

The Ceresco Messenger - December 2025

The "W" in Christmas

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations - extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending.

Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six year old. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's "Winter Pageant."

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production.

Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then.

Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats. As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor.

Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas," I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment - songs of reindeer, Santa Claus. So I was slightly taken aback by its bold title, "Christmas Love."

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads.

Those in the front row - center stage held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing "C is for Christmas," a child would hold up the letter C. Then, "H is for Happy," and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, "Christmas Love."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet, girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down - totally unaware her letter appeared as a "W".

The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding her "W". Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together.

A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a reason for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

"CHRISTWAS LOVE"

And, I believe, He still is.

During December we will be collecting the Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering (RMMO)

A Legacy of Love: Honoring Those Who've Served

Following God's call often comes with sacrifice. Many retired ministers, missionaries, and their widowed spouses have served faithfully, yet often lack the resources to fully prepare for life's later seasons. Health challenges, the loss of a spouse, or isolation.

These are the people who have poured into our lives. Pastors who prayed with us, missionaries who served where we could not. Their dedication helped shape the American Baptist Churches USA into the vibrant, faithful community it is today.

Your offering is more than a donation, it's a heartfelt expression of love and gratitude. It allows us to provide emergency assistance and a "Thank You" check to those who have devoted 15 or more years of their lives to God's service.

Thanks to your generosity, in 2024 we raised \$932,122, resulting in 3,331 checks sent to retired ministers, missionaries, and widowed spouses.

These gifts meet real needs and offer comfort in life's most vulnerable moments:

"I am so humbled and thankful for your generosity. I was so surprised when I checked my account and saw your kindness displayed. I will remember my family in Christ and the love you've shown."

— Retiree from Ohio

"Thank you for the RMMO gift. An unexpected and generous blessing. Thank you for all you do in Jesus's name."

— Retiree from California

"Thank you so very much for the Thank You check from MMBB. What a lovely gift— just when my laptop was on its last legs. It couldn't have come at a better time. Thank you! Our affiliation during these 40-plus years has meant more to me than you could imagine."

— Retiree from Virginia

Each time a check is received, it's more than financial support, it's a reminder that they are still part of a loving church family that sees them, remembers them, and honors their service.

Martha Circle Minutes - November 12, 2025 Hostess: Marcy Bonney

Present: (8) Dawn Frey, Sarah Collins, Sharon Hadley, Jennie Markos, Ruth St. John, Joy Sommers, Becky Wilkens, Marcy Bonney

Devotions: "Goodness of God", Scripture reference 1 Corinthians 10:13. God will give us no more than we can handle. If we are placed in the face of temptation, He will provide a way for us to turn from it.

Collections: Devotion - \$8.00. Love Gift - \$14.00.

Secretary: (10) present last meeting. Dawn to get signed up with online banking with MC banking account. We will be packing the Christmas Shoe Boxes at November meeting.

Sunshine: Sarah sent out (3) cards.

Missions: IM: How to use the New-World Mission Offering Discussion Guide.-Hot meals project to provide children a nutritious meal in Tijuana, Mexico.-\$20,000 from OGH emergency disaster relief funds to assist the Caribbean with food and supplies as Hurricane Melissa hits Jamaica, Cuba and Haiti.-Christians unite to pray on November 2nd for the Persecuted Church-Dominican Republic of the Congo-Baptist mission hospitals offer healing and hope to those living on less than \$1 a day.

Treasurer: Balance as of November 12 \$3,301.71. Available funds of \$2,687.69 after distribution of payouts to Isaiah House (bake sale \$283)-Bin Buddy Project (\$260) for purchase of items needed-Love Gift \$71.02. Rick Frey will need to be reimbursed for items bought for spaghetti supper.

Old Business: Spaghetti supper was a success serving 44 adults and 3 kids bringing in \$549.00 with \$163 given in donations for a total of \$712. Profit after expenses \$569.

Motion made by Dawn to use general funds to help with Bin Buddy Project. Second by Ruth and carried.

Martha Circle to support World Vision project with \$240 which will provide (1) goat, (2) ducks, (3) rabbits, and (4) chickens.

December 3rd will be our Christmas party. No meeting to be held. Bring white elephant gift, a snack, and invite someone.

New Business: Officers for next year will remain the same. We will not meet in January or February but will resume in March. Hostess for each month: March 11: Sarah, April 8: Jennie, May 13: Becky, June 10: Picnic, July 8: Ruth, August 12: Sharon, September 9: Joy, October 14: Marcy, November 11: Dawn.

Meeting dismissed in prayer by Dawn and we then had snacks and filled the Christmas Shoe Boxes.

Next Martha Circle gathering will be December 3 for the Christmas party with white elephant gifts!



Putting Christ into Christmas

('Twas the Night Before Christmas)

'Twas the night before Christmas, the eve of Christ's birth;
 Many people were resting all over the earth.
 The shepherds were watching their sheep in the night,
 When all of a sudden, they saw a bright light.
 And what to their wondering eyes should appear
 But a beautiful Angel, high up in the air.
 His face was all shining; his garment so bright,
 That the shepherds began to tremble with fright.
 But as he came nearer, the words that he said
 Soon gave them to know they had nothing to dread.
 He told them of "Peace", with no fear or danger,
 For their Wonderful Gift they would find in a Manger.
 So leaving their sheep they went into town,
 To seek for this Gift; they would look all around.
 They came to the stable, the covers they lift,
 And there in the Manger, God's Wonderful Gift.
 So pure and so holy, so full of God's love,
 They knew it was Jesus, God's gift from above.
 And so as they returned from this Wonderful Boy,
 Their hearts were all running over with joy.
 And so as we think of this Savior again,
 May our worship this Christmas not be in vain.
 Let us love Him and trust Him; there's none that's too small;
 May the Lord richly bless you. Happy Christmas to all.

- Wm. E. Jasper

Date	Worship Flowers	Special Music	Junior Church	Children's Time
12/7/2025	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
12/14/2025	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Sommers
12/21/2025	Sommers	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
12/28/2025	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Markos



Christmas Prayer - Remember Why We Celebrate the Season

God, thank You for sending Your Son to us. I know this time of year we often forget why we celebrate. We tend to be so caught up in planning for parties and gift giving that we forget why we are doing all of these things in the first place. Let me not forget the struggles and strife that Mary and Joseph faced in bringing Your Son, Jesus, into the world.

Yet, Lord, let me not forget the blessings you bestowed on them. You gave them a great gift of a Child and You blessed them with shelter in a time when it seemed they might not have anywhere to stay. And then You brought our Savior into this world to two loving parents and believers who awaited His presence.

I cannot imagine your sacrifice, Lord, but I know that I am blessed by it. I know that every day I feel your presence and look around the world in wonder at your creation. So, this year as I decorate the tree, this year as I sing Christmas carols, let me not forget that Christmas is so much more than gifts and lights. Provide me with the presence of mind to keep me rooted in faith this season.

And let the world find the blessings I have found in You. As cliché as it may sound, let there be peace on earth this season. Let us have the hope and love in our lives that You brought us through the birth of Jesus.

Thank you, Lord. Thank You for bringing my Savior into the world, and thank You for Your blessings on my life. Amen.



Dec 2	Niko Holmes	Jan 1	Michael Meng
Dec 17	Laia Wasielewskit	Jan 2	Elise Rae Lopshire
Dec 18	Ryan Boysen	Jan 2	Josh Lopshire
Dec 21	Rayna Sommers	Jan 2	Alexandria Hamaker
Dec 27	John Paschen, 1939	Jan 4	Avery Goodman
Dec 28	Donna Ruthruff	Jan 7	Olivia Farmer
Dec 28	Candace Ivey	Jan 13	Bob Beltz
Dec 30	Viviana Anthony	Jan 15	Jeff Walker
		Jan 18	Brian Gary
		Jan 25	Emily Ivey
		Jan 28	Harlynn Casey
Jan 3	John & Ruth Paschen, 1959	Jan 29	Steve Wilkens

Happy Anniversary

Not Only Christmas Day -- Mary Fairchild

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 servant," 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

Pastor Mary's Address During Sabbatical
 35175 Highway 12 East, McCool, MS, 39108

Pastor Mary will be back with us on Sunday, January 4, 2026! We can't wait!!

December 2025

Sunday		Mon.		Tue.		Wed.		Thu.		Fri.		Saturday	
11/30		1		2		3		4		5		6	
Fellowship & Testimony Sunday, 1st Sunday of Advent						Bible Study 10 Martha Circle Christmas 5 pm						8 am Men's Breakfast, Christmas Party 11a-1pm	
7		8		9		10		11		12		13	
Communion Sunday & The Helmsmen. 2nd Sunday of Advent						Bible Study 10 WMT 5 pm Family Night Potluck 6 pm						Admin. Council Meeting 9 am	
14		15		16		17		18		19		20	
Pulpit Supply: Pastor Roxie, Third Sunday of Advent Church in Use						Bible Study 10 am							
21		22		23		24	Christmas Eve	25	Christmas Day	26		27	
Christmas Eve Service & 4th Sunday of Advent with Roxie Perry Bake Sale						Christmas Eve		Merry Christmas! Church in Use					
28		29		30		31		1/1	2026	1/2		1/3	
Pulpit Supply: Roxie Perry Church in Use 1 pm						New Year's Eve		HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!				8 am Men's Breakfast Take down Christmas decorations 9 am	

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**Have a Blessed
Christmas & a
Happy New Year!**

God Bless You!