



From the Pastor's Desk

By Rev. Freddy Fritz

Four Goals for Spiritual Growth in 2022

It is a New Year. And it is time for New Year Resolutions. Most people who make New Year Resolutions fail within a few weeks. Rather than make “resolutions,” why not adopt “goals” instead. Let me suggest four goals for spiritual growth in 2022:

1. **I will read through the Bible this year.** Growing Christians are reading Christians. Find a Bible reading plan that will help you. You will never grow spiritually if you do not read God's word regularly.
2. **I will spend time in prayer every day.** Growing Christians spend time each day in focused prayer with the Lord. I am not talking about praying before a meal or praying while commuting. I am talking about being alone with the Lord in prayer. Make a list of items to help you pray. The way to increase time spent in prayer is to increase the number of items for which you pray.
3. **I will walk in holiness.** Make a commitment to apply God's word consistently to your life each day. And also make a commitment to deal radically with sin. Quickly repent every time you know that you have broken God's law.
4. **I will worship in person with God's people each Lord's Day.** You will not grow spiritually if you do not worship in person with God's people each Lord's Day. Watching a worship service is not worship. It is watching others worship. The highest priority of the medical community is to keep people healthy. But the highest priority for Christians is to worship God.

If you practice these four goals in 2022, I can assure you that you will grow spiritually. I pray that you will have a spiritually profitable New Year!

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Christmas 2021 at TBPC

December 13....

The Messiah!

First, there were five from TBPC,
eating at Datz...



Then there were 21 from TBPC,
listening in awe...



Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

December 18... Food Pantry

With thanks to TBPC from Bay Chapel ...

On their first day at TBPC, December 11, Bay Chapel Food Pantry served 221 families. On December 18, they blessed 245 families with food and also with gift cards in stockings for kids.



Cars wound around the Salvation Army Truck in line on December 18.



Pastor Wes and Jen Morris, Pastor Chad and Tiffany Clower, Lee and Michelle Scheilka (Pantry Coordinators), the Pantry Team (some pictured), and the Bay Chapel Family thanks the TBPC Family for the use of our grounds for this mercy ministry to our community.

December 19

Christmas Caroling



Oh, Come!

Let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Eileen

Men's Ministry

Men's Breakfast

On December 11, 2021, the Men's Ministry had its second Men's Breakfast since December of 2019. The event was well attended with seventeen men enjoying breakfast at the church and a message given by our very own Chaplain, Michael Bridges, who serves at the local James A. Haley VA Hospital in Tampa. This was Michael's first breakfast presentation. It was noteworthy of the time and dedication Michael devotes at our local VA Hospital. All of the other sixteen men were equally interested in the dedication he has to our veterans in Tampa and with the families he interacts. Michael does such a great service touching the hearts of thousands of people, spreading Gods' word, and being there with families during the last few hours of a person's life. Michael is a strong influence to people of the PCA through his dedication he has to these veterans.



We began the breakfast at approximately 8:40 a.m. Alisa and Brian Carrier cooked the breakfast; they enjoy cooking for the men of TBPC. Some of the items served were thick-cut bacon, sausage links, homemade biscuits and gravy, eggs benedict, fruit tray, and hot apples for Christmas along with coffee and orange juice. It was a festive morning as all of the men enjoyed the breakfast immensely.

Following breakfast, the Men's Ministry Director, Brian Carrier, spoke about the events that we will be doing the remainder of the year. These include bowling and a trip to a Tampa Bay Lightning game. We are looking forward to a growing year in the Men's Ministry events next year.

Brian then introduced Jeff Beams, the Men's Bible Study leader, and Jeff discussed the Bible Study that will begin again on January 7, meeting at 7:45 a.m. on Saturday mornings. We will continue our study of "The Book of Acts." Jeff also brought up that we will be using another Bible study guide by Dr. Jack B. Scott. He invited those who are interested to please attend.

Next Brian introduced our own Chaplain Michael Bridges who provided a word to the men at the breakfast. Michael proceeded to explain the responsibilities that a Chaplain has at the VA Hospital. He also spoke to the men of the different people and religions that he encounters. His ultimate responsibility is to share the word of God to

people either recovering from injuries or surgery, or people in their final hours of life. It is a lot of responsibility to try and meet with each patient and be able to talk to them about their beliefs and how he can pray for them during the difficulties they may be encountering. It was very informative and important to understand the life of a chaplain in the VA hospitals.

Michael concluded his presentation with the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day and the reason for our Christmas season. Jesus was born to die for our sins on the cross. We celebrate the Christian life of the perfect sacrifice that God gave to his people by providing his son Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life so we could have eternal salvation. We want to thank Michael for his presentation the Men's Ministry group.



Brian Carrier had a tip from Pastor Freddy that it was Joe Markowitz's birthday (he was in attendance). Brian thought he said Joe Kirkpatrick and announced his birthday instead. Freddy made the correction to Brian. The men sang Happy Birthday to Joe Markowitz and he was given a birthday smoothie.

The breakfast ended with Michael providing prayer after his message. It was truly a blessing to hear the word from a true missionary spreading the word of God to the men and women of our military in the VA Hospital in Tampa by our own Chaplain Michael Bridges.

Men's Ministry would like to thank all the men who participated in the breakfast event and made this a very successful and popular event. The Men's Ministry continues to offer these events to bring Christian men together for a time of fun and fellowship.

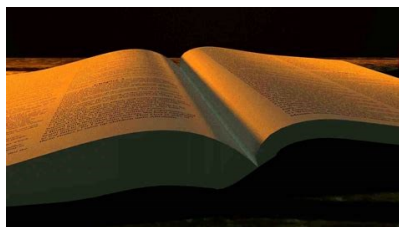
The Men's Ministry would also like to invite all men to the Men's Bible Study, which is the core of the Men's Ministry. We hope that you men can make it to the Men's Bible Study. We meet every Saturday morning at 7:45 a.m. We are studying the book of Acts using our study guide written by Dr. Jack B. Scott and led by Dr. Jeff Beams.

If you would prefer, the Men's Discipleship Group led by Pastor Freddy Fritz using the book "Grounded in Scripture" also begins at 7:45 a.m. and will run approximately 10 weeks. Please be sure to come and attend either one of these groups as Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church continues to support the Men's Ministry through these events and the support of bible study teaching.



Thank you again for the support of the Men's Ministry, Men's Bible Study and the Men's Discipleship Group.

Grace and Peace.



The Brunch Bunch

A note from the former Empty Nesters desk!

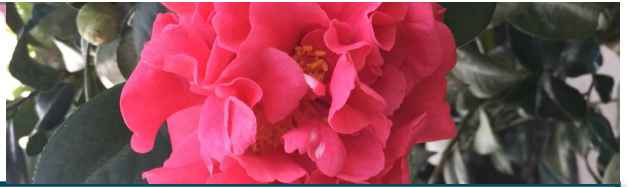
We had our last luncheon known as the Empty Nesters in December at Señor Tequila Mexican Bar and Grill. We had a great turn out with sixteen people. Fun was had by all with talking and great fellowship with each other!

Starting January we are now called The Brunch Bunch, so please join us all for our next luncheon on the 3rd Sunday in January.

Until then, blessings.



TBPRES WOMEN



Suzanne Swenson



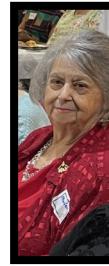
Women's Ministry Christmas Brunch

"After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with great delight (Matthew 2:9-10).

For its 33rd year of hosting the annual Christmas Brunch, TBPC Woman's Ministry selected "Follow the Star" as its theme. We were very pleased to have seventy-seven women attend. To support our event, we had ten hostesses, ten servers, a coffee steward, and five childcare workers with nine children in the nursery.

Welcome and prayer:

Ashley Powe reminded us in her welcome comments that our forever-friend and former member of TBPC, Marianne Cali, began hosting the brunch those many years ago. There we were, now sitting among our sisters in Christ, remembering and acknowledging the reason for the season, and showing hospitality to each other in kind words, fellowship, and food!



Ashley's prayer:

"Thank you for this time of fellowship and worship. We thank you that so many years ago, your Son was born with the hope and promise to save the world. We pray that you will help us keep at the forefront of our minds the true reason for the season. Just like the wise men who followed the star to find our Savior, we pray that we will seek you this holiday season and beyond, knowing that you are our everlasting hope, joy, and redemption."

The joyful event continued with Kim Sesia singing a beautiful solo entitled "Jesus Light of the World" by Third Day. Since the words were so appropriate for our program, I have included them for your enjoyment:

"The most beautiful night of the year
All the stars light up the sky
And the city is sparkling with silver and gold
From a million points of light
A reflection of something that's deeper within
Just a flicker of something more
Jesus, light of the world
Shine through the darkness, bright as the day
Jesus, light of the world
Shine in our hearts, show us the way tonight



Who is this Child in a manger?
 Kings bow down and angels sing
 The Lord of the Universe
 Has come here to save us, a precious offering
 All the heavens above and the earth below
 Are filled with the light of Your love
 Jesus, light of the world
 Shine through the darkness, bright as the day
 Jesus, light of the world
 Shine in our hearts, show us the way tonight
 . . . ”

Jennifer Schumm provided her testimony



I grew up “churched.” Thinking if you’re good you’ll go to heaven, if you’re bad, you’ll go to hell. Period. I believed, but I was disobedient and I didn’t care. It felt good and after all, I was a good person, I was a nurse, I helped people. Right? Salvation was MY burden, entirely. Not a gift offered up and bought through suffering and served freely by unparalleled grace; not decided before the world began.

My family consisted of parents, two sisters, and one brother of which I was the oldest. We were middle class and looked good in public. We prayed at bedtime and at meals but no one ever owned or opened a Bible in my home, even though

I received one at my confirmation in sixth grade. We went to church and Sunday school, youth group and choir, and Bible school but at home the screaming, yelling, fighting, and physical abuse ruled the majority of our young and confused lives. I grew up insecure, afraid, and constantly searching for love, accolades, and praise to heal my bruised and tortured soul to make me feel better about me, not knowing that peace and joy were abundantly available to me all along, at any time.

As an adult, being “churched” continued. Married with three children, a successful cardiac RN, husband with a successful business. We had it all I thought. Eight years on Session, head of the missions committee, Sunday school teacher, and choir member. Raising the children “right”, they were smart and athletic, good kids. But I was selfish, prideful, saying I believed but living disobediently. My husband was emotionally and verbally abusive to me and the children, sometimes physically. I was too insecure and afraid to leave so I prayed—and prayed—that HE would change. But you see God didn’t want him to change, he wanted ME to change and I had no idea what was coming. When my unbelieving husband walked out abruptly one cold January day after twenty-five years and my son was killing himself with heroin, and I had to quit a long-time beloved job because of betrayal by a person I believed to be a strong Christian, I suffered my “walking” nervous breakdown. I was severely depressed, had massive anxiety and panic attacks, and I contemplated suicide—every. Single. Day. If not for my Savior and my God-given gift of a sister, Judy, who never let me go, who stayed with me through literally hours and hours, days, weeks, and months of sobbing and breaking down over and over again, I would have been gone.

Sin. Has. Consequences.

“ . . . I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy” (Romans 9:15).

And then it happened. He came to me one evening as I was sitting on my couch mired in my situation, feeling guilt, fear, anxiety, and profound sadness. I felt him, it was inexplicable, surreal, supernatural. But there was no doubt, no mistake, no wondering what was happening. It was HIM, as sure as he was standing in my living room. He called me home, into his heart, into his peace, into his protection, into his all-consuming love. I did not sleep for forty-eight straight hours, I only prayed and read the word and slowly, my heart began to heal.

And I repented fully and repented daily, from my heart, like I never had before in my life. Every act, thought, and word began to matter, to be lived, thought and spoken to glorify Him—not me.

“Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit away from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit” (Psalm 51:9-12).

Slowly, slowly I came up out of that dark, sinful, self-serving valley of the shadow of death. I wasn’t holding on to him, he was holding on to me. He knew, that before time began, he would reveal himself to me. I walk a new walk, a new road with him, in him, for him.

Some of you will recognize this passage from “Gentle and Lowly” by Dane C. Ortlund because I hold it dear to me: “Whatever is crumbling all around you in your life, wherever you feel stuck, this remains, undeflectable: his heart for you, the real you, is gentle and lowly. So go to him. That place in your life where you feel most defeated, he is there; he lives there, right there, and his heart for you, not on the other side of it, but in that darkness, is gentle and lowly.”

Your anguish is his home. Go to him. If you knew his heart, you would. That is where I live.....

Carla Stevens, Speaker:
(Some of the following are Carla’s notes).



Our speaker, Carla Stevens, used our theme, Follow the Star, as the title of her presentation. This was based on scripture: “When they saw the star, they were overjoyed” (Matthew 2:10).

Carla began her presentation by inviting everyone to join her in reading Matthew 2:1-11: “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “ ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will Shepard my people Israel.’ ” Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh.”

Our speaker reminded us that stars are mentioned over 200 times in the bible both positive and negative.

God uses his presence of stars to show blessing, his presence. God also uses the absence or covering of stars to show judgement and his displeasure.

Now for the responses to the star: the religious leaders knew the Bible. The chief priests and scribes knew the significance of the star being present in Bethlehem. Herod knew the star was God's blessing as he had heard the priests. He lied and schemed to kill Jesus.

Now we get to the point, the responses to the STAR. The religious leaders KNEW the Bible. The chief priests and scribes KNEW the significance of the star being present in Bethlehem. Herod KNEW. Herod—hatred. Knew star represented God's blessing—he heard the priests. He lied and schemed to kill Jesus. We know because of the killing of babies. However, there is another response to the star: The priests and the scribes! When they heard, they did nothing. The Reformation Study Bible points out that “Although the religious experts concluded from the prophets that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, not one of them bothered to make the short journey with the Magi to see the Christ” Whereas Herod responded in hatred, the priests were indifferent. Another form of hatred.

The two ways to respond to Jesus, the one to whom the star was pointing, are the same today. Either we see the star, see Jesus and, by God's grace run toward Him or we see the star and respond in hatred or, in a way worse, indifference.

But LOTS of indifference. Hear the Gospel See the star. Que importa! Jesus letter to Laodicea in Revelations 3:14 he called them neither cold nor hot and that they would bespit you out. This is us at times and it is very much our culture. But WHY? Indifference because we lack a sense of God's holiness and, thereby, fail to see our sinfulness. Fail to see our need for him, and fail to be AWED by Him!

How will we respond to Jesus? Are we following the star? Do we, this Christmas season, see Jesus and get excited and let our light shine and point others to Jesus? It is easy to get excited about the “Magic” of Christmas — Hall-mark—family—parties—kids singing — us singing songs we've known all our lives — nostalgia of Christmas. But, are we seeing Jesus? Are we as excited as the Magi were? Put yourself in their place! As the shepherds? Are we willing to follow no matter what because we see the beauty and wonder and majesty of our great savior?

Carla noted that she recently read a Christmas article from The Gospel Coalition which she shared with us: “What happened that night [Jesus birth] still stands as one of the most monumental events in human history. God became a man and entered our dark, cold world to redeem a sinful people. And that is a story that makes Christmas worthy of being ‘Merry.’ Be amazed! The God of the universe became man!”

“Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-11).

Never, ever, be indifferent to this story. Be amazed! Be overjoyed! Be lights that shine and point others to Jesus!

Pictures from the Brunch









And in closing—no Christmas Brunch would ever be complete without these fabulous men of God!
Thank you from all of us!



Sister-to-Sister Schedule of Events

Jan. 29, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Spiritual Mothering/Mentoring
Bring your favorite soup, side,
appetizer, or dessert.
TBPC Sanctuary

March 5, 1:00 p.m.

Lunch at The Sparkman House Luxury
Bed & Breakfast in the Historic District
of Plant City

At the January get-together, along with prayer, food, and fellowship we will review the results of the survey and invite further discussion on the needs, desires, and views of the group with respect to mentoring.

Please note that the February event is rescheduled to March so as to not conflict with the Church Retreat.



For further information please contact:

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Ashley Powe at acpowe@gmail.com or 813-410-7053

SAVE THE DATE

Church Retreat
25 - 27 February 2022



January Birthdays

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| Cheryl Barber | January 06 |
| Ron Whitley | January 08 |
| Vern Yu | January 08 |
| Rene Palacio | January 09 |
| Richard Gainer | January 18 |
| Toney Sauls | January 18 |
| John McNulty | January 20 |
| Andrea Proctor | January 22 |
| Lilli Palacio | January 23 |
| Natacha Etienne | January 28 |
| Christopher Powe | January 29 |
| Melissa McNulty | January 31 |

January Anniversaries

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Chew, Lenny & Cheryl | January 01, 1988 | 34 Years |
| Harshfield, Scott & Patricia | January 12, 2021 | 1 Year |



Trumpet Staff

Rev. Freddy Fritz, *Editor-in-Chief*

Andrea L. Proctor, *Co-editor*

It is the goal of the *Trumpet* staff to provide articles for learning and growing, news for connecting with our church family, and information on opportunities for service and participation. The views and opinions expressed in the *Trumpet* have not been reviewed or endorsed by the Session.

Please forward articles, pictures, ministry reports, and calendar items for the next edition of the *Trumpet* to andreaproctor@tcforce.com by the 20th of the month preceding publication.

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