

CHATHAM CHRISTIAN CHURCH
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Sunday Worship Service 9:15 AM
Bible School 10:45 AM

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There is little doubt that we will still live in a strange new world as we enter 2023. Trying to understand that world, however, proved to be more difficult than we thought.

We did our best on Sunday nights to explore how the thinking of philosophers laid the foundation for the strange gender confusion we are currently experiencing, and we affirmed a biblical understanding of who we are and why God made us the way He did. I do have to admit, however, that we stopped mid-stream.

We covered the historical thinking, but decided to simply summarize how that thinking has gone main-stream today, and encouraged the class to read the second half of the book on their own. Hopefully those who are doing so will be even better equipped to answer the questions that are bound to find their way into our homes.

Having confessed that we stopped mid-stream, and acknowledged what has gone main-stream, I feel a need to swim up-stream and admit that sometimes you can't even lead a horse to water, let alone make it drink.

Back in October I reviewed *Living Life Backward* by David Gibson in detail. I was convinced everyone would benefit greatly from reading it. But since no one asked for a copy, I'm going to try once again to lead you to it. In fact, I'm going to actually help you drink it in. Yes, *Living Life Backward* will be our Sunday evening adult study for the new year.

If you don't want your resolutions for the new year to end up in vain, this study of Ecclesiastes will get you started in the right direction. Instead of setting your sights on a future that is unsure, and a path through life that is guaranteed to end with you crying out "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity", you'll learn how to live a successful life by living it backward.

Unlike our previous study, this book is an easy read. You could wade in by yourself without danger of drowning, but if we swim through it together we'll make some good waves and really stir things up.

Dive in with me at 6:30 on the 8th, and you'll be glad you did.

God Bless, Rick



THE CHATHAM MESSENGER

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PARALLEL UNIVERSES

by Chris Luzio

As I've mentioned before, one of my favorite things about my job is that I get to help my students make connections between two realities...two parallel universes, if you will. In my chemistry classes, we investigate the invisible realm of atoms, ions, and molecules in order to understand, predict, and influence the observable, visible realm of everyday life.

When they first enter my classroom in August, many of my students would claim the air in the room isn't made of anything, that air is empty space and not material in its nature. What they quickly come to realize is that air is composed primarily of nitrogen and oxygen molecules, pairs of tiny, invisible atoms bouncing around and off each other and everything else in the room...that the invisible is in fact, real! When we study gases in more detail during the spring semester, these students gain a fuller understanding of the invisible matter around them in the air...not from me telling them that this is so, but by experiencing it themselves through experimentation. They see how a balloon's mass increases after it is filled, they try to blow up a balloon inside a sealed bottle...and by experiencing the material effects of an invisible reality, my students gain a more complete understanding of the air around them.

I think something similar happens when we meet around this table and that's one of my favorite things about sharing the Lord's Supper. This meal acts as a reminder at the intersection between two realities...two parallel universes, if you will. Through it we experience both of these realities simultaneously. The matter itself, the bread and cup, are unremarkable on their own, but they exist so that we may experience the body and blood of Jesus ourselves. They confirm an invisible reality: that we are given life through the death and resurrection of Jesus, but that this fact changes us and our present reality. May we die to self just as He died to save.

The incarnation of Christ most perfectly demonstrates the intersection of the invisible and the visible: as God took on human flesh, the spiritual taking on the material. Jesus is both God and man and, as a result, man can be with God. And, when He comes again, we will also most perfectly experience this intersection as these two realities (the invisible and the visible) become one.

Until then, when we partake in these emblems of Jesus' body and blood, we are reminded of all that He did on the cross. By His sacrifice and His resurrection, our sins are removed and our relationship with the Father is restored. May this invisible reality be demonstrated clearly in our lives this day, this week, this year, and forever.

STATISTICS		
	12/4	
Worship		118
Offering		\$5,494.00
	12/11	
Worship		123
Offering		\$8,444.42
	12/18	
Worship		101
Offering		\$9,283.95
	12/25	
Worship		95
Offering		\$2,874.50
	1/1	
Worship		89
Offering		\$4,029.95

ELDERS & FINANCIAL PROJECTION AFFIRMED

The elders and financial projection for 2023 were overwhelmingly affirmed. Your confidence in the leadership of our church family and willingness to support our ministries is very encouraging. We trust God will bless us in the new year as He has been doing for over 50 years.



NEW STUDY FOR ADULTS ON SUNDAY NIGHTS

A Sunday evening study for adults will begin on January 8th at 6:30. The study will explore how Ecclesiastes teaches us to live in light of the end.

All adults who aren't involved with our youth groups are encouraged to attend.



The mail box is still full of Christmas greetings. If you haven't already done so, be sure to look for yours.

Gold, Frankincense, & Myrrh

A Christmas poem for communion
by Paul Hunley

Why these three gifts for a little boy?
Wouldn't it make more sense to bring a rattle,
ball, and toy?

The Wise Men traveled from far away,
To give these gifts on this special day.

Gold the first gift that they decided to present,
Throughout the Old Testament, divinity it represents.

The Babe born in Bethlehem was God on this earth,
And yet a manger in a stable does not seem too glamorous a birth.

Gold is a lavish gift and very fitting for a King,
Perhaps the wise men knew exactly what to bring.

Frankincense is an aromatic resin used to make an offering smell good.
Quite fitting for a man who would be so terribly misunderstood.

He would soon become an offering hanging on a tree,
So that all who confess their sin and believe in Him will be made free.

I imagine when they gave this gift, they didn't have a clue,
That this tiny Hebrew boy would be the only true King of the Jews.

Myrrh is a spice used when embalming a body for the tomb.
Bitterness, suffering and affliction was symbolized in this perfume.

They traveled from a far and laid this spice at Jesus' feet,
Surely unaware that it would be wrapped in his burial sheet.

But death could only three days hold our Lord,
He arose from the grave so we could receive the reward.

And here we gather on this Christmas morn,
Still talking about these gifts that the men did adorn.

At this time of the service we often speak of a gift,
It is not gold, frankincense, or myrrh. Our focus needs to shift.

I doubt the wisemen could have been thinking this far ahead,
To know that his body would be represented by bread.



Jr/Sr High School

As I mentioned Sunday, our focus for youth groups in January will be a series called "focus" because it is not easy to stay focused. Especially these days when we're connected to a never-ending stream of new notifications, messages, videos, posts and entertainment. It makes sense that we feel a little distracted at times.

So we are going to be honest about this reality while exploring passages from both the Psalms and the Gospels. Our study will redirect our attention to spiritual disciplines that will help us grow in our relationship with Christ. The world will always try to keep us distracted, we need to remain focused on what truly matters.



4th & 5th Grade

Every year we have a great time together during this conference in Bloomington! This year, we will be leaving CCC at 4:00pm on Friday, February 24th and will return by 5:00pm on the 25th. The cost of the conference is \$59 if we register in January.

The theme for SuperStart this year is "Unscripted." The goal is to provide our youngsters a Biblical foundation for the unscripted moments and feelings they experience during these important years. We will be looking into parallels between our experiences and those of Jesus. His ability to guide us towards correct actions and choices will be firmly established.

More details will follow, but I wanted to set the stage so we can get this conference on our calendars!



Junior High School

A couple years ago, Christ in Youth stopped offering their weekend Junior High Conference in Bloomington. While we have looked, we haven't been able to find a similar weekend conference to plug into.

This year, LSCA is offering a Winter Blast event for Junior High students on February 3rd—5th. While it won't be as large as the Believe conference in Bloomington, this retreat provides an opportunity to get to know other local Junior High students in a weekend full of worship, learning and fun activities.

The cost is \$135 which includes a shirt if registered by January 12th. It begins at 5:00pm on the 3rd and concludes at noon on the 5th. If interested, you can register online at lscacamp.org.



High School

The options we have this year for our summer conference are July 10-14 in Wheaton, IL or July 17-24 in Warrensburg, MO. It's early, but they fill up fast. We have never been to CIY in Wheaton and that intrigues me, but our decision will be based on when the majority of you all can attend. Please let me know over the next couple of weeks which dates you prefer.