



# THE MESSENGER



## Inside this issue:

Pastor Brian	2
Pastor John	3
Bryce, Youth	4
December Calendar	5
Becky, Children's Ministry	6
Family News and Notes	7
Christmas after Katrina	8
Sermon on the Amount	9
Food for the Family	10

OFFICE HOURS  
8:30 AM-5:00 PM, M-Th  
8:30-Noon, F

Rev. Brian Early, Senior Pastor

John E. Baker, Associate Pastor

Mauricio Rivas, Pastor  
Iglesia Bautista Hispana

Bryce Wescott, Interim  
Youth Ministries

Becky Pyles, Director  
Children's Ministries

Director of  
Church Administration  
Frank Hoffman

Elder Board  
Rick Gill  
Frank Hoffman  
Don Megrath  
Joel Pyles  
Ron Taylor



### Sunday, December 11

**9:00 & 10:45 a.m.:** Join us for a soulful pre-Christmas concert with Sonya Kaye.



**6:30 pm:** *God's Angels*—Our children's Christmas drama brings us a heart-warming story for the entire family.

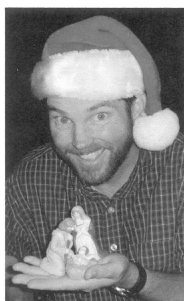


### Sunday, December 18

**9:00 & 10:45 am:** Family Christmas sing with good, old-fashioned Christmas carols

### Saturday, December 24

**6:00 pm:** Christmas Eve Candlelight service...a night dedicated to the Christmas story



### Sunday, December 25

**10:45 am:** A Christmas drama, *Away With the Manger*, presented by Steve Wilent of Master's Image Productions. This is the story of how a nativity scene first divides, then brings together, a small town in search of the true meaning of Christmas.



## Building Momentum, Moving Forward

Pastor Brian Early

Dear Church Family,

As Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, "there is a season for everything." We have recently gone through a transitional season. This season has seen Becky Pyles join us in September as our Children's Ministry Director. And now in December, we are bringing on Dave Charlson to be our Youth Director. I am so pleased with both of these good folk in what they bring to us with enthusiasm, potential and maturity to each of their positions. We are fully staffed once again! There is a momentum swing that is taking place!

We have had a number of visitors come our way this summer and fall. Many of them are calling GFBC their home. Some of them are already plugging in and ministering. We have had several people make decisions to follow Christ as their Savior and rededicate their lives to Christ. Four were baptized in November. Six new people joined the church at our Family Forum in November (Daphne Banks, Helen Ingledew, Steve and Kathy Smith, Jenny Thomas, and Josh Van Vlack). The momentum continues.

We are seeing good cooperation at the ministry team level. I am encouraged by what I am seeing with several of the teams that are bringing more people on board. The women's ministry now has a new leader in Elizabeth Burke. Worship services have had a great flare of enthusiasm as a number of new people have stepped up to add wonderful dimensions to the dynamics of each service. The drive for the future is seeing itself through our team efforts!

Financially we have continued to hover at about 90% of budget in our giving. But we also have had a modest but steady participation in the *Adventure in Faith*. Because of this, as well as because of careful spending, we have been able to retire the borrowing of \$20,000 from designated funds. We

pray that the momentum will continue through the end of the year and into 2006.

I am excited about the new outreach small group that Kathy Fox and Simona Gherghisan have started. We are having more focus on being externally driven and that is exciting momentum building.

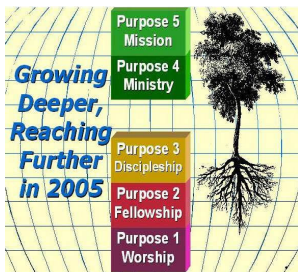
Attitude is also part of momentum. Our positive and enthusiastic attitude as we move into the Christmas season will be part of what the community will be attracted to when they come our way. We are preparing a host of special events for the Christmas season (see Pastor John's article) that you can invite friends and family to. We want the Gospel of Jesus to be heard through the message and seen in our countenance. We also know that people come looking for a church home where people are excited about God's hand and work in their lives. Let's shine bright this Christmas season with the love and joy of Jesus Christ. Help to keep the momentum going as we move forward into the New Year!

My love to you and prayers for you,

Brian

### ***Update on Pastor Brian and melanoma prevention...***

On November 15 Pastor Brian began a month-long treatment process to reduce his risk of having a re-occurrence of melanoma. In May he had a small cyst removed from his back. His oncologist has recommended immunotherapy using the drug interferon. He will be having infusions five days a week for four weeks. There are side affects with this treatment which include flu-like symptoms and emotional instability. Pray for strength for him during this time and grace with him, if he doesn't get everything done that he should!



## Sharpening Our Focus At Christmas

Pastor John Baker



One of the signs of an externally focused church is that it brings beauty to the community where it resides. This December we have five beautiful opportunities for you to help a friend or neighbor focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

You will be seeing the details, I'm going to give you the rest of the story....

### December 11 Sonya Kaye, Sunday Morning

I've known Sonya Kaye for fifteen years and I've watched her grow as an artist and in her walk with the Lord. Our band is excited to have the opportunity to work with her again this year.

Sonya's music takes her everywhere—to Africa where she sang for the President of Uganda, to ESPN and the opening of a recent Sonics game, to churches, coffee shops, and universities around the country.

Sonya's testimony really resounds with those who are looking for the true meaning of Christmas, and we plan to have her share more of what God is doing in her life this year in both the first and second services.

### December 11, 6:00 pm "God's Angels" Children's Christmas Drama

I'm excited with the growth in our Children's Ministry this fall, and one of the big areas of interest is our Children's Drama under the direction of Wendy Heim every Sunday morning. Our Sunday evening Children's Drama is a major family event and gives us a chance to bring the videocams and enjoy the message of Christmas through the eyes of our children.

### December 18—Family Christmas Carol Sing, Sunday Morning

For those of you who are looking forward to everybody singing all (well, many) of our favorite carols, together with a Gaither Homecoming kind of atmosphere, this is it—

both services. Our Worship Band, Jubilant Song, and Worship Singers are going to join with our church family to raise the roof—so bring somebody to enjoy it with you!

### December 24, 6:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, Saturday Night

Hopefully the roof will be back in place by Saturday as we read the Christmas Story together, sing some more carols, enjoy some more special music, and end with a candlelit rendition of *Silent Night*. It is amazing how many visitors we have for this service and how important this time is for connecting with those who are searching for truth.

### December 25 Away With The Manger—Christmas Morning Drama with Steve Wilent

Several months ago I asked myself, "How on earth do you have a normal Sunday morning service schedule on Christmas morning?" The answer: You don't—have a normal Sunday morning, that is.

What you do is get up when the kids get you up, open your presents, have a nice Christmas breakfast together, and come on over to the church in your robe and slippers at 10:45 for *Away With The Manger*—the story of how the struggle over a small town's Nativity scene first divides, then brings together a small town in search of the true meaning of Christmas. When the play is over, spend a little more time with friends, and then you can go home and put together the bookcase and start programming the iPod...

### Two more things—

- You might put on something other than robe and slippers Christmas morning—I like the idea, though.
- And, if anybody has a good idea for our New Year's Day Sunday Services, give us a call!



## The Blog Epidemic

by Bryce Wescott

In America, there is a tenant to our national freedoms called the “freedom of speech.” This freedom is more or less a freedom to express oneself. Through our freedoms, we state our opinions as fact and impress upon one another our own personal views as the only view that is right. For everyone today, this freedom is vital; especially for teenagers. It is important that their thoughts and opinions be heard as a building block to their development into maturity. It is also vital that mature adults treat teenage thoughts and opinions with care and guide them toward a healthy outlook of Christ and the foundations of God’s Truth.

With the Internet, there also comes the freedom to express oneself. A new means of expression is now available to students called a web-log, or a Blog for short. Sites such as Myspace or Xanga allow students to post their thoughts on a web page. This page usually contains information about the person, their interests, and influences.

The problem with sites like Myspace is not the self-expression but, rather, it is the Blogs themselves. In these Blogs, students have posted stories of drunken mishaps, decision indiscretions, or that they are going through depression and need prayer. You see, Blogs eliminate personal interaction. Instead of students seeking people for interactive advice, they are posting their innermost thoughts to Blogs. This is a problem because Blogs have replaced live communication with one another.

As many people know, the least effective means of communication is the written format; especially for emotions or matters close to the heart. Moving up the communications ladder is group presentation. This may bring people together, but it still is not very personal. Climbing another rung finds us at the phone call. While this is much more personal, it is also indirect. Studies have shown that the most effective method of communication is person-to-person conversation and this is what Blogging

eliminates.

Many of our students are using the least effective method of communication to express issues that should be personal. This is not lost on some people, however. I have heard several students say that sites like Myspace are destroying the Community of the Youth Group. They are right in thinking this. By only communicating through typed posts on a web site, they eliminate the important phone call or trip to Starbucks for a personal one-on-one.

For better or worse, I too have fallen into this trap. I admit that I have a Myspace page. It is a great way for me to keep in contact with a number of my friends who live in faraway places. I must admit that I love posting Blogs. I usually post political or theological thoughts that more or less presses upon the reader to think about issues. In keeping with being honest, I have been known to post a Blog about my personal life too. It was not until my mother approached me one day wanting to know about this girl I was going to marry that I fully understood what was going on. Through hearsay and a variety of people, my Blog became distorted.

What started as an innocent open-minded sharing of a thought, became something more (or less) than I had intended. Moreover, I finally began to see that personal communications and Community cannot be replaced by anything; no matter how slick the technology. I had allowed myself to use a public forum to express issues that I should have best shared in a phone call or Starbucks run.

I also discovered that instead of picking up the phone to call me, my friends simply posted their comments, and we fell into an unintended outcome: spending less time communicating or being together and more time on Myspace. This Blog site was eating away our Community.

Everyone seeks to know and to love and to be known and loved; to be vulnerable. Yet Blogs

*(Continued on page 8)*



# December 2005

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 6:30pm Worship Rehearsal #1 7pm Hispanic Men 7pm 24/7	2 9am MMO 6pm Women's Christmas Event 6pm Hisp. Deacons 8pm Hisp service	3 4pm Worship Team
4 6pm Hispanic Worship	5 7pm Women's Bible study@N Fisher's	6 9am MMO 6:30pm Youth	7 9am MMO 6:30pm AWANA 7pm Elder Board	8 6:30pm Worship Rehearsal 7pm 24/7	9 9am MMO 1pm Primetimers Potluck 5pm Dress Rehearsal for children 6pm Hispanic Deacons Meeting 8pm Hisp Service	10 7am-2pm Hispanic ladies breakfast 4pm Worship Team
11—Sonya Kaye  6pm Hispanic service in chapel 6:30pm Childrens Program 	12 7pm Women's Bible study@N Fisher's	13 9am MMO 6:30pm Youth 6:45pm Men's Min. 7pm Finance Tm 7pm Ensemble	14 9am MMO 6:30pm AWANA	15-Messenger Deadline 6:30pm Worship Rehearsal 7pm 24/7	16 9am MMO-Christmas program 3pm Primetimer Outing 8pm Hispanic Service	17 4pm Worship Team
18—Family Carol Sing 2pm Hispanic Christmas dinner	19	20 6:30pm Youth	21 7pm Elder Board	22 6:30pm Worship Rehearsal	23 8pm Hispanic Service	24  6pm Christmas Eve Service 6pm Hispanic Christmas Eve Service
25—One Service Christmas Drama 10:45 am 	26—OFFICE CLOSED	27 7pm Portland Rescue Mission	28	29 6:30pm Worship Rehearsal 7pm Wedding Rehearsal	30 Wedding 8pm Hispanic Service	31 6pm Hispanic New Year's Eve Service
Winter Youth						



## Take Time to Savor the Season... With Your Family!

by Becky Pyles

It seems impossible that the Christmas season is already upon us! While this means even more busy-ness than at any other time of the year, families should carve out time to celebrate “The Reason For the Season”!

One way to focus on the birth of our Savior is to use an Advent Calendar. An Advent Calendar is a simple and fun family activity, usually involving a calendar with windows that open for each day from the beginning of Advent, and counting down until Christmas Day.

Since Jesus is the Light of the World, an Advent Wreath made with candles also is a fun way for families to focus on God’s gift of His Son. Advent wreaths are made using four or five candles, and lighting them according to each week before Christmas. When you are lighting the candles, whether it’s once each day at dinner time, or once each week, you can read different scriptures about the coming of the Savior.

Take the time to enjoy the family God has given you! Below, I’ve shared some of the activities that the Pyles family does this time of year. Use any or all of these ideas to make this Christmas Season more focused on Christ, and the joy that we have because of the gift of salvation through Him!

### **Make your own Family Advent Wreath**

Put four candles on a wreath or at least in a circle. The candles are purple, because it is the season of the coming of the King! You can also make one of the candles pink or rose colored. If you have a fifth candle, it goes in the center of the wreath and it should be white.

#### **First Week**

Isaiah 60:2-3

Light one purple candle

Theme—the Hope of the coming Savior

#### **Second Week**

Mark 1:4

Light two purple candles

Theme—the Love that God has for us

#### **Third Week**

Isaiah 35:10

Light two purple candles and the pink candle

Theme—The Joy that we find in Jesus

#### **Fourth Week**

Isaiah 9:6-7

Light all the purple candles and the pink candle

Theme—the Peace that can only come from Jesus

#### **Christmas Eve or Christmas Day**

Luke 1:68-79 and Luke 2:1-20

Light all the candles, including the white candle in the middle

Theme—celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ!

### Have Fun with Your Kids This Christmas Season!

- **Bake Christmas Cookies together! Make baskets or plates full of them for your neighbors.**
- **Go to see Christmas lights together. We have many neighborhoods around this area that put on a spectacular display!**
- **Have a candlelight dinner and read the Christmas story.**
- **Go caroling around your neighborhood or at a nursing home.**
- **Snuggle up together with blankets and popcorn and watch Christmas movie classics.**

## Family News and Notes



Cathy and I would like to thank the congregation for the cards, phone calls, and overall love shown during our illness. /s/ Bill Russel

A huge THANKS to all who helped to make our 2005 Fall Fiesta truly FABULOUS! From bringing candy, to taking a pie in the face, running a booth, or cooking hotdogs—**every** person who was involved made a difference. Please pray for the 100 kids who enjoyed this out-reach event and were presented with the gospel message!

Dear Church Family, I have been astounded at all the cards that have come for me since my retina surgery. Thank you very much for all these cards, phone calls, a plant, and visits. Additional heartfelt thanks for your prayers. Both Helen and I noticed a change in my condition when someone told us they had been praying. Don't stop praying since the surgeon has not released me yet. Thanks again for everything. /s/ John Joy

This is a note to thank you for your part in making our married students' dinner such a success again this year. I was not able to attend the dinner because I was ill, but I heard reports once again that everything went well. Your facility is just right for this event. We especially appreciate your allowing us to use the nursery facilities. Thank you again for your assistance. Student response to the dinner was so good that we are hoping to be able to make this an annual event. Sincerely, /s/ Lynn Robert Ruark, Dean of Men, Western Seminary



**Avery Jessica Ruhl** was born on October 28 in Bend, OR, joining her brothers Dawson and Dylan. Her parents are Dan and Jessica Ruhl; grandparents are Joe and Judie Ruhl, and great-grandmother is



Jerry Howard. Congratulations to the family and welcome to Avery.



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Gladstone OR 97027-6403  
503-722-2386



Laurel Chambers  
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Oregon City OR 97045-1566  
503-656-1173

Dale & Sandra Ballantyne  
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Bob & Kathy Yergen  
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*From your staff...*  
Thank you for your support, your expressions of love and concern, and your commitment to the church family at GFBC. God bless you richly throughout this

next year.

*John* *Brian*  
*Becky* *Laura*



## Christmas After Katrina

Laura Bondiotti

The GFBC family has committed to adopt Faith Bible Church in Slidell, Louisiana as they recover from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. As we reach out to the Slidell community, we have been given the privilege of adopting several families who really need our help during this Christmas season.

If you, or a group you are a part of, would like to be involved with helping show the love of Christ at Christmas in Slidell, look for the giving tree set up in

Tucker Hall.

The deadline for mailing packages to be received by Christmas is December 5. All gifts need to be wrapped, labeled and turned in to the church office or Laura Bondiotti no later than Saturday, December 3. If you would prefer, financial donations are welcome any time between now and Christmas. For more information, please contact Laura at the church office by phone (503-654-7728) or e-mail (laura@gfbcfamily.org). Thank you!

## Youth News (continued)

*(Continued from page 4)*

directly take away from that which we most greatly desire. Anyone can post matters of their heart and never talk to anyone. Frankly, Blogging gives us a false sense of community and transparency.

When Job lost everything he had, his friends sat with him and said nothing (Job 2:13). It was not their words or their comments on Job's Blog that helped Job know they cared. Instead, it was them staying with him, in the flesh, for 7 days and nights doing nothing but being personal that let Job know they cared. This was the one thing Job's friends did right. They did not send letters, send a third-party messenger, or write in the sand their desire that he get better. They personally spent time with him.

Blogs are now a common communication tool on the Internet. In light of this, I want to offer a challenge to both parents and students. It would not be beneficial to ban Myspace or other Blog sites. However, we need to keep them in perspective and use them properly to not destroy Community. Let us continue to

seek out personal relationships with everyone inside of our Community. Kids, take time with your parents to talk about your struggles and thoughts. Parents, spend time listening to your children. If life is too busy to be healthy inside of the family Community, it cannot be healthy elsewhere either. Spend quality time together.

The key to this is, primarily, listening. Far too often parents just want to fix the problem or correct the path and move on. While this might be necessary, more is accomplished by first listening. We all need to take time to listen, care, love, and share in what Community really means. What students need are adults who will love them and listen to them unconditionally. Are you willing to be that adult? Try it; you will not regret it. Students, are you willing to get real with an adult who can love you unconditionally? Try it; you will not regret it.



## Baptisms November 13, 2005



Haleigh Murrell

Steve Smith

Kathy Smith

Daphne Banks

## Fabulous Fun Fiesta was for all ages!



## Sermon on the Amount GFBC FAMILY GIVING 1/1/05--11/20/05



**General Fund YTD**  
 \$314,101 Budget  
\$282,011 Giving  
 \$ -32,090 90%

**Missions YTD**  
 \$54,144 Budget  
\$50,175 Giving  
 \$ -3,969 93%

### *Not a burden, just a joy!*

When layperson Helen Trudgeon of Tempe, Arizona, was asked to offer her thoughts on stewardship to her congregation, she said, "Giving a percentage to our church has sometimes been hard, but it has never been a bur-

den." That is a truth often expressed by percentage givers, especially tithers. Invariably they tell of the joy they have discovered in following the ancient practice of giving 10 percent to the work of the Lord. Could it be that those who haven't tried it are missing the pleasure to be found by such action?

## Food for the Family

The holidays are coming and finances are tight for several in our congregation, as well as for people in other parts of the country. We want to be blessed by being a blessing to members of the GFBC family. You can help by doing one of two things...

1. Bring non-perishable, holiday dinner food items and place them in the barrel in Tucker Hall.
2. Donate funds for perishable items, such as turkey and dairy products, by putting a check in the offering marked "Food Boxes".

The barrel will be available in Tucker Hall through December 18

so we can put together boxes for Christmas.

*For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.*

*At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need (2 Corinthians 8:12-14a).*

