



## **T'was the Night Before Christmas ~ Heaven's Version**

**'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through Heaven's house,  
All the angels were stirring, the Saviors birth to announce!  
The Heavenly Hosts were getting ready to sing,  
In the hope that their anthem would let True Freedom ring.**

**The shepherds were keeping their sheep late that night,  
While the Provision from Heaven hung just out of sight.  
Mary was weary from traveling all day,  
While Joseph was searching for a place they could stay.**

**A decree from Caesar made travel a must,  
Mary's feet were now cold, tired, and covered with dust.  
Yet, in her heart she quietly remembered,  
That the Angel of the Lord said, She was highly favored!**

**All Joseph could find was a room in a barn,  
But at least for the night Mary's feet would be warm.  
The time of her delivery would be here soon,  
As the light of the day, gave way to the moon.**

**The Son of the Highest he shall be called,  
A Horn of Salvation given for all.  
He will sit on the throne of his father David,  
And one day all men will sing his praises.**

**The Mighty God and Everlasting Father,  
Whose Government alone will rest on his shoulder.  
A Wonderful Counselor, and the Prince of Peace,  
Whose Government over time will only increase.**

## **T'was the Night Before Christmas ~ Heaven's Version (cont.)**

**The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him;  
He is anointed to heal all who are broken.  
He will set at liberty them that are bruised,  
Mistreated and jailed, and by power, abused.**

**The promised Messiah from a time long ago,  
Was now ready to be given to the world down below.  
The promise of His Kingdom reigning on Earth,  
To govern our hearts, and to show men their worth.**

**The shepherds were resting; the sheep were silent that night,  
When the Angel appeared, and caused them great fright.  
Fear not, said the Angel, I bring tidings of great joy,  
Which will be for all people, so all may rejoice!**

**Your Savior has been born in the City of David,  
Which is Christ the Lord, who has come to save us.  
He will make the dark places lighted within,  
Take away all guilt and do away with all sin.**

**Peace on Earth! The Angel said, All is well with mankind!  
For the Father has sent his Gift right on time.  
The Gift of forgiveness for all to enjoy,  
His salvation and blessings for you to employ.  
You'll find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes,  
His name will be Jesus, and he is God's love exposed.**

**Then the Angel was joined by the Heavenly Hosts,  
Giving glory to God in the Highest, as together they rose.  
The shepherds heard them exclaim as they rose out of sight,  
God's forgiveness to all, and to all, a very good night!**



By Elizabeth McAndrew



## **Martha Circle Minutes, November 8, 2023**

Present: Dawn Frey, Sharon Hadley, Sarah Collins, Joy Sommers, Marcy Bonney, Linda Chisholm, Joanne Henley, Darlene Anthony, Veronica Anthony, Joyce Cary, Ruth St. John, Vi Halder.

Collections: Love Gift \$18.65. Devotions: \$14.00.

Devotions: Given by Marcy: Scripture used was Matthew 6:24 - 34. Jesus wanted His followers to rely on God's provision for daily life and not to make worrying their priority, for worry is a thief.

Secretary report: Given by Sharon: Ten present at October meeting. Time change for November and December meetings will be at 5:30. Christmas Shoe Boxes will be filled at November meeting. A luncheon for Isaiah 117 House will be hosted at the Journey church on 24th St. This will be an informational luncheon. MACS will be doing their Christmas Basket project from December 11-14. Volunteers are welcome.

Treasurer Report: Given by Joy: Beginning balance as of November 5=\$2,297.33 + Sept. Bake Sale \$20, +October Bake Sale \$65, +Spaghetti Dinner \$341, +November Love Gift \$18.65, -check for Love Gift -\$18.65, -Rick spaghetti supplies-\$260.60, Sam's Club - \$80.40 for spaghetti supplies, Heifer Mission -\$215.00. Devotions + \$14 = Balance \$2,181.33.

Missions: Given by Marcy: Jon and Amanda Good on assignment in U.S. Samaritan's Purse completed their 12th season in Alaska for the ministry of Operation Heal Our Patriots. A box will be put in the foyer for MACS Christmas drive.

Sunshine: Given by Sarah: Six cards sent out. Sarah volunteered to make a silk flower arrangement for Donna Ruthruff. Darlene made a motion to do so and seconded by Marcy. A thank you card will be sent to Heather Rocco for the donations she gave to the Martha Circle for the Christmas Shoe Box project.

New Business: Martha Circle will fund the HEIFER International project with (1) goat (2) ducks (3) rabbits (4) chickens. Motion made by Dawn to do so and seconded by Darlene.

Sarah proposed we use the money from the spaghetti supper to fund the cost of the shoe boxes. Balance from 2022 is \$73.30. Funds from the craft show will be used to cover remainder of the cost for 24 boxes at \$10 a box. Sarah made a motion to do so and seconded by Marcy.

We will meet again on December 6 and that will be our Christmas party. Everyone is to bring a "white elephant" gift and a Christmas snack.

Meeting dismissed in prayer by Dawn and then on to refreshments and then filled our 24 Christmas Shoe Boxes

Next meeting will be in March 2024 - Hostess Dawn

**We are collecting for the annual Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering during the month of December. There are special envelopes available at the church.**



## *‘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.

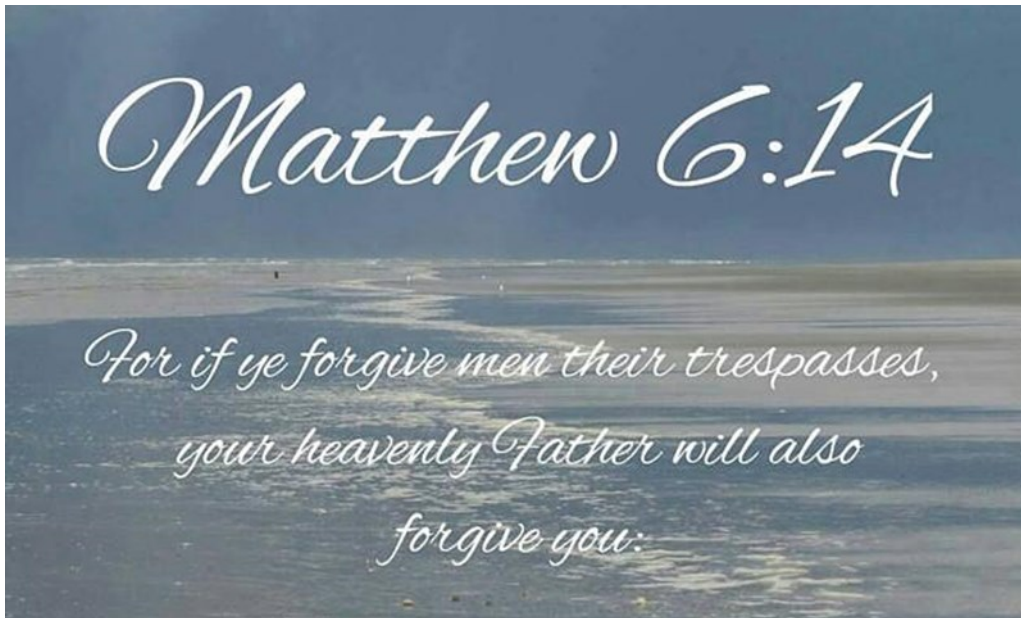
In the Book of Life which He held in His Hand  
Was written the name of every saved man.  
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;  
When He said "It's not here" My head hung in shame!

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!





## Forgiveness... Time to Weed the Garden?

### Matthew 6:14-15

Time to weed the garden? But it's snowing. Yes, but now is as good a time as any to get rid of those roots that are growing deep and causing us frustration some we don't even realize. But, you said "weed my garden" and now you are talking about frustrations. I know, I know.

When I think of weeding my garden I think of all those pesky weeds. If I keep up on my weeding they are not too bad to pull up but if it gets away for just a few days and we have rain.... Then watch out. If I let it get out of control those weeds get so hard to pull out that I have to get a shovel to dig them out!!

I heard a sermon one time about how bitterness grows roots like a weed and latches on. Since I have heard this sermon I have tried to not hold on to bitterness and forgive. As hard as it may be at times it really seems to just make me feel better.

Another sermon I heard spoke of 3 truths about forgiveness. #1 - Unforgiveness is Torture. Why is it torture? Because God commanded us in the Bible to forgive others and if we don't obey God's commands it can cause anxiety, negativity, isolation and physical health suffers.

#2 - Forgiveness releases me from the torture of my past. This one stuck with me. That I can forgive but still not have a relationship with the one that I forgave. I do not have to allow them access to my life. When I forgive I am releasing myself from the torture of the past and not allowing it to affect my future. Wow - it IS true - whom the Son sets free is free INDEED!

#3 - Forgiveness releases people to God's judgment. - So, when I forgive someone and release them to God, he will judge them. Let go and Let GOD!! Let HIM carry the weight!

I have had people ask me "Why are you so calm", "Why are you not bitter"? Simply put, I have the peace of Jesus in my heart and forgiveness. It is not always easy, there are times when I feel anxiety creeping in when certain people "set me off", but I try to just give it to God so that I may know peace, not just for me but for my family.

# Christmas Tree Oh Christmas Tree

Submitted by Jennie Markos

The Christmas tree was up in the house although mom did not let us decorate it... yet. She said that we had to wait until the weekend. Of course, I was determined to know the reason why for the long delay I mean really, the weekend was a whole 3 days away!!!

She said that she wanted to string popcorn like when she was a kid. She also said that she had one more surprise for us. Oh boy I wonder what the surprise will be. Maybe a new movie for the VHS that Dad just bought us? Or maybe, just maybe she is FINALLY going to let me go to the movies by myself with my friends - doubtful. Guess God is trying to teach me patience by making me wait for a whole 3 days.

Fast forward to Saturday morning. I go bouncing, literally, down the wooden stairs in our house at promptly 7am to find my mother in the kitchen making breakfast. She has already been up for a few hours working at her sewing machine. I can tell because there are pins and needles all over the table. "Good morning mommy dearest", I say in my sweetest voice I can. She looks at me and smiles and tells me good morning as well and asks me to go check on the animals. Darn, I was hoping she would spill the beans about the surprise but not yet.

I get all bundled up and go out to do the morning chores. The chickens need to be given food and water and so does the stray barn cat. We have named the cat Herman. Herman is a big fat orange cat with the friendliest face of any barn cat you have ever seen. On the way back into the house I hop a ride on the tire swing and then decide to head into the house for a warm breakfast.

By now my brothers are both up. Dad had to work today so it is just the four of us this morning. While we are eating Mark, my oldest brother, talks about his shift last night at work. He is working at KFC part time while still in school. Sometimes he brings us home leftover desserts from there - they are so yummy. Jeff said that he has to work later today at the grocery store in town so mom said that she will tell us our surprise now.

Well, she said, we are going to have our very own Nativity Scene! Cool said both the boys, I think I just kinda looked like "ok". I was hoping for that VCR tape. She wanted us to set the nativity scene early today before the boys went to work. She already had a spot picked out on the hill overlooking the pond in the clearing. She figured we could set the scene and take some popcorn and cranberry string for the tree and read a few verses from the Bible. So we did. And then the boys went to work, and mom and I decorated the tree and waited for Dad to get home from work.

I really did not think much about that nativity scene or why mom was so excited about it until a few nights later. It was late at night, and I couldn't sleep. I looked out my window and it was a bright, bright night. It must have been a full moon that night or close to it. I thought I could see a glow from the clearing from where we had the nativity scene, so I snuck downstairs and put on my boots and coat and walked just outside the back door.

I did see a glow! I did not go any further but stood there in my boots and coat and nightgown - just at peace staring at the beauty of the scene thinking of the meaning of the nativity. At that moment I realized that the silly little VCR tape I wanted so badly was no big deal anymore. What mattered was that God sent his son for us, ALL of us. And that so many times I have been that 1 sheep that he had left the 99 for to go and get. What matters is our family, our church family and those around us. Yes, it is fun to celebrate Christmas and decorate but it is also fun to just take in the moment and enjoy those around you and while you witness to them, cast your net.





- Dec 2 Niko Holmes
- Dec 17 Laia Wasielewskit
- Dec 18 Ryan Boysen
- Dec 21 Rayna Sommers
- Dec 27 John Paschen, 1939
- Dec 28 Donna Ruthruff
- Dec 28 Candace Ivey
- Dec 30 Viviana Anthony
  
- Jan 1 Michael Meng
- Jan 2 Elise Rae Lopshire
- Jan 2 Josh Lopshire
- Jan 2 Alexandria Hamaker
- Jan 4 Avery Goodman
- Jan 7 Olivia Farmer
- Jan 13 Bob Beltz
- Jan 18 Brian Gary
- Jan 25 Emily Ivey
- Jan 28 Harlynn Casey
- Jan 29 Steve Wilkens

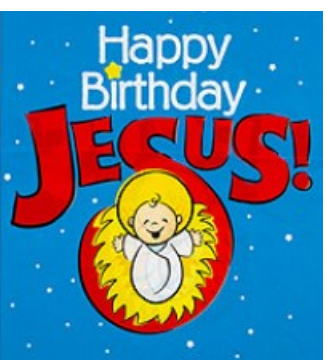
- Dec 23 Ken & Kay Davis
- Jan 3 John & Ruth Paschen, 1959

**Children's Time Sign-Up**

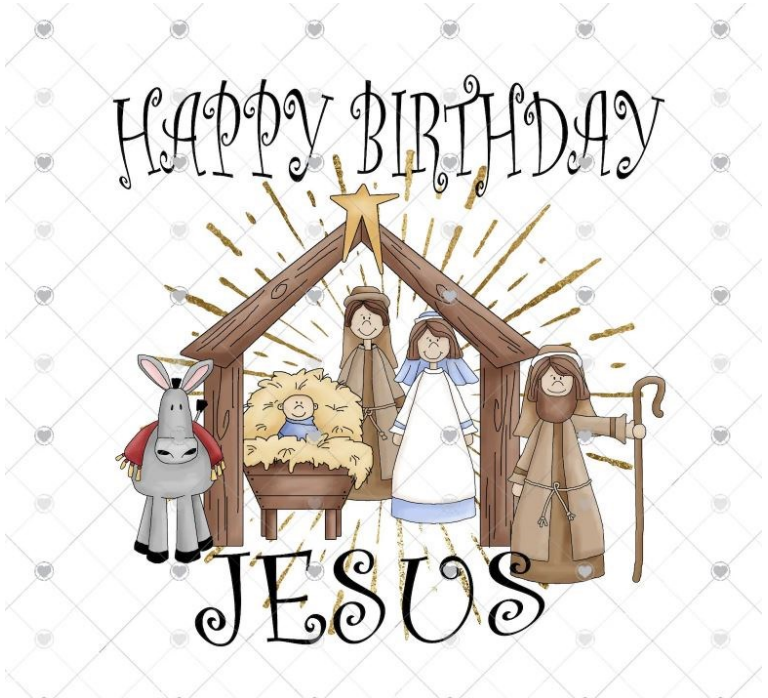
- 12/3 - Sommers
- 12/10 - OPEN
- 12/17 - Sommers
- 12/24 - OPEN

**Flower Time Sign-Up**

- 12/3 - Poinsettias/OPEN
- 12/10 - Poinsettias/OPEN
- 12/17 - Poinsettias/OPEN
- 12/24 - Poinsettias/OPEN



Kid's Christmas Party, Dec. 2nd  
11am-1pm Crafts, Food & Fun  
Join us!







## As Long as There's a Christmas

The first few lights glow brightly,  
as you watch the season start.  
You know you should be happy,  
but don't feel it in your heart.

Instead you think about a time  
when someone laughed with you,  
and the love you shared then filled your  
soul. But too soon it was through.

So Christmas comes with sadness,  
and a yearning deep inside,  
a thirst for love and peace and hope  
that will not be denied.

Late one night you hear a voice,  
so soft, and without blame,  
and then, surprised, you realize,  
He's calling you by name.

"I know your hurt and loneliness,  
the heartache that you bear.  
I listen and I cry with you  
through every single prayer.

"I promised in the manger  
and fulfilled it from the cross.  
I built a home that's filled with love  
for all those who are lost.

"So let Me come and heal your heart  
and give you rest within.  
For My way is kind and gentle  
and will bring you joy again."

His words still echo through the years,  
a vow that He made true,  
"As long as there's a Christmas,  
I will be in love with you."

--Jack Zavada

## Not Only Christmas Day

Lord, this is my prayer, Not only on Christmas  
Day, But until I see You face to face, May I  
live my life this way:

Just like the baby Jesus, I ever hope to be,  
Resting in Your loving arms, Trusting in  
Your sovereignty.

And like the growing Christ child, In wisdom  
daily learning, May I ever seek to know You,  
With my mind and spirit yearning.

Like the Son so faithful, Let me follow in Your  
light, Meek and bold, humble and strong, Not  
afraid to face the night.

Nor cowardly to suffer, And stand for truth  
alone, Knowing that Your kingdom, Awaits my  
going home.

Not afraid to sacrifice, Though great may be  
the cost, Mindful how You rescued me, From  
broken-hearted loss.

Like my risen Savior, The babe, the child, the  
Son, May my life forever speak, Of who You  
are and all You've done.

So while this world rejoices, And celebrates  
Your birth, I treasure You, the greatest gift,  
Unequaled in Your worth.

I long to hear the same words, That welcomed  
home Your Son, "Come, good and faithful serv-  
ant," Your Master says, "Well done."

And may heaven welcome others, Who will  
join with me in praise, Because I lived for  
Jesus Christ, Not only Christmas Day

-- Mary Fairchild

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We  
have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came  
from the Father, full of grace and truth. - John 1:14



# December 2023

Sunday		Mon.		Tue.		Wed.		Thu.		Fri.		Saturday	
27		28		29		29		30		1		2	
						Bible Study 10 am		ZOOM BIBLE STUDY 6 pm		First Day of Advent		Men's Breakfast 8:00 am	
3		4		5		6		7		8		9	
Communion Sunday, First Sunday of Advent		Boy Scouts 7 pm				Bible Study 10 am  Martha Circle Christmas Party 5:30 pm						ADMIN. COUNCIL MEETING 9:00 am	
10		11		12		13		14		15		16	
2nd Sunday of Advent		Boy Scouts 7 pm				Bible Study 10 am  WMT 5 pm Family Night Potluck 6 pm							
17		18		19		20		21		22		23	
3rd Sunday of Advent		Boy Scouts 7 pm				Bible Study 10 am							
24		25		26		27		28		29		30	
4th Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve  DEC 31 New Year's Eve		<b>MERRY CHRIST- MAS!</b>				Bible Study 10 am		Information for January Messenger due at Noon					

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**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

**Ceresco Baptist Church**

December 2023 Messenger

