but the Gospel to children throughout the world! We will meet at church beforehand (TBA) to carpool over and eat dinner. Contact Ben if you want to participate!
- **Save-the-Date: February 12-15, 2016. Winter Retreat 2016! San Marcos Christian Camp, Santa Barbara, CA.** You won’t want to miss our Youth Winter Retreat over Presidents’ Day Weekend, 2016! Pick up a registration form this Friday or Sunday: Don’t miss the “Early Bird” registration date of **Friday, December 18!** Invite your friends, for a weekend of fellowship, preaching, worship, games, and, of course, s’mores!

This Christmas, Go The Opposite Direction: Spend *Ourselves*



Christmas season “officially” begins at different times for different families. For some, Christmas season begins the day after Halloween, for others, the day after Thanksgiving, for others, in December (this is me), and for others still, not until Christmas Eve! But, whenever your family opens the door to Christmas season, a lot comes through that door. Traditions come rushing in. Family visits, Holiday parties, and vacation plans start to overwhelm our normal schedules. Trips to the mall become more frequent and the parking lots fill up, as we check items off our shopping lists.

Even with the stress this frenzy can bring, there really is something merry and cheerful about collectively celebrating a holiday with our families, our friends, and in a way, even with the person in front of us in line at Starbucks, buying the same box of red and green-wrapped almond chocolates we are. I am all for this!

However, in all of this, we can feel the pressure, even if we don't *want* to, to strive for bigger, better, and more: a bigger tree than last year's, more lights on our house than our

neighbor, more gifts per family member, busier schedules than last year. It's almost a badge of honor to be the “most stressed” at Christmas. We may start to wonder if God is pleased with all of our holiday frenzy.

One challenge to take up this Christmas is the challenge of striving for bigger, better, and more in the *opposite* direction. Our hearts are made to be big-hearted and to go “all out”, so channel that instinct for God's glory and our neighbor's good. Maybe the answer to a longer shopping list for ourselves and our immediate family is not refusing to shop, but shopping extravagantly for the poor and the forgotten, for that homeless person that always seems to hang around outside the grocery store. Maybe the opposite of outdoing our next-door neighbor's Christmas lights is outdoing them in hospitality, and having them over for dinner to share the Gospel! **Romans 12:10** even urges us to “*outdo* one another in showing honor!” It could even be something as simple as going out of our way to give someone else the parking spot at Del Amo.

None of this is to suggest that we need to *work* to earn God's favor this Christmas. The Christmas story is just the *opposite*: the Son of God took on flesh and came to earth to *unconditionally* love sinners by dwelling with them, then dying on the cross for their sins. However, there *is* something deeply joyful and abundantly merry about spending *ourselves* for Christ this December!

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

This December, please join us in prayer:

- 1) For God to move someone to **salvation** before the end of the year.
- 2) For God to give us a spirit of **giving and over-the-top generosity** this Christmas season.
- 3) For God give us a spirit of **unity**.