

The Connection

A Word from Pastor Dave

"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:4 - 5, NIV)

As we approach 2023 we get to enjoy the Christmas season at South Point exploring the theme of God's Missionary Heart. So significant in the Scriptures that page after page drips with the passion which God has for His lost people. Like the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 to find the one lost lamb, God radically cares for every single person who is struggling to find their meaning and purpose in His created order.

Just as this care and concern of God is clearly reflected in the writings of the Gospels I believe the same care and concern is also reflected in a different way in the writing of our little Newsletter. Partly that's because I know that when I write my articles for the Newsletter it takes me forever! The truth is English class in high school was pretty close to a nightmare for me. Over the years as a pastor I've grown to appreciate some of the wonderful intricacies around good communication that my high school teachers were hoping I would pick up on a long time ago from the likes of Farley Mowat, Shakespeare and George Orwell. The actual discipline of writing is my nemesis (at least now, there's spell check). Honestly, I'm not trying to complain about the work. I don't mind doing the work that clearly falls under my own responsibilities. However, it is such

December Dates

- 3rd Pastoral Team Meeting 8:30 am**
- 4th Worship Service 10:30am**
- 7th Prayer at Church 10:30 am**
- 9th Laughing All the Way Christmas Social 6:30 pm**
- 11th Worship Service 10:30am**
- 14th Prayer at Church 10:30 am**
- 17th Men's Breakfast 8:30 am**
- 18th Worship Service 10:30am**
- 24th Christmas Eve Service 6:30 pm**
- 25th Christmas Communion Service With Breakfast 9:30 am – 11:30**
- 28th Prayer at Church 10:30 am**

a delight to bare witness to others who are operating out of their God-given gifts and talents. In most newsletters, there are several articles besides mine, which are always handed in before mine. I always know what the theme is before those other writers know. And yet their articles come in quickly, well written, and needing very little help with all those pesky details of spelling and grammar, etc. Not only are the articles handed in but they carry that vital combination of interest and intrigue which you might hope for from a professional author.

So this month I simply wanted to use my article to highlight the other articles. It seems to me that a thank you and some honest appreciation is highly appropriate. But more than just my thanks I would like to go ahead and point out how I see God's fingerprints on this little newsletter every time it gets published. The generosity of those who contribute to it, the talent and care of those who assemble it and the encouragement that it inevitably brings, I believe all demonstrate the reality of God's Missionary Heart. Because out of God's heart He created and gifted each person that contributes to the work of His

Church including our Newsletter. And truly it is in the collective expression of that in which we start to see the big beating heart of God. When we see one author, artist, or athlete perform it is easy enough to marvel at their ability. However, when we see God's people working together, each with their own strength to offer, it becomes a joy to marvel at what God is doing! So in conclusion let me just say thank you to our editor, publisher and printer. Please let me say a big thank you to those who contribute columns and recipes and photos and stories. Allow me to express my absolute gratefulness for those who are willing to share a piece of themselves in order that we can see what God is doing!

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16, NIV)

Ministry Highlight



This month, we would like to highlight the Sound and Media ministries in our church (please see below for a description). We could really use some new volunteers in these areas. Training is provided.

If you would like to learn more about these ministries and what is involved or try one out one Sunday, please let me know (226-347-0033, tracy@southpointcc.ca).

SOUND

Sound team members make a huge difference in our services by combining efforts of the worship and media teams and Pastor in a sound mix that is clear and pleasing to the congregation. They are responsible for set up, testing and continual adjusting and mixing of all sound equipment during practices and services.

JOIN US

We are looking for adult and student volunteers who are willing to work closely with our Worship teams to help

them sound their best. Training is provided.

TIME COMMITMENT

One weekly evening practice from 6:45 – 9:00 pm
One Sunday Morning from 8:30 am until the end of the service

MEDIA

Our volunteers that work at the media desk ensure that all of the lyrics are ready for worship Sunday morning. They also make sure that all of the slides and videos that are needed for our Sunday morning service run smoothly by following the provided worship planner.

JOIN US

We are looking for volunteers who are willing to work closely with the sound and worship teams to help make our service visually appealing. Training is provided.

TIME COMMITMENT

One Sunday Morning from 8:30 am until the end of the service.

Barnabas Notes

Barnabas, aka Tom has been writing an article for the "Barnabas Notes" section in our Newsletter since May of 2017. That was 61 newsletters ago. After the first edition of "The Connection" came out, Tom approached me and asked if he could write this article each month as a way to encourage us all. In the Bible, Barnabas was known as "the son of encouragement". The definition of encouragement is "the action of giving someone support, confidence, or hope". If you know Tom and I would like to include Wendy who writes the prayer section in our newsletter, they spend their lives giving support, confidence and hope to those around them on a daily basis. It's just who they are. Whether it's preparing a meal for someone, dropping off eggs or vegetables from their garden, raking leaves, fixing something, driving someone, sending a text of encouragement, praying faithfully...they humbly help whoever God brings to them and gives God all of the glory.

In the summer, they celebrated 50 years of marriage. As a church family, we did not do anything to recognize this milestone in their lives. I would like to take this time to say Congratulations and thank you for faithfully serving here at South Point for over 23 years. May God bless you both :)



When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.
Acts 11:23 (NIV)

Prayer Corner

All glory and praise to you King Jesus. It is you who has called us out of the darkness and into your wonderful light.

Jesus, the word made flesh, a lamp for our feet and a light for our paths.

As we follow you on this path, may the reason for your coming ever shine in and through us. Like the stars that first night when you came, like every tree this Christmas season, may we be lit up like a city on a hill, so that you may receive glory. Lord, guide the lost to that place of wonder where hope can be found wrapped in swaddling clothes in a humble stable.

Emmanuel, God with us.

Gluten Free Pumpkin Cookies

(The yummy fluffy ones Joni brought for GST last month)

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup canned pumpkin puree
(Do not use pumpkin pie filling,
it is pre-sweetened and spiced)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 cups gluten-free all-purpose flour
with xanthan gum
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

GLAZE

- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 4 Tbsp pure maple syrup
- 1 tsp milk



INGREDIENTS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F
2. In a small bowl add the baking soda to canned pumpkin, stir to combine and set aside. The key to this recipe is the chemical reactions between the pumpkin and baking soda. Allowing the pumpkin and baking soda to sit for at least 2 minutes before adding it to the rest of your ingredients is key to what makes these gluten-free cookies so light and fluffy.
3. In a large bowl cream the butter and granulated sugar together
4. Add the egg to the butter mixture and beat until the mixture is light and fluffy
5. Add the canned pumpkin (with the baking soda mixed in) and pure vanilla extract to the butter mixture and mix until fully combined
6. Combine the gluten-free flour, salt and spices in a medium-sized bowl and stir to combine
7. Add the gluten-free flour mixture into the pumpkin mixture and mix until fully combined. The cookie batter will be thick
8. Drop large tablespoons of the cookie batter onto a parchment paper-lined baking sheet about 2 inches apart. **I use a greased 1 ½ tablespoon cookie scoop for this recipe. The cookie scoop makes for the perfect amount and size**
9. Bake the cookies for 15-20 minutes or until bottoms of the cookies are lightly golden brown. Please watch your oven because all ovens are different
10. In a small bowl, combine all the glaze ingredients in a small bowl. Stir until fully combined. Drizzle over warm cookies
11. Store the leftover cookies in an air-tight container

LELAND KLASSEN



DAN MACAULAY

LAUGHING ALL THE WAY

A *Christmas* Comedy and Carols experience for the whole family!



FRI DEC 9TH

SOUTH POINT COMMUNITY CHURCH

475 BEVEL LINE RD, LEAMINGTON

6:30 PM (DOORS OPEN AT 6:00)

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS INCLUDED
TICKETS \$10 (FAMILY RATE AVAILABLE)
AVAILABLE THROUGH THE CHURCH

What is the best possible holiday present?
A broken drum – you just can't beat it!

What did one ornament say to the other?
– "I like hanging with you?"

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?
– "It's Christmas, Eve"

Why did Santa say "Oh! Oh! Oh!?"
~ Because he was going backwards

Where does Santa cash his checks?
~ At the Snow Bank.

What did one snowman say to the other?
~ Does it smell like carrots?

Why is a Christmas tree so bad at knitting?
~ They have too many needles.

What is every elf's favourite type of music?
~ Wrap

What is every mom's favourite Christmas Carol?
~ Silent Night



December

BIRTHDAYS

Giovanni
1st

Connie
10th

Evan
12th

Owen G.
12th

Eric
13th

Aki
14th

Vincent
24th

Keith
27th

Greg
30th



Reflections by J'Aime

NASA recently launched a spacecraft with the purpose of testing whether or not the craft is capable of putting people on the Moon. So far, the craft has sent back lots of useful data as well as some striking pictures. The most recent picture (as of this writing) was of the Earth, taken from lunar orbit. It was breathtaking and terrifying to see our little planet floating in space.

The photo really highlighted the empty blackness of space. It's just... there, surrounding the planet in the most menacing way possible. Yet the Earth was still there, a beacon of light within the darkness. Well... not a beacon in it's own right, per say. The Earth doesn't generate it's own light – that comes from the Sun.

We humans have concocted a great number of technologies to light up the darkness. Is your house dark? Turn on the lights. Driving at night? Headlights for the win. Celebrating Christmas? Put up a lighted tree in your house and string multi-colored lights on your roof. All of this is amazing but take a moment to stand back and think about Biblical times. No electricity. No artificial lights.

The Christmas story tells us about the Magi who find Jesus by following a star. Can you imagine? I can barely get to Toronto without a GPS unit and here's these Biblical wise men finding the Savior of the World by following a point of light in the sky. How bright must that have been?

People don't like the dark. The inability to see breeds fear. The moment that darkness creeps in and overtakes the light, you feel lost. The good news in all of this is that we, as

children of God, are never truly in the dark. God's light shines around us all the time (John 1:5) and there is no darkness in God at all (1 John 1:5).

God chose us – He literally called us out of the darkness into his marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). And He sent us His son Jesus to pay the price for our transgressions. Jesus, fully man and fully God, proclaiming that he is the light of the world (John 8:12).

The sheer brightness of God's love and light cannot be measured. It is everywhere, all the time, ever present and brilliantly shining with us and through us. Whether you are a Magi in the desert, a lost driver on the 401 or on the Moon – there is nowhere in this universe you can go where the truth of God's love cannot follow you. There isn't a place dark enough to snuff out that light.

That doesn't mean the darkness doesn't exist. It's there, and so many people suffer with it. Especially during the Christmas season. It is so easy to see the commercial nonsense of what our modern society says Christmas is supposed to be and become bitter, jaded, depressed and angry. You find yourself looking down into the abyssal blackness instead of doing what the Magi did – *look up to the light!*

During this Christmas season please remember that, despite the darkness that so easily surrounds us, we are beacons of hope, peace and joy. We are a part of this delightfully tangled, proverbial strand of Christmas bulbs, twinkling with the light of the Son.

Feliz Natal, familia.



Could you share with us your all time best, funniest or surprising Christmas gift that you received or have given to someone else?

J'Aime:

My first Christmas without my husband (which was, like, my 5th ever Christmas) was rough. I wanted nothing to do with the happiness of it all until my sister-in-law (14 at the time) asked if she could decorate my house. I agreed and wound up with the craziest display of lights in my neighbourhood. It was joy and happiness all at once and I am so very thankful for that memory.

Diane:

Two years ago on Christmas Eve, the doorbell rang in the early evening. When I opened it this tall man with orange and red hair and a woman with purple hair were standing there laughing at me as I realized it was our son Scott and his wife Nicole who drove from B.C.. That was the best Christmas in a long time.

Autumn:

My cousin Ava was born very early. We were scared that she wouldn't be healthy. She spent two months in hospitals and she got to come home right around Christmas. She was tiny but she was healthy. The first time I held her she fell asleep and then I fell asleep. Best Christmas ever. This year Ava's little sister is being born around Christmas time so I am going to nap with her as well.

Hugh:

After not seeing my daughter for many years, contact was re-established, and after a time, an invitation arrived for Christmas at her mother's home.

At first contact, after so many years, my daughter's first words had been "Dad, do you remember that camping trip we had on that island in Opeongo?". And then, "Dad, do you remember that cottage we used to go to? I'm going back there someday." It seemed obvious what she would like for Christmas.

I called Len's Cove, in Portland, Ontario. At first, the staff seemed to discourage me, as they have lots of regular customers, and those customers get first choice of vacancies. But when I explained the situation, and that we had vacationed there for several years, they accepted my proposal. I would pay in advance for a week in a two bedroom cottage, and they and my daughter would negotiate whatever dates were convenient for both parties.

Christmas Day arrived, and my daughter's turn came to open her gift. It didn't look so exciting. It was enclosed in a plain brown business envelope. I did trouble myself to adorn it with a red bow. First out was a copy of my favourite photo of her soloing a canoe at 15 years old, at the island in Opeongo. Then out came a gift certificate that I had made up for a week at the cottage. It took a minute for her to figure out what it was, and as she came to realize her eyes opened wider and wider until I was convinced that they were going to pop out of her head. Our family is not one to display huge emotion on occasions like this. We save that for really, really earth-shaking stuff like serious illness or death, so she voiced a sincere "Thank You", maybe more than once, and we moved on with the day.

Later on, her mother came up to me, and quietly said, "Did you know that Melissa has not had a real holiday in more than 12 years?"

But that is not the end of the story. My daughter had been living apart from her husband. I was visiting one day, when she asked me if I minded if she took her husband with her and the three kids to the cottage. "Would I mind?" . What a question! But there were only two bedrooms.....I tactfully suggested that her marriage was her business, and I had provided her vacation, and it was up to her when and how she enjoyed it.

As it turned out, she did invite her husband, and Len's Cove co-operated by providing three bedrooms instead of two. Husband and wife reconciled, and are still reconciled today. And the family went on to enjoy holidays at Len's Cove several more times.

Len's Cove, by the way, is in the peaceful village of Portland, on beautiful Rideau Lake, in the Rideau Canal system. The facilities are rustic, and affordable. If you want a serene interlude in your life, and don't want to break the bank, pay the place a visit. And when you do, remember my three grandchildren and their mother (and father) in the pool, or at the private little beach just around the corner.

Pastoral Team Highlight

Crybaby - one who cries or complains easily or often (aka Trev Murray)

Last week we had a child dedication at the church. It wasn't unlike many others that we have had in the past. Theo held up his prized cupcake while walking around showing everyone who would notice. Archer laid quietly in his dad's arms. Both innocent. Both confident around his parents.

You know me. Or, if you don't, you need to know that I wear my emotions on my sleeve. I do have a temper. Sarcasm gets the best of me quite often. I do have hope which leads to happiness. But, my weakness would be my tears. I've been known to watch the same movies, comedian acts, Instagram reels and even commercials to get them rolling. My tears, that is. I'm always up for a good laugh or a good purge to help "water my face".

The problem with allowing the tears to come so easily is that, sometimes out of nowhere, they sneak up on me before I realize that the emotion is even there. But, you would argue that this isn't that great of a problem. I guess that I'll agree. Sometimes I'm ok with crying. Sometimes it annoys me. I want to come across as more of a strong man who has it together. In control of himself.

When Pastor Dave asked if we as a church family would be willing to pray for the two young families that were standing up front with their little ones I thought the same thing that I think whenever he asks that question... of course we will. Of course we all will stand up to show our support. But, will we? Will I?

My answer to his question has more ummph than at other child dedications. Why? Because my first born now lives in Whistler, British Columbia. He's out on an adventure that I'm not sure will end back here at home. His mom and I raised him and his sister to travel and to wonder what is around the next bend. Now he's gone doing exactly that

And, I'm often brought to tears. Sometimes at the most appropriate of times. Sometimes at the most inappropriate of times (at least in my opinion). When I stood to say that, yes, I will be praying for Archer, Georgia and Gavin I was holding back as best as I could. Why the tears, I thought? Why? Because it means something to pray for another man's family.

I think of you off and on. I see your face and, if it comes to me, I pray for you. Each of you.

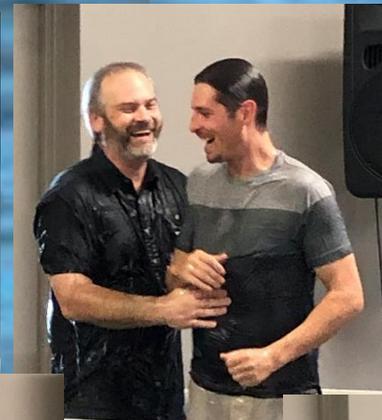
Pray for me.

Trev "Cry (for my)Baby" Murray

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 MSG

Because we know that this extraordinary day is just ahead, we pray for you all the time—pray that our God will make you fit for what he's called you to be, pray that he'll fill your good ideas and acts of faith with his own energy so that it all amounts to something. If your life honors the name of Jesus, he will honor you. Grace is behind and through all of this, our God giving himself freely, the Master, Jesus Christ, giving himself freely.



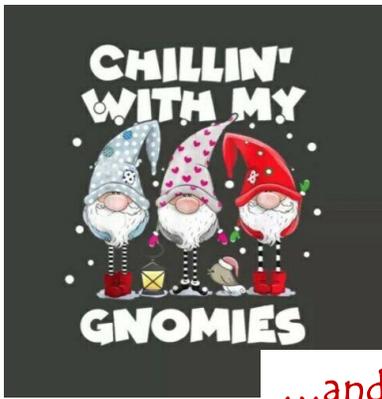


I indeed baptize you with water, ...
But He shall baptize you with the
Holy Ghost and Fire



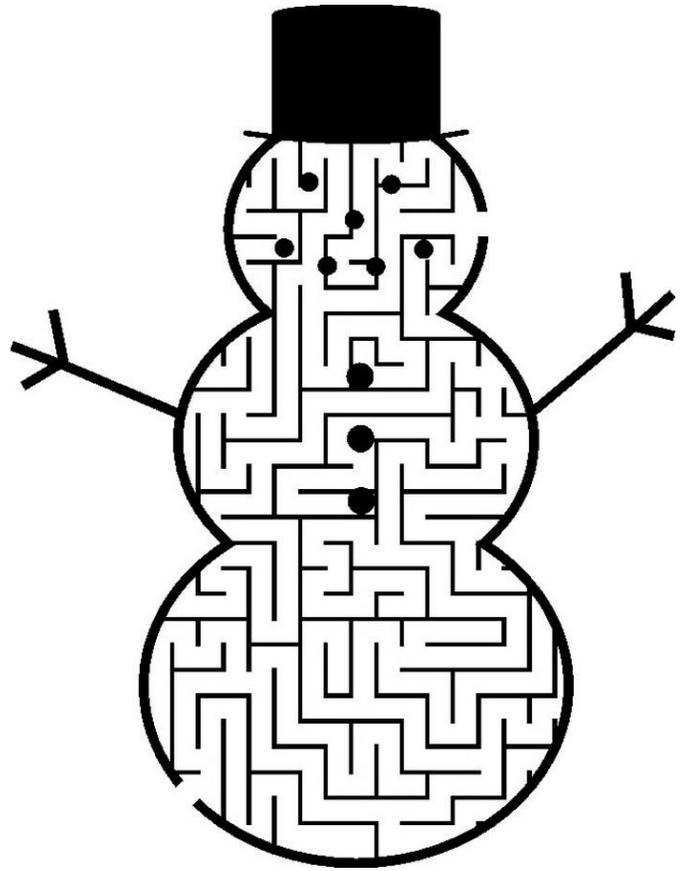
Christmas PARADE





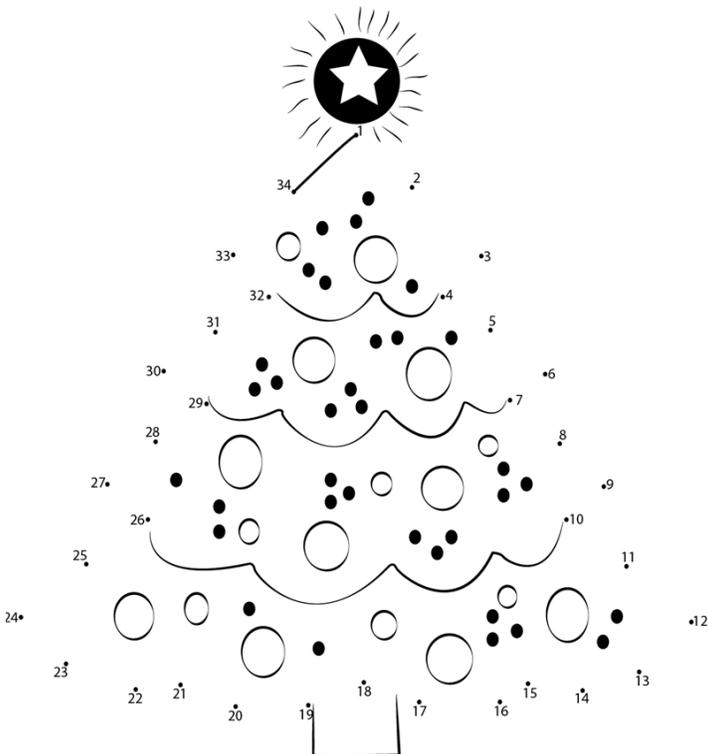
...and cookies!





The Christmas Story

V B K R A C W U J Z A L P G I W T
 M L B E T H L E H E M N P H M C F
 T C O N V S O V Y E Y V T L M W Y
 E Q R H S V C F P I W E Y P A C M
 U N G L T M S F C E N S U S N D B
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 C J U Z G Z C E D P X E B M R O Z
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Merry Christmas
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- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|--------------|----------|
| Myrrh | gold | Frankincense | census |
| Bethlehem | stable | manger | shepherd |
| star | prophet | angel | Joseph |
| Mary | Magi | Jesus | baby |
| Immanuel | | | |