



## FBCD's Ignite Youth Groups' Hottest Stories & Updates!

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## Let's Be Thankful For God Is Good!

**By: Andrea Barajas**

*As we approach thanksgiving, you may be thinking as others usually do around this time; "YAY! Mouth-watering turkey, delicious homemade mashed potatoes, sweet tart cranberry sauce, rich, creamy pumpkin pie..!" Not to mention an excuse to indulge yourself with endless possibilities of foods. But the main reason why we have thanksgiving is not all about food; it's about being thankful for what God has given us. As it states in **Psalms 107:1, "O give thanks unto the Lord for He is Good; for His mercy endures forever."** Take the well-known story of the Pilgrims and the Indians for example. The Pilgrims wanted to make peace with the Indians so that there would be no more disruption between the two groups. The Indians agreed to*

share a meal together, providing peace and happiness amongst them all. This story was God's will. He saw that there was too much chaos between his children and decided to bring them together as one. As it says in **John 15:12, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."** So, while you're at Thanksgiving dinner with your family, share what you're grateful for and thank God for all the miracles He does in your life.

*Blessings to all,*

*Andrea Barajas*



# Holidays / Holy Days

Jackson Fong—Student Ministries Pastor

As the year closes, it seems like everything goes by faster. I'm not sure if it's because people are rushing to get things done or because schedules tend to be packed so tight. There always seems to be something to do, somewhere to go, or someone to meet. But I don't think that was supposed to be the norm.

If we were to take a look back on the purpose of some of these holidays, regardless if we are talking about Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's Day, the original goal was for that day to be set aside to celebrate or commemorate something or someone.

As this year closes up, I think it would be wise to remember the idea of being 'set apart'. It's term we use in church to describe the idea of being 'set apart', to be 'holy'.

If you have a personal relationship with Christ where you have repented from sin, if you believe that Christ is God's Son who died on the cross for your sin, was buried and has risen again, and if you have accepted the gift of eternal life, you are part of God's family, one of His children. It means that you are 'Set Apart' as a child of God.

It can be an interesting thing to celebrate a celebrity's birthday. The idea of really appreciating the gifts and talents they may have. But that tends to really be more 'lip service'. You could post a 'Happy Birthday' on their Facebook wall, but the likelihood that they will respond to you is not really high.

A beautiful thing about making time to celebrate Christmas is that with the Birth of Christ, a way was opened for humanity to return to connecting with God without any other mediator. It's almost like having God on speed dial where you could skype or facetime him whenever or wherever. The idea of having a direct line to the God and Creator of the universe, is a pretty amazing thing. The idea that God would WANT to hear from us and connect with us about ANYTHING. It could be about a major event or a major need. But it could also simply be a quiet random thought. And God WANTS to hear from us. He WANTS to connect with us.

## Jesus' Prayer of Thanksgiving

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. <sup>26</sup> Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!

<sup>27</sup> "My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:25-29 New Living Translation (NLT)

The idea that regardless of who you are, what you think you have or don't have, God loves you and wants you to come to Him. This passage calls to those who are tired and at first glance, don't have anything to offer. Yet God calls so that HE can GIVE.

During this season, make some time to slow down, to rest and perhaps to reconnect with God. Reconnect the Holiday as being a "HOLY DAY" and set yourself apart to reconnect with God. Let Him Love you, Strengthen you, Encourage you, Comfort you and Meet you where you are.

May you and your loved ones have a Merry Christmas,

*Jackson*

# Reviewing Past Events

## Trunk or Treat



## Thanksgiving: it's History in Fact and Myth by Jim Fountain

One author (Johnson) said that “the tradition of the Pilgrims’ first Thanksgiving is steeped in myth and legend.” He goes on to say that “the Pilgrims’ first Thanksgiving began at some unknown date between Sept. 21 and Nov. 9, most likely in very early Oct. Accordingly, there were only two accounts of those present. First is Edward Winslow’s date Dec. 12, 1621. Winslow said that the corn (or wheat) did well, but that the peas were parched by the sun. Fowl was killed as well as deer. The second description was written 20 years afterwards by William Bradford but not discovered until 1854. Bradford’s *History of Plymouth Plantation* “prompted a greater American interest in the history of the Pilgrims. It is also in this account that the Thanksgiving turkey tradition is founded.” (Johnson) The “Thanksgiving ‘menu’, namely five deer, a large number of turkeys and waterfowl, cod, and bass; plus the harvest, which consisted of wheat, corn, barley, and perhaps any peas that survived the scorching” were the few items mentioned by Johnson’s article. A “Popcorn Myth” that the Indians introduced this corn was untrue; it was the Northern Flint corn which does not pop well – parched to make a snack or ground up and mixed with strawberries for a cake-like dessert.<sup>1</sup>

Another article (Smithsonian Institution) states that the Pilgrim’s Thanksgiving Feast of 1621 was not the first one of its kind. There was one on May 27, 1878 in Newfoundland and another by the Popham Colony in Maine in 1607. Also Jamestown had two in 1607 and 1610. “The pilgrims with a puritanical rejection of public religious display, held a non-religious Thanksgiving feast, aside from saying grace.” (Smithsonian) The fact was that in 1623 the Pilgrims at Plymouth Plantation, Massachusetts had another Thanksgiving due to a drought that destroyed their crops. Shortly thereafter, Capt. Miles Standish came with supplies and news that another supply ship was coming, did the colonists hold a day of thanksgiving and prayer that combined a religious and social celebration on June 30, 1623.<sup>2</sup>

One more resource, Greener, started with this statement: “The idea of the American Thanksgiving feast is a fairly recent fiction ... it was only after the first World War that a version of such Puritan-Indian partnership took hold in elementary schools across the American landscape. We can thank the invention of textbooks and their mass purchase by public schools for embedding this ‘Thanksgiving’ image in our modern minds ... the first Thanksgiving Day did occur in the year 1637, but it was nothing like our Thanksgiving today.” It was proclaimed as a celebration for the safe return of heavily armed hunters or colonial volunteers who went from Massachusetts to Connecticut where they massacred 700 Pequot Indians. Only “the United American Indians of New England meet each year at Plymouth Rock on Cole’s Hill for a Day of Mourning” remember this murder over 375 years ago and largely forgotten by “white people, by European Christians.” (Greener) The article goes on to say that our modern, festive Thanksgiving “began with the greatest of misunderstandings, a true clash of cultural values and fundamental principles...Did the Pilgrims sharing their thanksgiving meal with the local Indians, the Wampanoag and Pequot? No. That never happened. That is, until its inclusion in the ‘Thanksgiving Story’ in 1890.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Caleb H. Johnson @ <http://mayflowerhistory.com/thanksgiving/>.

<sup>2</sup> Nat’l Museum of Am. History & Smithsonian Institution @ [http://www.si.edu/encyclopedia\\_si/nmah/thanks.htm](http://www.si.edu/encyclopedia_si/nmah/thanks.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Richard Greener @ [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-greener/the-true-story-of-thanksg\\_b\\_788436.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-greener/the-true-story-of-thanksg_b_788436.html)

# Thanksgiving Word Search

Q T U R K E Y X Z X C Z S A L D W E A S  
 W H J F N E W W O R L D A F D A H J P A  
 H A M D G B C Y A M S W C C Y R V U L L  
 E N K S A L V A T I O N R O E K A C Y A  
 R K K A W E S A F Z A L I R W M C O M D  
 T S T U F F I N G A S I F N M E A R O H  
 Y G L Q S V F R B G S G I O E A T N U J  
 U I Z W H K D E R T I H C N C T I O T K  
 I V X C A S S E R O S T E W E G O N H L  
 O I C E R X F U N C T M S D F G N T R O  
 P N V T E C V B D E Q E G S A V E H O P  
 A G I V E T H A N K S A Z X C V B E C C  
 G R A V E Y X C V B S T W E R T D C K U  
 S H M A S H E D P O T A T O E S S O I S  
 F R E E D O M T Y G I V E D C T E B U T  
 A G V T T R A V E L A S D F Z U R R Y A  
 M F P I L G R I M D P I E Z X F V U T R  
 I D B Q W E R F E A T H E R S W E E A D  
 L S B R O C O L L I Z X C H E L P S E T  
 Y A N M W W E R T Y C A S S E R O L E W

Less than 5—You are in a food coma

10-6 You could probably try harder

15-11 Not Bad

20—16 Pretty good

25-21 Sweet!

30-26 You are really observant!

More than 31 Have you considered proofreading? :)

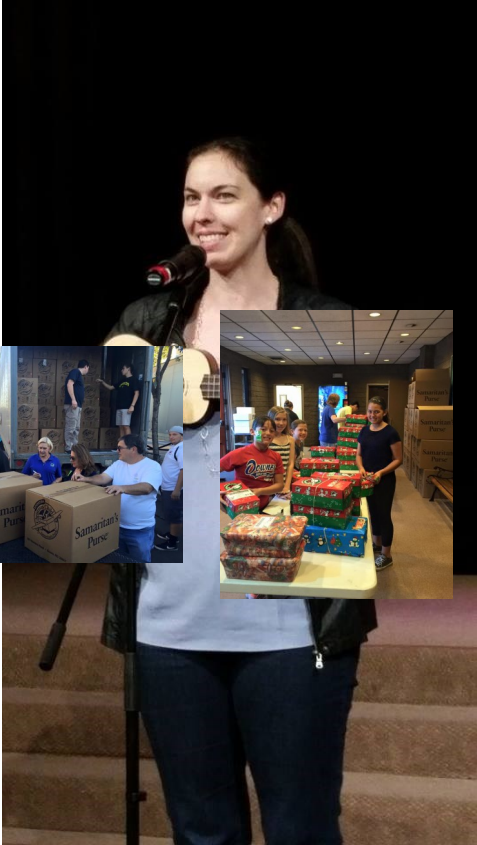
# Potluck of Praise



# Reflections Of Beauty



# Comedy Night



# Operation Christmas Child









## CHRISTMAS

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called *Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*” Isaiah 9:6.

Christmas, for those who might not know, is the day that our Savior-Jesus Christ- was born to Mary and Joseph. He was born in the city of Jerusalem, in a manger because there was no motel room available. After his birth, the three wise men traveled miles and miles to come and see him, bringing extraordinary gifts. Today we know Christmas as the day our Lord Jesus Christ was born to bear our sins.

In our society today, people automatically think about Christmas as a holiday for gifts, Santa, elves, reindeers and so on. Yet, most people seem to forget that the reason we have Christmas is because Jesus Christ was born.

This holiday season, I encourage you all to give to the less fortunate ones and spread the happiness and joy of our Everlasting Father. Merry Christmas to all, and remember the true meaning behind Christmas!

Love always,  
Andrea Barajas

# ***Student Ministry Update***

The last couple of months have been pretty packed. We had our **Potluck of Praise** where we shared a great meal as well as some of what we were grateful for. We had our second Annual **Reflections of Beauty Conference** where we heard from Comedienne and Author Kristin Weber as well as Actress, Comedienne and Author Kerri Pomarolli. In addition to them, we had a Spoken Word and Music Artist Melissa Sharee; Actress and Music Artist Venus Burton; Sharon Ngai, founder of Radiance Hollywood and **Justice Speaks**; Ceo of **Idle Tuesdays** Recording Studios, Emily Hibard; Sarah Soto from **Azusa Pacific University**, Annalyse Lee from **Biola University**, Vanessa Serrano from 7th Street Church, Mari Wingate from the **Living Help Center**, CEO of **Then Jesus** Jennifer Trimino, and Kristy Johnson from **Intervarsity** shared a great deal of love, encouragement and wisdom. We were led in worship by the **Sarah Stricklin** Band. That evening we enjoyed a **Family Night of Comedy**. We have had a night to serve with **Operation Christmas Child** as well as at **Beacon Light Mission**.

After a 17 week series on **Apologetics** or WHY we believe what we believe, the Middle Schoolers have been working through a study on the book of **Hebrews**. The High Schoolers have been studying through how Christianity stands up to or alongside **different belief systems** looking at how they are or are NOT compatible. They also recently started a short series of **People in the Christmas story** and the characteristics we can follow.

Wednesdays we had completed an overview of the book of **Job**, looking at how God provides hope and help when things seem hopeless. In the midst of the holiday season, we have been covering a series called **Post This**, looking at how God wants us to connect with each other in our words, our social media posts and even in our texting.

Saturday, Dec, 12th, there will be an opportunity to connect with a number of other churches and ministries here on Campus. CRU, part of Campus Crusade has the first High School Chapter here in California at Warren High School. They will hold a NIGHT OF WORSHIP here in the High School Room from 6 pm –8:30 pm. This is one of many things we will be doing in partnership with them and others.

We will take time to celebrate Christmas during our **Midweek Christmas party**, but we will also take time to serve, Some will be traveling to **Thousand Pines** to serve with **Jill's House**, to minister to children with special needs. Some will help with the **Christmas Dinner Theatre** (Dec 18, 19 or 20). If you or your family are planning to go, please don't wait to purchase your tickets as the seats are selling fast. Sunday, Dec. 20, we will make time to revisit the Christmas Story during a **Special Youth Breakfast** during the Second Service. Please bring Bacon, Eggs, or Pancakes/Waffles. (IF they are not cooked, please bring them immediately after first service.)

As we want to encourage families to spend time together, **we will not be meeting Wed, Dec 23 or Wed, Dec 30**. We DO encourage you to attend the **Christmas Eve Service** Dec 24th at 5 pm.

For those who will be restless around that time, we WILL be offering a **Game Day**, Friday, Jan 1st, from 11 am to 8 pm. Please bring your favorite multi player game (Electric, console, board or card game) and \$5 (Per Person, to help cover lunch and dinner)

Saturday, January 23rd, we will be taking students to Biola University for this year's **TURN YOUR CAMPUS** conference. This will be an incredible time of learning, connecting and being stretched. Please save the date. The cost will be \$20 per person which includes the big seminars, the music, the speakers, the program and lunch. This will be a great opportunity to be encouraged, inspired, and to have a lot of questions answered.

Next year we will be looking at the topics of **INTENTIONAL LIVING** as well as reconnecting with **SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**. We'll be making some changes to small groups and will also be working through some additional changes to our calendar as well. It will be the beginning of an amazing year! In addition to the small groups we have, we will also be creating new opportunities as to make some great connections.

Keep on the look out for options and updates.. You can check out our facebook page, the church website, or make sure you link up with the text updates.

For additional upcoming dates and specials, Check out the events page further on in the Newsletter

Blessings!

*Jackson*

# SAVE THE DATE!

Please see Katie with a deposit of \$25 to reserve your spot BEFORE the End of January.

## 2016 Summer Camps @ Thousand Pines

### Middle School

### July 3-8, 2016 \*

### High School

### July 17-22

\* This date is based upon a minimum of 6 registering **before** the end of January

## YOUR Article Could Be Here!

We are looking for

- Short stories • Devotionals • Your Questions • Your Memories (Past Events)  
Photos / Artwork

It does not have to be long. (Or it can be as long as you would like.) We are looking for a minimum of two paragraphs.

You can look up a passage of Scripture and share about what God is teaching you.

Share about your stories, your struggles and your dreams.

We want to give you options as well as opportunity.

### TAKE THE Opportunity!

Send Submissions to  
 JacksonF@FBCDowney.org or  
 andrea.brja2@gmail.com

<p><b>Stay Informed!</b></p> <p>-Check out FBCDowney.com</p> <p>-Find our Student and Parent Facebook Pages</p> <p>-Text Updates</p> <p>Middle School—Text JHS to 33733</p> <p>High School—Text HSGroup to 33733</p> <p>College—Text FBCA to 33733</p>
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## Dates to Save in 2016

- Jan 3**                    **Adult Leader Meeting**
  
- Jan 10**                  **Music and Drama Options Resume**
  
- Jan 23**                  **Turn Your Campus**
  
- Feb 10**                  **Agape Feast**
  
- March 11-12**            **Stuck In The Middle**        **(Middle School ONLY)**
  
- March 29– Apr 2**      **Rainbow Acres Missions Trip**
  
- April 8-9**                **YS Team Training**
  
- April 22-23**            **Planet Wisdom**
  
- July 3-8**                **Middle School Camp**
  
- July 11-15**             **VBS**
  
- July 17-22**            **HS Camp**



# Upcoming Events!

## December

Friday - Sunday - Dec 11-13      **Jill's House O3 Adventure Weekend**  
\$50 a person

Please meet in front of the gym by 3:30 pm

Fri, Sat, Sun—Dec 18-20      **Service Opportunity - Dinner Theatre**  
See Michelle for Details

## Save The Date! Upcoming Options for 2016

Fri—Jan 1      **Game Day 11 am—8 pm In Room 214**  
Bring \$5 and your favorite multi player game

Sat, Dec 5      **Beacon Light Mission**  
Meet in front of the Stamps Center 5:45 pm  
Join us for a night of service and feeding the hungry

TBD      **Work Day**  
We will be painting and reorganizing the room

Sat—Jan 23      **Turn Your Campus**  
Music, Food, Learning and more with over 1,000 leaders \$20

## **Submission options** **2016 Updated Submission Topics and Themes**

January— New Year, New Life, New Beginnings (Due Dec 27)

February—Love, Relationships, Purity (Due Jan 24)

March—Spring, Growth, Spring Cleaning (Due Feb 21)

To submit pictures or articles for next month Contact  
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or Jackson - [Jacksonf@fbcdowney.org](mailto:Jacksonf@fbcdowney.org)