



Daniel's Article

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds...' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them..." Genesis 1:26-32 Life 101

Genesis 1:1, this one very simple grammatical structure, contains the most foundational, fundamental, profound, revolutionary, and extraordinary words ever recorded. All other realities hinge on the truthfulness of this statement. Either a personal God created a personal universe and revealed that truth to us, or we are the byproducts of impersonal forces such as chance and time with no rhyme or reason for our being. Even if scientists could explain how we came into existence apart from a Creator, they could never answer the more important truth, "why?" "In the beginning God..." portrays a transcendent being, One that resides beyond time and space. "In the beginning God created" portrays a God who alone takes credit for the existence of time and space. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" portrays a God who takes credit for the whole of the creation, every part of it originates from Him and apart from Him nothing of our universe would exist. What is quite striking about this creation emerges in its contrast to our own creative works. Humans are creative creatures (notice the ironic, intentional dual use of the root word "create." in this sentence). We create out of what already exists. We make houses out of existent materials. We make cars by manipulating materials available to us from within the earth. As impressive as an artist or engineer might be in their ability to "create" new artwork or products, this verse ramps up the creative ability exponentially or even better, infinitely. God creates all that exists out of nothing. "In the beginning" before there was time, God spoke into the nothingness and made everything. "And God said let there be light" reveals the effortlessness required for divine transcendence and infinitude to make all things. The beauty of the creation reveals His wisdom and knowledge. The expanse of the creation reveals His power and ubiquity. Though He is everywhere present within this universe, the universe cannot contain God. From this one sentence, this opening statement of the

Bible, comes the most profound and important statement in the Bible. If God did not create the heavens and the earth, then nothing else stated in the Bible matters. If, on the other hand, the first verse of Genesis is true, then the force of the rest of the Bible rushes over us in successive waves of fear and awe. The existence of a personal God clearly impacts our prayer life. If there is no God, or if God is an impersonal force simply acting on an impersonal universe, then prayer is little more than a silly exercise, a child's game intended to keep the participants distracted from the cataclysmic reality of a meaningless life. We pray because we believe God exists. We pray because we believe He made us. We pray because we believe He cares. A God who can speak the universe into existence has the power to make my life matter. He has knowledge and understanding of all my triumphs and failures. He has the wisdom to direct my life. As the author of this verse, He has the capacity and the desire to communicate truth to me. God continues His creative work in sustaining us. Every breath we take is a gift from the One who made us. Our Creator, Sustainer wants us to pray to Him. He longs for us to fellowship with Him by sharing our hopes and dreams, our fears and disappointments, our struggles and victories. Not because He is unaware of these details, but because the act of sharing with Him draws us into a closer fellowship with Him.

The Nature of People

The most fundamental truth of Scripture is that there is an all-sufficient, all-powerful God who created everything. Another foundational truth of Scripture is that humanity holds a unique position within the creation as part of God's divine plan. The six days of creation in Genesis 1 come to a culmination in the personal work of making men and women. This is ironic, given the significant size advantage that the sun, moon and stars possess over humans, given the height advantage most trees have over people, given the speed and agility advantage of many animals over humans, and given the sheer beauty resident within flowers, sunsets, mountains, and rivers and oceans. All of the created expanse, power, and beauty are subjected to this one creature – to humans. We are made "like" God. There is much literature in theological circles speculating on the nature of this "likeness" or "image" of God ("Imago Dei" in

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Latin). The impersonal tone of the creation prior to the creation of people presents the physical universe in instrumental terms. Sun, moon and stars shine, fish swim, birds fly, etc. God creates these objects with tasks, connecting their worth exclusively to what they do. Men and women have been created as image bearers, to reflect the nature of God in the way they relate to Him and in the way they relate to the rest of creation. Because of this, humanity bears both instrumental and inherent value. Instrumental value meaning the value in an object based on what it can do. Inherent value meaning the value in something or someone based on what or who they are. Humans possess instrumental value – "rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky..." However, God imparts inherent value into each individual, value based on who we are, not on what we can do. Our own sense of worth hangs in the balance at this point. We are not even out of the first chapter of Genesis and all worldviews, all understandings of the nature of God and the nature of humanity culminate in this truth, that God has imparted to human hearts a unique intrinsic value or worth. No human scheme can destroy your intrinsic value. God, in His eternal, divine plan gave you infinite value that comes not from what you can do, but from your connection to your Creator. He made you in His image, a transcendent gift that takes breaks through the mundane and valueless madness that so often pervades our daily experience. The culture assaults this intrinsic worth with attempts to get us to trade our value found in our unique relationship with God. The trade offer from the world is to entice us to live as if we had only instrumental value, in other words to live like the rest of the creation, the creation humans were to subdue. Instrumental valued living involves a life based on what makes us feel good or what we can do that makes us feel valuable or what entertains us. When these types of transient (temporary) values dominate the reality of our inherent value is diminished. It is true that God has given us tasks to accomplish, pleasures to enjoy, and gifts to use. However, these gifts function as an extension of who we are in God. It is out of our unique relationship to Him that these instrumental gifts bring us joy and bring Him honor. This passage provides help for the despairing heart, a heart that feels useless, worthless, or purposeless. We are not like the birds or trees or stars which are pure matter, soulless beauty, functioning impersonally at the command of their maker. God created us in His own image, in a unique relationship to Him. We have value because the God of creation has made us in His infinitely valuable image. Your worth is contingent on God and your relationship to Him. Your worth is not dependent upon yourself and what you can do. God loves you and He has created you in a unique relationship to Himself. You bear His image.

~ Daniel

Grace on Display



Christmas season is here and as has been our tradition in years past, we would like to provide gifts for all of the children in the orphanage. The current political situation in Mexico, the import/export tax law requirements and the time restraints, necessitate that this be completed a little differently than in years past. Therefore, we are requesting monetary donations for the purchase of gifts for the children. Gifts and clothing will be purchased in Mexico to insure appropriate fit and style.

If this is something you would like to participate in, please drop your offering in an envelope marked "Grace Christmas." *In order to get the monies to the orphanage in time, we are requesting that all gifts be given by Dec. 14th.

Children's Ministry

Wednesday Nights, for kids ages 3* - 6th grade.

*3 year olds in Cubbies must be potty trained, and have turned 3 by Sept. 1st. A parent must stay on campus through the duration of the program. See our website to see what Adult Bible Study classes we have for you.



Sunday Afternoon, for kids from 7th - 12th grade.

TREK/Journey is for students in Jr. High and High School to continue AWANA. See our website to see what Adult Bible Study classes we have for you. 7th - 12th grade AWANA meets on Sundays from 4:00pm - 5:30pm.



Awana December Emphasis: Penny drive for Grand Prairie Santa Cop. Monies raised will be used to purchase items to donate to Santa Cop. Questions? Please see your Awana Leader or Brittany.



We will continue through the Gospel Project on Sunday mornings at 9:45am throughout the fall! Don't miss a Sunday hearing the Gospel presented throughout the entirety of the Bible.



**Sunday Nights
5:30pm
Front Lawn of
Worship Center**

MD² is for kids in kindergarten through 6th grade. Join us for games on the lawn (weather permitting) followed by small group boys and girls Bible study groups. Our Christmas series is called "Places". You won't want to miss this study on some of the important places during the time of our Savior's birth. Will you make room for Him this Christmas?



The Children's Ministry families will be serving at the Mission Arlington Christmas store on Monday, December 22 from 10am-12pm. We will meet at the drop-off center in the back lot of Mission Arlington at 9:45am to walk over to the store together. Volunteers will be stocking shelves, helping people shop, and helping with gift wrapping. Contact Brittany at brittany@matthewroad.org if you are able to attend!

Lottie Moon Offering



WEEK OF PRAYER FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS AND THE LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING
November 30 - December 7

When our church partners with the International Mission Board and gives to the Lottie Moon offering, missionaries are able to share the gospel with unreached people groups, train believers to start new churches, assist in the planting of new churches, show Christ's love to those in distress, and, most importantly, work to spread the Kingdom of God. According to IMB's 2013 Annual Statistical Report, our missionaries shared the gospel with 1.7 million people, trained 23,000 nationals to start new churches and helped plant 6,200 churches. While those statistics are exciting, there are still 4 billion people who remain lost. More giving will allow IMB to send more missionaries so that more people are reached for Christ! Let's join in one sacred effort by praying for our international missionaries and giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Wednesday Night Dinner Ministry



December 10th:

Special Wednesday Night Dinner sponsored by the Youth Department

Pizza!

\$1.00 per slice

\$10 per whole pizza (*preordered)

Pepperoni and Cheese Pizzas Available

****Please email the church office by Tuesday at 4pm to place your preorder.***
To RSVP your attendance, but not preorder, please email the church office at christy@matthewroad.org no later than 10:00am, Wednesday Morning.

We will return with Wednesday Night Dinners in January. Thank you for your continued support!

Student Ministry

Check out the Student Ministry Events & Activities coming soon!

- December 10th -** Youth are doing dinner for church! 4:00pm-6:00pm
- December 19th -** Christmas Party at a the Macons 7:00pm-9:30pm
- December 20th -** Small Group Leadership Training 1pm-8pm @ Common Grounds
- December 22nd -** All Family Serve day at Mission Arlington, contact Brittany Harley
- December 24th -** No Collide (Christmas Eve services at 5pm & 7pm)
- December 29th -** Youth Serve Day (Mission Arlington/Ice Skating) 8am-1:00pm
\$5 Ice Skating, Breakfast and Lunch on students
- December 31st -** No Collide, No New Years Party

Bible studies:

***All Bible studies are on till December 15th, and will take a break from December 22nd til January 3rd**

- High School Guys (9th - 12th) - @ the Geisnedorffs, Mondays, 6:30pm, led by Seniors
- High School Girls (9th - 12th)- @ Christine Wehrli & Maggie Dean's, Thursdays, 6:30pm, led by Christine & Maggie
- Middle School Guys (7th, 8th & 9th) - @Kings, Mondays, 6:30pm, led by Andrew Snyder
- Middle School Guys (7th & 8th) - @ Ms. Shirley's, Tuesdays, 6pm-8pm, led by Chris Hines
- Middle School Girls (7th & 8th) - @ the West's, Mondays 6:00pm-7:00pm, led by Madi Snowden
- Athletes Guys Bible Study - @ MRBC, Mondays, 6:00pm, led by Nic Russo & Jared Scott

Gift Basket Silent Auction



Join us Sunday morning, December 14th, as we have a silent auction of gift baskets, raising monies for medical supplies.

Items for bid will be located in the Fellowship Hall during Morning Services and Bible Studies.

We need your help to make this a successful event! Please bring your basket to the church office December 10th - 12th, or Sunday morning, December 14th. We have listed below some great ideas for basket themes, but you can be as creative and original as you'd like! If anyone needs help in "wrapping it up"...putting cellophane and ribbon, Mary Beth Gunderson can assist - just bring your basket, with a card (to include who donated it, retail value, and contents and any other detail). If baskets need to be wrapped up they need to be at the church office before Friday Dec. 12th, otherwise, just bring "ready" basket to the church by 8:00am. Mary Beth will have bid sheets ready to attach to each item. Questions? Please contact Mary Beth at 469-358-3566.

Some ideas for themed baskets:

Chocolate basket... all things chocolate

Work out basket...membership to a club/YMCA, water bottle, maybe a pedometer

Fishing outing...someone with a boat will take you fishing, dates and place tbd

Christmas decorations...lights, tinsel, ornaments, table decor

Green thumb...gardening gloves, seeds, books, knee protectors, plants/bulbs, etc all in clay pot.

Automotive...gift cards for oil change, gas & auto zone, car wash accessories/ all in a bucket

Kitchen gadgets...cookbook, holiday kitchen towel, chip clips, potholders, measuring cups/spoons

Comfort...hot cocoa, devotional books/journal,mug,blanket/throw

***TIP* Be creative with your "base/container".... use baskets, bowls, buckets, flower pots, pans, colander, toy box, dog bed, turkey platter, dessert platter, storage box, laundry basket.**

Music Ministry

"The Music of Christmas" will be presented during our morning worship services on Sunday, December 7th. Our children's choir & drama team will join our adult choir and praise band as we present a fresh look at the Christmas story.



In addition to the favorite Christmas songs, we will feature songs by Keith & Kristyn Getty, John Rutter and Chris Tomlin. You won't want to miss this special time of worship as we kickoff the Christmas Season at Matthew Road!

~ Jeff

Come join one of our choirs!

♪ Adult choir rehearsals meet Wednesday nights at 6:30pm, in the sanctuary.

♪ Proclamation Youth Choir meets Wednesday nights, at 5:45pm in the choir room.

♪ The Children's Choir meets Wednesday nights, at 6:00pm, on the 2nd floor of the education building.

PAW Spring



Preschool Academy of Westchester (PAW) is a quality preschool program for children ages 9 months - 5 years old.

Your children will enjoy their classroom activities planned around our curriculum, "Wee Learn" (published by LifeWay). At our program, your child will learn about sharing, healthy living, academics, music, American Sign Language, the Bible, manners, cooperation and giving. It is a time for both you

and your children to enjoy.

Schedule: We are a Monday & Wednesday preschool. Our hours are 9am - 2pm.

Tuition and Fees: Tuition is \$130.00 per month. There is an annual supply fee of \$75.00 (prorated if enrolling during the school year) and a registration fee of \$35.00 (non-refundable). Supply and registration fees are due upon enrollment. (Sibling discounts are available.)

Pease call Cyndi King, at 972-641-7380, for more information.

Enroll now for the Spring Semester!!!

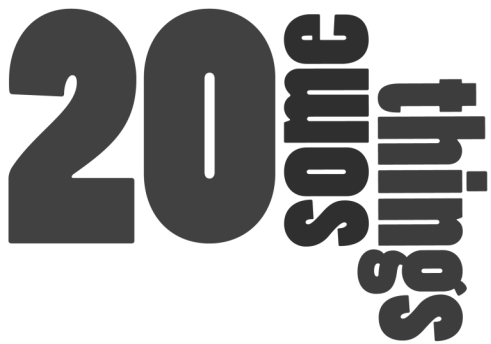
20Somethings

What's up		
December 10 & 17th - Study break after bible study - 9:30 to 12:00 am; Common Grounds; snacks to be provided	Free	
January 20th - Alley Cats	\$10	
February 15th - Ice Skating 6:00pm (see Madi)	TBA	
February 27 - 28 Equip Conference in San Antonio (see Rachel)	\$60.00	
March - TBA	TBA	
April - 17 Retreat at Riverbend (See Rachel)	\$50.00	
May - Top Golf (See Madi)	\$10.00	

REGULAR SCHEDULE

Bible Study
Sunday:
9:45AM - II Corinthians;
The Book of Acts
Ed Bldg
5:30PM - Snack/Prophets as
Preachers
Fellowship Hall

Discipleship Wednesday:
8:30PM - Common Grounds
Attributes of God and
why do they matter



Matthew Road Academy



Matthew Road Academy is now accepting resumes for the 2015-2016 school year. MRA is a growing Christian two day a week university model school for 3rd-12th grade on Tuesday/Thursday.

Teachers work in their field of subject for 1-6 class hours per school day.

The Academy supplies the curriculum, the teacher prepares their syllabus. This is a perfect position for a retired teacher or someone who has left the field, but would love working part time. Pay is competitive. Interested teachers must have classroom experience, preferred certification present/past and/or a degree in their field of study, and be active in their church. Please contact Candice McClellin at mracademy@att.net or 469-261-3779.

Grace has a Name

Grace has a Name will provide an intentional opportunity for individuals and families to experience the truth of Christmas. During a the busiest time of the year when shopping, parties, and responsibilities seem to dominate our schedules, the revolutionary truth from Bethlehem with a baby in a manger often gets relegated to just a fable we may talk about a couple of times or hear about at church. Grace has a Name will guide individuals and families to move beyond approaching the Biblical story of the arrival of Jesus as a nice fable for a cultural celebration of a holiday to embracing the reality of the baby in the manger commencing God's perfect rescue for all humanity. As part of this class exploring the truth of Jesus, families will be given practical teaching points to reinforce the truth of Christmas at home. Starting date is December 7th, this four week class will be in the Sanctuary on Sunday nights at 5:30-6:30 and be taught by Jay and Britney Harley.



December 2014 Events & Activities

For more information, please see our website, www.matthewroad.org, or call the church office at 972-641-2717.

December 7th: Christmas Choir Musical, during AM services
December 10th: 20Somethings Study Break, 9:30pm, CommonGrounds
December 14th: Themed Basket Silent Auction, during Morning Services/Bible Studies, FH
Deacon Meeting, 4:30pm, Conference Room
December 17th: 20Somethings Study Break, 9:30pm, CommonGrounds
December 19th: Parents Night Out, 6:30pm, Worship Center
Youth Christmas Party, 7:00pm, Macons' Home
December 21st: B&G Meeting, 5:00pm, Conference Room
December 24th - January 1st: Church Office closed
December 24th: Candlelight Services, 5:00pm (with childcare) & 7:00pm (no childcare)



Please note: The last day to turn in offering for the 2014 tax year is Sunday, December 28th. Statements will be mailed at the end of January to the address we have on file for you. If your address has changed, please email the church office at crystal@matthewroad.org.

Discipleship

Sunday Nights:

- 20Somethings - Fellowship Hall, 5:30pm (ongoing)
- Adult Discipleship - Sanctuary, 5:30pm
- Ladies Bible Study - Fellowship Hall, 5:30pm
- Young Marrieds Bible Study - Library, 5:30pm (ongoing)
- Guy Talk for youth - CommonGrounds, 5:30pm (ongoing), see Zach for exact location
- Girl Talk for youth - CommonGrounds, 5:30pm (ongoing), see Zach for exact location
- MD² for children - Education Building, 5:30pm (ongoing)

Wednesday Nights:

- AWANA Club for children - Ed. Building, 6:30pm
- Collide for youth - CommonGrounds, 6:30pm (ongoing)
- Adult Bible Studies - Library, 6:45pm
- Women's Bible Study - Conference Room, 6:45pm
- 20Somethings Bible Study - CommonGrounds, 8:30pm

Regular Scheduled Activities

Sundays	
Morning Worship	8:30 & 11:00am
Morning Bible Study (all ages)	9:45am
Evening Bible Study (all ages)	5:30pm
7:17 Service	6:45pm
Mondays	
PAW Program	9:00am
Tuesdays	
MRA	8:30am
Young @ Heart Activities	9:45am
Wednesdays	
PAW Program	9:00am
Wednesday Night Dinner	5:15pm
Proclamation (youth choir)	5:45pm
Children's Choir	6:00pm
Collide (youth)	6:30pm
Adult Choir	6:30pm
AWANA Club	6:30pm
Adult Bible Study	6:45pm
20Somethings	8:30pm
Thursdays	
MRA	8:30am
Fridays	
Chick time at Chick-Fil-A	9:00am
Saturdays	
Men's Coffee Group	7:30am
(Good Day Caf�, Grand Prairie)	

Average Morning Attendance for November: 490
Average 7:17 Service Attendance for November: 240

Financials as of November 5, 2014 (without PAW)	
Budget Income	\$749,400
Budget Expense	(797,900)
Net Budget	(48,500)