

Bethel Baptist

January 2015

Thoughts from Pastor Gene

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105)

I have read that a lamp in Old Testament times was small and flat with an oil-fed wick. It gave just enough light to see a short distance ahead. Just as a person would depend upon a lamp to help see the way at night, we can trust God's Word to provide the illumination we need to walk safely through a dark and dreary world without stumbling. The guidance and direction we need for our next step is available. We don't have to agitate in uncertainty or rush in one direction and then another. We can choose to be intentional about slowing down and dedicating more time to read and study God's Word.

L.I.F.T resumes Wednesday, January 7, at 7:00 pm. This weekly Bible study is designed to help individuals **Live Intentionally For Truth** in our every-changing culture. The instructive teaching and lively discussion will help you clarify your beliefs and increase your resolve to live with conviction, confidence and compassion. The new study is Managing Life and includes six action topics - Manage, Submit, Watch, Give, Prioritize and Receive.

Another opportunity for group Bible study is our Sunday school and Bible study classes at 10:00 am for children, teenagers, and adults. Bethel's team of dedicated teachers uses their spiritual gifts to explain and apply the teachings of the Bible in personal and meaningful ways. Our two classes for adults, **Community Class and Cornerstone Class**, launch a new series Ready: Ministering Life to Those in Crisis on January 18. The study is designed to help us be more sensitive to the struggles and addictions that people in our society are facing. This study will also give us a biblical understanding and perspective for

ministering in the midst of those crises.

Jan 18: *Ready when Injustice Prevails*

Jan 25: *Ready to help the Poor*

Feb 1: *Ready when Sickness Comes to Stay*

Feb 8: *Ready when Sex Destroys*

Feb 15: *Ready when Homosexuality Devastates*

Feb 22: *Ready when Pornography Controls*

Let's start **2015** with a renewed commitment to be more in touch with God through Bible study and prayer!



Communion Sunday

The Baptist Faith & Message states, "The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming." We will be observing communion in the morning worship service at 11:00 am on Sunday, January 11. It will be a great time of worship and celebration as we honor our Savior who loves us eternally!

Copies of the newsletter and monthly calendar are available in the foyer. Both are also available under the **News & Events** tab on our website www.bethelbaptistchurch.net

faith &
hope love

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

In January 1984, President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation designating the first National Sanctity of Human Life Day. Churches around the United States gathered to celebrate God's gift of life, commemorate the many lives lost to abortion, and commit to protecting life at every stage. We will again be participating in this national observance and **Michelle Traudt**, a guest speaker from Austin LifeCare, will share her personal testimony in the morning worship service at *11:00 am on Sunday, January 18*. Please join us as we celebrate life and defend the biblical claim that all life is sacred.

Quarterly Business Meeting

We will hold a general assembly at *10:00 am* in the sanctuary on *January 18* for Bethel's Quarterly Business Meeting. The church's financial status for 2015 will be discussed and a preview of upcoming church events will be presented. After the meeting, Pastor Gene will teach the first lesson in a new Bible study series – *Ready: Ministering Life to Those in Crisis*.

Thoughts for a New Year

We want lives of simple, predictable ease—smooth, even trails as far as the eye can see—but God likes to go off-road. (Tony Snow, former White House press secretary)



Grace woke you up this morning, grace started you on your way and grace enabled you to survive until this very moment. (Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.)



If God is your copilot, maybe you should change seats. (Susan Hightower)



He opened a window in my heart, and the light of the world shined in. (David Letterman, Talk show host)



God will probably not be interested in how much we included in our day, but how much of our day included him. (Allia Zobel-Nolan, Author)

A New Year . . . New Resolutions?

Forty-five percent of us start the new year with resolutions. What percentage of us actually does a good job with *keeping* those resolutions though? Are you a resolution maker? If so, here are some ways to make this the year you succeed at keeping yours:

Start early

Thinking ahead really boosts your chances of success. It's essential to make plans, not just have good intentions. (*I'm going to read the Bible from cover to cover this year*).

Keep it real

Don't overdue your resolutions! Do what is manageable and what you know you can realistically accomplish. (*I'm going to read a book of the Bible a month, rather than trying to read a book of the Bible every evening*).

Make a plan

Don't set yourself up with vague resolutions – set exact goals with realistic deadlines. (*I'm going to follow a reading guide already established for reading the Bible in a year*).

Make it a team effort

Find a family member, a friend, a co-worker, a neighbor...make your resolution a team effort! (*I'm going to have someone following the same plan, so I'll be accountable to someone else but also have someone to share my thoughts on what I'm reading*).

Be flexible

If your first attempts at a resolution are a struggle, try a different way of doing things. (*I'm struggling to make the time to do my Bible reading, but since I'm in the car so much, I'm going to listen to the Bible on CD*).

Pay attention

Keep track of what you're doing – keep a journal, jot notes on a calendar...whatever works for you! Seeing the progress you make helps keep you going. (*I'm going to write the Bible sections I read down on my calendar every day*).

Based on "A Success Story (Yours)," by Alex Ferreyra (www.guideposts.com)