

# MERRY CHRISTMAS!

2025





MARANATHA ASSEMBLY

### **HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET**

We hope this little book can be a blessing to you in the days ahead. In it you will find: "A Look Back and A Look Ahead" where Pastor Cam shares some of the highlights from this past year and a brief glimpse into where God is leading us in 2026; a reminder and question in a blog written titled, "Who Is God?" based on our Christmas series this year; a guide for how to take "Family Communion"; and a copy of "The Christmas Story" from Luke 2:1-20 to read on Christmas morning.

We pray this Christmas season with your friends and family is beautiful, full of joy, laughter, and encouragement as you remember the reason for the season

God bless and Merry Christmas!

The Team at Maranatha

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# A LOOK BACK A LOOK AHEAD



### A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK AHEAD

#### **PASTOR CAM**

2024 was our year of believing and trusting that God is far more able than we could ever imagine - and it perfectly prepared us for 2025, our year of Overflow. We've experienced God's power moving among us in incredible ways. Last year He gave us the vision; this year we've been living it out. It's thrilling to look back at all He's done and to see the momentum as we step forward together:

- **1. HIRING OUR NEXTGEN PASTOR** After years of prayer and more than a year of searching, Pastor Emily Foster joined us. She's already leading our Kids and Youth ministries with grace and vision. This is the first big step in building our "NextGen Foundation"- what a blessing!
- **2. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPROVED** The county fully approved our permit to build the Equipping & Training Center (E.T.C.)! This 3,500 sq ft addition will bring everything to one level, increase seating to over 165, and give us separate bathrooms for kids and adults. We're actively planning to break ground in 2026.
- **3. DISCIPLES MAKING DISCIPLES** We added 3 new discipleship groups this year, and now 40% of our church family is growing deeper in faith and reaching the lost together. The stories coming out of these groups are powerful.
- **4. NEW & RENEWED** We've grown over 20%, welcoming new families and seeing God call some longtime friends back to Maranatha. It's been beautiful watching new believers come to faith, get connected, and become vital parts of our family.
- **5. Overflowing Generosity** You blew away every giving goal this year -both in tithes/offerings and Kingdom Builders (missions). Because of your faithfulness, we blessed local teachers with coffee and donuts, provided Thanksgiving dinners for 15 families, did a week long VBS ministry that raised over \$1500 for a local food pantry, ministered to our community through "Light The Night", added new missionaries, increased support for longtime partners, and raised over \$80K toward the E.T.C. As a church we also give 10% of every gift towards Kingdom Builders. Together we all have given over \$125K, and counting, to Kingdom Builders! Praise God!

God is moving, and we're just getting started. This has been a year of Overflow! But we're excited for what comes next. Our team has been praying over 2026, and sensed a clear word from the Lord: He's doing a brand-new thing. Throughout Scripture, Heaven's wind brings miracles, renewal, revival, and transformation (Mark 2:2, Acts 2:2, 1 Samuel 10:6, Isaiah 43:19, Revelation 21:5, etc.). The Lord spoke to me saying "Cam I want to bring a fresh wind in 2026. People being made brand new, their lives completely changed and an outpouring of the Spirit that brings about maturity, depth, and transformation within people." We're believing God for this **Fresh Wind** in 2026, and we can't wait to see all He will do!



ACTS 1:8 SHALL RECEIVE



ACTS 2:2 THERE CAME A SOUND FROM HEAVEN, A MIGHTY

# RUSHING WIND

THEN THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

WILL
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# WHO IS GOD?

This Christmas season, we've been on a journey together to answer the most important question any of us will ever face: Who is God?



## WHO IS GOD?

#### **PASTOR CAMERON WARD**

This Christmas season, we've been on a journey together to answer the most important question any of us will ever face: Who is God?

A. W. Tozer once wrote, "What comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you." How we see God shapes everything, our peace, our hope, our joy, the way we face trials and celebrate victories.

In Exodus 3, when Moses asked God His name, the Lord didn't give a simple title. He said, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). I imagine hearing this Moses felt a little bit like "ok, and that is?" Luckily God continued, "The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob... This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations" (Exodus 3:15).

When God didn't leave Himself as just "I AM" but appealed personally to Moses saying "The God of **your** fathers" of "Abraham" "Isaac" and "Jacob", it went beyond the distant, unknowable, completely other into a personal, knowable God. The revelation of God's name shows us wants to be known - not just known about, but truly known. And He tells us exactly how: look at who I have been to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. Look at My eternal nature. Look at My Son.

#### The God Who Is

God is. This is a complete sentence even though it feels like more needs to be added. He is the great "I AM." He is eternal, without beginning or end. He is the uncreated Creator who spoke everything into existence out of nothing. He is. He is unlimited in every way. Unlimited in knowledge, presence, power, you name it. He is utterly unique, completely holy, and yet wonderfully understandable. We don't have to guess who God is. He has shown us. And the most important thing in all eternity is that we know Him, not just know about Him (John 17:3).

The God of Abraham: The Father Who Is Faithful When God calls Himself the God of Abraham, He reveals Himself as the faithful Father. Abraham's name means "father of a multitude," yet for decades he and Sarah remained childless. God promised the impossible (a nation from an elderly, barren couple) and asked only one thing: "Walk before Me."

Twenty-five long years passed. Abraham faced the facts, looked up at the countless stars, and chose to trust the God who "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Romans 4:17). God kept His word. Isaac was born. The same God who was faithful to Abraham is faithful to us. Every promise He has made is anchored in His unchanging nature. Forgiveness, peace, eternal life, strength for today, are all promises upheld by His power. He is the God who can make it happen. Our job? We walk in faith, hope-filled steps of obedience. Face the facts, don't pretend things are different than they are, its acknowledging reality that allows you to acknowledge the miracle. Praise Him despite the circumstances and allow Him to bring you peace that surpasses understanding.

### WHO IS GOD?

#### CONTINUED

The God of Isaac: The Holy Spirit Who Is Joy

Isaac's name means "laughter." When God calls Himself the God of Isaac, He declares, "I am the God of joy!" Isaac's mom, Sarah laughed in disbelief when she heard she would bear a child in old age. But a year later, she laughed again, this time in amazement as she held her son . "God has made me laugh," she said, "and all who hear will laugh with me" (Genesis 21:6).

God loves to turn sorrow into dancing, mourning into gladness (Psalm 30:11). He delights to do the unexpected, to bring life where everything seemed barren. And the source of this lasting, contagious joy is the Holy Spirit Himself.

The angels proclaimed "good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10). The kingdom of God is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). When we receive God, we receive joy.

The God of Jacob: The Son Who Is Salvation

Some of us know Jacob as the deceiver, the liar, but his name means the "heel-catcher." Jacob had a history of holding onto people and not letting go until he received a blessing. At his birth he grasped at his brother's heel, as a grown man he wrestled with God all night and would not let go until he was blessed. Jacob's life was often messy, yet God redeemed it all.

In Jacob we see a picture of Christ: the heel that would crush the serpent's head while being struck itself (Genesis 3:15). Jesus took on flesh, lived the life we could not live, died the death we deserved, and rose victorious. Jacob's name also hints at 'supplanter', one who takes another's place. And that's exactly what Christ did for us. He took our place, exchanged our mess for His glory. Now you and I are invited to grab at the heel of Christ and not let go. When we do the God of peace crushes the enemy under our feet (Romans 16:20).

Cling to Jesus with everything you have. Stop grasping, scheming, trying, and striving. Lay it all at the cross, and hold on to Him alone for new life.

#### The God Who Is With Us

This is the God who stepped into our story in Bethlehem. Eternal, yet born as a baby. Unlimited, yet lying in a manger. Holy, yet touching lepers and sinners. The great I AM became "God with us." This is how He desires to be remembered forever, Father, Spirit, and Son – three in one, the great I AM. The God who keeps every promise, who fills us with joy, saves to the uttermost, and who is with us.

Don't settle for knowing about Him. Receive Him. Walk with Him. Laugh with Him. Cling to Him. He has made Himself known. Will we know Him in return?

Trust Him, He is faithful. Receive Him, He is joy. Cling to Him, He is salvation.

Know Him, He is with us.

PASTOR CAMERON WARD





# A NOTE FROM PASTOR EMILY





## A NOTE FROM PASTOR EMILY

Hi Everyone,

I'm so excited and blessed to be your NextGen Pastor at Maranatha. Even though I just started in October this year, these past few months have already been such a joy. I've loved getting to know your kids and youth, and I'm so thankful for you, the parents, for everything you do – loving your children, bringing them to church, and letting me be a part of their lives. It really means so much to me.

The best part of Christmas isn't a present under a tree. The greatest gift is Jesus, God's Son, who came to show us His love and to be with us forever. That is what we get to celebrate together, and it's what makes this season so special.

I'm really looking forward to spending more time with your kids and youth, going to camps and events, encouraging them in their walk with God, and being part of their lives. I can't wait to laugh, learn, and grow alongside them and see all the ways God is working in their hearts.

I hope this Christmas fills your homes with joy, your hearts with peace, and your lives with the love of Jesus, the greatest gift we could ever receive.

Merry Christmas y'all!

Pastor Emily NextGen Pastor







### THE CHRISTMAS STORY

#### **READ LUKE 2:1-20**

"I In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

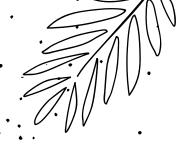
15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

New International Version

#### **PRAY**

Example: "God, thank you for these gifts we are about to open. May they be a reminder that we have already received the greatest gift of all. As we find joy in seeing people open gifts we have given them, may it give us boldness to spread the word about Jesus everywhere to everyone sharing with them the greatest gift our world has ever known.



# **†** FAMILY COMMUNION





Looking at communion from a Biblical perspective, it was not conducted in the same manner as it is often received in churches today. Communion took place during the large Sunday gathering, as well as any time believers gathered for a meal. The Church's intention was to frequently come together with other believers over a meal, to recount the story of what Christ had done for them, was doing in them, and all He had promised to do through them! It was a time of remembrance but also a time of fellowship. This Christmas gather for meal as a family and possibly even invite a friend or another family to join you. During the meal, partake in communion together, share, laugh, and enjoy each other's company.

In His presence, there is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11), so as you gather, joy should be the guiding emotion of the moment. Below is a simple guide to assist you as you take communion as a group. I encourage the head of your household to lead this moment.

#### **GUIDE**

- 1. SHARE Share a praise of what God has done for you. Thinking on and answering these questions can get conversation going: What does Jesus' sacrifice mean to you? Why are you thankful for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus? How has Jesus changed your life? What are you thankful to God for?
- 2. READ Read Scripture together. I usually read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 in the NIV. It's a simple read, get your Bible and have someone read the passage.
- 3. PRAY OVER THE BREAD Thank God for Jesus' perfect life, and the new life He has given to us. Example:

"God, thank you for sending Jesus to show me how to live a new way. You've exchanged my failures for your perfection. Your grace has given me new life so like Jesus I can honor you in every thing I do."

4. PRAY OVER THE CUP - Thank God for Jesus' sacrifice which has made atonement for our sin as a witness to all creation of God's grace. Example:

"God, thank you for the sacrifice of Jesus which has made me whole and Holy! You gave your Son for me, Jesus willingly gave His life for me, and now you've given your Spirit to live in me! I have gone from sinner to saint because of your grace and love. Thank you, God!"

5. CLOSING PRAYER - Lead your family, or group, in a prayer of thanksgiving. Example:

"God, we are so thankful for all you have done. We remember your sacrifice, your perfect life, and the new life we now have through Christ. Help us to remember your grace every day, to know you and make you known to everyone, everywhere. Amen."

## **NOTES:**

Use this page to jot down special memories trom this Christmas season. Write down the words or verses that keep repeating to you, and keep these notes as a reminder for the 21-Day Fast beginning in January.	



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