



Striving together
for Christ
~Acts 2:42~

Love as our hallmark, God's Word as our authority, and Christ as our Lord

Inside this issue:

PASTOR'S PEN	1-2
A MUSICAL MINUTE	3
REST HOME MINISTRY	3
WOMEN'S CORNER	4
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CHAT	4
CALENDAR OF EVENTS	5
WEEKLY MINISTRY SCHEDULE	5
MAJESTY	5

Pastor's Pen - First or Last?



The question often arises as to which day Christians should gather for worship. Where in the Bible does it state that Christians should gather on the first day of the week rather than the Sabbath (last day)? In an effort to address this question, please consider the following:

The Church is not to be judged concerning the Sabbath*

The Church is explicitly instructed to dismiss judgments concerning Jewish ceremonial observances.

Colossians 2:16-17 -

¹⁶Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—¹⁷things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. ^[NASB95]

Here is a clear, unambiguous, New Testament command to the Church of Jesus Christ concerning Sabbath keeping, namely that we are not to be judged on the basis of such observances. The

lateral comparisons in context ("a festival or a new moon") clearly demonstrate that the Jewish days of religious observance, including the Sabbath, were mere shadows of the greater substance, which is Christ. Since the Jewish Messiah—and Savior of the world—has come, the shadows have been eclipsed by the glory of the Son of God. Just as the Church is not obligated to observe the Jewish festivals ordained for Israel, so the Church is not obligated to observe the Jewish Sabbath, which was ordained as the sign of the Mosaic covenant given to Israel (Ex 31:13, 17). Likewise, the Church although a priesthood of believers, does not perform the ordinances of the Levites (cf. 1 Chr 23:30-31) concerning sacrifice and Sabbaths.

The Church is not to impose observance of the Sabbath

Paul rebukes the Galatians for their resorting to "elemental things" of external, mechanical religion. Included in this rebuke (Gal 4:9-11) is the observance of certain days—undoubtedly inclusive of the Jewish Sabbath. At the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), the Apostles did

not impose Sabbath observance upon the Gentiles. In Romans 14:1-6, Paul again teaches that everyday is alike and that if anyone observes the Jewish Sabbath, they are forbidden to judge those who do not. The implication is clear, God has not commanded the Church to meet on a particular day for worship.

The Sabbath is not the only day of worship

Worship is, and always has been, intended to be the *daily* practice of the true worshipper (cf. Rom 12:1-2; 1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:9; Col 3:17). With regard to a day appointed for corporate worship, no particular day of the week is required or forbidden for the Church.

The Church is to abide in Christ for "rest"

With regard to the Sabbath as our "rest," Hebrews 4:1-11 presents Christ as the fulfillment and offer of our true Sabbath "rest" (cf. Matt 11:28) and then draws attention to the heart and away from externals (cf. Heb 4:12-13). Hebrews 4:10 assures the Church that "the one who has entered His

TBC Edifier

Pastor's Pen (continued)

[Christ's] rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His" and therefore *in Christ*, there "remains ... a Sabbath rest for the people of God." (Heb 4:9). Lastly, we must keep in mind that Christ is "the Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) and that He has come to fulfill the Law and not abolish it (cf.

resurrection of our Lord, which was on the "first day of the week" (cf. Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1), the Church is seen gathering together on "the first day of the week" (cf. Act 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2) and not on the Jewish Sabbath.

It is striking, at the least, to note that the Hebrew Scriptures refer to "Sabbath" no less than 116 times, while the



Matt 5:17), therefore by abiding in Christ we abide in the Sabbath rest that God has provided—indeed the substance that belongs to Christ.

The Church is not seen observing the Sabbath

Although there is not any explicit command for the Church to meet on a certain day—appropriately so in light of the Scripture's teaching above—the Scripture records the Church as meeting on the first day of the week instead of Sabbath for corporate worship, distinctly for the "breaking of bread" (Acts 20:7). From the

New Testament epistles—the writings most proprietary to the Church—refer to Sabbath only twice (Col 2:16 and Heb 4:9). Whereas nearly half of the references in the Hebrew Scriptures are prescriptive concerning Sabbath observance, both instances in the New Testament epistles are presented in the context of understanding the Church's relationship to the Old Covenant. Instead of a command to observe Sabbath, the Church is commanded to "let no one act as your judge in regard to ... a Sabbath day" (Col 2:16).

The Sabbath is in class with other covenant law to the

nation of Israel and not the Church

The practice of animal sacrifices, worship at the temple, the Levitical priesthood, observance of the Passover, the Day of Atonement and other holy days, and other regulations concerning land, livestock, and indentured servitude are not commanded nor practiced by the Church in the New Testament (cf. Hosea 2:11). Since God "rested" (*shabbat*) on the seventh day of creation, and the Sabbath (*shabbot*) was designated a day of rest, the LORD declared His pattern as the grounds for the sign of the covenant that the LORD made with Israel (cf. Gen 2:2-3; Ex 20:11). The message would have been profound, since the LORD had just delivered them from slavery without rest and promised them that they would find rest under His provision and protection if they only abide in the covenant (cf. Deut 5:15). Although Genesis records the seventh day as the day the LORD rested from all His work, and Exodus declares it as the basis of the Sabbath observance, explicit stipulations concerning observance of the Sabbath were only given by covenant to Israel as a nation. One of the key purposes was that it would serve to distinguish Israel from the pagan nations as belonging to the God of creation. It was a day of unified devotion and dedication to God and a reflection of God's goodness and provision for

His people (cf. Ex 20:9-11; 23:12; 31:13-17). If the Church is under the same stipulation to observe the Sabbath positively, then the Church is also under all related stipulations concerning failure to observe the Sabbath (cf. Ex 31:14-15).

Notes:

*There are only two occurrences of "Sabbath" (the English rendering) in the New Testament epistles (Col 2:16 and Heb 4:9); all other NT occurrences are found only in the Gospels and Acts.

**The following early (pre-Roman Catholic) testimonies dismiss the claim that the designation of Sunday as the traditional day of Christian corporate worship was a later imposition on the Church by Roman order, and thereby reflects the mingling of pagan and truly sacred practice. Justin Martyr wrote the following sometime between A.D. 150-155: "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits;" (*The First Apology*, Chapter 67; Ante-Nicene Fathers - page 186). Secondly, Pliny the Younger, pagan governor of Bithynia, wrote in A.D. 112 the following to Emperor Trajan: "they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ as to a god..." (*The Letters of the Younger Pliny*, page 294). Though there is no explicit reference to "Sunday" it is clear that there was "a certain fixed" day that Christians assembled for corporate worship. Taking into account Justin Martyr's testimony, the evidence suggests a consistency in representation of Christian practice to meet on a designated day of the week known to the Romans as Sunday. It is also noteworthy that the Roman's did not see any relationship with the early Christian's assembling on Sunday (a day that they referred to as "the Lord's day" - cf. Rev 1:10, which could be translated: *the day belonging to the Lord*) and the idolatrous worship of the pagan sun god.

A Musical Minute - Paul Ellsworth

“The Music of Christmas”

Christmas is one of those especially musical holidays. Classical music has a solid standing in the season and some classical works are immediately recognizable and known as being “Christmas favorites,” such as Handel's *Messiah* and Rutter's *Magnificat*. This year, Trinity Bible Church is featuring a lesser known Christmas work by Benjamin Britten, *A Ceremony of Carols*.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) is a 20th century British composer, who is most known for *A Ceremony of Carols* and *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. While 20th century music is generally

thought of as “modern” and quite different from classical music of previous centuries – adjectives such as atonal and dissonant are often used to describe 20th century classical music as a whole – Britten's music can be very accessible and enjoyable.

A Ceremony of Carols is a set of Christmas poems from the 17th century and earlier, arranged in various styles. Britten wrote the work in 1942 in a few days on his way from the United States to England aboard the *Axel Johnson*. He had picked up a copy of “The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems” in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in which he found the

texts. He unified these as a contiguous work using a plainchant, *Hodie Christus Natus Est* (“Today Christ is born”) as a processional and recessional. Britten originally wrote the piece for women's choir and harp, as the premiere performance reflected; however, the first published version called for boys' choir. A full choir arrangement – or SATB, which stands for **S**oprano, **A**lto, **T**enor, **B**ass – was requested of Julius Harrison by the publisher, Boosey and Hawkes, in 1943.

Due to time and theology (several of the songs, being pre-Reformation, tend to focus on Mary), the Trinity Bible Church choir will be singing a selection of songs from *A Ceremony of*

Carols: Hodie, Wolcum Yole, There Is No Rose, Balulalow, This Little Babe, In Freezing Winter Night, and Deo Gracias. Two of these will have textual changes. Because of the Latin and Middle English, the text in modern English will be provided.



Rest Home Ministry - Jim Fennell

Ken would always be in the same place, parked in his wheelchair by the patio doors as we came each week to the nursing home to minister to these dear people with hymns, Scripture and a message from the Bible. He eagerly greeted us each Friday, even though a stroke kept him from moving his right arm and took away his ability to speak clearly. He was always attentive and knew many of the hymns we sang each week, because he would follow-along as best as his physical condition permitted. He listened closely to the messages. Ken was a Christian. He told us so, and his attitude reflected his joy in Christ. After each service as we go around and greet the people who are present in the room, Ken was always

cheery and had a firm hand shake with his left hand.

While many people will miss a Friday because of various health issues or other reasons, Ken was absent two, then three and then four Fridays in a row. Since a patient's medical condition is confidential, we could only find out that he was not doing well and had apparently suffered more strokes.

After the Friday service on Nov. 6th, we found out that Ken departed this life the previous morning. He is now



in the presence of the LORD whom he trusted (Ps 16:11). We rejoice that we had the opportunity to encourage him in the faith with music, song, and the Word of God. Hopefully, we were a blessing in his life, even if it was only for less than one hour per week.

Join us in sharing the gospel in song and word each Friday, or whenever you can, at 10AM - Gilroy Health Care, 8170 Murray Avenue in Gilroy. We meet in the lobby and then go back to the Sun Room where we conduct the service.

A Season to Share...

TBC Christmas Caroling Outreach

Friday, Dec. 18th
Meet at TBC, 6:45PM

After the event, participants are invited to the Tithering-ton's for a Post-Caroling Party! Drinks will be provided, bringing a dessert to share is welcomed! See Paul Ellsworth for more details.

A Season to Give...

TBC is now accepting donations for Christmas food baskets given to families in need. If you would like to donate, please make your check payable to TBC and designate it “food basket.”

Also, VOM Action Packs and Immanuel's Child Stars are available in the Equipping Center for those interested in donating toward sharing the Gospel internationally this Christmas.

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Women's Corner - Carole Ellsworth

Ladies! You are invited to the Women's Christmas Tea entitled "Mary, A Symphony of Love" in our new sanctuary! December 11th, 7:00pm.



Diana Fennell will be our speaker with a message about our Lord Jesus Christ, as seen through the eyes of Mary, His maidservant. Our Women's

Choir will accent the evening singing "The Magnificent." Invite your friends, family, and neighbors! Our Tea is a very special event for all to hear

the Word of the Lord along with time for personal contact with believers at their table. Please pray now for the workings of the Holy Spirit and that "Christ be magnified" (Philippians 1: 20b).

Ongoing Women's Bible Studies – We are currently studying "LORD, Teach Me to Pray" by Kay Arthur, Thursday evenings (during Awana). We would like to offer this Bible Study again in the New Year, during daytime hours. New Women's Bible Studies will begin in the new year, with details to follow.

As we approach the Christmas season and welcome in a new year, may we, "Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before Him; Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Give to the LORD glory and strength. Give to the

LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth." Psalm 96:2-9.

Upcoming Events for Women:

- Flower Arranging Fellowship at the home of Gail Miller - 12/14 from 7-9PM.
- Christmas Cookie Exchange at the home of Michelle Warren - 12/15 from 7-9PM.

Invite someone you know!

Children's Ministry Chat - Sonia J. Wykoff



Curriculum Update

2009 is coming to a close, but our Children's Ministry teachers are just beginning some exciting new lessons!

Dec. 6th our Sunday school classes began the series "The King is Born" celebrating Jesus' role as the eternal King! Also, the Children's Church Primary class (1st-2nd grades) began new curriculum focused on *Learning to Worship and Pray* while the Middler class (3rd-5th grades) is learning how to *Know the Savior!* Both groups

will be exploring these topics until February.

Christmas Festivities

There are many fun ways to celebrate the Christmas season at TBC this December, and Children's Ministry offers a few! Thursday the 10th, Awana will have its annual Christmas Party - I think I smell pizza and treats! The fun begins at 6:30PM. On Sunday the 20th, we will have a Christmas party during Children's Church for grades 1st - 5th! Children are encouraged to invite friends to both events!

An End for One, a Beginning for ??

Recently, Leeann Steputat decided to take a rest from her sixteen years of teaching Children's Church at TBC. Her dedication to teaching God's truth to our children

was a blessing, and she will be greatly missed!

An end for one, however, is a possible new beginning for another! We are always seeking dedicated servants like Leeann who are willing to sacrifice a small portion of their time to teach TBC's children about the Lord. If you have an interest in this area of ministry, please contact me or Kelly Abbott. TBC membership is a requirement.

Did You Know?

A *Charlie Brown Christmas*, created by Charles Schulz, is one of CBS' most successful specials debuting in 1965 and running through 2000. It includes a full recitation of Luke 2:8-14 by the character Linus. Originally, network execs wanted to cut the biblical passage, but Schulz insisted

it stay in the television version stating: "If we don't tell the true meaning of Christmas, who will?"

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!" Lk 2:10-14



"That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."

Trinity Bible Church – Calendar of Events

December

- 10th: Awana Christmas Party - Last session until 1/7/10
- 11th: Women's Christmas Tea - 7:00PM
- 14th: Flower Arranging Fellowship - 7:00PM,
Gail Miller's home
- 15th: Women's Christmas Cookie Exchange - 7:00PM,
Michelle Warren's home
- 18th: Christmas Caroling - 6:45PM (meet at TBC)
- 20th: Children's Church Christmas Party - 11:30AM
TBC Christmas Concert - 6:00PM
- 24th: Christmas Eve Service - 7:00PM

January 2010

- 7th: Awana Resumes - 6:30PM
- 8th: Family Game Night
- 24th: TBC Annual Business Meeting - 6:00PM
- 30th: Majesty Concert
- 31st: Majesty Concert

February

- 5th - 7th: Marriage Conference featuring Dr. Street

Look for more information
about our upcoming events
online at
www.TrinityBibleChurch.org



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Trinity Bible Church Ministries – Weekly Schedule

Sunday

Sunday school for all ages	9:00AM
Morning Worship Service	10:30AM
<i>The Word of Truth</i> KFAX 1100AM	9:30AM
Choir Practice	4:30PM
Prayer Service	6:00PM

Wednesday

Elder Meeting (every 3rd Wed.)	7:00PM
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Thursday

AWANA (3yrs. - 12th grade)	7:00PM
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Friday

Nursing Home Service	10:00AM
Home Bible Fellowship (every other Friday)	7:00PM

Saturday

Praise Team practice	3:00PM
Orchestra practice (Practice times are scheduled to change)	4:30PM

For more information regarding any of our ministries, please contact the church office or visit the TBC website.

Coming January 2010!

The Master's College: Majesty

On January 30th and 31st, Trinity Bible Church will be blessed with the musical talents of *Majesty*, a ten person ensemble from *The Master's College*. *Majesty* is auditioned, instructed, and led by the chair of the music department at the college, Dr. Paul Plew. During the school year, they visit churches three weeks out of each month and also travel on a three week tour after singing with *The Master's Chorale* on a two week tour immediately following the spring semester. Their program includes music, testimonials, and challenges from Scripture; *Majesty* will also assist in leading the congregational singing during the normal worship service.

