



## A Word from Pastor Dave

*This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

*But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son.*

*And he gave him the name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25, NIV)*

In so many ways, obviously Jesus' first Christmas was not a Hallmark Christmas. Now don't get me wrong there was plenty of things noteworthy about Jesus' conception and birth. And the whole story has God's fingerprints all over it. So you could declare this story does have all the hallmarks of being a divine story. However, when it comes to the Hallmark Company who brings us beautiful greeting cards, precious statues and cute movies that's just not the Christmas Mary, Joseph and Jesus experienced.

### December Dates:

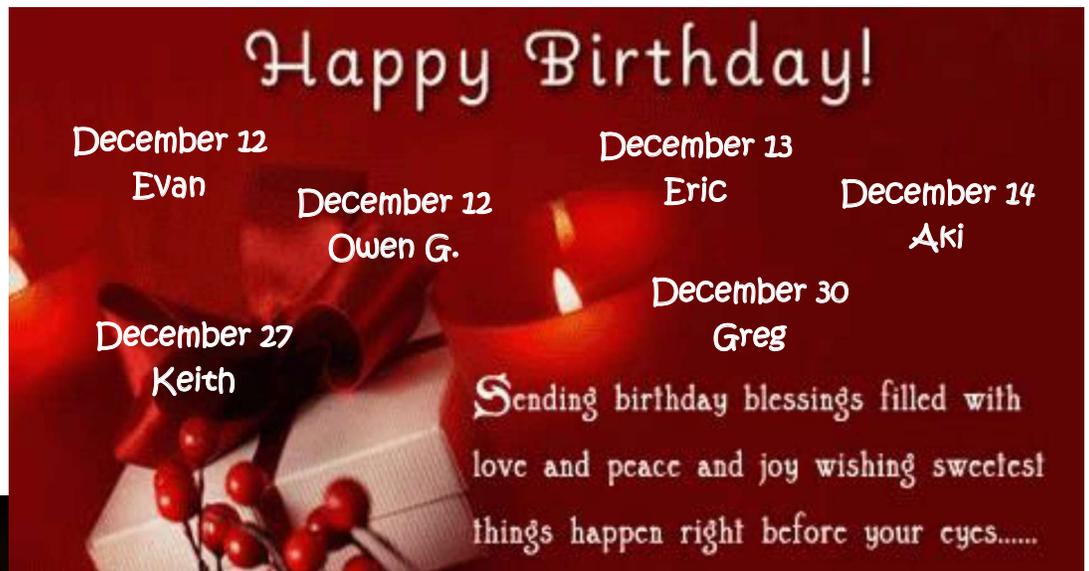
- 1<sup>st</sup> - Prayer at Church - 10:30
- 5<sup>th</sup> - Worship Service - 9 & 11am
- 5<sup>th</sup> - Stick Practice & Pizza With Miss Shea - after church
- 8<sup>th</sup> - Prayer at Church- 10:30 am
- 11<sup>th</sup> - Progressive Christmas Dinner Banquet- 6 pm
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Worship Service - 9 & 11am
- 13<sup>th</sup> - Women's Christmas Gathering 6:30 pm
- 15<sup>th</sup> - Prayer at Church - 10:30 am
- 19<sup>th</sup> - Worship Service - 9 & 11am
- 22<sup>nd</sup> - Prayer at Church - 10:30 am
- 24<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Eve Service - 6:30 pm
- 25<sup>th</sup> - Merry Christmas
- 26<sup>th</sup> - Worship & Communion Service 9 & 11am
- 29<sup>th</sup> - Prayer at Church - 10:30 am

As a pastor, I feel like over the years I have kind of harped on this point. It's important to me that we know as much as possible about the history and reality reflected in the Scriptures, so that when we look there for wisdom and guidance, we can find something that relates to our own experience of life in this rather broken world.

Still, it seems that grace compels us to tell the story with a certain finesse. Since the biblical record describes how angels weaved themselves in and out of Joseph and Mary's life how can the average person be anything but amazed. If glory rightly belongs to God and the word itself means "heavy"; in the sense of carrying great authority and/or significance; then you would be a fool not to see how truly glorious this is! "God with us", in the midst of family disputes that are simply hurtful and fraught with misunderstanding. "God with us", when we travel to distant places underfunded, alone, cold and seemingly without a

friend in the world. "God with us", when medical emergencies happen in dirty, uncomfortable places and you just don't know what to do. "God with us", when those in authority aren't just absent but rather eagerly oppose our existence.

If the truth about Christmas this year in your life is that there is a mix of messy parts as well as truly enjoyable moments, then guess what, you are in good company. In good company because your Christmas resembles Jesus' first Christmas. In good company, because your Christmas resembles the Christmas that we all experience every year. In good company, because whether you realize it or not angels will be attending your Christmas this year, just like they've attended all the Christmases over time. So let us enjoy our own Christmas! Not because it's perfect. Better than that in fact, because Jesus was and is willing to enter into it "with us."



## Prayer Corner

Thank you Lord for the gift of becoming one of us, our God with us.

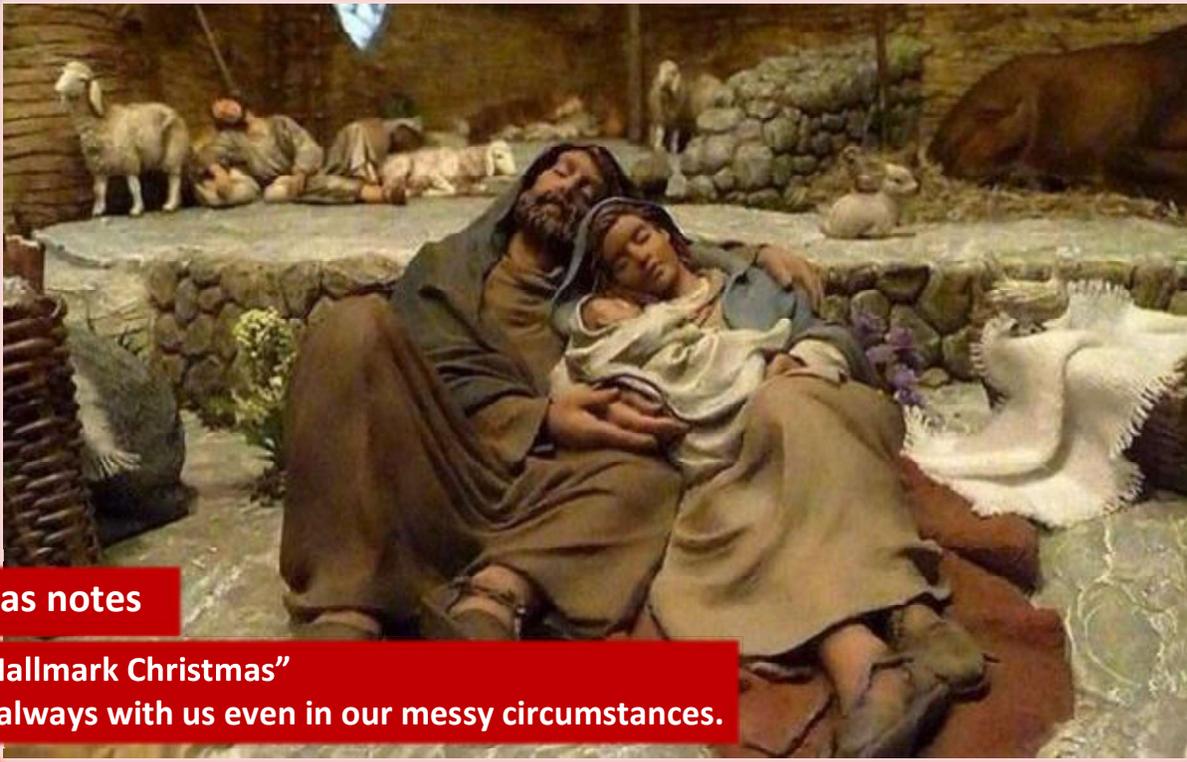
A gift of hope to all nations, wrapped up in swaddling clothes.

Your life unravelling before us to reveal the gift of salvation, your death and resurrection to light the way back home.

Believing and receiving we celebrate the gift of belonging to you...being called your very own.

Thank you again and again for coming for us. Emmanuel, our God forever with us!





## Barnabas notes

**“Not a Hallmark Christmas”**

**Jesus is always with us even in our messy circumstances.**

The original Christmas story bears no resemblance to the sanitized version we sometimes imagine. Jesus was born into a really messy world. That was intentional. When we look at our circumstances and wonder if anything good could come from them, remember the messy circumstances of that first Christmas.

Although Christ coming into our lives is truly astonishing, the way in which Jesus comes into the world is really quite normal. His birth is not marked by a lot of pomp. Jesus isn't born in a great city like Rome or Jerusalem, but in the ordinary town of Bethlehem. It is not the kings that come to visit the baby Jesus first, but the shepherds, the common working folk.

He isn't born by an important person like a queen or a princess but by a simple courageous young virgin. Mary is not glamorous, but a young girl with a determined faith and trust in God. Mary did not want to give birth to her child in a manger far away from her home in Nazareth. She would more likely have chosen to deliver with her family and friends close by, in the warmth and safety of her own home.

Today we strive so hard to ensure that pregnant women are warm and safe and comfortable, surrounded by supportive family and friends in a hospital or at home with a midwife present. That is the ideal situation for giving birth. But from His birth, Jesus goes against the stream of what is easy and neat. And this is good news.

We all know that in our own lives, more often than not, things don't work out exactly as we planned. From the food we prepare, to the gifts we will give, sometimes our Christmas gets messy. The dog gets into the turkey, our uncles get into an argument and stop talking to each other, Grandma got your daughter the same toy that you selected. Messes like these are unavoidable at Christmas, and really, they happen all the time. But the Good News that comes to us at Christmas (and actually every day of our lives) is that Jesus is most certainly present with us in all of the messiness of life. Even when we are a mess, when we can hardly hold it together, and even when everything falls apart on us, Jesus still comes to us in our need, inviting us into relationship with Him and our creator

In Christmas, God comes to be with us, as one of us, in the person of Jesus Christ. Born into humble circumstances, from birth, Jesus challenges the idea that life should be lived without messes. He is God's greatest gift of love and acceptance, the gift that keeps on giving regardless of how messy our lives get.

May you and your family have the merriest (and messiest) Christmas ever!

Barnabas.



## Ruby's Recipes

### *Pumpkin Pecan Pie Bars*

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine softened
- 1 1/2 cups of flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 (16 oz) can of pumpkin
- 1 can condensed milk (not evaporated)
- 2 eggs beaten
- 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup chopped pecans

#### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

In large bowl beat sugar and butter until fluffy, add flour, oats, baking powder and 1/2 tsp of salt.

Mix till crumbly. Reserve 1/2 a cup of crumbs.

Press remaining crumbs on bottom of ungreased 15x10 inch cookie sheet.

Bake for 20 minutes.

In medium bowl, mix pumpkin, condensed milk, eggs, spice, vanilla and 1/2 tsp of salt.

Spread over crust. In small bowl, combine reserved crumb mixture with pecans. Sprinkle over pumpkin mixture.

Bake 30-35 minutes or until set.

Cool in pan on wire rack.

Sprinkle with icing sugar if desired. Cut in bars. Store covered in fridge.

Makes 3 to 4 dozen bars.



### *Apple Cranberry Relish*

*2 unpeeled oranges, quartered and seeded*

*2 unpeeled apples*

*1 pound fresh cranberries*

*1 cup sugar (or to taste)*

*Chop oranges, apples and cranberries in food processor or into fine pieces.*

*Add sugar and mix well.*

*Store covered in fridge.*

*Relish gets better as it seasons.*



# Ministry Highlight

This month we will be highlighting the Sound and Media Ministries within our church. Both of these ministries work closely with the worship ministry. The sound team is responsible for setting up and taking down the equipment on the stage and to help the worship team sound their best. Volunteers that work at the media desk get all of the lyrics ready for our worship songs and they make sure that all of the slides and videos that Pastor Dave uses for his sermon run smoothly. Both of these ministries work behind the scenes using audio and visual technologies that enhance our worship experience each Sunday morning. If you would like to learn more about opportunities to serve in these ministries or in any other area of the church, please let me know.

## PUT ME IN COACH



NAME

PHONE

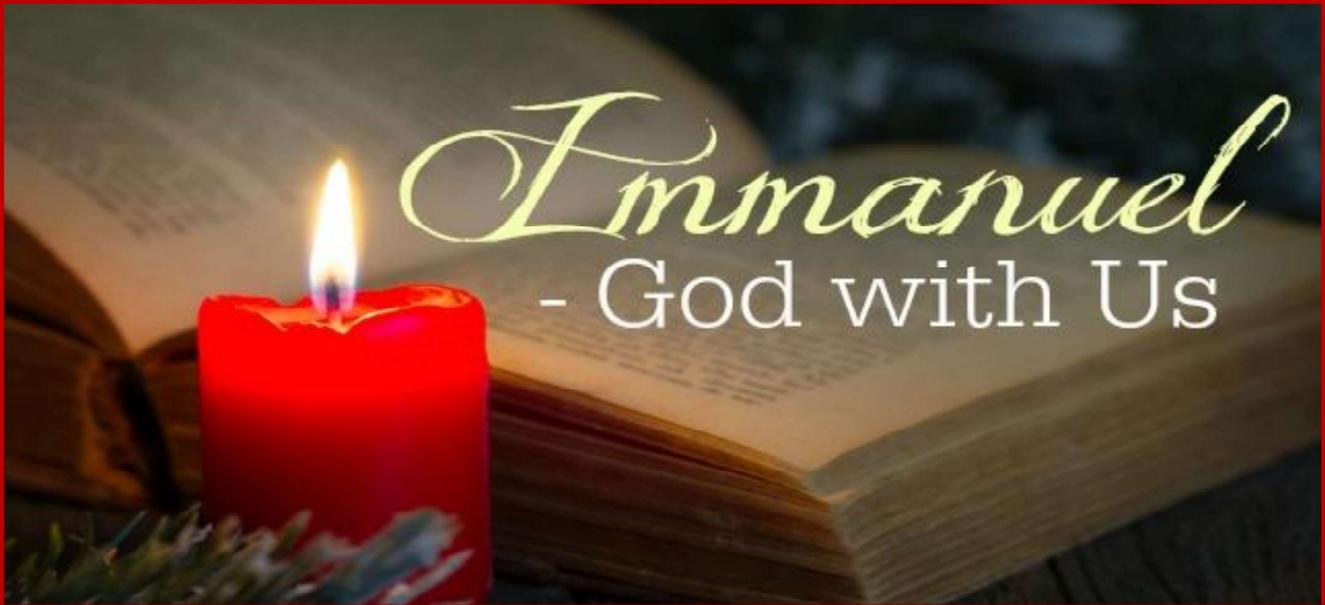
### MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

(CHECK ALL THAT INTEREST YOU)

- Prayer
- Media
- Kids Wing
- Greeting
- Worship
- Sound
- Nursery
- Ushering
- Hospitality (GST)
- Maintenance
- Men's Ministry
- Women's Ministry

Other: \_\_\_\_\_





## Reflections by J'Aime

I work in international logistics. My job is to move things for a living. In order to do my job it's useful to stay up to date with the latest news regarding the global supply chain. Right now, most of that news is bad. Shortages everywhere! Transport costs at all-time highs! Global manufacturing is a mess! Prices on the rise due to inflation and increased demand! Don't get me started on it all – I could talk for days. The rational parts of our brains understand that this is the reality of the world we live in. Do you know who doesn't understand what's going on? Kids. Most children aren't wandering around the toy store, seeing the massive increase in price of their favourite toy and thinking, "Hmmm, I do believe this toy is more expensive due to a 500% increase in ocean freight costs over the last six months coupled with limited freight capacities and made worse by labour shortages and a lack of raw materials." Those kids are running gleefully through the aisles of the store making lists of the many presents they want for Christmas and us, as adults, are looking at those lists and wondering how we're going to swing Christmas on a budget that likely won't be nearly enough this year. At least, we won't think it's enough. We're all so used to this idea of a 'commercialized holiday season'. It's woven into our society to a sickening degree. It's easy to look at your spindly Christmas tree with its weird looking ornaments your kid made at school 10 years ago, lit with that one strand of lights that you found in the side box of the Peterbilt that only kind of works, sitting on top of the lopsided tree skirt you made out of leftover felt pieces and think... yup, it's not enough. And that tiny pile of second-hand items and homemade gifts

wrapped in the flyers you got in the mail? Yeah, that's probably not enough, either. We're constantly fed these terrible ideas of commercialism on repeated loops and they're designed to do nothing more than make us spend money. This year especially will be tough because of the global supply chain mess. That's not what Christmas is supposed to be. Picture perfect decorations and piles of gifts are not inherently bad but, if you're so wrapped up in the outward aesthetics of your holiday appearance that you forget about Jesus being the reason behind Christmas, then your personal priorities need a bit of a realignment.

The focus of South Point's Christmas theme this year is Matthew 1:23. "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God is with us"). Think about that. God is with US! Within our hearts, within our being and giving us the gifts of grace, peace, love and belonging. He does this all the time, not just once a year. God isn't stuck in a shipping container somewhere. God is with us and He loves us. Even when we think we aren't enough, God sees us and our true value as His children.

God doesn't need to be picked up and delivered because He's already with us. However, we all have our part to play in spreading the good news. In a way, we're all in the logistics field – the moment you open your mouth and share the love of God you've moved a commodity that is far more precious than anything we could ever buy. And guess what? Sharing the love of God is completely free – no shipping charges will apply.



In this fun Christmas themed movie sisters Eve and Lacy Bell find themselves living less than their dream lives when they make a wish to Santa and wake up in a magical Christmas Movie town. In a town where literally every Christmas movie plot is taking place. The sisters are lacking meaningful relationships, one is cynical and the other a hopeless romantic, the town is having a Christmas Pageant that needs saving, and the sisters are going to “save” Christmas. They have a grandmother who makes cookies but is firm in helping them move forward in their lives. There is the handsome baker, the handsome inn keeper, the little girl wishing for her father to return home, and the miserable boss, who is lacking in Christmas spirit. In this town everything seems perfect, the perfect guy shows up just at the exact right moment, the people passing by are all joyful and friendly, but suddenly things start to go wrong, even in the perfect Christmas town, and the sisters start to long for their ordinary non-Christmas movie lives. I don’t want to spoil it for anyone, but things work out quite magically for the sisters in the end. The interesting thing about this movie, (other than the fact that our very own Ms. Jenn is in it!) is that despite the fact that it’s deliberately corny, the kids could not stop talking about it! Obviously, the best part is when Jenn walks down the street! At first, the kids didn’t understand that the movie is meant to be silly, and kind of poking fun at our traditional romantic Christmas movies. I was trying to explain what a spoof is or that it’s meant to be satirical but the kids were not really getting it. As the movie went on, they started to get it, and were able to laugh at the obvious cheesiness of the whole thing, except the 8-year-old who still likes and enjoys the sweetest Christmas movies. If you like movies where people find love at Christmas time, or movies where a princess isn’t truly happy until she finds great meaning in her life, or learns to follow her

heart then this movie might not seem funny, it might seem like another great Hallmark Christmas movie. But if you prefer movies like Home Alone, A Christmas Story or even Die Hard, this might not be the right fit for you. I can say, that the kids enjoyed telling their dad all the silly ways the characters behaved, and the things they did, for instance at the end a character gets on stage to sing with an acoustic guitar, and when he starts to play, you can hear drums and an electric guitar, they found this hilarious. I enjoyed watching the kids cover their eyes and scream or make disgusted sounds when characters kiss at the end. It was a relaxing way to spend an afternoon. The kids all wrote movie reviews as a part of our school day, and the movie received reviews that ranged from 1 star to 5 out of five stars. The 4-year-old, was excited about having popcorn and once that was over, he couldn’t be bothered with any movie. Now CBC rates this movie PG14, and for the life of me I can’t figure out why, could it be the very gentle kisses at the end? Or the one sisters’ cynical attitude toward Christmas? I just don’t know, but I can say that I’ve seen Disney movies with more questionable content, and would give it a PG rating. It was a fun and sweet Christmas movie, suitable and safe for anyone!

It was not necessarily great for teenage boys, but would make a great girls-night-in movie with little or big girls!



# What's your favourite Christmas movie and why?

Jessica ~ My favorite Christmas movie is Elf, because it's so funny and light hearted, and the whole family can enjoy it.



Bobby's favorite Christmas movie is Die Hard, because it's action.

Emma, Christopher and Ben love Elf as well. Because it is funny.

Sammy loves The Princess Switch because it has princesses in it.

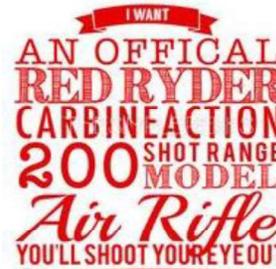
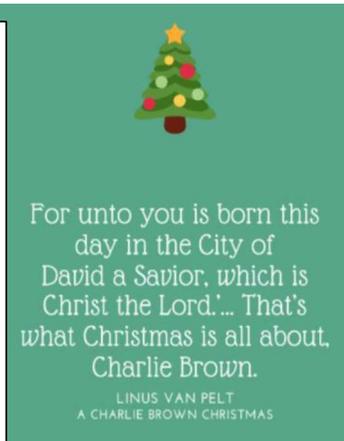
Liam's favorite is "The Grinch" the new animated one.



J'Aime ~ Autumn and I have a tradition of watching a movie together every Christmas Eve. Usually Sci-Fi. I look forward to that every year so I don't really have a favorite Christmas movie - I have a favorite movie partner.

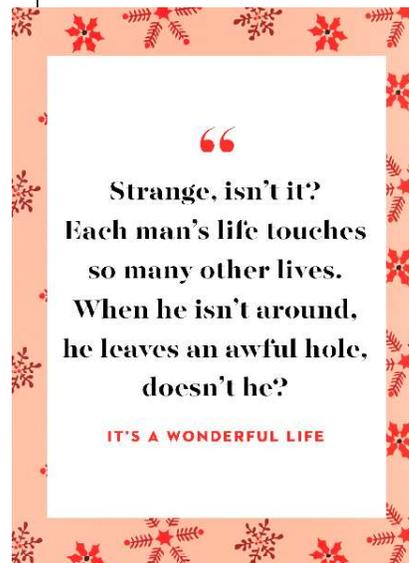
Maybe **CHRISTMAS**,  
he thought,  
*doesn't come*  
**FROM A STORE.**  
Maybe **CHRISTMAS**,  
*perhaps,* **means**  
**A LITTLE BIT MORE.**  
~ The Grinch ~

Jenn ~ A Charlie Brown Christmas - I remember watching it with my family as a child, because it speaks to the true meaning of Christmas - that its about Celebrating the birth of Jesus with family and friends and because my dad reminded me of Charlie Brown. A close second is "A Christmas Movie Christmas" because I was lucky enough to be in it - even if only for a few seconds!!



Tracy ~ I can't just pick one. I have favourites for different reasons. 1. The Christmas Story is a favourite because it is one that I watched with my family growing up and also now with my own family and it's just really funny. 2. Elf is the movie that we watch with our boys every year and we just laugh a lot. Does somebody need a hug? 3. I just love watching every sappy Christmas movie, even if the plot is the same. I love a happy ending.

Carl ~ My favourite Christmas movie is "It's a Wonderful Life". I think it's a great movie because it's a classic and has been around since 1946. I think the lesson that George Bailey finds out when he wonders what his life could have been like resonates with a lot of people. It's easy to think that other circumstances are better than your own but it's important to realize that the situation we are in is under the control of God. If we waste our time wanting something else we will miss the great things that we have been given. George Bailey found out that he was where he was supposed to be and was honest and respected by the community. He also found out the importance of relationships. In the end, the community rallies around him. I really like the warm cheerful ending.



Paul ~ It's a wonderful life...it demonstrates how something simple, can be blown out of proportion. How one man's desperation leads to wrong thinking. And how God sends an angel to show He didn't make a mistake in creating Geaorge Bailey. How? By showing what lives were touched by his being here. I draw comfort in this movie, it shows God can use me in the same way to touch other lives for Him...Amen