

# The Challenger

## Ministerial Staff

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Reaching people, touching lives, and growing together in Christ's love.

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Within Moses' book of Exodus, there is a smaller book called the Book of the Covenant. It has as an intro the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) and then it has three and half chapters of commentary on what God meant when He gave the Ten Commandments. For example, the Book of the Covenant's commentary explains that not only should we not steal someone else's property, we should also take responsibility for when something not belonging to us is damaged while in our care (Ex. 22:14). These four short chapters were so central to the understanding of how God wanted His people to live under His reign, this smaller Book of the Covenant was kept within the Holy of Holies next to God's Ark of the Covenant.

It might surprise us then, that in this crucial bit of legislation that He elevated to the status of being the heart of His whole Law, He *commanded* them in Ex.23:14: “*Three times a year you SHALL celebrate a feast to Me.*” Isn't it interesting that God found it necessary to COMMAND His people to celebrate? Why would He feel it necessary to do that?

Because sometimes we just don't feel like it.

One celebration was to remind them that no matter how difficult life could get, they could always praise God that He had delivered them from their slavery. The second celebration was to remind them to be thankful for how faithfully He provided for their needs. The third celebration was to remind them that not only did He provide for their needs, He also generously provided them with luxuries, so much so that they never lacked anything – even while wandering for forty years in the wilderness! The celebrations were to be joyous times that instilled within His people attitudes of gratitude that would cement their hearts to His and deliver them from a multitude of sin.

But sometimes we just don't feel like it.

The holy-day season is upon us again and some of us are inwardly groaning. It's not a time of celebration for some of us. For some of us, it's a time of sadness because we're remembering our loss while others are enjoying the company of their loved ones. For some of us, it's a time of stress when we're adding even MORE activities and projects to our overloaded schedules. For some of us, we're counting our pennies and wondering how we're going to have enough to celebrate this year. Yet God commanded celebration in the heart of His Law. Granted, He was talking in terms of Passover, Pentacost, and Feast of Tabernacles. He didn't mention “Thanksgiving” or “Christmas.” The idea, however, is the same. Letting our sadness ruin our willingness to celebrate can hamper our ability to be thankful for all the ways He is continually blessing us. Letting the stress of our holiday schedules ruin our willingness to celebrate hampers our awe of what God did for us by giving us His One and Only Son on that first Christmas.

Thankfully, we don't have to follow all the ceremonial laws of Moses' book anymore since we're under a new covenant, but the heart of God's Law remains. Celebrate Him! When we don't feel like it only makes it a greater act of faith. Celebrate Him! We continue to have so much to be thankful for!

In His Grip,

*Pastor Fred*



The Church office will be closed on the following dates to observe:

Veteran's Day - 11/12

Thanksgiving Holiday - 11/21, 22, & 23.

And for Christmas - 12/24 & 12/25. And also New Year's Day. We will be open 9am - noon the 26<sup>th</sup> thru the 28<sup>th</sup>.



## Community Christmas Potluck Dinner

Tuesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>  
Noon - 3pm

We need your help and your donations of food or money. Please let Freddie know what food items you will be providing or if you can help in anyway. He will also be accepting monetary donations.  
Thank you!!



**Adult** Christmas Party  
Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm  
in the Fellowship Hall. Call the Church office or see Pastor Ted for more details.



### AWANA NEWS

12/19 - 6pm Caroling at Campus of Care and last night of AWANA  
See you back on January 9th, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!



*Christmas potluck  
Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>  
Immediately following service.  
Please bring a dish to share*



Christmas  
Eve  
Worship



Candlelight Service  
Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup>  
5:00 & 6:30 pm



Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to His people on  
earth. ~ Luke 2:14