

TAYLOR

the word in twenty-eleven



2011

church leaders consider the new year

compiled by
Dr. Terrence H. Fossen and Timothy Willson

a word from the editors

If you are like us, you paused at the beginning of 2011 to consider the opportunities and challenges ahead. The start of a new year often finds us thinking about how closely our lives reflect our priorities – perhaps even wondering if we have the right priorities. So many parts of our lives warrant this review and reflection!

In many churches, the sermons in early January remind us of the possibilities that present themselves with each new year. Church communities often take time to reflect personally and collectively on God's faithfulness in the past year, and on His promises for the new.

For the second year in a row, Taylor has invited church leaders to summarize what they have been sharing with their congregations. These New Year's messages have something significant in common – each one reminding us of the Giver of Life, the One who walks every step of life's journey with us.

May your journey in 2011 be marked with a wonderful new experience of grace.

Blessings,

Terry Fossen and Tim Willson
Taylor College and Seminary



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the word in twenty - eleven

the father's business | matt ziprick, bethel lutheran church

Luke tells an amazing story of when Jesus was lost. Well, not lost, exactly, but his parents didn't know where he was. Mary must have been thinking *"What have I done?!"*

Jesus was in the temple doing what he did so often – listening and asking questions, and he asked quite matter-of-factly, "Didn't you know that I had to be about my father's business?"

The father's business is restoration, renewal, forgiveness and freedom, but Jesus can often seem lost or, at least, *elusive* because he doesn't always work on our schedule. Jesus is often surprising, never static and predictable, but only because of our limited understanding of him and his ways.

Just as Jesus was with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, so he is often with us in the midst of our conversation and our searching for him. N.T. Wright has written about this, reminding us that we do well to search for Jesus – in the scriptures, in prayer and in the sacraments, among other places.

A good question to ask is this: *In what ways did Jesus seem elusive and surprising in 2010?* He was faithful to us in the past year, and we can be sure that he will be faithful to us in 2011. He is Immanuel, God with us, surprising us with his grace, mercy and compassion.

He invites us to join him in the Father's business, bringing freedom to the captives... and sometimes the captive is us.

Luke 2:40-52

the word in twenty-eleven

Matt Ziprick is one of the pastors at Bethel Lutheran Church in Sherwood Park, AB; Bethel is also involved in the McCauley area of downtown Edmonton. There is more to be said about Matt, but it is best learned by sharing stories over an extra large Tim Horton's, one cream, one sugar or a Starbucks triple grande, one pump caramel macchiato. matt.ziprick@bethelchurch.com

imagine! | wayne ayer, west center baptist church

Ephesians 3:20 is amazing. It says, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us."

Our challenge is to identify with the person of Jesus Christ... to know with confidence that He alone is able to give the enablement.

Together as a church we are imagining what it would be like to experience the wonder working power of God at work in each our lives and our church here at West Center. But we know that is not possible unless we begin with '*NOW UNTO HIM.*'

So we are getting into the Word of God, so that the Word of God can get into us, that we might know *HIM* and that *POWER* in our lives and church!

Oh, imagine!!!

Ephesians 3:20

the word is twenty-eleven

Wayne Ayer is lead pastor at West Center Baptist Church in Madison, SD. New to Madison, Wayne and his wife Amber share life with their two children. Wayne is known as a gifted communicator, and is excited about leading a church that is focused on developing healthy disciples.
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new beginnings | robert millman, grace christian fellowship

New Year's resolutions give evidence that we all would like something better from life. I think the tradition springs from some way humans yearn for improvement -- Life *must* be better than this! The idea of a fresh start appeals to us – everyone wants to think that something positive is ahead of us.

Jesus spoke to this most basic human need for hope in a new life in John 10:10. Physically we experience our bodies slowing down, and it seems that we are running out of potential, yet Jesus comes to say that he is the source of life. And God is all in favor of a fresh start and a new beginning (Isaiah 43:18); it's good to know that even if you don't make plans, there is still a plan. However, it's good to ask: how is it that we make a new beginning?

I found this helpful acronym on an online preaching resource that I often visit, sermoncentral.com. It's a great way to remember some important points as a new year begins: S.T.A.R.T.

- Stop Making Excuses (Prov 28:13, Prov 24:10)
- Take an Inventory of Your Life, and see where God has led (Gal 3:4)
- Act in Faith (have a positive expectancy for life -- consider the 12 spies who went into Canaan)
- Refocus your life to align it with God's purposes - this is a great part of renewal (Prov 4:23, Rom. 12:2)
- Trust; this is similar to "Act in faith" above, but John 16:33 shows the connection between trust and peace

So let us wish one another a Happy New Year, trusting that He came that we might have life more abundantly.

Isaiah 43:18

the word in twenty-eleven

Bob Millman has a mission statement that is shared by his church, Grace Christian Fellowship: Seeking, Living and Sharing New Life in Christ. Born in the UK, he is now a dedicated Edmonton Oilers fan, and is on the board of The Counselling Center, a non profit Christian counselling center making affordable counselling available to those in need. rmillman@shaw.ca

people who go, grow | dr. marc maffucci, quail lakes

We will be mobilizing our small groups and Sunday school classes in three calendar periods into what we call "Go Projects". These projects will involve a high percentage of the church family and make a significant impact in our city in terms of the needs of the poor, the migrant workers, home repair and compassionate care ministries in the name of Jesus.

These events will be used as opportunities to further create a "culture of inviters", teaching our people to share the gospel in relationships and to invite others in the community.

Our key verse for 2011 will be the Great Commission, recorded in Matthew 28. Jesus directed his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations" and we will move in obedience to that command, remembering that the passage ends with" a great promise:

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matt. 28:19-20

the word in twenty-eleven

Dr. Marc Maffucci is Senior Pastor at Quail Lakes Baptist Church in Stockton, California. He has served churches in Washington State and New York State, and has earned degrees from Western Seminary, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Houghton College. Pastor Marc is married and he and his wife have two daughters. pastormarc@qlbc.org

11 in 11 | james erb, hollyview family fellowship

It's 2011, and the number 11 is on our minds as we begin this new year of adventure. In cooperation with the Holy Spirit we will work to see 11 people enter into a relationship with Jesus in this new year.

In partnership with God, we imagine 11 people being baptized.

We will sponsor 11 events that will build community and/or prioritize those not yet here.

We are committed to 11 days of prayer as a body.

We hope to serve our community at 11 events in 2011

We dream of seeing 111 people in worship on as least 6 Sundays in 2011.

If you think about it, eleven is a big number.

Mark 16:14-15

the word isn't twenty-eleven

Jim Erb serves Hollyview Family Fellowship (NAB) in Portland, Oregon... "a friendly church" of 80-90 people. He and his wife Janet have been sweethearts since their teens, and have three grown children. Jim says his goal in life is "to be a faithful friend of Jesus and help others discover that same friendship." jameserb1@comcast.net

focusing in jesus | ken vandermeulen, thornhill baptist

With our eyes fixed intentionally on Jesus, I am casting a vision for our congregation in Calgary. It is my hope that we will make progress in three key areas in 2011.

I believe we need to focus on:

1. knowing God,
2. growing in character, and
3. caring for people

(Of course, we need to be better at demonstrating care for people across the aisle and across the street, as well as those around the world.)

Rom. 12:9-18

the word isn't twenty-eleven



Ken VanderMeulen has been serving as pastor of Thornhill Baptist Church in Calgary, AB for 11 years. He is married to Kara, and they have three "fabulous" children: James, Peter and Renee. Ken loves to read and to run (his personal best half-marathon time is 98 minutes, but he dreams of getting that down to 90 minutes some day). kvmeulen@telus.net | www.pastorken.yolasite.com

vine and branches | jeremy putz, central baptist church

Our theme verse for this year is John 15:5: "I am the vine and you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

SUCH a powerful reminder that when we are disconnected from Jesus there is zero chance for anything of lasting value to come of our lives. But when we are connected Jesus says we will bear much lasting fruit, the fullness of God's blessing in our lives.

As we dug into this chapter in the fall we realized in a simple yet powerful way that fruit has seeds. When God gives fruit it's awesome, it's juicy, it's delicious, but he also puts right in the middle of the fruit the potential for SO much more fruit. He blesses us to the point of overflowing, enough to share around. He blesses us with eternal reward, secure identity as the chosen friends of God, fulfillment, purpose, complete joy, perfect love...really all the things for which every person in the world deeply longs.

So may we be those who remain in Jesus this year by loving each other as he has loved us, and may we be those who live in the fullness of his blessing, so full that it spills to those around us in the world.

Yes, Father, may it be...

John 15:5

the word in twenty-eleven



Jeremy Putz is Senior Pastor at Central Baptist Church in Edmonton, AB, and is an alumnus of Taylor Seminary. www.centralbaptist.ab.ca | jeremyputz@gmail.com

servant saints | jason shine, mid-west baptist association

The time for the church to be a people set apart, completely different than the world around them is now. We should look different! We should love, serve, give, live selflessly.

If we do the world will notice. If we do not the world will continue to assume that what we have is not of any significance to them the way they now do.

Will you be different? Will you be a practitioner of what God considers true religion or will you just be another fake?

James 1:27

the word isn't twenty-eleven

Jason Shine is Campus Ministry Director with the Mid-West Baptist Association in Edmonton, AB, serving with them as a chaplain at the U of A. He can be reached at jshine@ualberta.ca

the largeness of grace | john van sloten, new hope

I never make New Year's resolutions, but this year I did. (God is gracious and ever kind and forgiving!) My resolution was to stop being such a control freak... To stop checking my email every ten minutes, to stop checking Facebook and my other online services (to see if anyone loves me!)... to stop having to push so aggressively into something to make it happen -- I am notorious for that. I do not need to play God in terms of how it all plays out! And neither do you.

To wrest control from God is to sin against Him. To claim to be the one who gets anything done in your life is to forget that *all that you are* and *all that you accomplish* are His, and subject to His Holy and divine will. But God empowers and supports those with a heart that is 100% dependant on His grace to sustain and keep and save, and 100% resolved to do what is right and to make the hard choices.

God wants you to live out of the largeness of his grace before you think you need it... in response to having been met by it... so that before you need it again, you're living in that place.

So, make your resolutions! Set the bar high, high, high, for He is holy, holy, holy. And understand that you make them by the grace of God, before the face of God who made all things, who whispered you and breathed you into being, and has given you any capacity you have to do anything in life.

And then, with all of your heart and soul and mind and strength, pledge to follow Him, the God who has given us all things.

Proverbs 16:9

the word in twenty-eleven

John van Sloten is senior pastor of New Hope Church in Calgary, AB. He is known for his teaching of scripture using cultural icons – and his sermon “The Day Metallica Came to Church” led to a book of the same name which is generating a lot of interest. johnvs@newhopechurch.ca

be loved, do love | ryan sato, first baptist church (edm)

As we embark on the year 2011, I'm inviting our congregation to reflect on two movements of the "Loved Life."

The first is "THE BE-LOVED LIFE." In Matthew 3:17 we read: "This is my son, the BELOVED, with whom I am well pleased." Isn't this the voice that we long to hear? We might need to set some time aside to actually hear this voice anew; and that's why it's so important that we be a church that is a community for spiritual formation, because embracing our belovedness in all its fullness is a long, slow, journey. When we take time to listen to God, whether it be in a time of silence, solitude, meditating on scriptures, singing a spiritual song, joining in on a prayer, practicing Sabbath. . . these are places where we can hear anew the voice of God.

Now, lest you think that I'm a contemplative pastor who doesn't think action is important, there is a second movement to the "Loved Life". . . and I'm calling it the "do-loved" life. Jesus lived and ministered from a place of belovedness. We are called to live and minister from this same place of belovedness. This is "THE DO-LOVED LIFE."

What does this look like? Isaiah 42:6-7 presents it to us as acts of "gentle justice." You and I are called, invited, and urged to do something in the midst of being God's beloved: we're called to gently move into places and faithfully bring forth justice.

As a new year begins, take time to hear the voice of the community of the Triune God saying: "This is my daughter. . . This is my son. . . the BELOVED, with whom I am well pleased." Then be empowered by this same community of the Trinity to "do love" in the name of Jesus.

Matthew 3:17

the word in twenty-eleven

Rev. Dr. Ryan Sato is the Senior Minister at First Baptist Church, Edmonton, AB. He is learning with the people of First Baptist of what it looks like when the church pays attention to the "journey inward"- "journey outward" movements of spiritual formation. May God's will be done in Edmonton as it is in heaven! ryan@fbcedmonton.ca

hungering, thirsting | curtis reimer, college heights

At College Heights Baptist Church we are beginning this new year with a study of 'The Sermon on the Mount' from Matthew 5-7. Our key thought at the beginning of 2011 is around the idea of 'hungering and thirsting for righteousness.'

We will approach the Easter season by examining the heart of our King and listening to Him unfold the ambitions, character, priorities, and many blessings of life in His kingdom.

The series is titled "Counter-Culture Christianity" and my prayer is that the Holy Spirit will call us out of conformity to the world and make us more like Christ.

Long ago, Charles Spurgeon wrote that "*the way to rise in the kingdom is to sink in ourselves.*" My desire is that each of us would be willing to lose out on the treasures of this world to inherit the eternal riches of God that can never perish, spoil, or fade.

Matthew 5:6

the word is twenty-eleven



Curtis Reimer began to serve at College Heights Baptist Church in Prince George, BC in 1998; in 2007, he was invited to become senior pastor. He and his wife Susan are proud parents of Micah and Hope. Curtis says his passion in life is "to know Jesus as intimately as possible and become more and more like Him with each passing day." curtis@mychbc.ca

loving God and neighbour | lyle buyer, mckernan

As we begin 2011, I am continuing a series in the book of James entitled, *"Loving God & Neighbour... in the Real World."* At McKernan Baptist Church, we always launch our ministry year in September, and our theme for 2010-2011 is *"Love God - Love Your Neighbour"* taken from Matthew 22:36-40.

We want to explore:

- * what it means to understand and embrace God's love for us. I believe this is a key part of loving our neighbour "as ourselves."
- * what it means to love God in response to His love. I believe this is essentially a call to simply surrender to His trustworthy plans, purposes and direction for our lives.
- * what it means to love our neighbour. This involves our geographic neighbour (our city and neighbourhood), our relational neighbour (those we have relationships with) and our global neighbour.

Also, in 2011, we are involved in an intentional process of planning and seeking God's direction in regard to our aging facilities and would appreciate the prayer of the broader Christian community.

Matthew 22:36-40

the word isn't twenty-eleven



Lyle Buyer wrote to us from the Seattle airport, but he spends most of his time in Edmonton's lovely McKernan neighbourhood where he has served as pastor (McKernan Baptist) since 1993. He is an alumnus of Taylor (then NABC), and this is where he met and fell in love with Jeannie; they have been making music (and four children) together ever since. lyle@mckernanbaptist.ca

overflowing humility | mike freeman, lifeway church

As a youth pastor, I'm responsible for fostering the spiritual transformation of our children. For that to happen, I've come to realize that one of the most vital components is the degree to which we as adults engage those who are young. We don't have a lack of love for teens and children -- quite the opposite! But my wish is that there would be *an overflowing humility* between the generations.

In 1 Peter, the apostle describes the role of an elder in the church, asking us to care for those who are younger in their faith. Three things are outlined:

1. No compulsion (*"not because you have to"*). Peter describes Jesus' suffering and death (as well as his own), and insists that what really matters is what we pass on to others.
2. Not what we get out of it (*"not for ...gain"*). Work with youth is always about how we can *give*.
3. Not domineering (*"being an example to the flock"*). We don't lead by force, but by example.

For our church to grow great, we need to be full of adults who are looking for ways to invest in young people. Teens can be part of this overflowing humility by learning to follow the lead of adults. *Who is being faithful? Who is pursuing Christ?* Follow their example! Ask questions – find out why things are done the way they are; people are always willing to share and teach from their experience.

Transformation begins when adults turn their eyes toward the young, continues when young people are teachable, and it overflows when everyone clothes themselves in humility.

1 Peter 5:1-4

the word isn't twenty-eleven

Mike Freeman is the pastor of youth ministries at Lifeway Church in Federal Way, WA. A graduate of the University of Washington, he says his real education came through serving and being mentored in ministry during that time. He recently earned an MDiv from Multnomah, is married to Jessica, and they have a son, Jayden, and a daughter, Michella. mfreeman@lifewayconnect.com

with us & for us | lawrence schmidt, renaissance

At the outset of 2011 we continue to reflect on a theme given to us earlier in the previous year:

*God is with us;
God is for us;
We are changed...*

These three simple lines speak to His continual presence in our lives (*Matthew 28:20*), His inexhaustible grace and favor toward us (*1 John 1:9*), and His ability and desire to transform us (*2 Corinthians 3:17-18*).

The topics on Sunday mornings vary considerably, but our theme serves to remind us that when we follow Christ – while we may face set-backs – He is still at work in our lives. Not only is He at work, He actually desires to be our friend and through His closeness we are changed.

This theme points towards hope during times when we mistakenly believe that our Christian lives may “not be working”. It’s a theme meant to be pursued corporately, as we reflect together on the power and grace of the cross and His victory over sin.

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Romans 8:31

the word isn't twenty-eleven



Lawrence Schmidt is pastor of Renaissance Community Church (Edmonton), and has a background in environmental consulting. He has a BA (Trinity Western) and is a Taylor Seminary student (MA in Theological Studies). He is married (to Rosalind), has 3 children and enjoys sports; he dreams of one day surfing a big wave. lawrence@renaissancechurch.ca | www.renaissancechurch.ca

index

<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PG</u>
Ayer, Wayne	West Center Baptist	Madison, SD	Imagine!	4
Buyer, Lyle*	McKernan Baptist Church	Edmonton, AB	Loving God & Neighbour	14
Erb, James	Hollyview Family Fellowship	Portland, OR	11 in '11	7
Freeman, Mike	Lifeway Church	Federal Way, WA	Overflowing Humility	15
Maffucci, Marc	Quail Lakes Baptist	Stockton, CA	People Who Go, Grow	6
Millman, Robert*	Grace Christian Fellowship	Edmonton, AB	New Beginnings	5
Putz, Jeremy*	Central Baptist Church	Edmonton, AB	Vine and Branches	9
Reimer, Curtis*	College Heights Baptist	Prince George, BC	Hungering, Thirsting	13
Sato, Ryan	First Baptist Church	Edmonton, AB	Be Loved, Do Love	12
Schmidt, Lawrence*	Renaissance Community	Edmonton, AB	With Us & For Us	16
Shine, Jason	Mid-West Baptist Association	Edmonton, AB	Servant Saints	10
van Sloten, John	New Hope Church	Calgary, AB	Largeness of Grace	11
VanderMeulen, Ken*	Thornhill Baptist Church	Calgary, AB	Focusing on Jesus	8
Ziprick, Matt	Bethel Lutheran Church	Sherwood Park, AB	The Father's Business	3

**denotes a former/current Taylor Seminary student*



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