



## ***preacher's podium***

**“Let me urge you to receive the gift of Jesus this Christmas, by giving Him the gift of yourself.”**


First of all, please remember we are consolidating our four weekend services into two next weekend. Preaching and Praise services along with Bible School classes will be held Sunday at both 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. Very special services are planned as we conclude our series on *The Gift*. Our theme for the morning will be, “You Can Give Yourself.” Saturday night service and our Sunday morning Chapel service will resume the first weekend of the new year, January 2-3. Please help us make sure that everyone gets the word.

Wasn't this past weekend fantastic! Wendy and the worship choir did a wonderful job of leading us in worship. Matt had a powerful message on worship as illustrated by that of both the angels and the shepherds. No doubt a highlight of the weekend was PS 119, a group of fifty first through fourth graders, that dramatically presented Luke 2:1-20 from memory. Furthermore, attendance at all services was up with a count of 2,437, second only to Easter.

Next up is Christmas Eve at Kingsway. Come to our candlelit Worship Center and hear the beautiful music of the chamber ensemble from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. For this one evening only we ask you to leave all conversation outside the Worship Center and simply take this time to meditate on the real reason we celebrate Christmas. The devotional service itself begins at 6:30 p.m. with beautiful congregational music led by Kingsway's Timothy, Daniel Shelton, wonderful special music, and my final Christmas Eve devotional message. In keeping with our current series on *The Gift*, the theme will be, “Jesus Gave Himself.” If you have guests in your home, bring them along. This is the perfect way to usher in Christmas. Please take advantage of the free childcare that will be provided for children, birth through three years of age.

Last Saturday, our elders met for our annual reorganizational meeting. Steve Stombaugh will continue as chairman of the elders and chairman of the Administrative Elder Council. Bruce Cordray will serve as vice-chairman. Bob Meeks continues to lead the Shepherding Elders assisted by Dan Keller. I want to personally express my appreciation for the three men who are leaving the eldership after three year terms: Greg Bruzas, Steve Kays and Dr. Bob Krause. All three are dear friends and humble, servant-leaders in the Lord's church.

Thousands of years before Jesus appeared in Bethlehem's stable the circumstances surrounding the coming of the Messiah who would be the Savior of the world had been prophesied. The promise of His coming was like a thread that ran through the Old Testament, starting with just a hint after the first recorded



sin, when God promised the serpent (Satan) that Eve's offspring would crush him (Genesis 3:15). The next promise came to Abraham when God said that through him He would bless all the people of the earth (Genesis 12:3). Abraham's great grandson, Judah, was promised that an eternal scepter would come from his lineage (Genesis 49:10). Among other things Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah that He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). He also prophesied the miraculous works that the Messiah would perform (Isaiah 35:5-6). It was Micah who prophesied that He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). It was Zechariah who accurately, prophetically described the Messiah's humble circumstances and betrayal (Zechariah 9:6, 11:12-13). Again it was Isaiah who vividly described in prophecy the torturous death Jesus would die and why (Isaiah 53). It was David who spoke of Jesus' resurrection (Psalm 16:10).

These are only a few of the more than 300 prophecies that surrounded the first coming of Jesus Christ. He would not just be one representing God, as had the prophets; He was God (John 1:1). Knowing our need for a Savior, God the Father sent God the Son to die in our place, forgive our sins, and conquer death by coming alive again. In the words of Linus, “That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown!” But speaking of prophecies, there's one more great prophecy that is repeated over and over in the New Testament which has yet to be fulfilled, and that's the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus said, “I will come again!” (John 14:3). Indeed, John writes,

*Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see Him – even those who pierced Him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for Him. Yes! Amen! (Revelation 1:7).*

Indeed, Peter writes, “The day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens and the earth will pass away ...” (2 Peter 3:10).

As surely as Christ came the first time as prophesied again and again, He will come again as He and the New Testament writers promised. The world wasn't ready when He came the first time. Except for a few shepherds and some wise men from the East, they didn't even recognize Him. You will recognize Him when He comes the second time, but will you be ready? Are you ready? If the answer is not an unqualified “Yes!” Let me urge you to receive the gift of Jesus this Christmas, by giving Him the gift of yourself. And for all of you, I pray that this will be the best Christmas ever!

Yours for a soul-winning church,

John



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Avon, IN 46123  
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## ***decisions for Christ***

- Luke Kegeris and Mark Starlin were baptized and placed membership.
- Brian and Amy Kiser transferred their membership to Kingsway.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
6 p.m. Music  
6:30 p.m. Service

Sunday, December 27  
Worship Services  
9 and 10:30 a.m.

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## ***glimpse of growth***

Preaching and Praise	2,437	<u>General Offering</u>	
Bible School	551	Weekly Budget	\$98,731
Decisions	4	Given this Week	\$86,192
New Members YTD	230		

To give online, please visit [kingswaychurch.org/giving](http://kingswaychurch.org/giving).