

Sunday Schedule:
 9:30 a.m. Prayer
 10:15 a.m. Worship Service with Nursery
 10:15 a.m. Children's Ministry
 11:30 a.m. Coffee Connection

January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 4 pm— AWANA Double Buck Day	7 6:30 pm Ministry Team mtg.	8 7 pm General Board mtg.	9 6:30 pm Flipside	10 7 pm Praise Practice	11 12 Flipside Lock-In 7 pm—9am	
13 Garth Sjue will be speaking 4 pm- AWANA Duct Tape Day	14 6:30 pm Coaches Connection	15	16 6:30 pm Flipside	17 7 pm Praise Practice	18	19
Pastor Daryl in California for Doctor of Ministry residency						
20 4 pm— AWANA Crazy Hair Day	21	22	23 6:30 pm Flipside	24 7 pm Praise Practice	25	26
Pastor Daryl in California for Doctor of Ministry residency						
27 Communion Potluck followed by Annual Congregational Meeting No AWANA	28	29	30 6:30 pm Flipside	31 7 pm Praise Practice		

A Free Voice

“Thinking Out Loud”



By Pastor Daryl Thompson

I am still in the after glow of our celebration of Christ's birth. I have been personally blessed by our Sunday services, our Christmas program, our small group service project, our night of caroling, and our Candlelight Christmas Eve service. Each of these has enriched my life and my faith. They have ministered to me and allowed me to minister to others. I am sure that you can say the same.

This Christmas has also been a special blessing for our family. Beth and I have been fortunate to have our four children at home as well as our wonderful son-in-law, three grandchildren and my mother. Our house has been a busy place filled with activity, Christmas treats, and laughter from early in the morning to late into the night. The little ones are the ones up early and the bigger ones are the ones up late. Interesting how that seems to work. I hope that you have also been able to enjoy some time with special people in your lives.

The end of one year and the beginning of another is a good time to look back and forward. In looking back I see God's faithfulness and goodness. I am especially mindful of His protective hand on those who have experienced serious illnesses and injuries and surgeries during this past year. Elizabeth Kroger, Joel Knudsen, Kiel Sjue, and Katie Muller come immediately to my mind but I know there are others as well. God does not spare us from life's trials but He does walk with us through them.

In looking forward I see great opportunities and possibilities. They are opportunities and possibilities for God to work in my life and turn me into a person that is more like

our savior. Each new year is a new beginning. It is an opportunity to build on the lessons learned and the truths discovered during the past year. I am thankful that God also gives us the strength to go on and face the future with its unknowns.

I also see opportunities and possibilities for God to work through my life so that others are helped in their spiritual journey. What an honor it is for God to use us to help others. As I look at our church family I see this happening all of the time. I see people helping people with encouragement, counsel, material and relational support. I see people at various stages of understanding and response to God's great love, to God's great gift of eternal life, and to God's great mission of reconciliation.

It is a special challenge for us in the United States to clearly see the spiritual needs around us. We are a materially rich nation but an increasingly poor one spiritually. Although people have spiritual interests, many know little of God's word and have significant misunderstandings when it comes to the Bible's central truths. Many people gain their beliefs from popular music and movies which rarely convey an accurate picture of God. The people around us are just as lost as those who may live in China or India and do not know of Jesus Christ.

God has us here to be His hands and feet to reach these people. This is a process that involves contact and communication with them. It is a series of experiences that includes others and eventually includes visits to church events and services. We may be involved in the process for only months before we see some people making great discoveries and responses. For others we may be involved for years. In either case, it is essential that we be involved. This coming year is filled with opportunities and possibilities to be used by God in this ongoing process that is taking place all around us. I encourage you to make the most of it. It will only be 2008 once in our lifetimes.

I wish you and your family a happy new year.