

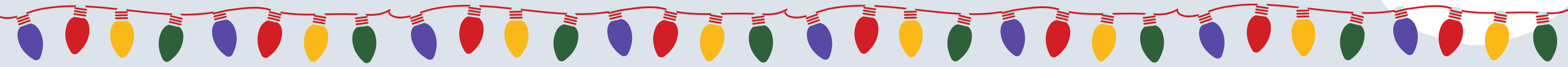


SUMMERDALE YOUTH NEWS

DECEMBER 6, 2020

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"THE GREATEST GIFT"

Thanksgiving was wonderful this year! We enjoyed fellowship, food and football! I know our family was busy with shopping, wrapping presents, decorating the house, hanging lights, moving furniture, building a new bedroom, and talking about all the exciting changes happening in our lives to end 2020. We are eager to see what God will bring us in 2021. Misty, all our boys, and I are grateful for all our blessings and for the next season of life. Our wedding will be this Saturday and we cannot wait! God has truly been good to all of us.

I am reminded of a story I heard several years ago... Two friends were fortunate enough to have season tickets to watch the New Orleans Saints. They could not help noticing that there was always a spare seat next to them at every home game. They had a friend who would love to buy the season ticket, especially if all three could have seats together, but no one ever showed up. During half-time of the next to the last game one of the friends went to the ticket office and asked if they could buy the season ticket because the seat was always empty. The lady at the window said that unfortunately the ticket had been sold and she couldn't give him any more information. Strangely enough, when they arrived to the final home game of the season, there was a man in the seat! He was decked out from head to toe in Saints gear. However, he looked a little grumpy. Finally, one of the men could not resist it any longer. He turned to the newcomer and asked, "Where have you been all season." He huffed and said, "My wife bought the season tickets and kept them for a surprise Christmas present!" That's a great idea, but a terrible way to give a gift.

The Greatest Gift Was A Mysterious Gift. Paul spoke to the Corinthians about giving their resources. He pointed out the generosity of the Macedonians and encouraged the Corinthians to be generous as they gave to the special Jerusalem offering. As he concludes his teaching on giving, his thoughts take him to Christ which leads to an outburst of excitement and praise. He said, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (II Corinthians 9:15). What do you think of when you hear the term "mysterious" gift? I assume that it's something that fills your heart with wonder and awe. That is exactly what the gift of Jesus is to the world.

The Greatest Gift Was A Miraculous Gift. Miracles are often disregarded in our secular culture and the term is often abused when it is used. People can come up with a logical answer for everything, thanks to science and philosophy. However, according to a study by the Pew Forum, 79 percent of Americans believe in Biblical miracles. There is no miracle greater than the Incarnation! Think of all the miraculous things that happened when Jesus came into the world. The Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled. Things happened exactly as they were foretold (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 40:3, Jeremiah 31:15). Angels visited Mary and Joseph on separate occasions. An angelic choir appeared to a group of lowly shepherds. A star unlike any other appeared in the sky and led the Magi to the Christ child. There were visions and dreams. The mother was a virgin. There is no logical human explanation for the miracle of Jesus.

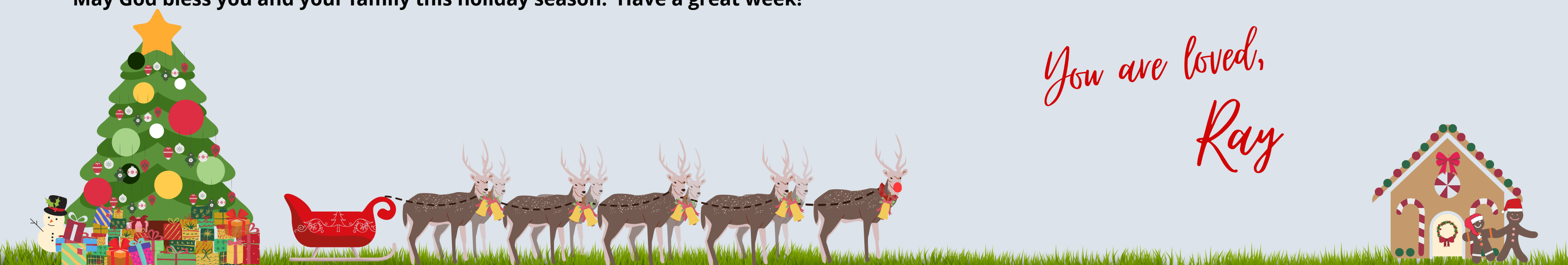
The Greatest Gift Was A Magnificent Gift. This gift is magnificent because it provides peace with God. It promises forgiveness of all your sin. It brings eternal joy. It meets your deepest needs and longings. It sets you free from bondage and slavery. It catapults us into the love of God where we belong. It brings us into the presence of God. It is a gift that keeps giving for all of eternity. Eternal life is for those who do God's will (Matthew 7:21) and it comes from God alone (John 14:6, Titus 1:2, 3:7). There is nothing more magnificent than Jesus.

The Greatest Gift Was A Measureless Gift. There is no gift that compares with the gift of the Christ. The best Christmas gift that you have ever received pales in comparison to the gift God gave that first Christmas to you and me. During the Christmas season stores will run special sales with this little disclaimer, "While supplies last." What they are offering is in limited supply. If you have been seeking the PS5 for a gift this holiday season you already know about this gimmick! By the way, if you do get at limited supply item you might want to keep your receipt and check if they will give a FULL refund. There is no disclaimer, "while supplies last" on the measureless gift of God. All who ask for this gift will receive it and if we are obedient we will be rewarded! God expects us to receive His Son as a gift (John 3:16).

The absolute greatest gift ever given was Jesus Christ! We have no idea when He was born, though Catholics and a handful of Protestants try to push the December 25th date. This is based on the opinion of Hippolytus of Rome in the third century. My opinion is that it was in early to mid September, possibly September 11, according to reliable scholars. Scripture confirms that it was in the Fall or Spring season (Luke 1:24-31, 3:23). It really doesn't matter when He was born, so long as we believe in His birth, death and resurrection. The major point is that when Jesus was born it was truly amazing! Paul said, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (II Corinthians 9:15). The heavens and the earth rejoiced! How should we respond to the gift of Jesus Christ? How can we share the gospel during Christmas? How can we give a message of hope to others? We need to praise the Lord! We need to say, "Thank you" for all that He has given us.

May God bless you and your family this holiday season. Have a great week!

You are loved,
Ray



SYG NEWS & EVENTS



We offer two opportunities for our children during the week for Bible study. On Sunday mornings we meet on the front pew for a "Pew Packers" style class before worship. SONSHINE STUDIES will have singing, Bible reading, and an object lesson for pre-K to 5th grade. We also have Wednesday night Bible classes for all ages! The teenagers will be studying the L2L material to prepare for the 2021 convention in Orlando, FL. Please bring your children and teens to Bible study and worship.



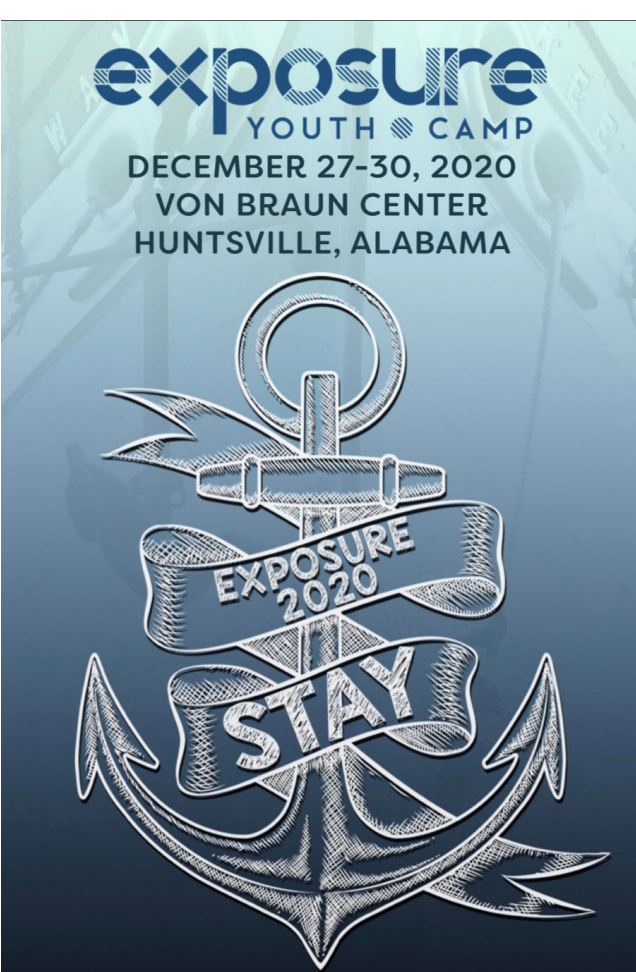
Young Adult Christmas Party will be held on Sunday evening, December 20th, beginning at 6 PM. It will be held in the fellowship hall and we are asking everyone to bring a side dish and/or dessert. Please RSVP with Ray by that Sunday morning if you can attend. Also, we need teens to volunteer to watch the little ones in the Theater.



GIRLS NIGHT OUT & GUYS NIGHT OUT
We are planning a girls night out and guys night out for Saturday, January 2. The date and location are TBA. See Misty or Ray for more details.



Youth & Young Adult Game Nights will resume on January 29th at 6:30 PM. Game nights will be held in the fellowship hall on the last Friday of the month. We are asking everyone to bring a finger food and/or a dessert. A movie will play in the Theater for the little kids who do not want to play games.



We've got questions. You've got answers. Don't throw us shade. It's time to spill the tea. This is an interview with one of our teens in a series of random questions. We call it "7 Groovy Questions." You can find it on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube. The next video will be with Chase Joiner.



GULF YOUTH EXPERIENCE

JANUARY 15-17, 2021
ONLINE ONLY
GULF 2021 | RHYTHMS

TENTATIVE YOUTH CALENDAR:

December 6 - SONSHINE STUDIES @ 9:30 AM
December 9 - Family Bible Hour @ 6:30 PM
December 13 - SONSHINE STUDIES @ 9:30 AM
December 16 - Family Bible Hour @ 6:30 PM
December 20 - SONSHINE STUDIES @ 9:30 AM
December 20 - Young Adult Christmas Party @ 6 PM
December 27-30 - EYC in Huntsville



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