

KISSINGER'S CALLER NEWSLETTER

Calling all people to Jesus Christ

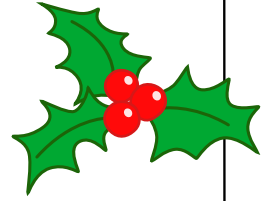
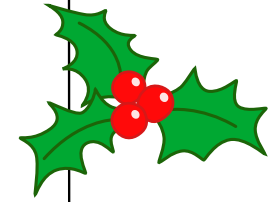
Kissinger's Church "Where the Bible Comes Alive"

PASTOR DAVID REINWALD

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Is Santa Claus a Christian ?



¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace

SPECIAL EVENTS TEAM

New team formed in July for the purpose of planning events and activities to invite people from both outside and within the church to fellowship and develop relationships so that we may share Christ, and minister to one another's needs. Charirperson is Pauline Seyler, co-chair is Jeanne Neidermyer, and our Secretary is Lois Bordner. Some of our first event plans are; Our church "T-shirts", movie night, Thanksgiving eve fellowship, chalk talk, Christmas caroling and a game night.

We would love more people to join our team. Please speak to Pauline or Jeanne or come to our meeting on the last Monday of the month at 6:00 PM. We would love to have you join us.

A Merry Christmas to all

Kissinger's Christmas Bazaar

Again this year we are asking for donations of handmade items for our Christmas Bazaar. You can bring them in and give them to Ruth Graul, Annamae Painter, Pat Misiaszek, or Sandy Kurtz. Last year we had a lot of beautiful items donated. Fellowship Team sends out a heartfelt "Thank you" to everyone who donated and participated last year and made our Bazaar a success.

DECEMBER 2018

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Christians and Santa Claus: a Biblical View

As I drive through my neighborhood in December, I am confronted with giants dancing on my neighbors' lawns. A 6-foot-tall Scooby-Doo sways in the breeze donning a red knit cap. An inflatable carousel that wouldn't fit in my living room spins a snowman, a reindeer, and an elf in an endless circuit. Santa Claus can be seen in plastic light-up form, inflated fabric, plywood silhouette, and various other renditions—including catching a bass on a large fishing pole. Oh! Look! That yard has a manger scene surrounded by reindeer and candy canes and soldiers and snowmen and . . . you get the point.

If you brought someone from Russia to my neighborhood, what would they infer from the inflated and illuminated army? I sincerely doubt that it would convey the message of the Creator entering His Creation to redeem it from the Curse of sin. The manger scenes might raise a question, and the lit Cross in my yard with the message "A Savior Is Born" would hopefully draw the visitor's attention. But these are certainly lost among the troop formations. So, is this season about celebrating dancing snowmen and blinking lights or a Savior and the hope He brings?

Sadly, our culture has shifted its focus to the dazzling decorations and away from a dazzling Savior. Commercialism has swallowed whatever Christmas used to be before it was this. Battles are fought over the very name of the holiday, and Santa Claus is embraced more freely than the infant Jesus. Santa is an icon in modern culture, and his image is used to sell everything from soda to sports cars. Let's consider what we can learn from God's Word regarding Christians and Santa Claus—in light of the true meaning of Christmas.

The Origins of Santa Claus

As with many things in our culture, Santa has his beginnings in a Christian past. As the legends have it, the concept of Santa is rooted in the real Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, dating to the fourth century. Nicholas inherited a large amount of money and used much of his fortune to help the poor. Nicholas gave freely to meet the needs of people around him, fulfilling the commands of Christ to aid the poor.

After his death, the Catholic Church recognized him as a saint—hence the common American usage of St. Nick as a substitute for Santa. The red clothing is likely founded in the red robes worn by bishops. The white beard and other trappings (e.g., reindeer, sleighs, elves, etc.) are likely adopted from various cultural influences being mingled together over the centuries. If you study the celebration of Santa (a.k.a., St. Nick, Kris Kringle, Father Christmas, and Sinterklauss) around the world, the similarities are obvious, as shoes are substituted for stockings and the North Pole for the mountains of Lapland.

Wintertime Worship: Santa Claus or Jesus Christ?

The mythical Santa is clearly founded in a man who honored Jesus Christ with his life and his possessions. Nicholas gave freely of his riches to benefit those who were less fortunate than himself. This is clearly a fundamental Christian principle, as we see care for the poor proclaimed throughout Scripture (e.g., James 2:1–17).

Is that the same idea we see in the Santa Claus celebrated today? The popular song extols children to stop shouting, pouting, and crying in order to earn Santa's favor and his gifts. This is clearly not the attitude that we see in the biblically motivated actions of the original St. Nick—and a far cry from a biblical attitude of raising children in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

I have personally overheard mothers using gifts from Santa to manipulate their children into behaving in a way

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that pleases the parent at the time. Such manipulation is entirely unbiblical. As Christians, we should discipline our children for sinful behavior because it is an offense against God, not because it is inconvenient or embarrassing for us. Using gifts from a mythical figure can only serve to promote a form of moralism that is alien to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If our actions are done to earn rewards for ourselves, are we not acting selfishly? This is not an attitude we should seek to instill in our children.

Our motivation for being obedient to God's commands should be out of an attitude of gratitude for the **grace** He has shown us. The gospel speaks of God's work in forgiving us of our sins—not because of the righteous acts which we have done, but because of what Christ did on the Cross for us (Titus 3:4–7). Nothing that we can do can make us righteous before God or make us deserving of His good gifts. *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8–10)*

Does the promotion of Santa lead to an exaltation of Christ? Since Jesus and Santa Claus bring competing messages, I would suggest the answer is no. As Jesus Christ continues to be marginalized by society, our goal should be to magnify Him in our homes that our children would be impressed with His kindness to us shown on the Cross. This is the message the original St. Nicholas would have communicated.

Mommy, Is There Really a Santa Claus?

A Christian parent must thoughtfully consider that Scripture is full of commands against deceiving others (e.g., Exodus 20:16; Psalm 101:7; Ephesians 4:25; 1 Peter 2:1–3). Persistently proclaiming the existence of a man in a sleigh with flying reindeer as fact can only lead to deceit. Please understand that I am not saying there is no place for imagination, but the level of emphasis on Santa appears to cross the line. The active teaching of Santa as a real person who performs real miracles to reward children for acting a certain way, in full knowledge that he is a myth, can only be described as deceit. Any parent who teaches their children much of what is popular about Santa knows that they will eventually learn that it was all a lie. Lying is a sin and cannot be justified on biblical grounds. Have we bowed to cultural pressures to have our children conform to the ways of the world, or do we celebrate Santa so that Christ can be exalted? Rather than dealing with the root of sin against God, who is the definition of “good,” the “goodness” promoted by Santa finds its roots in the humanistic philosophy of behavior modification. As children grow, they will undoubtedly begin to hear others speaking of the mythical nature of Santa. They will ask and will expect an answer from the parents they have trusted. Since some may not wish to totally skirt the issue of Santa Claus (and it is difficult to do anyway), consider how it is possible to allow children to learn about the real St. Nicholas—and maybe even share in some of the fun of make-believe—while remaining honest with your children. If Santa Claus has taken the glory from Jesus Christ in your family's celebration of Christmas, maybe it is time to seriously consider changing the emphasis. I understand that these are matters of conscience in many ways and that sincere Christians will come to different conclusions on Santa Claus. What I would ask is that you examine your decisions in light of what Scripture teaches. If our conscience convicts us of sin in our hearts, we can bring that to God in repentance and know that He will freely forgive us because of what Christ has done.

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:5–10)

Rather than offering a platform to chastise Christians with views contrary to this article, I hope you will think and pray about how to bring Jesus Christ the worship He is due during this season when we recognize His incarnation. Let us all make the Word of God the authority in our decisions about celebrating this, and every, holiday—giving God the glory He alone deserves.

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A DAY TO REMEMBER

NOVEMBER 11, 2018



The Kissinger Congregation was blessed on November 11 to witness a beautiful rededication of marriage vows of Pastor Dave and Jackie celebrating 10 years of marriage. Officiating was Pastor Mark Brophy. This emotionally memorable service included daughter Sarah, communion and a foot washing ceremony as well as special songs Pastor Dave wrote and sang to "His Girls". The service was followed by a congregational full course turkey dinner served by the fellowship team

HEALTH NUGGET

Once a person reaches thirty years old they start to lose muscle and bone mass. So, it is important that they have an exercise program so they can slow down that process and maintain their life as they get older. If you have any fitness questions, call Andrew Santos 484-824-9396 or email Aspersonaltraining@hotmail.com

Wedding Anniversaries

11/11 Liz Spangler

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Peanut Butter Cookies

1 egg
1 cup sugar
1 cup peanut butter
1 teas. Baking soda

Mix and roll into golf ball size
Press with fork and flour
Bake 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes

THE REAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS IS EASTER

EXCITING SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES at 9:00 AM

Dave Kauffman is teaching "STORIES FROM THE BIBLE"

Bryan Seyler is teaching a new Series on "GRACE"

Pauline Seyler & Barbara Adams will be teaching classes for children ages 5 thru 12

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FROM THE PASTOR

CHIPMUNK NEWS

Chipmunk News December 2018

Friends,

I read a very good article recently about all the Christmas movies that will be shown this year, specifically the Hallmark Channel (Feel free to check out the Lifetime Channel as well).

I admit that I enjoy sitting with my family and watching a movie set in a small town with snow, Christmas decorations, and family get-togethers. Oh, and let's not forget the "boy meets girl" theme. And, after some tough moments and misunderstandings they live happily ever after.

Unfortunately, this may be the central theme of Christmas to many, when it is truly so much more. And, so much better. You see, the Christmas story that we find in scripture isn't centered on the theme of, "boy meets girl", but, "boy meets world"!

The One who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. So the Word (Jesus) became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. John 1:9,14

Yes, I enjoy a good Hallmark movie. They're nice but have no eternal qualities. Plus, they're fictional stories with fictional characters. Whereas the birth of Jesus brings to all the hope and promise of everlasting life, and a real God coming to save real people – you and me!

So, by all means, catch a few movies this Christmas season. But, when each movie ends, continue to consider and enjoy the true story that never ends!

Blessings,

Pastor Dave



**IM DELIVERING FRUIT
CAKE TO ALL**



The Kissinger's Church Safety team is looking for volunteers from the congregation who would be willing to Help, in an emergency/medical situation, during Church on Sunday. We are looking for Doctors, nurses, EMT's or individuals trained in first aid. If you are interested please contact Ronald Heilman C:484-529-

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