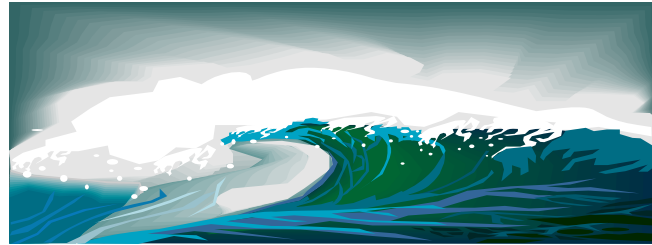




The *December 2017*

# Anchor

We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul...Heb.6:19a



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Thinking of the joyous Thanksgiving celebration we recently held with family, I felt saddened by the thought that this holiday's meaning may have been diluted for many. Thanksgiving for some has become not what was intended, but a mere beginning of the Christmas holiday shopping season. I recently received a nice Thanksgiving card which on the front had the expression *öFaith, Family, Friends matter at Thanksgiving.ö* I feel this is a beautiful reminder of what matters most each day of our lives.

For many, the traditions of Christmas are blended into the traditions of Thanksgiving. My mind turns to the shopping for gifts. I think an argument could be made that take away the dinner, Thanksgiving is not the holiday it once was. Preparations for Christmas have kind of taken away the time reserved to spend quality time with family. *God instituted marriage and the family unit. He knew of the support and value this would bring to people, yet today many families fail to find the quality time to support each other, yes even at Thanksgiving.*

We now move forward towards the celebration of our most sacred holiday of Christmas. This is a time of the year packed with traditions that are time honored in many families. The favorite recipes come out for those food items we eat only at Christmas. The card address book reminds us of the old friends we like to stay in touch with - at least once a year. Travel plans are made to visit our parents, grandparents, etc.

I think Satan likes us to be a busy people. Busy people can become like ships passing in the night. We see each other on the outside but fail to truly know the person living inside. About the time of Thanksgiving we might have the conversation of what would you like for Christmas? I can think of better questions to ask. *What are you thankful for in your life, what can I do different to be there for you more than I have been?* These are just a few but enough to get the point across. **We need to know truly how to help and care for each other.**

So we now begin the countdown for Christmas. *The ultimate excitement of Christmas morning rests truly in remembering what Jesus Christ has done and is doing in our lives.* Let's be careful to not let the material gifts being received on Christmas day dilute the true meaning of this sacred day on our church calendar.

Let's share our hearts with God and make an extra special time to give Him homage for the bountiful gift of salvation given to everyone who calls out His name. ***Jesus Christ is the perfect gift from the creator to His creation, resulting in eternity with Him for all who believe.*** This holy season, my prayer is for friends and family to unite to celebrate in Christian love.

*Many Christmas Blessings,*

*Pastor Mark*



As we head into one of the most holy times of the year as Christians, we are reminded that the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was the beginning of God's plan to bring us back into fellowship with Him. It was His life that eventually led to the cross and His death, and ultimately His resurrection and salvation for you and me. But His coming, should have not come as a surprise.

The Bible foretold in **Isaiah 7:14** *“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”* Can we really grasp the context of that scripture remembering that it was said about 700 years **before** Jesus came on the scene? God was sending prophecy foretelling of the coming of our Lord. When we skip over to Luke, we see that prophecy fulfilled when Mary, who was a virgin, became pregnant. *That's just how amazing God is! He keeps his promises.*

Speaking of promises, one of the greatest things we can teach our children and grandchildren is the importance of telling the truth and keeping their word. This holiday season gives us the opportunity to spend quality time with our kids. Why not make this year special. Remember, *character traits count*, and when people see our young people tell the truth and keep their promises, it says a lot about who they are. These traits are biblical too. The Bible says to let your yes be yes and our no, no. Plus, one of the commandments is to not lie. These character traits can be lumped into one cache called honesty. *The next time you are having a heart to heart with your young person, take a few moments to talk about the importance of honor.* It's a conversation they will not forget.

Speaking of youth, Captivate will have a busy month in December. We have committed to a 2-hour window of bell ringing at Food Fair in Ravenswood during FBC's day of bell ringing. We are inviting all youth in the church who want to ring the bell to stop by during the 2-hour window. They can stay for 15 minutes, 30 minutes or the entire time. We hope to give out candy canes to everyone who walks by. Additionally, Captivate will be going to the Sky Zone trampoline park in Charleston on December 16, followed by their annual Christmas dinner. This is a time we celebrate a great year and look forward to next year.

As we start thinking about how to begin the New Year, think about where you are in your relationship with Jesus. Are you in a good place or do you have room for improvement? Where are you kids in their relationship? **Why not make a commitment together to get more involved in Sunday School and youth programs at church.** Having the influence of church on your child's life will go a long way in, not only helping build character and love for the Lord, but also a chance to mix and mingle with others who might be different than they are, but share the same love for Jesus.

In closing, let me just wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas season this year. I find myself in awe, when I think about how great a church we have. You are such a blessing to me and my family. One of the greatest joys I have is serving you and your children. Thank you for allowing me to fill the pulpit in Mark's absence. Your cards, texts and emails of support have meant the world to me.

***May you be fully blessed in the coming year, and may you prosper with better health, and even more happiness. May God fully and richly bless you like none prior.***

In His service,  
**Pastor Toby**