

STAY CONNECTED...



to Marion Hills Bible Church



Someone You Should Know



In 2009, when T.J. Westerkamp was 24 years old, he accepted Christ as his Savior. All through his life he had a natural curiosity about God and was very interested in learning about what the Bible teaches as compared to Catholicism. Online, T.J. came across websites about the doctrines of God and he also enjoyed online discussions about the existence of God. His favorite verse is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

In July, 2012, T.J. came to our church because he was looking for a church that was willing to baptize him and had read about Marion Hills Bible Church online. For two weeks Pastor Campo privately taught him about the meaning of baptism; that it was an outward sign of an inward work. Baptism was a way for him to show others that he was trusting in Jesus alone to get him to heaven. Many of his family members came to witness his baptism, and since that day, our church has been blessed by his faithful attendance and contributions to the ministries of MHBC.

Every Sunday, at 9:30 am T.J. enjoys attending Sunday School where Matt Grider is currently teaching on the Minor Prophets. T.J., along with Tom Rosati, fill in at the Sunday evening service when Matt is unable to teach. They have co-taught the books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Malachi, and their current study is Galatians.

After the Sunday morning service, T.J. also enjoys greeting the people as they exit the sanctuary. He has greatly appreciated the warm and friendly atmosphere of MHBC. He also enjoys writing the *Gospel Connection* article of the MHBC newsletter, which goes out three times a year and is currently online.

T.J. keeps busy working for his family's business in Lisle, Illinois, preparing hospital billing. He never misses Wednesday prayer meeting where he seeks God in prayer for courage to share the gospel message with his large family.



Gospel Connection

While some shepherds were in the fields keeping watch over their flock, an angel of the Lord stood before them. Upon witnessing the angel, the shepherds became frightened. The angel then said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). This was the first Christmas in history. It is the day we look back on when we celebrate Christmas every year. But why is this day so significant and such good news?

First, we need to understand who this Savior is and His purpose for coming to earth. The Savior, who is Christ the Lord, is God in the flesh. He is fully God and fully man. His name is Jesus. His reason for coming was to reconcile sinners with God. God decided that in order to reconcile lost sinners to Himself, His Son Jesus would have to pay for the sins of mankind. The blood of Jesus is the only acceptable payment for our sins. As prophesied hundreds of years before the events occurred, Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, and on the third day, He rose from the dead.

Now, in order for all of these events to take place, Jesus had to be born. Without the birth of Jesus, there is no crucifixion. There is no death, burial, and resurrection. And for us, there would be no salvation, forgiveness, or hope. However, as the shepherds heard, the good news was that the Savior was born. Jesus's life on earth had begun and His redeeming act was soon to follow. If you are unsure about what the good news is, we would love for you to visit us so that we can explain it further.



What does Christ want for Christmas?

First the wrong answer found in Micah chapter 6: With what shall I come before the LORD with? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

This is "Let's Make a Deal" religion isn't it? God said in verse 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Justice means treating people right because you know God. Mercy means loving the unlovely even when they don't love you back. Humility speaks of an attitude that is the opposite of pride. Humility does not say "I'm a worm." That's not humility, that's self-pity, which is really another form of pride.

This is humility. God made me and I belong to him and whatever He wants I shall give! So what do we give the God who has everything? How about justice, mercy and humility, now then this requires something.

Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD, though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool."

Verse 19 says, if you consent and obey. The word "reason" is a law term used in arguing, and convincing, the people were to be convinced by their argumentation with God that He was right and they were wrong about their condition.

Philosophy says: Think your way out.

Indulgence says: Drink your way out.

Politics says: Spend your way out.

Science says: Invent your way out.

Industry says: Work your way out.

Communism says: Strike your way out.

Fascism says: Bluff your way out.

Militarism says: Fight your way out.

Jesus Christ says: "I am the way (out) ...

*Only He can make you whiter than snow,
if you consent and obey!*

? What If...?

Cliché Alert! Christmas Giving vs. Getting

Every Christian has that one area that brings doubt into their mind. Some people can't come to terms with God's control, yet our free will. Others have a hard time with bad things happening to good people. As for me, I am filled with doubt when I see good Christians repeatedly disobeying God's commands of contentment and equality.

The modern world is primarily designed around the core idea that money and material things equivocate to power and happiness. We as U.S. citizens proudly live in a country that protects rights to own property and economic prosperity. The problem is that we so often confuse these man made rights and reward structures with that of God's and in so doing, we sin.

There is no more obvious display of this than Christmas. We celebrate Jesus's birth by coming to a short candlelight service, rushing out to buy our last gifts or to see what was purchased for us. We express our love materially, and while we enjoy the presents, we are always left feeling

empty. Once the happiness of the gifts and festivities melts away, all that remains is a lack luster of joy and God-given fulfillment.

What if we actually committed to living a Christ-focused Christmas? We don't have to forego all our gifts and happy tidings, but **what if** we additionally prioritized the Christ part, too? When I was younger all ages would put in the time and give a gift of praise to the Lord. The children would put on a program. The teens would give to the community, and the adults, too, performed in a choir singing songs of praise and joy.

I recognize that no one should judge another's spiritual relationship, nor do I believe that a thought of praise can't relay the same gift to the Lord as a well-practiced song. I only intend to point out that as a fellow Christian, I do not see even those *seconds* of praise. I ask you to stop, drop, and praise. Give a gift to someone in need, offer words of encouragement to those weak in spirit, or find time to quietly give praise. Everything in life is only for now, as we are only assured today; praise Him as if you were going to see Him!



Current Connection



The Christmas season causes most of us to look forward to a time of abundance. We are planning our dinners, buying gifts, and enjoying all the season's sights and sounds that make us merry.

As Christians, many of us think about those in the world who don't have this privilege but are at a loss as to what we can do. This year, the Ladies Berean Fellowship began a project to help our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering persecution and martyrdom for their faith. Voice of the Martyrs has a way for us to extend a helping hand to those in need. We are collecting items to send to VOM, who will, in turn, send these items all over the world to places we can't reach on our own. Things like t-shirts, towels, soap, blankets, sheets, small toys for children, and many other needed items. We hope these small gifts will be an encouragement to those who would otherwise remain destitute, and let them know that they are not forgotten. VOM adds other items to our packages to complete the needs of individual groups, as well as a Bible in their own language.

It is a dangerous thing VOM is undertaking because there are devastating consequences for people who are caught aiding these persecuted Christians. But if they are willing, we should be willing, too. By providing this help to our brothers and sisters, we are God's "hands and feet" to the poor, and hopefully become a whisper of God's Holy Spirit to their hearts, letting them know He has not forgotten their suffering for His Name's sake. What a joy to be able to be involved in this worthy project! So, this Christmas season let's remember that, by God's power, we can extend a loving hand.



Get Plugged-In

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen. On July 30, 2017, Lorne Bidak was baptized. On September 3, 2017, Al and Judy Sauter were also baptized.



Surrender and Win meets every Thursday evening from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm.

Berean Ladies Fellowship meets at 6:30 pm on January 18, February 15, and March 15. Watch for more information concerning these meetings.



Newsletter Staff:

Pastor Michael Campo	Karen Kruse	Micki Rosati
Faith Grider	Tim Kruse	Sandy Wagner
Tim Grider	Fran McLaughlin	T.J. Westerkamp



Schedule of Weekly Events:

Sunday School	9:30 am
Morning Worship	10:30 am
Evening Service.....	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Services	
Bible Study/Prayer Meeting.....	7:00 pm
Thursdays	
Surrender and Win	7:00 pm
Berean Ladies Fellowship	6:30 pm
(3rd Thursday of the Month)	

Editor in Chief: Janet Wheatley