



Family focus

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | REAL FAMILY CHURCH |
DECEMBER 2017 – VOLUME 2

CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT SERVING OTHERS

When you look around this Christmas, you will see lights, ornaments, bows and ribbons. The crisp winter air just feels a bit more special when you know that Christmas is just around the corner. It is magical.

But, when you look a bit deeper, you notice that not everyone is smiling. Some are struggling to make ends meet. Others are facing the pain of a lost loved one that won't be at Christmas dinner this year. Still others wonder where they will sleep out the night as the days grow colder.

There are people out there that need us.

It can be a challenge to find a way to help when the needs are so many. But, what better time to put ourselves out there to help than at Christmas? It's during this season of hope that we can offer the most hope to someone around us.

So, find a need and fill it. Don't worry about how great the need is. Just meet the one that is in front of you.

There was a beach filled with starfish, washed up with the high tide. They were dying, but a little boy was throwing them back into the ocean. A man came along and said to the boy, "Son, the need is too great. You will never make a difference throwing these starfish back one at a time."

The boy stooped down and picked up a starfish. Hurling it toward the ocean, he said, "It made a difference to that one."

This Christmas, let's make a difference.

CHECK IN, DO GOOD

Do you remember learning Bible stories as a kid? You probably learned through picture books. This December, we're providing age appropriate, faith-based books for children in developing nations. Every 3 check-ins at Real Family Church will provide a book to a child. We are partnering with **OneHope** to make this happen. OneHope presents the Living Word of God in an engaging way to children and youth. They plan to reach every young person, in every nation, with a relevant Gospel message by the year 2030. Check them out at onehope.net and help us make a difference in the lives of kids around the world by checking in. [#books4kids](#) [#realfamily](#)

Church Events

- Dec 2nd High Point (Service Team)
- Dec 10th Real Family Christmas Celebration
- Dec 17th Prodigal Ministries Christmas Gift Deadline
- Dec 24th Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
- Dec 27th NO YOUTH GROUP (Christmas)



Christmas Gifts I Remember

Do you think it is odd that I don't remember many of the Christmas gifts I have received in my life?

I'm pretty sure I got toys as a kid. I remember a little robot that would run programs that I punched into its head. It seems like I got a Transformer or two at some point. I have seen pictures of the year I got a bike and I can only assume that all my He-Man and Star Wars toys probably came some time around Christmas.

But, I remember this one year where I was completely stunned

by my parents sliding a *signet ring* into my stocking. I am probably the only teenager that ever wanted a ring with my initial on it, but they knew me and their gift reflected that.

I remember my wife's first present to me. I was an aspiring singer/songwriter and I opened up an envelope that revealed she had purchased *some time at a professional music studio* for me to record a demo. How cool was that? She really knew me.

My kids have repeatedly given me the cheesiest comic book movies that you have ever wanted to see. Guess what? They know me. They know their dad loves movies about superheroes...the cheesier the better.

That really is what it comes down to. *The gifts I remember are the ones that reflect a strong relationship with the person who gave me the gift.* Sure, I would love a big screen TV or new car, but it would be meaningless if the relationship behind the gift were hollow. That relationship means so much more.

I think that is what is so special about the Christ-child. We speak of God's gift of Himself at Christmas. We talk

1 John 5:11

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"

about how God gave His only Son to save a world that was lost. But, can we be honest for a moment?

The gift just isn't that special *if I don't have a strong relationship with the Giver.*

In fact, without that relationship, we might not even remember the gift at all.

Make this year special. Get to know the Giver this Christmas.

Alpha (For All)

A Christianity 101 course for anyone interested in asking BIG questions

Currently, our RFC students (grades 6-12) are working through a 13-week course called ALPHA on Wednesday nights. It is a time to have real talk about what it means to be a Christ-follower in today's world.

Beginning in January, ALPHA will be coming to all ages on Wednesday nights. We have seen such a great response from our students that we want to give the opportunity to

everyone to have these meaningful discussions.

We will be posting a lot of information about this online, as well as including a full write-up in our January newsletter. But for now, if you know someone that would like to get in on some of the BIG questions about life, faith and God, pray for them to be a part of ALPHA.

We anticipate that 2018 is going to be a great time at RFC.

New To Our Family

We are certainly seeing lots of new faces around. And we expect to see many more as we roll toward our Launch on January 7th.

If you are new to Real Family, we want to invite you to join our church as a member. We would love to tell you that there are all kinds of rights and privileges that go with it, but that wouldn't be real. Being a member is simply a promise that we will support and provide for one another.

It's a promise to be family.

If you would like to learn more about joining Real Family Church, contact Pastor Matt at matt@realfamily.church.



RFC Annual Thanksgiving Dinner 2017

A Prodigal Christmas

In December, we are asking our Real Family to help us provide Christmas gifts for the ladies of McCauley House, a part of Prodigal Ministries. Prodigal provides transitional housing for individuals recently released from prison, with Bible-based teaching and a compassionate environment.

We are collecting for 3 ladies this Christmas and ask that you bring wrapped gifts to the church no later than December 17th.

Inviting Friends

One of the simplest, most difficult things we can do is invite our friends to church.

I mean, we are called Real Family Church, so let's be real. Given a choice between inviting a friend to church or to a ballgame, I'm gonna choose ballgame. Neither one of them are complicated, but I feel like one will get me a quick 'yes', while the other may be a bit more dicey.

Well, that's not entirely true.

I mean, the ballgame might get me a 'no', but that won't hurt my feelings. People have stuff to do, so I'm not...well...I'm not embarrassed, I guess.

You see, if I invite you to a movie, it's a matter of preference. If I invite you to dinner, it's a matter of cost. If I invite you to Christmas, it's a schedule thing.

But, a church invite? That seems different.

I knew this girl when I was younger. We hung out at softball games and had a great time. I mean, we loved spending time together. I decided to ask her to go to a theme park with me. No big deal, right? After all, we already knew we liked spending time together.

Except it WAS a big deal. Because I wasn't just asking her to go to Kentucky Kingdom. I was asking her to go **WITH ME**. I was asking her to **TRY OUT A DATE** with me, even if it was just that once. And I knew that her response (or lack of response) would change our friendship.

It was a simple invite. But it wasn't an easy one.

It's the same when we invite someone to church. We aren't really inviting them for a one-time thing. We are asking them to **TRY OUT OUR FAMILY** and see if they would consider being a part. It might end with rejection. Or awkwardness. But, one thing is certain, once the invite is out there, **the friendship changes**.

So, we dodge it. We mention we go to church, without putting it out there that we would like for them to come.

I ended up asking that girl out. It was horrible. I was awkward and scared and basically blurted out my invite over the telephone, expecting the worst. She went out with me. I felt just as scared the day I asked her to marry me.

But, I asked her anyways. The possible reward was greater than my fear of losing our status quo relationship.

I would love for you to invite a friend to church with you this Christmas. It's simple. It's difficult.

And it's worth it.

Pastor Matt



To the Presses!

Pastor Matt will be a new contributor to the Oldham Era's weekly Religion column.

The Oldham Era, a weekly publication in the community of La Grange, has asked Real Family Church pastor, Matt Monahan, to be a regular contributor to its Religion Column, alongside other area ministers. On a weekly basis, the Era features a 700-word, full pages column for church leaders and area religious organizations. It is a great opportunity to reach the vast communities of La Grange, Buckner, Crestwood, Pewee Valley and Goshen.

Along with the column, the Era has published a Letter to the Editor featuring Real Family Church and offered a community spotlight for our various serve events throughout town.

We are grateful to the Oldham Era for being such a great neighbor to our new church and would love it if our Real Family Church family would support the Era with your subscription dollars in the coming months.

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12.24
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CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- In the month of November, we hosted our first *Open House*, as well as our *Thanksgiving Dinner*. Between those two events, we welcomed **23 first-time visitors** and received Connect Cards from 3 different individuals that stated they have **made a decision to follow Christ**. What a great time for some really great news!
- Don't forget about High Point, remember that we serve the distribution center on the **1st Saturday of each month from 9 AM—Noon**. If you would like to volunteer with us, sign your family up on the sign-up sheet found in the lobby. This month, we will be at the new location, **424 East Main Street, La Grange, KY 40031**.
- Our **Worship Team** has a great schedule planned for December, including a wonderful lineup for our Candelight Christmas Eve Service. We want to thank all the members of the team for their hard work, as well as new member, **Dylan Waddle**. There is still room for more. *If you would like to use your talent on Sunday morning (either musical or technical), contact us at matt@realfamily.church.*
- Beginning in January, Real Family Church will be preparing and serving a meal on the **4th Tuesday of each month** for **Prodigal Ministries'** men's home in Buckner. We will need volunteers for meal preparation, as well as a team to take the meal to the house and gather with the men as they dine. If you are interested in being a part of this wonderful new ministry, contact us at matt@realfamily.church
- If you have a child in our **Real Family Kids** group, be sure to check out our **Facebook Page** for information about upcoming events. The kids are working hard at their Christmas program and we want to equip you to be able to help them at home, too. For more information, contact Stacy at stacy@realfamily.church.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, December 10th 11:00 AM

Our REAL FAMILY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION is going to be an absolute joy to be a part of. Wear your ugliest Christmas Sweater (there will be a prize given), bake a tray of Christmas cookies to swap with others, and prepare for a precious treat, while our kids sing songs and an illustrated message is given by Pastor Matt for a wonderful family worship experience.

Sunday, December 24th 5:00 PM

One of our favorite family traditions is to gather for an hour of singing and worship on Christmas Eve by candlelight. Bring your family with you for the chance to celebrate this special holiday service. Each household in attendance will even receive a fresh, baked pie to add to their Christmas feast.

Childcare will be provided.

