



December 2018 Chronicle

Calvary Baptist Church
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Christmas Traditions

In 1993, Karen heard a guest speaker on Focus on the Family talked about traditions during the holidays. Merriam-Webster defines tradition as, “an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior (such as a religious practice or a social custom)”. The speaker defined traditions as those events our grown children will remember when they are not at home during the seasons. It should be a time where those memories are carried throughout not only childhood but also their adult lives as well.

That year we decided to celebrate Christmas Finnish style, my wife’s heritage. We put up homemade decorations with Finnish words, sang traditional Christmas music with Finnish words, decorated the table Finn style, and ate traditional Finnish foods served on Christmas Day. The children loved it and wanted to know what country we were going to do for the next year. Thus, was born the tradition of selecting an International culture, studying that country, and celebrating Christmas the way they do. However, over the years, as in most traditions it sometimes is more work and less celebratory of the reason for the season.

In Mark chapter seven we find Pharisees and teachers of the law questioning Jesus as they observed His disciples eating with unclean hands.

¹Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ²they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.

This behavior was going against the law of the elders (tradition).

³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash.

In verses 8-9, Jesus tells the crowd the real source of uncleanness.

*⁸You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” ⁹And he said to them, **“You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!***

In this passage Jesus wants us to consider whether traditions such as hand washing has elevated itself above or is equal to what God through His Scripture is really saying. By elevating tradition to equal status with the Scripture it keeps us from guilt of breaking God’s law. When considering your Christmas traditions, think about these questions:

1. Do they honor God?
2. How do they fit with God’s Word?

Many traditions start out with a good purpose but change directions from the original intent (learning how people around the world worship God during Christmas). This year our family is refocusing our Christmas around the manger. What “tradition” do you have that has changed course? Our traditions should always start with God and not alter His word. Merry Christmas, and never forget Jesus is the reason for the season.

Dear Friends and Jesus followers,

We have experienced significant transitions in our lives, most of which began with a degree of surprise. Each time we have learned to see more clearly God's leading even though each time the transitions have become more difficult and complicated. Thankfully we learned early on that God is faithful and is calling us to increased steps of faith with the challenges we faced concerning direction and God's will. That doesn't mean that we have been stellar in our response and following what God is doing, but for sure we have grown in trusting the God of the universe and resting more and more in His work in and through our lives.

Once again we have found ourselves surprised at what God is doing in our lives even as the possibility of shepherding the local body of believers that go by the name of Calvary Baptist Church began to materialize. We found ourselves asking God, "Where did that come from?" None the less, we have sensed God's strong nudge along this new and very different path for us. Each step of the way brought new insight and a confirming sense that God was indeed in this radical shift in our lives from overseas, cross-cultural ministry to a shepherding role in a rural town in Northwest Pennsylvania. There were scantily few exceptions to what we felt God leading us toward, and yet, those exceptions turned out to be God testing us along the way.

Bottom line: It is with great humility and confirmed sense of God's leading in our lives that we accept the warm "call" from Calvary Baptist Church of Warren, PA. We believe the "fingerprints" of God that we have sensed in bringing us to this point are also the encouragements that God wants to do something new in Warren through our teaming together with everyone at Calvary to bring greater glory to God and His Son Jesus. We accept this "call" knowing that in and of ourselves we can do nothing to help Calvary Baptist Church. We believe with God clearly in this process we can do a bit more as we lean into Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to bring greater focus on God. How-

ever, we believe that greater works than Jesus himself did are available in and through our ministry at Calvary if everyone at Calvary joins together with their added gifts and strengths and resources and sacrifices mixed with God's power through His Spirit! To that end, and as we begin our transition toward being in Warren full time, we ask you to be fervent in prayer for what God wants to do and what your part might be in that process. May God alone receive all the glory for what He will do.

Pray with us during this transition time. We are working with the deacons to have meaningful contact with you all as we travel and bring closure to our ministry with World Team. We look forward to our connecting during these times.

Grace and peace,

Joel and Linda Dingeldein

December Helpers

Deacon of the Week:

December 2 Kirk Kirkpatrick
 December 9 John Backstrom
 December 16 Leo Donovall
 December 23 Kerwin Smith
 December 30 Dave Chapman

Greeters:

December 2 Todd & Debbie Meabon
 December 9 Cindy Hile
 December 16 Marilyn Schoder
 December 23 Brad & Sheryl Morgan
 December 30 Beverly Pangborn

Nursery/Children's Church

December 2 Liza Donovall & Ruth Zullo
 December 9 Liza Donovall & Krissy Perrin
 December 16 Liza Donovall & Loraine Smith
 December 23 Liza Donovall & Peggy Chapman
 December 30 Liza Donovall & Sheryl Morgan



Ladies Christmas Lunch and White Elephant Gift Exchange

Saturday, December 8, 1:00PM
Perkins Restaurant

We will be having a Ladies' Christmas Lunch and White Elephant Gift Exchange on Saturday, December 8 at 1PM. Ladies of all ages are invited to come for a time of fellowship and fun at Perkins Restaurant. To add to the fun, find a no-longer-needed item in your home, wrap it up and bless someone else with it.

We would love to save a seat for you. So please sign up on the sheet located on the Sanctuary overflow bulletin board. For more information, contact JoAnn Greenawalt.



Upcoming Meetings

Deacon Board

Monday, December 3, 7:00PM

Christian Education Board

Sunday, December 2, 11:15AM

Deaconess Board

Sunday, December 9, 11:15AM

Safety Committee

Tuesday, December 18, 7:00PM

Centuries have rolled by,
and still the world longs for
and looks for
the peace the angels sang about
on that first Christmas morning. ...

"Where is His peace?" you ask.

I'll tell you where it is.

It abides in the hearts of all
who have trusted His grace.



Billy Graham

In the Stable *Where Christ* *Was Born...*



Smell the stable. Smell the fresh cow dung. Smell the dampness of the cave, the water dripping along the side. Smell the donkeys and the cows. Smell the rancid straw, gleaming with animal saliva.

See the cobwebs, the hen with her little brood of chicks over in the corner, the crude and simple atmosphere of heaven's maternity ward.

Touch the warm backs of the animals as they chew their food in the stalls. Feel the manger, cushioned with new, clean straw.

Listen to the wind whistling through the gate. Listen again and you will hear the hundreds who still are up late at night, meandering through the streets of Bethlehem.

Notice the shaft of light that penetrates the gate as if it were focused from heaven upon this particular place. Look over in the far corner and you will see them. You will hear them. And you can touch them. The young mother with her newborn child. Her sturdy husband-to-be. The wondering shepherds.

How goes the stable of your life? Where is Christ being born in the shadows of your inner self? While the noises of life all around you continue, have you noticed what's happening inside your stable? Have you invited the wise to come and open their treasures to you? Have you allowed the lonely to come and celebrate the new things that are being born in your life? Are you listening to your dreams during the night?

~Hal Edwards, in "Faith at Work" magazine,
December 1978



I SPEAK TO YOU from the depth of eternity. *before the world was formed, I AM!* You hear Me in the depths of your being, where I have taken up residence. *I am Christ in you, the hope of Glory.* I, your LORD and Savior, am alive within you. Learn to tune in to My living Presence by seeking Me in silence.

As you celebrate the wonder of My birth in Bethlehem, celebrate also your rebirth into eternal life. This everlasting gift was the sole purpose of My entering your sin-stained world. Receive My gift with awe and humility. Take time to explore the vast dimensions of My love. Allow thankfulness to flow freely from your heart in response to My glorious gift. *Let My Peace rule in your heart, and be thankful.*

Taken From: *Jesus Calling Perpetual Calendar, December 24*

Calvary's Cookies, Cocoa & Carols

**Wednesday, December 19
6:30PM**

Join us in Fellowship Hall and pour yourself a generous cup of cocoa, grab a handful of cookies, and belt out some the best loved carols of the ages. 'Tis the season to be jolly. Be sure to bring some friends and family to share this time of Christmas fun.



Winter Camps

Camp Burton

December 27-29

1-8 Grade

\$65.00

Miracle Mountain Ranch

Jr. Winter Camp

January 25-26

8- 12 years old

\$85.00

Sr. Winter Camp

February 1-2

13-17 years old

\$85.00

