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December 2015

Noel. Yuletide. The Christmas season is here! It is always wonderful to celebrate this warm and Christ-centered time.

Last week I saw in an article reporting that 18% of Americans go to church each week. On Christmas Eve that number surges to 47% of Americans attending church. This is the season to invite friends, family and neighbors to EvFree!

May your Christmas have a story like this recent one:

I met Patty during a Backyard Blitz...she wanted prayer for one of her sons. We sat down at the table and I began to explain to her about Jesus and God's plan of salvation for each person. At the end, she prayed to receive Jesus and cried tears of repentance.

—Peggy Bohrer

As Christmas is upon us, it is also the close of our *Season of Unexpected Change*. As our former Lead Pastor Mike resigned in September, God gave us a clarion call to agree again that Jesus really is the Head of our church. We love our pastors but Christ is the rock of this church. Our next season will center on *Yahweh is Peace* and we have vibrant goals for the year.

- The first has a true Christmas focus: to bring the love of Christ to those in our circles of influence. While the best way to do this is right where each of us live and work, we also have some great events happening on campus. Consider inviting folks to the *Special Needs Christmas Story* on Sunday December 6, the *Choir & Orchestra Christmas Concert* on Friday December 18 and the *Christmas Eve Services* at 3, 5 and 7 pm. The services will be family friendly, so bring your kids. Mary and Joseph brought their baby!





- The second endeavor is for hundreds of people to join us in *The Walk of Faith*. This will be a daily guide to read or listen through the New Testament in 2016.
- The third is to invite friends and family to hear internationally-known evangelist Luis Palau at our Easter services.
- The fourth objective is to personally go or send others this summer on one of the 20 teams with *Love Europe*.

God has given us a season of great favor. Every week in October we saw increasing numbers of people worship with us! Our Family Ministries of children, youth and special needs has 1,593 folks each week. Our Sunday Communities and Rooted have 1,774 people. Our Community Life area of Re>Store groups, Closer Walk and Women's Ministries touches 1,907 lives. While numbers can be numbing, here are two stories of the love of Christ touching lives...

I met a young Biola student after a ten o'clock service. I invited her to my study of John and our group of women have welcomed her ever since. We just never know which connections people are looking for!

—Judy Davis

Jenn and Mark West and their three daughters are deeply involved in ministry here. Today they are raising funds to relocate to Amsterdam to support the ministries in Europe. They are fulfilling our vision of Follow, Connect & Go.

At EvFree, folks are finding and experiencing the love of that Baby born at Christmas...





It's been two-months since I joined EvFree [during this time, he moved out of an unhealthy living situation]. I finally hit bottom...but the prayer team continued to pray and my faith in God grew. I went from being homeless without food to a new job, car, and a room to call my own with plans to lease a home in 45 days. I thank each of you for your faithful, fervent prayers. And I was so excited because on top of all of that I was able to make an offering to EvFree and the Compassion Fund!

—A Guy Impacted by Prayer

I watched the family across the aisle and up a few rows: dad, mom, daughter, grandma. Three generations lined up like stepping stones...I savor the sight...I murmur thanks for the sweet years I spent as a granddaughter, and I pray the same for the back of the blonde head fifteen feet away.

—Kristen Hartman

Thank you for your generosity to our church. It takes *everyone* to bring these many ministries to our community and beyond. Your year-end gifts are vital to touching lives with Christ—you can make stories like these continue and grow in the year to come.

Thank you for your partnership and vital support of God's work,

David Fletcher
Executive Pastor

