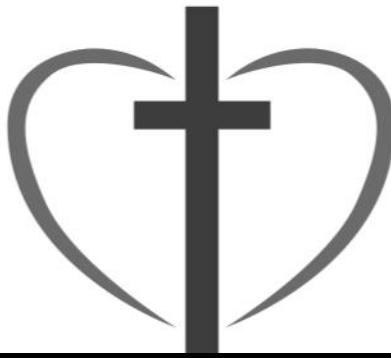


# Temple Baptist Church



*December 2020*

**Wade Allen**

Lead Pastor

**John O'Connor**

Pastor of Community Engagement

**Ron Fields**

Pastor of Senior Adults & Care Ministries



Everyone has signals that indicate the beginning of the Christmas season. For me, one of the signs that Christmas has arrived is when I hear the theme song from the Charlie Brown Christmas Special. The last verse of that song says,

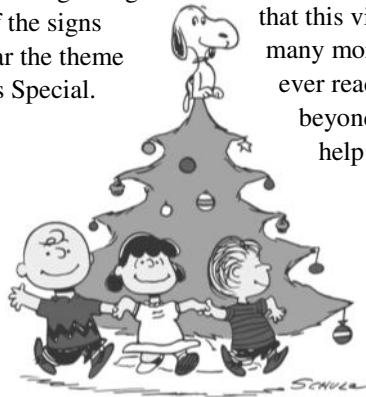
Christmas time is here  
We'll be drawing near  
Oh, that we could always see  
Such spirit through the year

Christmas is always a time when friends and family draw near to one another and celebrate the birth of our Savior; but with the recommendations from health officials to restrict our gatherings, this Christmas has the potential to be very different from the ones in our past. The question is: "How will you react?"

As Buddy the Elf reminds us every year, "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!" I want to encourage you to not allow the restrictions of this pandemic to steal your joy. Make special plans for sharing that joy with others!

One way to share Christmas joy is by inviting your friends and family members to join us online for our annual Christmas Eve Celebration Service. Since the Coronavirus numbers continue to rise and the Christmas Eve Service has the largest number of visitors of any service all year long, we have decided that

it would be best if we did not have this service in-person this year. This was a very difficult decision for me, but God has once again shown me that His plans are always better than mine. As I was praying over this service during the planning process, I realized that this virtual event has the potential to reach many more people than our in-person service has ever reached. We have the potential to reach well beyond Northwest Arkansas, but we need your help to make this happen.



Will you make plans to watch this Christmas special with your family on December 24th? Will you share this video with friends and family who are not able to be with you? Would you consider hosting a watch party that evening? These are just some of the ways that we can use this broadcast to reach out with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Some of you may be concerned that your family will not be interested... I get that. This is the reason why we are going to include many of you in this video also. Over the next few weeks, you may be asked to say something for the camera—please help us out by smiling when you say it ☺ then tell your friends and family that they need to watch it because you may be in it!

The video will premier on YouTube and Facebook at 5 PM on Christmas Eve, but if that time doesn't work for your family you can watch it at anytime after that. I am praying that God will use this to reach some of your friends and family who do not know Him as Savior.

MAKE PLANS TO INCLUDE THIS IN YOUR HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

# Christmas Eve

CELEBRATION SERVICE

12.24.20 - 5 PM  
YOUTUBE AND FACEBOOK



Our tradition each year is to reach out to our church family (specifically the elderly and shut-in) by singing Christmas carols to them at their homes. We do not want this tradition to be lost due to COVID! We want you to join us as we spread holiday cheer to our loved ones. We will ask that you wear your mask and ride in vehicles that only include your family members—no car-pooling. More information about this ministry will be announced in the bulletin.



community groups

*Winter Session*

january 3 - march 14

For those who are a part of our community groups, I pray they have been a blessing to you. If you are currently not a member of one, there will be time to sign up this month for groups starting next year. We planned to mix up the groups after each series; but in light of the current pandemic, we have decided not to at this time but will in the future.

Again you have time to sign up for a group if you have not been a part of one this fall. One last note, I am exceedingly grateful for all who have been a part of the Community Groups. I am also thankful to the leaders and hosts who have dedicated a lot of time and energy towards these groups. Please reach out to me or Wade if you are interested in getting involved.

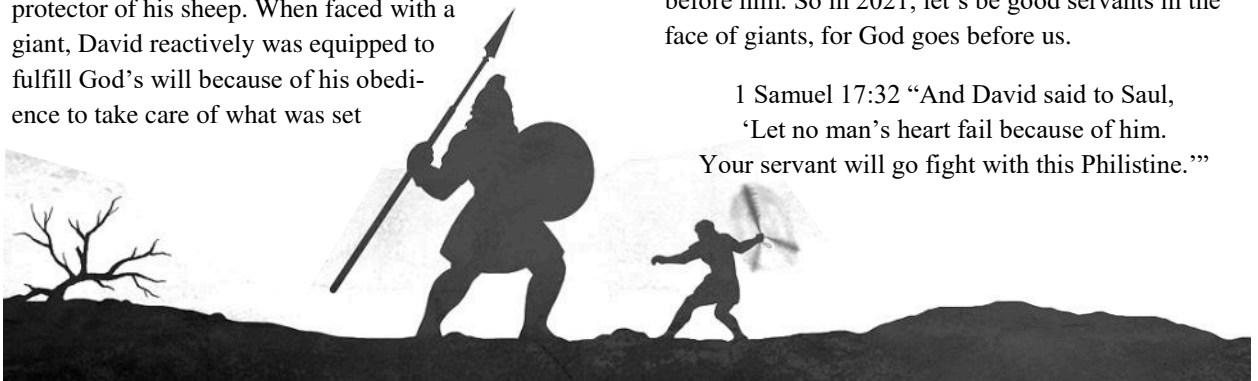


**John O'Connor, Pastor of Community Engagement**

I said this a few weeks ago in a sermon, but this year has been both the longest and fastest year of my life. As with all large events in history, COVID-19 has altered the way we will do life together. With the end of the year rapidly approaching, are you prepared to tackle the opportunities that God has before us? As you consider what next year looks like for your personal ministry, you have the choice to be Reactive or Proactive.

A Reactive response is when we are forced to make a change when an event happens—like COVID temporarily disrupting the in-person Church services. Every Pastor in the nation was scrambling to figure out how to do ministry. A Proactive response is to put a plan into place or controlling a situation before the event happens. Wade had the wisdom and obedience at the beginning of the year to have the pastors plan out ministry, sermons and small groups for 2020.

So back to the question, are you ready to be Proactive or Reactive? Be both. We need to be Proactive in the things that the Lord has set before us, so that we can be Reactive when God calls on us. When King David was a boy, he was a shepherd. His job was to take care of the sheep, which also meant protecting them from lions and bears. David, proactively, was obedient and faithful to become a great protector of his sheep. When faced with a giant, David reactively was equipped to fulfill God's will because of his obedience to take care of what was set



**Ron Fields, Pastor of Senior Adults and Care Ministries**

Christmas means hope.

I thought of writing about Christmas memories but the memories that kept recurring were not conducive to spiritual encouragement.

For instance one memory that has remained for many years occurred at about ten years of age. My brother, six years older, and a cousin near his age, were monopolizing the toy I wanted to play with. I followed them around and pestered them to let me have the dart gun. My brother refused to give in and my anger took over. I called him a name which resulted in his hitting me and knocking me down. As they went on their way, whistling and laughing, I grabbed a nearby rock and let fly! The rock hit my brother right in the back of his head. After the beating I never again had a bad word for him!

A world had been waiting for the promised Messiah for centuries. The nation had fallen on perilous times. A foreign nation ruled, quite ruthlessly. The godly were a definite minority and the religious elite were hypocrites. Suddenly a host of angels appeared, announced the birth of a Savior, and gave directions to poor shepherds! A baby was born. Mankind was given hope. And for centuries we are given an opportunity to choose hope over toys.

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before him. So in 2021, let's be good servants in the face of giants, for God goes before us.

1 Samuel 17:32 "And David said to Saul,  
'Let no man's heart fail because of him.

Your servant will go fight with this Philistine.'"

*Mark Your Calendars*  
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- December 6-9     **Community Groups**  
                          **Fall Session Ends**
- December 20     **Birthday Gifts for Jesus**
- December 20     **Worship Service at 10:30 AM**  
                          No Sunday School  
                          First Service Dismissed  
                          Kidz Time Christmas Party
- December 20     **Christmas Caroling—5 PM**
- December 24     OFFICE CLOSED
- December 24     **Virtual Christmas Eve Service**  
                          Premiering at 5:00 PM on  
                          YouTube and Facebook
- December 25     OFFICE CLOSED
- December 31     OFFICE CLOSED
- December 31     **New Years Eve Party—CANCELLED**
- January 1        OFFICE CLOSED
- January 3-6     **Community Groups**  
                          **Winter Session Begins**

Considering the rising number of cases of COVID-19 in Arkansas and beyond, we want you to be aware that there is a potential for change in our normal ministry schedule during this holiday season. We will do our best to make decisions that we believe are for the well-being of all our church family. Cancellations will be announced through the prayer chain, social media and the church app.



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