

Church Bell



"Follow The Bells"

December 2016



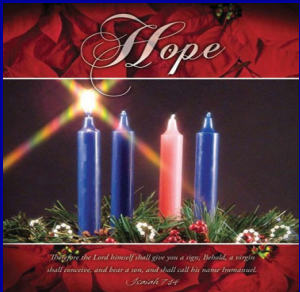
Cortland Christian Church

Reverend
Donald P. Barnes

153 Grove Drive
Cortland, Ohio

Phone 330-637-4611

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"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Pastor's Pen

December 2016

The grandkids "slipped" us their Christmas Wish Lists well ahead of schedule this year. We appreciate that. Helps us get our shopping done early. I'm always amazed at the length of these comprehensive scrolls, sometimes comprising multiple sheets of paper. However, Grandma and Grandpa do ask for them and the kids don't hesitate to ask for it "all." I think they've got it right. Maybe we grown-ups would glean more from the Holy-Day Season if we were a little more child-like in our approach and in our expectations. Christmas - we expect so little – and God offers so much. Have you made out your Christmas Wish List? What are you expecting to find under the tree?

According to an unknown source, there a plaque marking Abraham Lincoln's birthplace near Hodgenville, Kentucky. A small scrap of conversation is memorialized on the marker: "Any news down 't the village, Ezry?" "Well, Squire McLain's gone t' Washington t' see Madison swore in, and ol' Spellman tells me this Bonaparte fella has captured most o' Spain. What's new out here, neighbor?" "Nuthin' nuthin' a'tall, 'cept fer a new baby born t' Tom Lincoln's. Nothin' ever happens out here." Some events, whether birthdays in Hodgenville (or Bethlehem) or spiritual rebirth in a person's life, may not create much earthly splash, but those of lasting importance will eventually get the notice they deserve." Have you made out your Christmas Wish List? What are you hoping to find under the tree?

I don't know about you, but I believe the commercialization of the season dampens the joy associated with the holy-birth. According to a dated survey, Americans used 28,497,464 rolls and sheets of wrapping paper, 16,826,362 packages of tags and bows, 372,430,684 greeting cards, and 35,200,000 Christmas trees during the 1989 Christmas season. What might the totals be in 2013? I must admit to loving the festivities, but I try not to allow the "secular hoop-la" to steal the spotlight. Allow the special God-given gift to preside at you celebration, for in Christ God has offered a gift that will continue to bring blessings for an eternity. Have you made out your Christmas Wish List? What are you hoping to find under the tree? God has prepared something special just for you and yours. Don't forget to open the "package."

Our Worship Assistants



Elders:

December 4 Joyce Lewis and Larry Dix
December 11 Carol Robinson and Justin Klamut
December 18 John Kloboves
December 25 Larry Dix and John Molnar

Deacons:

Virginia Carr—330-507-3313
Chuck Chagnot, Katie Molnar, Patti Oriti,
Tyler Oriti, Sydney Carr, Carolyn Sparhawk

Deaconess:

Katie Molnar

The Church Office will be open on Monday-Thursday

9:00am.-Noon Phone: 330-637-4611

*Feel free to call or stop in if you have
a question or need help.*

December Coffee Hour Host and Hostesses



December 4 Sharon Hopkins and Judy
Hansel

December 11 Sharon Polakoff and Dorothy Moss

December 18 Carol Glancy and Gail Peura

December 25 No Coffee Hour

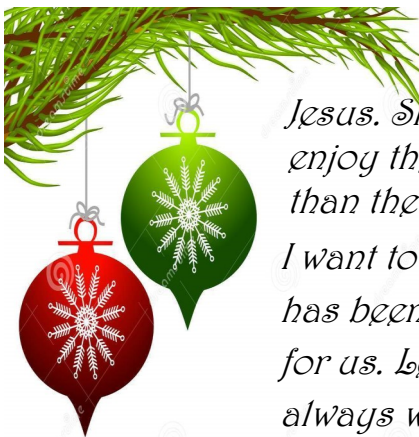


A little smile, a word of cheer,
A bit of love from someone near,
A little gift from one held dear,
Best wishes for the coming year
These make a Merry Christmas!

- John Greenleaf Whittier

Merry Christmas
Happy New Year!

CHRISTMAS.365GREETINGS.COM



Advent is the season of waiting with expectation for the coming of Jesus. Shall we use this time to recalibrate our hearts toward Him. May we enjoy the preparations, celebrations, and meals, but let's love our King more than the gifts, trinkets, and toys.

I want to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas Season. My hope is that it has been a good year for you and will continue to be. He is ever comforting for us. Let us during this busy season take the time to Praise Him for He is always with us. May your holidays be filled with love and hope.

Blessings and Love to all, Joyce

"Happy Birthday"

December 4	Nola Miller
December 5	Dorothy Moss
December 6	Phyllis Hake
December 9	Joyce Lewis
December 10	Pat Taylor
December 16	Joyce Hall
December 29	Lorin Hopkins
December 30	Laura Lee Lawrence
December 30	Stan Seagle



"Happy Anniversary"

December 16
Pastor Don and Lorra



Thank you to our Contributors to our Church Bell.

Betty Evans and Carol Glancy for the Great Holiday recipes, they are tried and truly delicious.

Joyce Eckard for the poem she wrote and submitted, beautiful and very appropriate for the season..

Dorothy Moss for the Thoughts on Volunteering (below) "No Bones About It" . Great description.

Mary Jo Johnson gave us new words for Jesus Loves Me. You will enjoy them.

Larry Dix for his always interesting Elder Corner Inspirational.

No Bones About It

Many churches have trouble getting enough volunteers for work that needs to be done. That makes this bit of wisdom especially appropriate.

There are four kinds of "bones" in every organization.

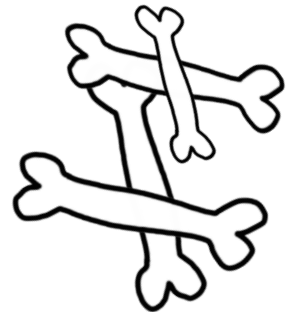
"Wishbones" spend their time wishing a job would get done.

"Jawbones" do a lot of talking, but do little.

"Knucklebones" knock everything others try to do. Then there are the

Backbones"— they get under the load and do the work.

Which one are you?



Written by a 90 year old schoolteacher, submitted by Dorothy Moss

"Jingle Bells" was originally written for which holiday?

The song was published in 1857 by James Lord Pierpont, and it was written for Thanksgiving. Since then, it has become a very popular Christmas Song

What type of tree does "O Tannenbaum" reference?

Instead, it praises the fir's evergreen traits as a sort of faithfulness that people aspire to.

A Tannenbaum is a fir. The song's original version has nothing to do with Christmas.



Do you ever feel lonely?

Lysa Terkeurst

Recently, I was at an event full of people. Everyone else seemed gabby and was effortlessly making easy connections with others. I just felt out of sorts. Someone had said something to me earlier that day that hurt my feelings and knocked me off kilter. It was one of those “I would really like to be at home alone, in a bubble bath, eating something chocolate” kind of nights. But I had to go to this outing, so here I was — lonely.

I politely smiled my way through the evening and finally got to go home. As I crawled into bed that night, I asked Jesus, “Why am I letting some thoughtless comment someone made affect me like this?”

There was no deep explanation. There was no Bible verse that instantly popped into my head. There was no sudden rush of peace through my heart. There was only a very gentle reminder in the depths of my soul that Jesus loves me — insecurities and all.

Jesus loves me.

Simple but so powerfully profound, that one statement grounds me in the truth of who God says I am. Friends can’t make you feel accepted all the time. Accomplishments will never truly make you feel secure. Having lots of people around you does not mean you won’t ever feel lonely. And chocolate, while it is deliciously distracting, is just a little too temporary.

So I turn to the One who is Everlasting, Prince of Peace, and Immanuel — God with us.

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel. — Isaiah 7:14

I draw close to Him so He can help me separate solid truth from shifting emotion. And I’m reminded by the writer of the book of Hebrews that God says,

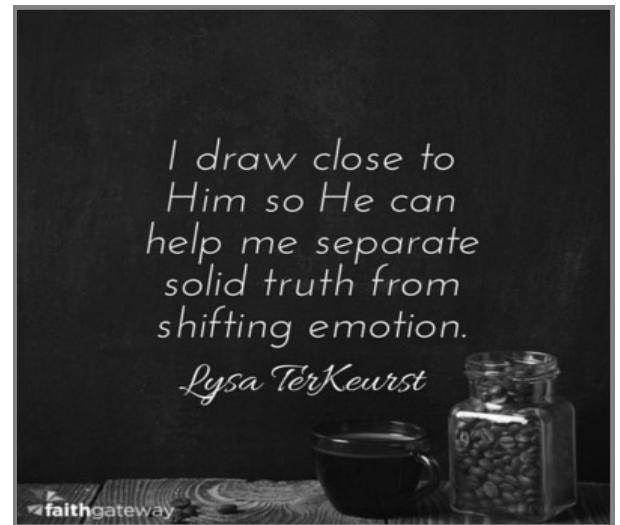
Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. — Hebrews 13:5

More verses to explore:

Deuteronomy 31:6

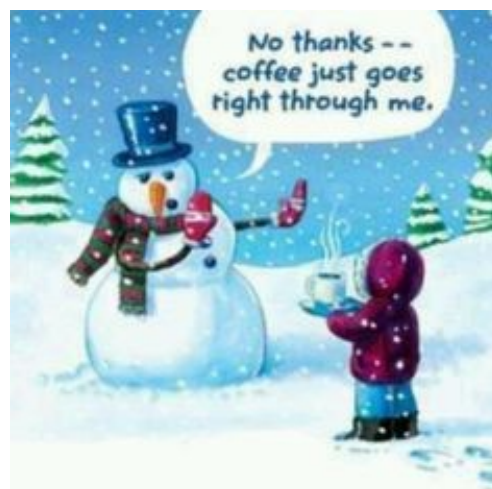
Isaiah 9:6-7

Matthew 1:21-23



Do you struggle with loneliness?

Even in a room full of people?
Which of the verses above are you going to memorize for those moments when you need to remember that the Lord is with you and you are not alone?



December 2016



Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself
will give you a sign: Be-
hold, the virgin shall con-
ceive and bear a Son, and
shall call His name
Immanuel.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		Cookie Baking	Cookie Baking	1 Cookie Baking Aerobics	2	
4 Service 10:30 2nd Sunday Advent	5 Aerobics	6 Deco-Cookies Board Meeting	7 ____>>>> Joyful Noise	8 ____>>>> Brownies Meet Aerobics	9 ____>>>>	10 Cookie Sale
11 3rd Sunday Advent	12 Aerobics	13	14 Christmas in Cortland	15 	16	17 Aerobics
18 4th Sunday of Advent	19 Aerobics	20 	21 Joyful Noise	22 Brownies Aerobics	23	24 Christmas Eve A
25 Christmas Play 	26 Aerobics	27	28 Joyful Noise	29 Aerobics	30	31 New Years Eve

Soup and Sandwich

*Always the
Third Thursday of the month.*



*The effort of shopping
for groceries, prepping
the meat and vegetables
for the sandwiches and
soup and setting up the hall for this event
goes on like clockwork.*

*Everyone comes in usually knowing what
needs done and goes right to work.
The signs and advertising just seem to ap-
pear magically.*

*Members bring in their pies and someone is
right there to cut and plate them, and put
them on display.*

*If you have never helped on this, come out
and see how it works.*

*January 19th, 2017 is the next
Soup and Sandwich*

What is the story behind The Birthplace of Jesus?



It was prophesied in Micah 5:2 that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the future King of the Jews. Indeed, this small Judean city near Jerusalem became the site of the Nativity. Bethlehem, which means "house of bread," was also the home of David, one of God's favorite kings.

Though the exact location of Jesus' birth is unknown, the story maintains that Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger, or food trough. In those days, stables were made of stones or situated in a cave.

Around A.D. 326-330, Empress Helena, wife of Constantine, built a church over the cave thought to be Jesus' birthplace. The church was rebuilt in the sixth century, and pieces of the original building still remain. It is said to be the oldest Christian church in existence and one of the most genuinely holy sites in the Holy Land.

This altar inside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is believed to mark the exact place of Jesus' birth.



December 31 Day Scripture Writing Plan

Each of the scriptures below takes ten minutes or less to copy out. Commit to spending ten minutes each day listening to God's voice as you simply copy these texts out of your Bible.

Day 1-Isaiah 7:14-17
Day 2-Isaiah 9:6-7
Day 3-Isaiah 11:1-5
Day 4-Isaiah 11:6-10
Day 5-Isaiah 40:1-5
Day 6-Isaiah 52:7-10
Day 7-Jeremiah 33:14-16
Day 8-Psalm 72:1-7
Day 9-Psalm 72:8-14
Day 10-Psalm 72:15-20

Day 11-Psalm 95:1-7
Day 12-Malachi 3:1-3
Day 13-Matthew 1:18-20
Day 14-Matthew 1:21-25
Day 15-Matthew 2:1-6
Day 16-Matthew 2:7-12
Day 17-Luke 1:26-29
Day 18-Luke 1:30-34
Day 19-Luke 1:35-38
Day 20-Luke 1:46-50

Day 21-Luke 1:51-56
Day 22-Luke 2:4-7
Day 23-Luke 2:8-12
Day 24-Luke 2:13-16
Day 25-Luke 2:17-20
Day 26-Galatians 4:4-7
Day 27-Philippians 2:5-8
Day 28-Philippians 2:9-11
Day 29-James 1:16-18
Day 30-Titus 3:3-7
Day 31-Choose your own verse



Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.
Psalm 119:18

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"There's one Christmas carol that's suitable for my voice. The one where the dogs bark Jingle Bells."



Jean Davis

July 4, 1927— November 22, 2016

We have lost our dear Sister Jean Davis, but Heaven has gained an angel. Our friend and member of CCC passed on to her new resting place with God on November 22, 2016. at the age of 89.

Her final resting place will be in McDonald, Pennsylvania where she was born.

**Pastor Don officiated at her funeral and sang one of her favorite songs.. " Softly and Tenderly". Jean was a very sweet and gentle lady, she is going to be missed by so many.
Her warm smile tells it all.**

A fellowship Luncheon with family and friends was held after the funeral.

Her brother Tom Strimel stayed by her side during her extended illness.

Hanging of the Greens



What a joyful time of year. Thanksgiving is behind us and the Holy-day season is upon us. With the beginning of Advent just around the corner, many wonderful things happen at Cortland Christian Church. In preparation for the season, we will spend a day or two preparing the Sanctuary, Narthex and Fellowship Hall for the beginning of Advent, the birth of our Savior, and preparing for the grandest moment of our Christian year.

The large beautiful nativity is placed very carefully on the altar, A star is hung above the nativity, the advent candles are placed in the holder with the purple and pink candles, just waiting for the time of lighting.

Wreathes and garlands are fluffed and hung with majesty on the doors and windows. Christmas trees are decorated with the white and gold Christian Symbols, table decorations in place. All of this will adorn our Church soon as we get ready for His birth. Pastor is busy working on his messages, while awaiting the arrival of the Baby Jesus.

Outside the lighted Nativity is displayed to remind everyone why we celebrate this Holi-day.

If you listen closely you may hear the sounds of humming, or the singing of a Christmas Carol or two. And definitely the church chiming out many familiar carols. Listen to our Bell tower to hear music of the season. Members are milling around doing their tasks of decorating. Wow, what a wonderful experience.

The church is humming with activity, if you close your eyes, you can almost feel His presence.

When we reflect on the season, do we really celebrate “the reason for this season” or wildly go around shopping for all those many gifts. That part is fine if we just remember that “Jesus” is the real reason for this season.

This is a great time for fellowship as we have all come together for a welcoming celebration, which will climax with the Christmas Eve Service., and Pastor singing “O, Holy Night“.

What a glorious experience this is. Please, be a part of this adventure.

Church Chuckles

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. Then he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: “I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I will miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses.” When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note, “I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket I will lose my job. Lead us not into temptation.”

Christmas Gift Suggestions:

To your enemy - forgiveness.

To an opponent - tolerance.

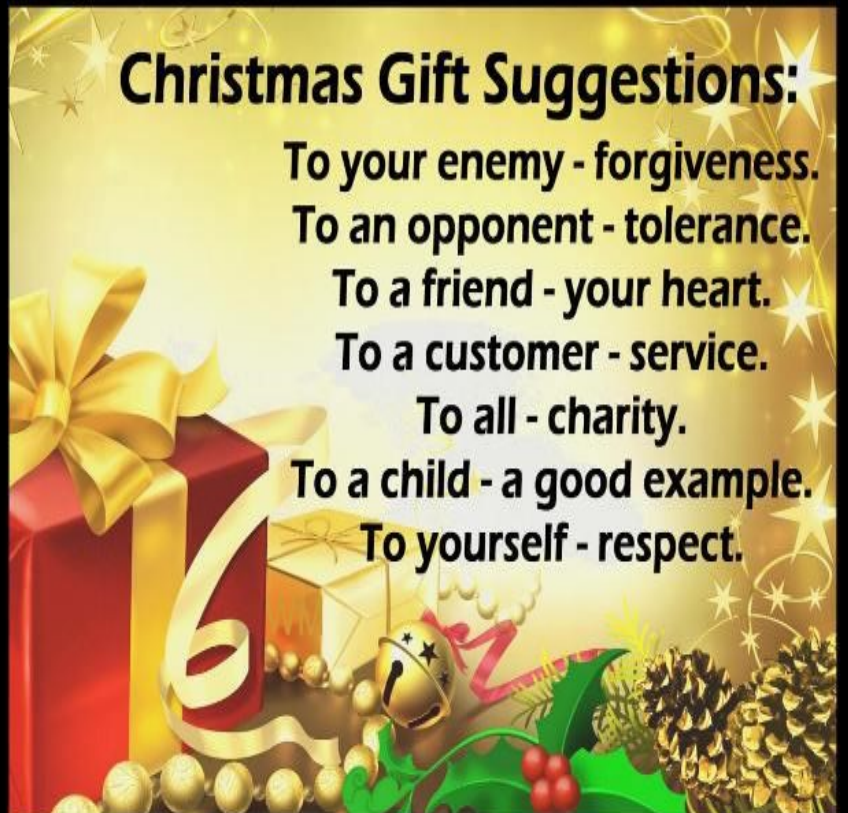
To a friend - your heart.

To a customer - service.

To all - charity.

To a child - a good example.

To yourself - respect.



Stockings for the Troops



At recent Women of Worship meeting, the members helped fill the Stockings for the Troops.

Linda Swauger shopped for the many unique and fun items to put in 45 stockings, 25 for Chase Duncans (John and Katie Molnar's grandson) Military Group stationed in Germany and Linda had name of military group stationed in Afghanistan to send out another 20 stockings.

They were boxed and sent out within a few days. I am certain these stockings will help make the holidays away from home a little more pleasant.

By filling the stockings and addressing a cards to the troops gave us a good feeling and better understanding of what this mission is all about. Good Job, Gals. Thanks Linda for sharing in this mission.



Stay Safe on the Highway

Have you ever heard these tips before? When it is raining very hard, don't run your wipers, just put on sunglasses and a Miracle happens. Your windshield will appear clean, as though you were using your wipers. You will see drops of rain on the windshield but not a sheet of rain.

Do not drive in the rain with your cruise control on. If you start to hydro-plane your tires lose contact with the pavement. Your car will accelerate to a higher rate of speed making you take off like an airplane. Do not use cruise control when the pavement is wet or icy. Some cars will not let you set cruise control when it is raining.

Maybe some very good ideas to keep us safe.

*A great volunteer opportunity
for individuals, families,
groups & businesses!*



Help! Friday, December 16 at Sparkle Market, here in Cortland is our day to ring the Salvation Army Bell.

Please, volunteer an hour or two.

Pick a church friend to ring the bells with,
it is more fun that way.

Come out meet and greet friendly faces.

Some of the proceeds come back to help any needy in Cortland..

The Key

Evxn though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works quitx wxll xxcept for onx kxy. I havx many timxs wishxd it workxd prxfxctly.

It's trux that thx othxr kxys work grxat, but just onx kxy not working makes a big diffxrxncx.

Somxtimxs our church sxxms likx my typxwritxr—not all thx kxy pxoplx work. You man say to yoursxlf, "Wxll, I'm just onx pwrson. I don't makx or brxak that church."

But it doxs makx a big diffxrxncx bxcausx a church to bx xffxctive nxxds thx activx participation of vxvry pxrson. So, thx nxxt timx you think your xfforts arxn't nxxssary, rxmembxr my typwwritxr and say to yoursxlf,

"I'm a kxy pxrson in the thx congrxgation, and I'm nxxdx vxry much."



"I Will Give Thanks!"

No matter the climate of Politics, and Wall Street,

"I Will Give Thanks.."

No matter the nay say, scoffers, and rebuker's,

"I Will Give Thanks..."

I will continue to salute Old glory,

and remember the words, "One Nation Under God.."

When all seems ready to collapse and debase from around us,

"I Will Give Thanks...."

I will remember, my Jesus, who died for me,

and, "I Will Give Thanks.."

Though all seems lost and undone,

I look to my God in Heaven,

And, "I Will Give Thanks..."

I will always remember my provider,

the One who put me here..

His promises fill the pages of my Bible, and to them I will adhere..

O' with a great shout, "I Will Give Thanks.."

Look neither left, or right, and have a fright,

of times and changes, for it is our God,

who has it all under control..

His outcome shall always prevail.

Worry and fret no more,

hand it all over, your burden will be lightened,

and troubled you will be no more..

And always remember,

"To Always Give Thanks!"

"Happy Thanksgiving!!"

By Joyce A. Eckard~~ November 2, 2008~~ 7:00 AM

*I come to your altar, O' Lord, singing a song of Thanksgiving, and telling of
all Your miracles. I love Your sanctuary, Lord, the place where Your glory
shines. For it is in You, I put all my trust. Psalm 26:6b~8*



Pictorial Directory

Pictures have been taken, Virginia and Carolyn have been busy rounding up pictures of our congregation when we are all having fun and doing our mission work.

It is always a big job for a few to gather, organize people, pictures, etc. and put them together in a form that the company, who is doing our directory can work with too.

All the info needed for the directory has been sent and in "several" weeks, we may see a finished directory that we have all been waiting for. We "Thank you" for all your efforts.

Hang on for awhile longer, it will be worth it.



Christmas Carol Quiz

Which Christmas song was the first song ever broadcast on radio?

"O Holy Night" and played "O Holy Night" on the violin. first audio broadcast in 1906. He read passages from the Bible A Canadian inventor named Reginald Fessenden created the "O Holy Night"

"Joy to the World" is based on which book of the Bible?

Psalms: Taken from Psalm 98. First time in publication 1917

Which Christmas carol is also the third best-selling single in world?

"Silent Night" is one of the best-selling songs ever. The song has been translated into at least 140 languages. Bing Crosby's version of "Silent Night" is

In what year was "Silent Night" first performed? *

It was written by a young priest in 1816 and then performed at a church in the Austrian Empire on Christmas Eve in 1818.

What was the original title of The Little Drummer Boy?"

"The Little Drummer Boy" was called "Carol of the Drums," and by carol standards it is brand new — it was-

Jesus Loves Me (For seniors)

Sing the words

Jesus loves me, this I know,
Though my hair is white as snow
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

Chorus:

YES, JESUS LOVES ME..
YES, JESUS LOVES ME..
YES, JESUS LOVE ME,
FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO.

Thought my steps are oh, so slow,
With my hand in His I'll go
On through life, let come what may,
He'll be there to lead the way.

Chorus:

When the nights are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song.
Telling me in words so clear,
"Have no fear, for I am near."

Chorus:

When my work on earth is done,
And life's victories have been won.
He will take me home above.
Then I'LL understand His love.

Chorus:

I love Jesus, does He know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear my say,
that I love Him every day.

Let your friends read this. Reach out and touch a
friend or loved one.
God Bless You all!!



Submitted by
Mary Jo Johnson

*Here below are our shut-in members or members of concern.
Please!*

*Drop them a card or a note of
encouragement and let them know how much we care!*



Take time to enjoy the small things in life take pictures of the sky, clouds, birds, moon, trees, lake, leaves on the ground, outside holiday decorations, animals, each other, etc. Share them with a shut-ins.

Take a small poinsettia.

Vivian Jensen

Meadowbrook Nursing
3090 Five Points -Hartford Rd
Fowler, Ohio 44416

Alice Kalas

Champion Estates 211
1 Windsor Place
Warren, Ohio 44484
330-307-7583

Grace Wagner

175 Wall Street
Cortland, Ohio 44410
330-637-5957

Phyllis Beer

Lake Vista
41 Heron Circle
Cortland, Ohio 44410
330-637-1456

Frank and Gloria Zanin

18170 N.91st Ave.
Apt.1210
Peoria, Az. 85382

Helen Carlton

477 N. High Street
Cortland, Ohio 44410

Vera Kidd

Community Skilled Nursing
Room 221
1320 Mahoning Ave.
Warren, Ohio

Raymond Kline

502 Arcaro Street
Cortland, Ohio 44410
234-244-4241



One of the holiday's best-loved songs, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," marks the longest holiday in the Christian calendar -- the time between Christmas Day and Epiphany, celebrated on January 6.

The song's origin is unknown, but some believe the song was written to help children remember various articles of faith.

These are: True love—God

A partridge in a pear tree
Jesus

Two turtle doves
Old and New Testament

Three French hens
Faith, Hope, and Charity

Four calling birds
Four Gospels

Five golden rings
The first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, which records the history and laws of ancient Israel

Six geese a-laying
Six days of Creation



The Twelve Days of Christmas
Song represents the various
articles of faith

Seven swans a-swimming
*Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, or the
Seven Sacraments*

Eight maids a-milking
Eight beatitudes

Nine ladies dancing
Nine fruits of the Holy Spirit

Ten lords a-leaping
Ten Commandments

Eleven pipers piping
Eleven faithful disciples

Twelve drummers drumming
*Twelve points of doctrine in the
Apostles' Creed*

Christmas gifts – from Paul’s point of view.

Elders
Corner

Philippians 4:10-13

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

As always, there are so many things conveyed in this short portion of scripture. I am going to focus on one. There is evidence that Paul is under house arrest in Rome at this time. Some scholars list other possibilities but the NIV Study Bible suggests this best fits the data. So Paul is sitting at home and has just received a gift from the church at Philippi. Sound like something on our own horizon today (other than the house arrest)? But look at Paul’s comments:

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me.

Hmm... not thanks for the sweater, not thanks for the money, not thanks for the food. No, he first gave thanks for the concern. He was thanking them for “thinking about him.” And isn’t that the perspective that we should have at Christmas? Not giving thanks for how much someone spent on my gift but giving thanks that they thought of me.... It is one of the reasons that I think so many people find it more relevant to spend time with each other during the holiday. We can borrow money to buy any gift, but we cannot borrow time we spend with each other. We only can spend the moments we have. The Great Bank of Time gives no loans...

So Paul thanks them for the thought (giving truth to the phrase – it’s the thought that counts) and then returns to them another gift:

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

Wait... content whatever the circumstances..... Wow... this is something today we still struggle with and I suspect the early church, being comprised of humans, struggled with that too...

Look around. People seek contentment by buying more things, getting a bigger house, a more expensive car, finding a new job that pays more money, a vacation home. Our DIScontentment shows up in our higher divorce rate, our complaints that it is not our fault for where we find ourselves today, it is always someone else’s fault. Our DIScontentment shows in the interaction between groups of people that voted a different way than we did with no belief that the other voters may have valid points.

We seek contentment through more of many things and the belief that our way is the only way. However, that is not what Paul says:

... I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Hear what he says? He has had it all and had nothing. He has been hungry and well fed..... He has been on all sides of the argument and he has LEARNED the secret. You see, the secret is not given to us. Our redemption has been given to us by Jesus Christ but not all things are given to us. Paul had to LEARN the secret. Learning is a process. It is an education. Like a book waiting to be read, God has placed it on the shelf of the library, we have to take it down, open it, and read, and LEARN...

I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.

Paul is speaking about Jesus Christ. And remember, this is the man (Paul) that Christ knocked down and blinded on the road. He had to be led to the next place to perform the next step. And even after his sight was restored, I read this as Paul had to LEARN to submit to Jesus Christ and focus on him whether times were good or bad; whether food was on the table or merely a dream, whether there were many gifts under the tree or whether there was not even a tree to decorate. Paul tells us the insight of a man submitting to Jesus....

So this month, let's make sure we thank folks for thinking of us, for caring about us, and for sharing with us. And let's remember that in all situations:

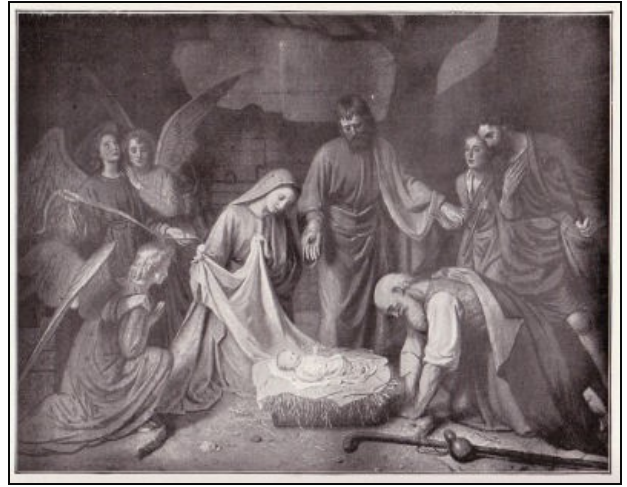
I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.

Merry Christmas and may God bless you...

Submitted by Larry Dix.....

Birth of Christ Jesus (from the book of Luke in the Holy Bible)

About that time Caesar Augustus order a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's hometown, for the census. As a descendant of David he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée who was pregnant....



While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped Him in a blanket and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the hostel.

There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody worldwide:

A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger." At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises: "Glory to God in the heavenly heights; Peace to all men and women on earth who please Him."

As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!" (*Luke 2:1-20*).

It was a simple scene that first Christmas - a rough room, a young couple and nothing but a feeding trough to put the child in. It was probably quite cold and with family far away there was little help. Not exactly the Hallmark moment we like to show in Christmas pageants. And yet this rustic scene marked the greatest event in the history of mankind.

God's Son became human and came to earth to save us. God had promised to send a Messiah, one who would save His people. He could have easily burst on the scene as a full grown man, a seven foot warrior with fiery eyes and arms of steel. This was what many people were looking for, but it wasn't how God did it. He arrived in the arms of a young girl. He was, as another of our authors put it, *"a very small package, wrapped in rags, given from the heart of God. The perfect gift."*

God gave His only Son to die in our place so that we, in all our brokenness, could know forgiveness. He came so that we could know what love feels like, real love - love that never leaves, love that never disappoints, love that is never betrayed. He sent His Son into a corrupted world to bring us hope.

How are you doing this Christmas?

Are you having a hard time finding hope in the world? Are you having a hard time finding peace? It doesn't have to be that way. You can have peace and find hope and know forgiveness through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer. Praying is simply talking to God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. Here's a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life to You and ask You to come in as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Bring peace to my world this Christmas. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, pray it right now and Christ will come into your life as He promised. If you invited Jesus Christ into your life, thank God often that He is in your life, that He will never leave you and that you have eternal life. Author unknown at this time.

Do you know the history of Holidays at Rockefeller Center?

In New York, it's not officially Christmastime until the tree is lit at Rockefeller Center. The first tree appeared in 1931, during the Great Depression, when workers placed a tree in the dirt of a construction site. That year, the tree symbolized Christmas as much as it did hope and the invincible human spirit.

In 1933, the current tradition began with a tree decorated with 700 lights placed in front of the newly completed RCA Building. The Rockefeller Plaza Outdoor Ice-Skating Pond opened in 1936.

The decorating themes and festivities have varied from year to year. In 1941, two reindeer borrowed from the Bronx Zoo were housed in cages beside the Prometheus Fountain. In 1942, during World War II, three living trees graced the Center.

In an act of patriotism, one tree was decorated in red, another in white, and the other in blue. However, because of wartime restrictions on electricity, the trees were not illuminated.

In 1949, the tree was painted silver. In 1951, the entire nation witnessed the tree-lighting ceremony when it was televised on *The Kate Smith Show*. And by 1964, the ceremony had become an annual event, with celebrities such as Johnny Carson, Hugh Downs, Ed McMahon, Barbara Walters, Debbie Reynolds, Marlo Thomas, and Phil Donahue hosting the show.

Today, the annual Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center is typically adorned with more than 25,000 lights but no other ornaments except for the star on top.



The Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center is adorned with more than 25,000 lights.



Our Angel Tree

(Betty's Angels)

Recently, Paper Angels and Paper Stockings adorned our little Narthex tree, each containing a name and age. Members chose a name to purchase a gift or fill a stocking. There were 24 choices. All were taken and will be ready for delivery to Betty's Angels near Christmas. These are lost children who did not fit into the system and have no one to care for them. Betty Strawderman took the challenge and now houses 12 of these children at her home. She feeds, clothes and tends to their spiritual needs, also.

**Merry Christmas Betty
and her Angels**



A Mysterious Gift... A Man's Reflection

By Mike Woodard

I looked at the gift. It looked SO different than the others under the tree. It was so carefully wrapped and even had a ribbon tied in a bow. In rich red paper it was beautiful! THIS gift was larger than the others too. Something was missing... It didn't have a name on it. I couldn't ask whose it was; it seemed too special. I just looked in wonder. Just having it under the tree added something special to Christmas. That Christmas, along with other holidays, was not special. Holidays, in my home, were filled with lots of drinking.

Drinking always led to yelling. . .
Yelling led to fights. . .

Fights sometimes went beyond words . . .

In our home the "special" had been lost in holiday events.

This Christmas in particular was framed in angry discussions of job loss and financial stress. I overheard a lot.

The GIFT was so mysterious; it was a blaze of red color in my black and white world. It captured my mind. I could hardly contain myself as the time came to open presents! I am the youngest of four. Presents were handed out in order, oldest to youngest. Each time another gift was handed out the anticipation built.

It did not go to my sister. . .
My oldest brother did not get it. .
My middle brother was given the box next to it. . .

Next, my mom's hand reached for THE gift . . . my world went into slow motion when she handed THE mysterious, beautifully wrapped gift to me! For just a moment I didn't move. Maybe it was a mistake... then I saw the hidden tag; it said, "To Mike from Santa." It was real. It was for me. My fingers began to un-wrap the box; I was still in disbelief. As the paper fell away, I could hardly believe my eyes; a brand new pair of black ice skates. New for ME! Being the youngest boy with two older brothers almost nothing was new coming to me. Now right in front of me were brand new shiny ice skates.

I remember nothing else of that day beyond skating up and down the ice covered country roads. I was the only one thankful for the recent ice storm! In the next few days, I'm sure I must have broken some world record for the distance skated by a 9 year old boy.

That gift lifted me out of a fog. I'm not sure what I would label the fog. Maybe it was the expectation that somehow Christmas should be special. Maybe it was TV or maybe comments I heard at school but somehow I thought Christmas should be a special time. The mysterious gift made that Christmas the most memorable of my childhood. I never found out who "Santa" was. I wish I could say, "Thank you" and let them know how much that gift meant. Someone's kindness made a significant impact and a memorable Christmas.

I now know there is another mysterious gift that makes Christmas special. Often it is missed in the busyness, emotion or misplaced focus of the season. This gift has removed the fog of despair that had a grip on my life. This mysterious gift came in the form of a baby born in a stable. When I consider that Jesus left the perfection of heaven, it is almost incomprehensible. He came to walk the planet He created. Each day, His heart was broken by the people he came to serve. He did this for nine year old boys. All this is wonderful, mysterious and beautiful. What a gift. Since I do know THIS gift giver, I can say "Thank you" for a life changing gift.

Have you considered Jesus, the One whose heart has been broken and He knows all your hurts and sorrows. Would you like to know Him personally? You can by simply opening up your life to Him and asking Him to come into your life, forgive you sins and be direct your life from this moment on. You can pray a prayer something like this:

Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life to You and ask You to come in as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Bring peace to my world this Christmas. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Amen





Pumpkin Magic Cake

(The ingredients separate to make layers)

Box of yellow or white cake mix ,mixed according to box (eggs, water, oil). Set Aside.

For Pie: 1 —15 oz. can Pumpkin Puree 1/2 C. evaporated milk
1/2 C. heavy cream 3 eggs
1 tsp. Pumpkin spice 1 C. brown sugar

For Frosting: 1 - 4 oz. oz. vanilla instant pudding 1 tsp. pumpkin spice
1 C. cold milk 4 oz. cream cheese
1— 8 oz. Tub of Cool Whip



Set oven to 350 degrees. Baking time is 50-60-minutes.

Step 1: Prepare cake mix according to box. Pour into 9x13 inch lightly greased and floured baking pan.

DO NOT BAKE. Set Aside.

Step 2. In a small bowl, combine pumpkin, evaporated milk, heavy cream, eggs, brown sugar, pumpkin spice. Mix until smooth. Slowly pour over batter. Bake for 50—60 minutes or until center no longer moves.

NOTE— Cake will be darker but it is not burned.

Step 3. Frosting: Place pudding, pumpkin spice, cold milk and mix well, add softened cream.

Mix until smooth— fold in Cool Whip. Frost cooled cake .

“Carol Glancy “ shared this wonderful moist cake recipe, just in time for the holidays

C.C.C Recipe Box

Peanut Butter Pie

(Smooth, Creamy and Tasty)

1 Baked pie Crust

4 oz. cream cheese (softened)

3/4 c. powdered Sugar

1 c. Peanut Butter

2 T. milk

4 oz. of the Cool Whip

Mix ingredients together fold in the Cool Whip , Pour into baked pie crust

Topping

4 oz. Cool Whip
Peanut Butter Cup



Spread the 4 oz. Cool Whip on top and then sprinkle chopped Peanut Butter Cup over top.

Shared by Betty Evans

Tasty Desserts for your Holidays

Pumpkin Pie Cake

(Better than Pumpkin Pie)

1 box yellow cake mix (reserve 1 c.)



To the remainder add:

1 stick butter (melted)

1 beaten egg

Beat with fork until all cake mix is absorbed. Place in bottom of greased and floured 9x13 baking pan.

Filling:

1 can pumpkin (1lb. 13 oz.)

4 eggs

1/4 c. white sugar

1/2 c. brown sugar

1 can evaporated milk

2 tsp. cinnamon

Beat with mixer and spread over cake.

Topping:

To the cup reserved cake mix add:

1/2 c. white granulated sugar

1/2 c. chopped nuts

1/2 stick soft butter

1 t. cinnamon

Mix with fork. Sprinkle over pumpkin.

Bake 350 degrees for 60 minutes.

Shared by Betty Evans



Cherry Cheeks Christmas — A Christmas Story for Kids

Cherry Cheeks was a very good child. He was round, with big red Cheeks. That's why he was called Cherry Cheeks. He lived in a little house up the mountainside, just beside a big fir forest. Cherry Cheeks would often go off for a walk. He would put on his red hat – the one with the pompom – and went to visit his friends in the mountains.



Sometimes, as he was walking along, a ladybird would come and land on his finger. Cherry Cheeks wouldn't move. Instead, he sang: "Ladybird, what a wonderful word!" Then the ladybird would fly off, feeling very pleased and thinking how nice Cherry Cheeks was.

Everybody knew and loved Cherry Cheeks. The first, tall and small, murmured: "There's Cherry Cheeks! Hello Cherry Cheeks!" And all the animals sang all together: "Hello Cherry Cheeks!"



Whenever he sat down in the forest, all the animals came up to him. The birds, the squirrels, the rabbits and even the butterflies!

They all used to listen to the old fir trees, because they could tell such beautiful stories...But let me tell you what happened one day to Cherry Cheeks. It was the night before Christmas. Cherry Cheeks was about 6 years old.

His parents had gone into town and he was on his own. His mummy had told him to be good and Cherry Cheeks had promised he would wait patiently until they got back.

First of all, he'd played in the snow with his school-friends, then he'd gone home. He played with his cat and did a little Coloring in book.

But when night started to fall, he started to get bored. He went to the window and looked out. And that's when he said to himself that he could surprise his daddy and mummy by going out to meet them.



He put on his red hat (with the pompom) and set out on the little path. When they saw him leave, the fir trees wondered where he could possibly be going at such a late hour.



was!

Cherry Cheeks waited by the path, but still his parents didn't come. Suddenly, everything went black. The night had fallen all of a sudden, so Cherry Cheeks decided to head back home. But Cherry Cheeks' legs were only little and it isn't easy walking in the snow with little legs. But he kept going bravely on. Sometimes he would fall up to his knees in snow. He was getting tired. Suddenly, he found himself in front of a big fir tree: he could no longer see the path. It was dark. He was lost and cold too. Cherry Cheeks started to cry. That's when the big fir tree heard his sobs. He touched him with his big branches. Straightaway, he knew who it

"Cherry Cheeks is lost!" He told all his neighbors. The fir trees told the squirrels and the rabbits, too:" Cherry Cheeks is lost!" Then the big fir tree lifted Cherry Cheeks up on his big, long branches and together with his neighbors, they made a hammock for him. So that he didn't catch cold, the squirrels and the rabbits came and snuggled up to him to keep him warm. Cherry Cheeks felt much safer with all his friends around him, keeping him nice and cozy. He slipped off to sleep



But of course the old fir tree knew it was Christmas Eve – and they didn't want Cherry Cheeks to miss Christmas. So they waited and watched for Father Christmas. As soon as they saw his sleigh, they called out to him and told him all about Cherry Cheeks' bad luck.



Now, Father Christmas knew that Cherry Cheeks was a very good boy. So he asked a snow cloud for his help. The cloud decorated the tallest tree in the forest with stars and threads of silver. Then he asked Mrs. Moon to shine her light over it all. Then, ever so gently, Father Christmas woke up Cherry Cheeks. He opened his eyes and to his amazement he saw the tallest tree in the forest shining like silver, so bright it lit up the whole forest.

The next morning, his parents found him asleep in the fir trees. When he got back home, Cherry Cheeks found lots of chocolates and toys in his stockings. Later, he told all his friends what Father Christmas had brought him. He told them about the toys and the chocolate, but also about the great silver fir tree. A huge fir tree, taller than his house, and shining bright. But nobody would believe him.

Still, it was true all the same. Cherry Cheeks was so kind to his friends in the forest that he'd been given an amazing present: the "magnificent silver fir tree" that had lit up this wonderful Christmas Eve.



The End

Christian Symbols

Christmas is a holiday full of symbolism. Do you know the meanings of the different Christmas symbols?

What is the Meaning of Gold?

The gift of gold to the Christ Child is supposed to have come from Melchior, a king from Arabia, who, legend has it, was one of the Three Wise Men.

His contribution is thought to have financed the Holy Family's flight into Bethlehem.



Do you know what Frankincense is?

Tradition maintains that Balthasar, one of the Three Wise Men who came from the East to find the Christ Child, presented frankincense to the baby as a gift by honoring him in way, Balthasar fulfilled prophecy that gold and frankincense would be brought from the Gentiles to honor the heavenly king (Isaiah 60 and Psalm 72).



Frankincense is an incense given to the baby Jesus.

Frankincense, a sweet gum resin from the Boswellia tree, is the purest of

The Christmas Tree



The fir tree has a long association with Christianity, it began in Germany almost 1,000 years ago when St Boniface, who converted the German people to Christianity, was said to have come across a group of pagans worshipping an oak tree.

In anger, St Boniface is said to have cut down the oak tree and to his amazement a young fir tree sprung up from the roots of the oak tree. St Boniface took this as a sign of the Christian faith. But it was not until the 16th century that fir trees were brought indoors at Christmas time.

What is Myrrh?

Caspar, a king from Tarsus and one of the Three Wise Men, is believed to have given myrrh to the Baby Jesus.

Myrrh is known for its medicinal value and was used in ancient times for cleaning wounds and sores, as an analgesic, and for embalming the dead or anointing kings.



Myrrh is actually an aromatic gum resin that oozes from gashes cut in the bark of the commiphora tree. It hardens into teardrop-shaped chunks and is then pounded into powder or mixed to make ointments and perfumes. It is named for its bitter taste and symbolizes the Suffering Savior, the Great Physician, and Christ's human nature.

What is an Advent Wreath?

The season of Advent is the beginning of the church year for Christians. It starts the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day and ends on Christmas Eve. Meaning "arrival," Advent is a celebration of the birth of Jesus and his eventual return.

Many families celebrate this holy season by lighting an Advent wreath. A circular evergreen wreath is laid flat and adorned with four candles around the wreath and one in the center. It is very symbolic of:

- The circular shape of the wreath epitomizes God himself, his endless mercy, and eternity, which has no beginning or end.
- The green pine boughs signify hope in God and eternal life.
- Candles reflect the light of Jesus coming into the world.

The four purple candles around the wreath stand for the four Sundays of Advent and for the four centuries between the time the prophet Malachi predicted the coming of the Messiah and the actual birth of Jesus. One purple candle is lit for each Sunday in Advent, with one candle lit on the first Sunday, two on the second Sunday, and so on, until all four candles are lit on the fourth





And to all a very
Merry Christmas and
a
Happy, Healthy
New Year
2017



Our Sanctuary Tree 2016