

Bay City Wesleyan Church  
December 25, 2016

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Christmas Sunday 2016

Declaring what we believe because it shapes our view of the future.

<http://bible.com/events/145911>

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New here?

Thank you for taking the time to check us out. We know stepping into new surroundings for the first time can be intimidating. If you're nervous, don't worry. Whether you've never been to church, or it's been a long time, we want you to feel at home.

We'll be here for about 70 minutes, sing some songs, open up the Bible to see what it means for us and pray together. Please don't feel obligated to make a donation in the offering. Give only if you are comfortable doing so.

We'd love to stay connected with you this week. The easiest way to do that is by following us on social media. You're welcome to take out your phone right now to connect. The links are below. We also love hearing from you and this is a great way to keep up the conversation.

CONNECT WITH US

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BCWesleyan](http://www.facebook.com/BCWesleyan)

Twitter: @PastrMarkHaines

Lighting the Christ Candle: REJOICE!

John 1:1-14 NET

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things were created by him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it. A man came, sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. The true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was created by him, but the world did not recognize him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him. But to all who have received him – those who believe in his name – he has given the right to become God's children – children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband's decision, but by God. Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We saw his glory – the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father.

Sometimes we struggle to keep our focus on the meaning of Christmas.

Why are the lines so long? Why is the line we're in moving so slow?

Why is the store closed now? Why are they out of that toy?

Why didn't I get the presents I wanted? Why can't I have what I asked for?

It's enough to make a person scream. Christmas can be more frustrating than any other holiday.

Maybe you're wondering:

Where is God when I'm frustrated and stressed?

Matthew 1:23 NET

“ Look! The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him Emmanuel ,” which means “ God with us .”

“At least I'm here with you.”

That's what Llama Mama told Llama Lama when he was mad at the Shop-O-Rama.

“I'm here with you.”

That's what Jesus tells us. “My name is Emmanuel, because I am with you.”

“I'm here with you.”

That's what God tells us at Christmas. “[I] became flesh and took up residence among [you].”

“I'm here with you.”

That was the last thing, John Wesley, the founder of our branch of the Christian family tree said before he went to heaven.

“The best of all is, God is with us.”

Citation: <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesley-the-methodist/chapter-xix-the-passing-of-john-wesley/>

Sermon in a Sentence:

I'm here with you.

A NEW WAY TO SEE LIFE:

We were created to live in God's kingdom as his children – crown princes and princesses. Sadly, we settle for living as stressed out slaves to the urgent. There's one way to enjoy freedom. Listen for Jesus to tell you, “I'm here with you.” Welcome Jesus as the King of your lives.

This is a daily exercise that Jesus said was like picking up our crosses to follow him.

Luke 9:23 NIV

Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

[Image]

[http://d1o2alqw72z1h8.cloudfront.net/5722009-1482042867922\\_152x152.jpg](http://d1o2alqw72z1h8.cloudfront.net/5722009-1482042867922_152x152.jpg)

INVITATION:

COME BACK in January – Discover what Jesus means when he calls you to follow him. (Hint: You may be surprised to find out that regardless of what you believe, regardless of how you behave, Jesus invites you to follow.)