

### *Scott's Thoughts* by Scott Deneen, Pastor to Youth and Families

This is, as I understand it, the final Newsletter for Basketball season. Wow! how time flies when you're having fun!! I trust the season has been a blessing for both you and your children. Watching my son play basketball for the first time was a joy and a pleasure. He immensely loved running up and down the court, dribbling, shooting occasionally, and the laughter of camaraderie. Sitting in the stands and laughing with many of you was also of great enjoyment to me!

As we draw this season to a close, I want to point your attention to the time of year - not Fall/Winter but Thanksgiving & Christmas. What wonderful, joyous times we celebrate. Thanksgiving celebrates God's faithful provision and protection in our physical lives and the lives of our loved ones. Thanksgiving is still a few days away as I write this but, if everything goes as it has the past 40 yrs., come Thursday afternoon, I will be loosening the old belt a few notches while breathing great sighs of overstuffed delight! As you read this, Thanksgiving has past, and I'll bet you're remembering the same was true for you! We gathered with family, ate to our heart's content, laughed, shared life, watched ball games, and thanked God for His grace. God is good.

Christmas celebrates a greater provision and protection in our spiritual lives. No matter how delicious that Turkey and mashed potato dinner was, no matter how much pie we were able to eat, no matter how hard we laughed, God does us one better with Christmas. Whereas Thanksgiving tends to feed our bodies, Christmas feeds our souls. My soul, tired as it is with fighting against Sin, needs a buffet of grace. My heart needs grace/mercy of 'grandma-styled' proportions. And that's just what God serves up at Christmas.

The scripture says that we were separated from God, under His wrath and curse, dead in our trespasses and sins. So I understand that my circumstances are in dire need of a Savior of epic scale. God, whom I have offended and who has every right to bring calamity upon my head, shocks me by opening the floodgates of Heaven and pouring out grace. Grace incarnate as a baby boy - Jesus.

Think about this while Thanksgiving is still fresh on your mind... spiritually speaking, I deserve no supper, no dessert, no mashed potatoes, no cobbler, no pumpkin pie. But that's just what God gives me in Christmas. Joseph is told by the angel, "You shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." Rather than getting turnip casserole or brussel sprout stew for my sins, God has given me a smorgasbord of grace in Jesus.

With every delicious bite you eat this holiday season, may your mind ponder just how wonderful God's mercy is. With every drink of egg nog, with every cherry pie, with every mince meat slice, remember that God's salvation is that much sweeter. Why not "taste and see that the Lord is good" this holiday season. Embrace the Savior either for the first time or in renewal. It will be the most God-honoring thing you can do and it will be to your greatest joy!

Blessings to You this holiday season,

Pastor Scott

### Upcoming Youth Events

- **Youth Group**  
Sundays 6:00—7:30pm  
Middle & High School
- **Imagebearers**  
Sundays 6:00—7:30pm  
1st—5th grade
- **Operation Christmas Child** November 22nd
- **Youth Group Christmas Party**  
Sunday, Dec 10th, 6:00pm
- **Live Christmas Scenes**  
December 21st & 22nd
- **Winterplace, WVA**  
Ski Retreat  
Jan. 26—27th





**Thank You!**

The FPC Basketball Committee would like to thank you for participating this year. We hope that you've had a good experience and that your child has "had fun" playing and learning the game of basketball.

Our volunteers (coaches, referees, scorekeepers) take the well-being of your child very seriously. We want the players to develop a healthy sense of self-worth as they learn how to play the game. They get to feel part of, and contribute to, their team. Most are

not concerned with the number of wins or losses, they simply want to play and enjoy themselves.

We consider it a privilege to tell your children about Jesus. It's the most important story they'll ever hear! Teams sit together during devotion time and study God's Word in the Bible. They pray together and learn how to ask for personal prayer requests. They're taught the Good News of what Jesus has done for us all. They

learn that He never changes and that He wants to be their best friend.

At the basketball finale this Saturday, you and your child hear this Good News again and will be given an opportunity to respond. Pray for this special time... that God will use it in incredible ways.

Have questions? Our Youth and Families pastor, Scott Deneen, is available at 704.263.4275.



**Basketball News**



**Finale** (see additional handout)  
**Saturday, Dec. 2nd**  
 Ages 6 - 9  
 (Teams #1 - #6)  
 9:30 - 11:00am  
 Guest Speaker: Tim Barton, Jr.

Ages 10 - 16  
 (Teams #7 - #16)  
 2:00 - 4:00pm  
 Guest Speaker: Bobby Jones

- Players should wear uniforms
- Foul-shooting and other contests!
- Team Verses and Trophies



**Luke 1:31-32**

[The angel told Mary]  
 You will be with child  
 and give birth to a  
 son, and you are to  
 give him the name  
 Jesus. He will be  
 great and will be  
 called the Son of the  
 Most High.

**Youth & Sports**

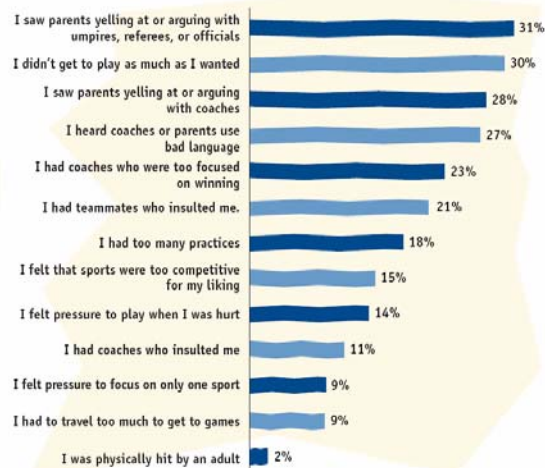
Trends & Tudes; [Harris Interactive](#)  
 July 2004

In 2004, Harris Interactive completed a survey among young people ages 8 to 18 regarding their attitudes about organized sports activities.

Young people have had a wide range of positive experiences during their participation in organized youth sports outside of school. They say they got a lot of exercise (80%), they learned athletic skills (72%), they worked as a member of a team (67%), they got to meet people they otherwise wouldn't have met (67%), they felt good about themselves (62%), etc. Sports clearly play a central, positive role in the lives of many young people.

But, despite an overall positive view of youth sports, young people also report some negative experiences. Here is a snap shot from the study:

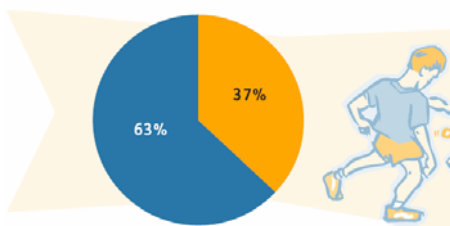
Which of the following experiences have you had during your participation in youth sports?



Harris Interactive YouthQuery®, July 2004, n=1,228, 8- to 18-year-olds

Enjoyment and playing time are crucial to young people and is what makes sports fun. From their perspective, these aspects are more important than winning.

Which of the following would you prefer?



- Be on an organized sports team that wins a championship, but I don't get to play much.
- Be on an organized sports team that loses most of its games, but I get to play most of the time.

Harris Interactive YouthQuery®, July 2004, n=1,228, 8- to 18-year-olds



Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

Morning Service  
 8:30 Worship Service  
 9:45 Sunday School  
 11:00 Worship Service

Evening Service  
 6:30 Worship Service

Call us at 704.263.4275

Visit us online at [www.fpcstanley.org](http://www.fpcstanley.org)

Team Rosters  
 Game Schedule  
 Parent's Corner