

THE BRIDGE

A Newsletter Connecting You to Temple Baptist Church

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Christmas 2015



Gregg Curtis
Interim Senior Pastor

I love the Christmas season for a lot of reasons: memories of wonderful times in the past, family times together and those special worship experiences; I love the carols we sing and the smell

of Christmas dinner cooking; the excitement of presents to open and the look on the faces of my children and grandchildren as they squeal with delight at the thought of what treasures may be hidden in each brightly wrapped box. I love the taste of snickerdoodles fresh from the oven and the sweet taste of Christmas punch as we laugh and talk excitedly around the brightly lit tree. These times seem almost magical as we anticipate the joyous reunions and relaxing days in front of a fireplace with a hot cup of cocoa; and of course, it is always nice to wake up Christmas morning and see the big flakes of snow floating lazily to the ground.

I know I've just painted an idyllic scene out of Currier and Ives and for many none of this represents the

reality of what Christmas is like in your world. For some this is a difficult time of the year; memories of lost loved ones who won't be around the table or sharing in the giving of presents. Places in the pew will be empty with only memories to keep you company. I have met several over the years that dread Christmas with a passion, maybe because of painful memories and unmet expectations.

This is all the more reason we need to keep the focus on the real meaning behind Christmas. Christmas is meant to be a time of hope for mankind, a time to reflect on why Christ came. As the carol we sing says:

*"Long lay the world in sin and error pining
Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth
The thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices
For yonder brinks a new and glorious morn."*

This Christmas of 2015 we see our world once again weary and having little hope as the clouds of hate and war hang low on the horizon. But let me point you to the One who still brings the thrill of Hope to hearts that are failing with fear. This One who says, "Come unto me, all you who are weary and are heavy laden and I WILL

GIVE YOU REST!" Matthew 11:28

The answer lies in the one who was called by the prophet, "the Prince of Peace." The greatest gift you will ever receive this year or any year is the gift of His peace. This comes through asking Jesus to be your King and your Savior. As the carol continues:

*He knows our need, to our weakness is no
stranger,
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!*

May your season of celebration be based on the new life that the babe in the manger came to give us and may His peace truly reign in your heart as He sits enthroned as your Lord and your God!

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

by James Bekkers (Executive Pastor) and Dean Anderson (Treasurer)

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7)

This has been a year of transition for Temple. In July we said goodbye to Pastor Dom and his family, wishing them God's richest blessings on the work that the Lord was beginning in Montreal. This was a difficult goodbye for many of us. We embraced the change, however, and we continued into the second half of 2015 with a renewed sense of trust in God's ability to lead and guide this congregation.

Over the course of 2015, there are many reasons to be encouraged. Our volunteer teams have remained strong and vibrant, serving in a multitude of different ways. Every month our Deacon's Board has been vigilant, carefully considering how to best make use of the resources God has given us and attending to the important needs of the church. The Elders have also been at work putting everything in place for a strong season of planning and teaching. Finally, your pastoral staff continue to move our church ministries forward with the hope that more people will come to know and follow Jesus.

On behalf of the leadership of Temple, Dean Anderson and I want to offer our sincere thanks and deepest appreciation for your consistent and generous giving this year. In fact, this has been one of our strongest years of giving to date. Temple depends upon the financial gifts of this congregation to continue God's work here in Sarnia and beyond. Your donations have made this possible.

As you prepare for year end, please consider keeping Temple in mind. Prayerfully consider whether you would like to make a "year-end" contribution. There are numerous ways you can give to Temple. To make it easier for you, here is a list of the most common ones for you:

- a) Put your financial gift in an **offering envelope** and drop it in our collection plate during Sunday service. Offering envelopes are available at the Welcome Centre or can be requested through the office.
- b) Donations can be made **online through our website** (www.templebaptist.com). Look across the menus at the top until you see the tab entitled "GIVING."
- c) We are registered as a church with all of the banks in the City. When you go to a bank, you can **ask your teller** about making a donation to Temple and they will assist.
- d) Some people have chosen to use the church's **pre-authorized giving plan**. For more information about this, please contact our church Treasurer, Dean Anderson, at treasurer@templebaptist.com.
- e) A series of **post-dated cheques** can also be a convenient way of making regular donations, especially if you are away or on vacation.
- f) Finally, some have decided to take advantage of the added tax benefits of giving a donation in the form of **stocks and bonds**, and thus avoiding taxation on capital gains. Again, if you would like to explore taking advantage of this option, please contact our Treasurer, Dean Anderson, at treasurer@templebaptist.com.

Whatever the form or method of giving, let us express our deepest thanks in advance for your ongoing kindness and generosity. We wait expectantly to see what God has planned on the road ahead and we look forward to travelling there together.

In Christ,

James Bekkers (Executive Pastor) and Dean Anderson (Treasurer)

Reminder: Donations must be received in the office by noon on December 31, 2015 if they are to be included in your 2015 receipt for income tax purposes.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2015

by Darryl Dennis

What a privilege it is for us at Temple to be involved in Operation Christmas Child. Temple has always been a giving church and this year we filled 456 shoeboxes. Each of us who has filled a shoebox this year has had a part in children coming to know Jesus. Pastors at the receiving churches have been in prayer for us as we filled these boxes, because they know what an impact they have on their communities.

Approximately 1,828,460 people (including children, parents, and even entire communities) have heard gospel presentations in many of the communities where boxes were distributed. The gospel has been shared wherever they were given permission. All shoebox gifts are offered freely to children, and only require approval from the parents or guardians. In 2014, 77,283 children who received Canadian shoeboxes have trusted Jesus as their Saviour. We, at Temple, got to be part in all that God is doing.

Thank you for your faithfulness in making this possible.

HAMPERS & 55+



Jim Train
Pastor of Congregational Care

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

We are preparing for Hamper Week from Mon. Dec. 14 to Thurs. Dec. 17. Your contributions will allow us to minister to so many in our church and community.

Children's gift sheets will be available at the foyer tables while monetary donations are accepted right through the end of 2015.

Monday Dec. 14 @ 10AMSorting foods from till noon
Tuesday Dec. 15 @ 10 AM Purchasing needed foods
Tuesday Dec. 15 @ 1 PM Sorting remainder of foods
Wednesday Dec. 16 @ 10 AM Filling hampers
Thursday Dec. 17 @ 11AM Delivery of hampers
Thursday Dec. 17 @ 5:30 PM Delivery of hampers

55+ - Forever Young @ Heart:

We had a sell out on Nov. 21 for the Seder Meal with Andrew from Jews for Jesus. It was a great explanation of Jesus in the Passover and the symbolism of the foods at the Seder Meal.

As part of our service to the Lord and others, we are hoping to have teams manning the Salvation Army kettles and hope to be a witness for Jesus. Also we are forming a Christmas choir for the JOY group's annual Christmas event including dinner. A schedule of our 2016 events will be available at the Welcome Centre in early January.

J.O.Y. (formerly Super Seniors) meet once a month on Friday mornings @ 10:15 am in the Chapel. There have been some exciting changes to the ministry that make it very inviting for seniors to bring friends. In October a presentation on how to make greeting cards was given followed by everyone making 3 cards.

Peter Neuhart, Linda Black, Mary Jane McColl and Erica Paradis are the new committee members and would appreciate your ideas and feedback. The 2016 schedule will be available late December or early January.

SECRET KEEPER GIRLS

by Erica Lazarakos and Katherine Reyes

It was a night of pigtails, sparkles and laughter. Over 300 girls of all ages giggled, danced, learned and worshiped together, when the Secret Keeper Girl's "Crazy Hair Tour" rolled into Sarnia, in early November. As host, Temple provided meals and volunteer support to make the evening a huge success. Thanks again to over 70 hard-working volunteers!

Just what is a Secret Keeper Girl? According to founder Dannah Gresh, she's a girl who knows she can share all of her heart-secrets with her mom at any time. She's also a girl who embraces modesty. Why? Because she knows that she is a masterpiece created by God. She strives to keep the deepest secrets of her beauty a secret!

Several Moms mentioned how much they appreciated that the topic of modesty was reinforced in a fun, practical way their daughters could relate to, during the interactive "Truth or Bare Fashion Test" segment. (You can find these at secretkeepergirl.com)

The evening included a gospel message and invitation, and a number of Moms, Grandmas or Special Friends came forward with little girls who were ready to begin a new friendship with Jesus. What a blessing it was to have the opportunity to watch so many Moms and girls share this special evening, hearing how deeply the King of Kings loves His girls!



WELCOME BACK DR. GREGG AND MARILYN CURTIS

We are excited to announce that Dr. Gregg Curtis and his wife, Marilyn will be joining us again in January 2016. Dr. Curtis will be continuing in the role of *Preaching Pastor* and providing spiritual care for the congregation.

The Curtis' will be living in the church manse. For the past number of years Marilyn has been teaching English at Campbellsville University and offering private piano lessons to students in the area. It will be an absolute delight to have Marilyn join us in the New Year.

The two are looking forward to ministering in Sarnia during this interim period. Their desire is to be used by God during while in Sarnia. If they can be of particular service to you, please feel free to contact Gregg at the church.



WELCOME MINISTRIES



Greg MacRobbie
Pastor of Youth and Family Ministries

One of the things I love about Temple is how warm and welcoming we are! It's great to know that though it is getting cold and bitter outside, people feel warm and welcomed when they enter our doors! Our Welcome Ministries exist because we love to make people feel welcome here, and because we want to do our best as a congregation to ensure that no one falls through the cracks.

A Guided Tour.

Our Guest Services teams are built and led with the goal of helping our guests experience the love and grace of Jesus from the first moment they turn in to our property to the last moment they leave. The Parking Team is our first contact with guests. Parking Team players make it their goal not only to direct the flow of traffic and help people find a good parking spot, they also share a warm smile and cheery 'Hello', and are happy to help people find their way. Next, guests typically meet our Greeter Team. These folks are great at letting people know they are welcome, expected and prepared for! They are always on the lookout for people that are new, and are quick to offer to help and connect them with others. Our Welcome Centre Hosts staff the Welcome Centre and are ready to provide the help that new folks are looking for. They also coordinate a large array of sign up and registration forms for the many ministries and activities we offer. Our Ushers greet you at the entry to the Worship Centre and are ready to help you find a seat or assist in any way if there is an issue during a service. After the service, our Hospitality Team has coffee and often a snack ready in the Chapel where you can unwind and catch up with friends. On the way out, you are likely to meet and be greeted by each of these teams as you make your way to your car and then home.



A Way to Give Back.

Our teams are staffed by faithful and caring volunteers who serve because they love Jesus, our church family and our guests. One of the ways you can bless them this season is to stop for a moment and let someone on the team know how much you appreciate their willingness to serve. Some come in early and stay late. Some put up with poor weather conditions, or sacrifice the opportunity to just hang out with friends. Letting them know their service is appreciated would go a long way to warming their hearts on a chilly day!



A Look Ahead.

We are always looking for ways to improve how we welcome and serve the people who enter our doors. A couple of things we are looking at for the coming year are a Café area where people can enjoy coffee and conversation before or after the service. Also, an information & communication space in the lobby that will serve as a Hub to inform our guests about what matters to us as a church and to help people connect to the ministries, teams, services and groups that we offer. This will be an interactive space with technology to allow people to explore the options and sign up for whatever their next step is.



IT IS JUST A PHASE. SO DON'T MISS IT



Dave Lane
Pastor of Youth and Family Ministries

Being a parent of two teenage kids, I have found that the years have flown by. It just seems like yesterday that my daughter was entering Junior Kindergarten and now she is talking about college. The moment we bring our children home from the hospital we know they will grow up. We just don't expect it to happen so fast. And that is why as parents, we need to make the most of the time we have with them.

We need to realize that a parent has 936 weeks between a child's birth and graduation. Therefore as parents, we do not want to miss what happens during the critical phases of growing up. A phase is defined as a time frame in a kid's life when we can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future.

Our role as a church, is to inform parents of these different phases and equip them to maximize each one.

Over the next year our goal is to make you aware of these phases by displaying them visually in our children's wing and family room. We will also be developing a parent series based on these phases.

Let me begin the process by giving you four statements to focus on as we think about these phases:

Embrace their physical needs. During the preschool years, parents must lean to embrace their child's tangible needs so they can begin to establish physical trust.

Engage their interests. During the elementary years, parents should take a crash course in storytelling and play so they can engage the interest of their child. This will be the best time to earn relational credit.

Affirm their personal journey. During junior high, parents need to master the skill of never freaking out. This is when they learn to affirm the personal journey of their tween. During this time, they will have plenty of opportunities to prove a relational commitment.

Mobilize their potential. At ninth grade, parents start mastering the art of negotiating. They have approximately 200 weeks left to mobilize their kid toward a better future, so they need to leverage their relational influence.

As we read these four statements, there is an underlying constant throughout ... *relationship*. If parents want to make the most of each phase their child will go through, they must make their relationship with their child a priority. This will take time, energy and sacrifice, but will be well worth it in the end.



1410 Quinn Drive
Sarnia, ON N7S 6M8

 www.templebaptist.com
 519.542.1427
 choffice@templebaptist.com