

Courier

FROM ME TO YOU . . .

In the early 19th century, Christmas in Great Britain had become almost extinct. The Times newspaper did not mention Christmas even once between 1790 and 1835. Charles Dickens wrote his classic "A Christmas Carol" in 1843 in an effort to revive the Christmas spirit. Unemployment and famine were common. Dickens wanted the government and the wealthy to recover a heart of generosity for those in greatest need.

Now in 21st century American Christmas is losing its way.

Holiday parties, feasting and drinking.

The generic politically correct greeting "Happy Holidays!"

Baking and Cooking

Gift Exchanges

Winter music - "Frosty the Snowman", "Jingle Bells", "Sleigh Ride"

Mistletoe and holly

Santa Claus

Commercialization- Black Friday Sales

It can be fun but it is also exhausting and distracting.

One can correctly argue that December 25th is not Jesus' real birthday. The church selected this date to Christianize the Saturnalia celebration of Winter Solstice. That is true. Jesus was likely born in spring. Yet we have been celebrating December 25th for centuries. We don't want to lose our focus.

God became flesh and dwelt among us.

God so loved the world that He GAVE his only begotten Son so that all who believe in Him could have eternal life.

The angels proclaimed good news of great joy for all people that in the city of David a savior was born who is Christ the Lord.

And his name is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace.

Let's not lose focus. Worship, celebrate, serve, proclaim, give, and love! Jesus is the Reason for the Season!

*Love,
Pastor Randy*

YOUTH NEWS

PRAISING, IMITATING CHRIST

Words of Wisdom

"Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more that standing in a garage makes you a car." -Billy Sunday

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Sunday morning Bible Study - Studying lessons in the book of James

Flash-point - EPIC Youth's Sunday night meeting at 5:30-7:30 pm. We gather for a meal and then have a night of bible study, prayer, sharing and fun. Come join us!

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 19 - Christmas Party/Gift Exchange/Movie Night

January 10 - First CREATION planning meeting*

January 23 - Financial Class for youth and parents?

February 13 - Youth led Valentine Dinner/Fundraiser (dinner/babysitting)?

More to come!

EPIC YOUTH WEBSITE :[HTTP://CHCOGEPICYOUTH.WEEBLY.COM](http://CHCOGEPICYOUTH.WEEBLY.COM)

Contact Michael or Sue for more updates and information

Pennies from Heaven

I found a penny today just laying on the ground.

But it's not just a penny this little coin I found.

"Found" pennies come from heaven, that's what my Grampa told me. He said angels toss them down.

Oh, how I loved that story.

He said when an angel misses you they toss a penny down sometimes just to cheer you up and make a smile out of your frown.

So, don't pass by that penny when you're feeling blue.

It may be a penny from heaven that an angel tossed to you.

SPIRITUAL ACROSTICS

"If you're right with God, you'll want to be right with others."

DECEMBER - Branch

When you speak about a branch, what do you think about? A river has many branches. A business can have many branches. There can be branches off of a main language, a race or even a family tree. A main road such as an interstate has many roads branching off which take you in other directions and to other places.

Years ago, Yvonne and I were running a shuttle for our son kayaking on the Upper Youghiogeny River. We actually put Curt on the river in West Virginia and we met him at the takeout back in the wilderness of western Maryland. Parking along the river waiting, an older couple stopped and a woman with a look of worriedness told me that they were lost and asked me if I could give them directions back to US Rt 40. I responded, "Sure, you see the road that you are on?

Just keep following it and it will take you anywhere you want to go." Well, her looks were that she wanted to kill me! But, we did get them out of the mountain and back on the road they wanted which they had to drive on other roads branching off of one another.

In John 15:1-17, Jesus teaches using a vine and a branch. I've given these verses a sub-title asking, "Are you a hardwood or softwood?" Here Jesus uses a grapevine for an analogy for us to grow from having a love relationship with Him and to be fruitful. Christ is our model. The more we know of Him, the more we will be like Him! * Let's use a tree for an example. The roots are God (vinedresser vs. 1) feeding and pouring all of His wisdom, knowledge and strength into Jesus, the main trunk (true vine vs. 1) which is teaching, feeding and sharing all of what He has been given from our Father into us, the many branches (true believers vss 2-3). Then, there are many smaller branches growing out of the larger branches which bear the fruit and leaves. These smaller branches are new believers. Jesus shares many rewards for us being a branch which produces much fruit (vs. 5). A branch that bears fruit will be pruned in order to bear more fruit (vs. 2). You may ask of anything and it will be given to you (vs. 7). You will be His disciple (vs. 8). You will abide in His love (vs. 10). Your joy will be made full (vs. 11). You are no longer called His slaves but, called His friends (vs. 14-15). But the greatest of all of these is that you will love one another (vs 17)!

So, you see, God is bringing radiant anointing nourishment (thru) Christ healing us as Christ helps us teach new babes in Christ! Our lives don't need to

be beautiful, they just need to be available!

*In His Service,
Bro. Jeff <>*

BITS ' PIECES . . .

Did you see . . . Operation Christmas Boxes were stacked high on the table! A total of 30+ boxes were collected! Thank you to all who contributed! You have made some girl or boy very happy!

***** Disappointed . . . only 13 DATA BASE INFO SHEETS were returned to Mailbox 14! Please do not assume I have your correct info as emails change, cell phones or land lines change or are disconnected. It is not too late to fill out the form TODAY!**

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DECEMBER SAVVY LIVING by Donna Marion

If you ask most people what their goals are, they will give you a very generalized goal. But stop to think about what your goals are and how you will achieve them. What would you like to achieve for 2016 and how will you go about reaching that goal?

Organization is a goal for all of us. One good place to start is with our finances. Knowing where you stand financially is an important step. Gather all of your bills and corresponding paperwork and organize them in a system that works for you. Make a list of all of your income and expenses. The important thing is to have a clear picture of your financial situation. Work on your budget for next year and commit right now to follow it. If you are not preparing to save for emergencies, you will not be ready when they happen, and they will happen. You will need new tires, an auto repair, furnace repair or a host of other problems when you least expect them. If you have some emergency funds, the problem is not so difficult to deal with.

If your mornings are filled with arguments, impatience, and aggravation, you can consider planning a new morning routine to make a smoother start to your day. Have each family member plan what they need for the next day before they go to bed at night and put it where it needs to be. If you are a coffee drinker, set up your coffee maker and set a timer the night before.

Pack lunches before bed. Do you want to set-up the slow cooker and put it in the fridge before bed? These little steps may add a lot of peace to your mornings.

Here's to Savvy Living!

CENTER your Christmas in CHRIST

Quotes from A. W. Tozer:

One of the most stinging criticisms made against Christians is that their minds

are narrow and their hearts small.

Any nation which for an extended period puts pleasure before liberty is likely

to lose the liberty it misused.



MY CREED
To live each day,
The best I may,
The hours with service filling;
To ne'er be sad
But always glad
And sound and well, God willing.

To weed from life
All wrong and strife,
To love my neighbor purely;
Be just and true
In all I do
And trust in God securely.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

December 2 ~Joanie & Virgil Purkey ~ **43 years!**
December 9 ~ Connie & Ed Ommert ~ 17 years

CONGRATULATIONS!!



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HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY!

- 2 Frank McCollum
- 4 Janie Perry
Dean Stiner
- 9 Tom Ahlers
- 10 Cody and Kaleb Zinn
- 11 Pat Glass
Charlie Kutz
- 15 Missy Kutz
Esther Reeve
Gale Witter
- 20 Sherrie Prall
- 26 John Plitt



CHUCKLES . . .

Have you ever noticed that . . . Common sense is a flower that doesn't grow in everyone's garden.

Life is short!
Love truly, Laugh uncontrollably.
And never regret anything that made you smile.
The best things in life are free until the government finds out and taxes it.

Have you ever just looked at someone and knew the wheel was turnin'... but the hamster was dead?

There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk. "Only the Ten Commandments," answered the lady.

God made man before woman
so as to give him time to think
of an answer for her first question.

My wife and I had words, but I didn't get to use mine

Something to think about . . . Equal Rights?

A Jewish deli wouldn't lose their business for refusing to serve you a ham and cheese sandwich.

A Muslim caterer wouldn't lose their business for refusing to serve a tenderloin lunch at a Pork Producers Convention.

An Atheist baker wouldn't lose their business for refusing to provide a Christmas cake decorated with the nativity scene.

Yet Christian businesses are being forced to throw away their religious beliefs to submit to the rights of others.

"Equal Rights" means equality for Christians, too

Jesus was content with a stable when he was born that we might have a mansion when we die

'Twas the night before Jesus came

*'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.*

*The children were dressing to crawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.*

*When out of the East there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!*

*When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray
I knew in a moment this must be The Day!*

*The light of His face made me cover my head
It was Jesus! returning just like He had said.
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.
In the Book of Life which He held in His hand
Was written the name of every saved man.
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;
When He said "It's not here" my head hung in shame.*

*The people whose names had been written with love
He gathered to take to His Father above.
With those who were ready He rose without a sound
While all the rest were left standing around.*

*I fell to my knees, but it was too late;
I had waited too long and this sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.*

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;

*The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
There's only one life and when comes the last call
We'll find that the Bible was true after all!*

The History of Advent

For many Christians unfamiliar with the liturgical year, there may be some confusion surrounding the meaning of the Advent season. Some people may know that the Advent season focuses on expectation and think that it serves as an anticipation of Christ's birth in the season leading up to Christmas. This is part of the story, but there's more to Advent.

The History of Advent

The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming," which is a translation of the Greek word *parousia*.

Advent symbolizes the present situation of the church in these "last days" (Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2), as God's people wait for the return of Christ in glory to consummate his eternal kingdom. The church is in a similar situation to Israel at the end of the Old Testament. Israel looked back to God's past gracious actions on their behalf in leading them out of Egypt in the Exodus, and on this basis they called for God once again to act for them. In the same way, the church, during Advent, looks back upon Christ's coming in celebration while at the same time looking forward in eager anticipation to the coming of Christ's kingdom when he returns for his people.

To balance the two elements of remembrance and anticipation, the first two Sundays in Advent (through December 16) look forward to Christ's second coming, and the last two Sundays (December 17 - 24) look backward to remember Christ's first coming. Over the course of the four weeks, Scripture readings move from passages about Christ's return in judgment, to Old Testament passages about the expectation of the coming Messiah, to New Testament passages about the announcements of Christ's arrival by John the Baptist and the Angels.

While it is difficult to keep in mind in the midst of holiday celebrations, shopping, lights and decorations, and joyful carols, Advent is intended to be a season of fasting, much like Lent.

While Advent is certainly a time of celebration and anticipation of Christ's birth, it is more than that. It is only in the shadow of Advent that the miracle of Christmas can be fully understood and appreciated; and it is only in the light of Christmas that the Christian life makes any sense. It is between the fulfilled promise of Christ's first coming and the yet-to-be-fulfilled promise of this second coming.

(Excerpts from *What is Advent*, Justin Holcomb)

THOU DIDST LEAVE THY THRONE

Emily S. Elliott, 1836-1897

"I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10)

This spiritually enriching text differs from the usual Christmas songs since it focuses not only on Jesus' birth but also on His life on earth, His suffering and death, and the ultimate triumph of His second advent.

This hymn was written by Emily Elliott to teach children the truths of the advent and nativity seasons. Emily's life was filled with benevolent activities in rescue missions and in the work of the Sunday school movement of that time. Although she wrote this text for the children of her father's church, St. Mark's Anglican Church in Brighton, England, the easily understood wording, the poetic imagery, and the spiritual truths found in these excellent lines soon made the hymn a widespread favorite everywhere.

The clear message of each verse is accentuated by the use of contrasting sentences, each beginning with the word "but." Then in the fifth stanza, the contrast is reversed with the rejoicing at Christ's return and the prospects of being at His side throughout eternity. The refrain after each verse effectively personalizes the truth presented. This fine hymn has proved to be an inspiration not only to children but to adults as well, during the Christmas season and also throughout the entire year.

Read the words of this Christmas hymn.

Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown when Thou camest to earth for me; but in Bethlehem's home was there found no room for Thy holy nativity.

Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang, proclaiming Thy royal degree; but of lowly birth didst Thou come to earth, and in great humility.

The foxes found rest, and the birds their nest in the shade of the forest tree; but Thy couch was the sod, O Thou Son of God, in the deserts of Galilee.

Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word that should set Thy people free, but with mocking scorn and with crown of thorn they bore Thee to Calvary.

When the heav'ns shall ring and the angels sing at Thy coming to victory, let Thy voice call me home, saying, "Yet there is room - there is room at My side for thee," My heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus, when thou comest and callest for me!

AFTER CHRISTMAS WISH LIST FOR SENIORS

Wouldn't it be great if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes and come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller!

I don't trip over things, I do random gravity checks!

Old age came at a really bad time!

When I was a child I thought Nap Time was a punishment . . . now, as a grown up, it just feels like a small vacation!

The biggest lie I tell myself is . . . "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."

I don't have gray hair. I have "wisdom highlights."

If God wanted me to touch my toes he would've put them on my knees.

The kids text me "plz" which is shorter than please. I text back "no" which is shorter than "yes."

Even duct tape can't fix stupid . . . but it can muffle the sound.

Of course I talk to myself, sometimes I need expert advice!

Lord, give me patience and give it to me NOW!

Why do I have to press one for English when you're gonna transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

THE PENALTY
If you talk about your
troubles
And tell them o'er and o'er,
The world will think you like
them
And proceed to give you
more.

THANK YOU for taking the time to read the Chapel Hill Church of God

December Courier! May you have a blessed day in the Lord!
