



22/23 December 2018
Vol. 40, No. 50

What 'God With Us' Means

1 John 1:1-4

English Services

(8 & 10:30 a.m., & 5:30 p.m.)

Prelude
Call to Worship
Worship through Praise
Anthem
Worship through Fellowship
Scripture Reading
Worship in Music
Worship in the Word
Pastor Larry Pabiona
Worship through Giving
Response Song
Benediction

Filipino Service

(3 n.h.)

Paghahanda
Tawag sa Pagsamba
Pagsamba sa Pag-aawitan
Pagkilala sa mga Bisita
Pagbasa ng Salita ng Diyos
Panalanging Pastoral
Pakikinig sa Salita ng Diyos
Pastor Dags Miguel
Pagsamba sa Pagbibigay
Tugon na Awit
Bendisyon

See inset inside for the **Traditional Service (Sat., 6 p.m.)** program.

What 'God With Us' Means

Today's Message (22/23 December 2018) /
1 John 1:1-4

CHRISTMAS
MEANS THAT
GOD WENT
TO INFINITE
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PERSONALLY.

The other name of Jesus is Immanuel, “God with us” (*Matthew 1:23*). This passage may not seem like a Christmas text, because it is not about Jesus’ birth. But in fact, the apostle John is giving us all the implications of what “God with us” means. This passage is a precise account of what Christmas really stands for:

1. CHRISTMAS MEANS YOU CAN HAVE LIFE FROM GOD (vv. 1-2).

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

- In verse 1, Jesus is “the Word of life,” then verse 2 says, “Eternal life...was with the Father and has appeared to us.” Jesus Christ doesn’t merely *have* eternal life or gives it. Jesus *Himself* is eternal life. To unite with Him by faith and to know Him in love, is to have life. There is nothing else for you to achieve or attain.
- In this passage we find three of the five *solas* on which the entire Reformation was based:
 - *Sola Gratia*: We are saved by the grace of God alone.
 - *Sola Fide*: We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
 - *Solus Christus*: Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.
- You can believe in the truth of Christmas—that you are saved by grace alone through faith alone, in Christ alone. You can become someone humbled out of pride but affirmed and loved out of insecurity—then given eternal life.

Traditional Service (Saturday, 6 p.m.)

Prelude
Call to Worship
Worship through Praise
Worship through Fellowship
Scripture Reading
Preparatory Hymn
Worship in the Word
Pastor Larry Pabiona
Worship through Giving
Response Hymn
Benediction

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1 John 1:1-4

- If Christmas is a nice myth, then you are on your own, in the worst sense possible. But if Christmas is true—as John vows that it is—then you are saved by Christ alone. Here is the sworn statement of John: “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim...we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you...”

2. CHRISTMAS MEANS THAT YOU CAN LIVE WITH GOD (vv. 3-4).

³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to make our joy complete.

John had insisted on the veracity of Jesus' existence, which means Jesus was born, lived, died, resurrected, and is returning. That's what he “proclaims.” Then in verses 3-4 he describes the point of all his proclamation:

- **The Heart of God: Christmas means you can have intimacy with God.**
When Moses pleaded to see God Himself, he was told he would die, yet in John 1:14, we are told that through Jesus, “We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only...full of grace and truth.” Christmas means that God went to infinite lengths to make Himself one whom you can know personally. God is not content to be a “force” or someone you know from a distance.
- **What's Fellowship with God For? For God's glory and your joy!**
Christmas means joy—“good news of great joy” (*Luke 2:10*). John is saying in verse 4, “My joy is incomplete ‘til you have the same joy with God that we have.” In John 16:22, Jesus promises that His followers' joy will be unending, because the “full measure” of Christ's own joy will be reproduced in us (*John 17:13*). God enjoys your joy.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The world fails to find Christian joy because the means to realizing it are so ordinary – that it begins with a humble plea like “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”. What an irony that Christmas is the one Christian event the world accepts, yet its meaning is the one it least understands.

Joy grows in believers over time through common, routine things—Bible meditation and prayer, obedience, worship attendance, serving Christians and neighbors, depending on Christ when suffering. And little by little faith will grow, and then our lives will come closer to God, our Source of joy ■

Merry Christmas! May you discover and delight in the eternal Source of joy!

PRAISE GOD FOR THE INITIAL RESULTS OF LAST WEEKEND'S CANTATA

We praise God for the following decisions last weekend in our participative concert (Cantata) where you, the congregation became part of the singing. Thank you for the people you invited and prayed for. Here are the results to praise God for:

- 93 prayed to receive Christ
- 27 would like to know how to be a Christian
- 102 want to become members of GCF
- 4 would like to serve in a ministry
- 2 interested to join a GG

Please pray for very good follow-up of all these people. Each and every one of them are a gift from God that we should take good care of.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY! BUT THANK YOU NONETHELESS

These are the following people who made the whole weekend Concert possible:

1. The GCF Singing Groups (*in alphabetical order*): Chancel Choir, Harvest, Praise Factory (and their parents), Senior Choir, Youth Choir, 6:33, and 4Word.
2. Accompanied by music from our Chamber Orchestra and Praise and Worship Band
3. Our in-house interpretative dance group, Tapestry

4. Our hardworking Ushers and Visitor's Center team.
5. And our behind the scenes people without whom nothing would run: Production team, Stage Management team, and Documentation team.

Praise God for all of you! Thank you for giving to the Lord. The souls won, new members that will come in, and believers blessed, are the fruits of your hard labor.

HAVE YOU NOTICED OUR BEAUTIFUL CHURCH DECORATION?

I know you have. Many of you spent time taking pictures of both the GCF exterior and the gigantic Christmas tree in the lobby that can "sing." Here are the people behind the beauty of our church decorations, singing Christmas Tree included! Please thank them when you see them (first names alphabetically): A'gay Fabellar, Ayi Atienza, Betchay Salustiano, Girlie Liu, Lily Cheng, and Lot Pabiona.

They teamed up with our staff whom we acknowledge, too: Diding Bajuyo, Noel Nalic, Rogelio Baracca, Tess Angeles, and last but not least, our GCF Carpentry/Maintenance team.

Praise God for the gifts that you have used to bless His house and to honor the birth of Christ! ■

Ministry Opportunities + Announcements

Merry Christmas!

from Greenhills Christian Fellowship



HOLIDAY SERVICE SCHEDULES

Christmas Eve Service (Dec. 24, Mon), 5 p.m.
New Year's Eve Service (Dec. 31, Mon), 5 p.m.
Please note that we will still have regular worship services on the preceding weekends (December 22/23 and 29/30).



PRAISE FACTORY AUDITIONS

January 12, 2019 (Sat), 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at A201 (Old Choir Room)
Open to kids ages 6-11, especially boys
Please prepare one audition song.



GGEX EXTREME

featuring Discovering What the Future Holds by Precept Ministries
All adults without GG are invited.
March 31, 2019 (Sun) at the Fellowship Hall
Free snack and material will be provided.
Registration is **free** but **limited to first 200**.
Registration starts on January 6, 2019.

The flowers this week are given with praise and thanksgiving to God by the Almiraz family, the Santos boys, the Messiah College and Tess Roseus for healing and provisions.

Please call 632 1354 to 56 for inquiries on how to participate in this ministry.

Join a DISCIPLE-MAKING GROUP

Growth Group Express

How to Make Decisions You Won't Regret (Lessons on David's Life)
Adults without GGs are invited!
Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
Fellowship Hall

Best Together in Christ

Group for Couples
Sundays, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Rm. B508

Spark Growth Group

Mondays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Seniors' Room

Life in Technicolor

support group for cancer patients and survivors
Every 3rd Sunday of the month
12:00-3:00 p.m., Seniors' Rm.

Overcomers

support group for those under any kind of addiction
Thursdays, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

If you are interested in joining any of the small groups above, fill out the tear-off form of this bulletin, drop it in the offering bag, or submit it at the Growth Group booth at the lobby. For more information, you can text or call us at 0917 532 1921.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT / December 2018

December Budget		Received, Dec. 1 to 16	January to Dec. Budget		Received, Jan. 1 to Dec. 16
General Fund	7,213,495	5,472,000	General Fund	102,654,224	89,197,039
Missions Fund	927,000	846,244	Missions Fund	11,124,000	10,094,204

Where you are now is your mission field

BY IRIS HOLGADO

Earlier this year, my sister Truthie took me to my very first short-term missions trip outside the country. This has been on my prayer list since 2013, back when my mom and sisters became involved with Wetfoot. Upon reaching Thailand, where my sister and I were tasked with teaching the kids of the missionaries, my heart beamed with so much joy at the sight of my prayers being answered.



I was assigned to the kids but I was also blessed to be able to talk to their parents about their ministry. I learned what brought them to missions, and what kind of work God is doing through them. These people were living my dream. I was raised in a family very invested and intentional in missions, and I grew up surrounded by people of different nationalities. And so far as I could remember, I dreamed of being a missionary, to be serving God in the field of missions outside the Philippines.

While still in Thailand, I prayed that God would allow me to come back. God answered. But this time, it was through

the missionaries I met. I would often hear these missionaries encourage my sister and I to return and serve again. However, they would always look at me and speak of serving in the Philippines. It was interesting how I was in Thailand, and yet they encouraged me to minister to my fellow Filipinos. I prayed again that God would make things clearer for me to understand better. God answered. It happened again the next day, I shared to one of the parents of my class that I was thinking about being a full-time missionary after college. She responded, "You're in college? That's your mission field, right there."

God answers our prayers. It's just that, sometimes, we overlook it. I've been praying that God would allow me to go and serve Him in the "mission field." It turns out, He's already answered my prayers. Where I am now is my mission field. This is where God wants me to be, where He wants me to serve.

Sometimes, we pray and ask that God would send us out of the country to serve Him, and we get upset that He hasn't given us a 'yes'. That's probably because we're already in the mission field where He wants us to make Him known. Our *oikos*, our community, our school or workplace, those are our mission fields. May we heed God's call for us to be witnesses for Him right now and to follow how He leads us in our missionary journey, one step at a time ■

GCF PRAYER GATHERINGS *at the Chapel*

The GCF Hour of Prayer
Tuesdays, 6-7 a.m.

Midweek Prayer Service
Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

ON THE COVER: "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people' (public domain). The *Angel Appearing to the Shepherds* (1639) by Dutch painter, Govert Flinck.



Greenhills Christian Fellowship
Know Christ and Make Him Known

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