



A Successful Christmas Celebration at Thunderbird West



December 26th by: TBW member Merle Zirkle - December 2011

T'was the day after Christmas and all through the land
People were snoozing, hourglass dripping its sand.

Grandparents were thinking, our kid's not so bad;
With the wife he has won he is quite a lad.
They've given us grandchildren who know how to play
And laugh and sing and make a bright day.

Parents were thinking this year was quite happy
But oh I could use a long winter's nappy.
The season's been busy and full of good cheer
But in only five days we start a new year.

Children were thinking a great Christmas we had
Good thing Santa knows we're not bad;
And we're glad that Daddy didn't get fired
And in poverty at Christmas we didn't get mired.

Santa was thinking wow, what a trip
To get everywhere I really let'er rip
Up this way, down that way around and about
We got it all delivered with a ho ho and a shout.

So Christmas still with us on this the next day
We reflect on the love His birth brings our way;
And we thank our Creator for sending His son
To show us the way His vict'ry is won.

We're happy in the love this season has brought
And thankfully pledge to live as we ought.
We value the gifts, 'tis right and 'tis sure
As also the love in the giver's heart for 'tis pure.

So this Christmas season draws gently to close
Leaving our hearts with warm gentle glows.
Thus happy and hopeful and full of good cheer
We look forward excited for a happy new year.

Pastor's Corner

The holiday season has been a good time of preparation for 2012. Thanksgiving was a wonderful time for my family as it usually is. I believe we always make a good effort of creating a spirit of gratitude in the prayers that we offer before we dive into the great American comfort food. I am, however, reminded that Thanksgiving does not mean the same thing for some as it does for others. In my thoughts, I always remember that the blessings that my family and I enjoy have been given to us to a great degree because of the sacrifices that many others have made in building this nation. As Americans, it seems wonderful to me that we can be thankful to nobody in particular. There are so many things that we can point to that cause our gratitude. I have decided to just be grateful.

During Advent we anticipate the birth of the savior of the world. This time also, reminds us of the disappointment of the advent season. We live in a world where too many admire the super of everything, where only the largest, fastest, most beautiful and most expensive are sought after. Maybe we have lost the ability to see the potential in small things. If you google "small things in the Bible," you will find many scriptures and examples of God using small things and very average people to accomplish big things. The theme that God is interested in little things is found throughout the Bible. I have often thought that God could find someone more qualified to do His work than me. God used many weak and imperfect people to move his purposes forward. If God can use them, and reveal Himself through them in such marvelous ways, it means that He can use me. This means that I need to be careful that I do not, in my own self-righteousness, put limits on what God can do with the smallest things, the most unlikely of people, in the most hopeless of circumstances. I think that is part of the wonder of the Advent Season - the *hope* for which we should be grateful.

We can be renewed in our belief that God is a God of new things and that all things are possible. It's a good time to remind ourselves that what lies ahead this year will often seem challenging, but we can rely on the love and strength of God's Spirit to help us along when we stumble. The question of "how are we going to make it?" was being asked of Jesus all of time and he would say to His followers what he said in Matthew 19:26, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible." Being grateful and thankful automatically puts us in a mode of giving, loving and an overall feeling of abundance. When we focus on what we have, rather than what we don't have, we should feel grateful. One of the easiest ways to start, not only this year but every day, is to just give; give a smile, a helping hand or a hug. It's not about accumulating or consuming things, but about being faithful to our calling as Christians and being compassionate. It is a matter of choice for us if we have a good year in 2012. I'm confident that we will make that choice. I hope and pray that each and every one of you will have a happy 2012 in Jesus Christ.

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Community Outreach

Early in the year, starting the 1st of February through the end of March, we participated in the A. Feinstein \$1M Challenge to Feed the Hungry of the World. In that time period, we donated food and money earning \$250.00, which was given to Valley View Community Food Bank in Youngtown. Genie Perigo graciously delivers our donated non-perishable food to the Food Bank throughout the year.

We were not able to hold the church open this fall for precinct voting in the neighborhood. However, the annual Halloween Rest Stop, with Carla and Kyle Brittan in charge, was held Monday, October 31st for the young Trick or Treaters. They reported a very good turnout.

Early in December (Thursday & Friday, Dec 1st & 2nd) and (Monday & Tuesday, Dec 5th & 6th), many of you volunteered for two or more 2-hour intervals at the Salvation Army Angel Christmas Tree project (located at the Arrowhead Shopping Center). This helps insure a Merry Christmas for many children, and even some older adults, who might not receive a gift at Christmas.

Thanks for your help.

Eilene Speer, Community Outreach

Worship Commission

The Worship Commission has been scheduling services for January and February of 2012 and is already looking towards Easter. The commissioners are always looking for ideas to make our worship services project the love that Jesus Christ has for each of us. Sunday is the time for us to “refuel” for our daily walk with Him.

Please feel free to contribute your ideas to any of the people on the commission. Or, if you would like to be a part of the Worship Commission, please speak with Vicki Alexander.

Have a Happy, Safe and Healthy New Year!

Vicki Alexander, Mike Alexander, Connie Denton, Madelyn Edwards & Heather Featherstone

Thunderbird West (TBW) Congregation Facilities Committee

Goal: Proactively maintain and improve the TBW facility and grounds.

The Facilities Committee accepted two applications for custodial services at TBW. One was from someone who heard of us through Dena Perrine, the second was from Dean Speers. Resumes from both men are being reviewed and a decision will be made within the next week.

Eldora Engebretson

Thunderbird West Congregation Directory

The 2012 Congregational Directory is almost ready. If you have any last minute additions or changes please contact Eldora right away. Email: elnjoeng@cox.net, phone: 623-566-9299.

Eldora Engebretson

Fellowship Committee

The Fellowship Committee members Vicki Alexander, Ruth Anderson, Madelyn Edwards, Eldora Engebretson, and Chairman Joanne Engelbretson met on 16 Nov to discuss ideas for 2012 and to talk about the Thanksgiving Dinner. Sixty-four people signed up for the dinner but eighty were served. Fortunately there was enough food for everyone and the compliments were numerous.

The committee put together a six month schedule that includes potlucks and social event. The schedule includes youth activity dates in order to avoid conflicts.

22 Jan	Youth Soup and Pie
11 Feb	Birthday Dinner (Evening Event)
26 Feb	Potluck
18 Mar	St. Patrick Potluck
22 Apr	Congregational Picnic
13 May	Mother's Day Brunch
17 Jun	Father's Day brunch

The February Birthday Spaghetti Dinner will cost \$5.00 per person. The plan is for every one to bring a "white elephant" gift to exchange. This has been fun in the past and some of the gifts have been known to be regifted.

The menu includes:

- Green Salad
- Garlic Bread
- Spaghetti with Red Sauce & meatballs and Alfredo Sauce
- Birthday Cake
- Ice Cream

We hope that everyone will come and enjoy the friendship and fun that these events will offer.

Joanne Engelbretson Fellowship Committee

Lawn Care Ole & Sven



Ole & Sven were sipping their Starbucks when a truck went past loaded up with rolls of sod.

"I'm going to do that when I win the lottery," announced Ole.

"Do what?" asked Sven.

"Send my lawn out to be mowed."

It was only a Quarter

Several years ago, a preacher from out-of-state accepted a Call to a church in Houston, Texas some weeks after he arrived; he had an occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change.

As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, "You'd better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it." then he thought, "oh, forget it, it's only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a 'gift from God' and keep quiet.

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, and then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, "Here, you gave me too much change."

The driver, with a smile, replied, "Aren't you the new preacher in town? I have been thinking a lot lately about going somewhere to worship. I just wanted to see what you would do if i gave you too much change. I'll see you at church on Sunday.

When the preacher stepped off of the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said; "oh God, i almost sold your Son for a quarter." our lives are the only bible some people will ever read.

This is a really scary example of how much people watch us as Christians and will put us to the test! Always be on guard and remember that you carry the name of Christ on your shoulders when you call yourself "Christian."

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

The will of God will never take you to where the Grace of God will not protect you...

Stay faithful and be grateful.

Kids in Church

3-year-old Reese:

'Our Father, Who does art in heaven,

Harold is His name.

Amen.'

~~~~~

A little boy was overheard praying:

'Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it.

I'm having a real good time like I am.'

~~~~~

After the christening of his baby brother in church,

Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car.

His father asked him three times what was wrong.

Finally, the boy replied,

'That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home,

and I wanted to stay with you guys.'

~~~~~

One particular four-year-old prayed,

'And forgive us our trash baskets

as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets.'

### A Dog's Purpose, (from a 6-year-old)



Being a veterinarian, I had been called to examine a ten-year-old Irish wolfhound named Belker. The dog's owners, Ron, his wife, Lisa, and their little boy, Shane, were all very attached to Belker, and they were hoping for a miracle.

I examined Belker and found he was dying of cancer. I told the family we couldn't do anything for Belker, and offered to perform the euthanasia procedure for the old dog in their home.

As we made arrangements, Ron and Lisa told me they thought it would be good for six-year-old Shane to observe the procedure. They felt as though Shane might learn something from the experience.

The next day, I felt the familiar catch in my throat as Belker's family surrounded him. Shane seemed so calm, petting the old dog for the last time, that I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within a few minutes, Belker slipped peacefully away.

The little boy seemed to accept Belker's transition without any difficulty or confusion. We sat together for a while after Belker's death, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are shorter than human lives. Shane, who had been listening quietly, piped up, "I know why."

Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next stunned me. I'd never heard a more comforting explanation. He said, "People are born so that they can learn how to live a good life - like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?"

The six-year-old continued, "Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long."

### Where I Have and Have Not Been

I have been in many places, but I've never been in Cahoots. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in Cahoots with someone.

I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there. I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my friends, family and work.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often. I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

Sometimes I'm in Capable, and I go there more often as I'm getting older. One of my favorite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get!

But one place I don't ever want to be is in Continent.

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## The Carpenter

Once upon a time, two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side-by-side, sharing machinery and trading labor and goods as needed without a hitch.

Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference and finally, it exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on John's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I 'm looking for a few days' work," he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there I could help with? Could I help you?"

"Yes," said the older brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor. In fact, it's my younger brother! Last week there was a meadow between us. He recently took his bulldozer to the river levee and now there is a creek between us. Well, he may have done this to spite me, but I'll do him one better. See that pile of lumber by the barn? I want you to build me a fence an 8-foot fence -- so I won't need to see his place or his face anymore."

The carpenter said, "I think I understand the situation. Show me the nails and the post-hole digger and I'll be able to do a job that pleases you."

The older brother had to go to town, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day -- measuring, sawing and nailing. About sunset when the farmer returned, the carpenter had just finished his job.

The farmer's eyes opened wide, his jaw dropped. There was no fence there at all.

It was a bridge .. a bridge that stretched from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, handrails and all! And the neighbor, his younger brother, was coming toward them, his hand outstretched..

"You are quite a fellow to build this bridge after all I've said and done."

The two brothers stood at each end of the bridge, and then they met in middle, taking each other's hand. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox onto his shoulder.

"No, wait! Stay a few days. I've a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother.

"I'd love to stay on," the carpenter said, "but I have many more bridges to build."

Remember This ...

God won't ask what kind of car you drove, but He'll ask how many people you helped get where they needed to go.

God won't ask the square footage of your house, but He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

God won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet, but He'll ask how many you helped to clothe.

God won't ask how many friends you had, but He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.

God won't ask in what neighborhood you lived, but He'll ask how you treated your neighbors.

God won't ask about the color of your skin, but He'll ask about the content of your character.

God won't ask why it took you so long to seek Salvation, but He'll lovingly take you to your mansion in Heaven, and not to the gates of hell.

### Some of Our Congregation



Leonard Speers helping the Food Bank



Robert & Beverly Kuhn



Alyssa Brittan



Left to Right: Jeannine & Gene Hummel & Mary & Phil Dachenhausen



Sue & Cliff Praast

## January/February Schedule

### January

#### 1 - "Kneel Before Him"

Communion Service

|              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| P/P          | Rebecca Chesnutt     |
| Speaker      | Mike Alexander       |
| Pianist      | Heather Featherstone |
| Deaconing    | Vicki Alexander      |
| PA           | Eldora Engebretson   |
| Greeters     | Jim & Sarah Walsh    |
| Hall Monitor | Howard Baldwin       |
| Nursery      | Amber Sloan          |

#### 8 - " By Water and the Spirit"

|              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| P/P          | Kyle & Carla Brittan |
| Speaker      | Scott Sloan          |
| Pianist      | Heather Featherstone |
| Deaconing    | Judy Bradish         |
| PA           | Tom Bradish          |
| Greeters     | Bob & Edie Ballew    |
| Hall Monitor | Mike Alexander       |
| Nursery      | Judi Walton          |

#### 15 - "Lord Speak to Me"

|              |                              |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| P/P          | Wanda Ingram                 |
| Speaker      | Rebecca Chesnutt             |
| Pianist      | Heather Featherstone         |
| Deaconing    | Josh Greenwalt               |
| PA           | Kyle Brittan                 |
| Greeters     | Donna Hill & Katherine Ramey |
| Hall Monitor | Lois Nelson                  |
| Nursery      | Rebecca Early                |

#### 22 - "Respond to God's Call" Soup & Pie Lunch

|              |                        |
|--------------|------------------------|
| P/P          | Dulcy Silverthorn      |
| Speaker      | Mike Hoffman           |
| Pianist      | Ruth Anderson          |
| Deaconing    | Evan Sloan             |
| PA           | Grant Morris           |
| Greeter      | Sigurd & Alyce Wingard |
| Hall Monitor | Ken Thomas             |
| Nursery      | Crystal Fairley        |

#### 29 - "Jesus Amazes and Astounds"

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| P/P          | Lois Nelson           |
| Speaker      | Testimonies/Stories   |
| Pianist      | Ruth Anderson         |
| Deaconing    | Ken & Awilda Thomas   |
| PA           | Kyle Brittan          |
| Greeter      | Sharon Davids         |
| Hall Monitor | John Walton           |
| Nursery      | Madelyn & Dan Edwards |

### February

#### 5 "Gather around Jesus"

Communion Service

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| P/P          | Howard Baldwin        |
| Speaker      | Bob Ballew            |
| Pianist      | Ruth Anderson         |
| Deaconing    | Lois & Dennis Nelson  |
| PA           | Eldora Engebretson    |
| Greeters     | Chuck & Connie Denton |
| Hall Monitor | Genie Perigo          |
| Nursery      | Diane Sloan           |

#### 12 - " Make Me Clean"

|              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| P/P          | Diane Sloan          |
| Speaker      | Mike Hoffman         |
| Pianist      | Ruth Anderson        |
| Deaconing    | Evan Sloan           |
| PA           | Kyle Brittan         |
| Greeters     | Dennis & Lois Nelson |
| Hall Monitor | Alyce Wingard        |
| Nursery      | Rebecca Early        |

#### 19 - "This is My Son"

|              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| P/P          | John & Judi Walton |
| Speaker      | Darrell Ashlock    |
| Pianist      | Ruth Anderson      |
| Deaconing    | Josh Greenwalt     |
| PA           | Grant Morris       |
| Greeters     | Clyde & Lee Swick  |
| Hall Monitor | Ron Silverthorn    |
| Nursery      | Crystal Fairley    |

#### 26 - "Remember the Everlasting Covenant"

|              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| P/P          | Mike Alexander       |
| Speaker      | Ann Gould            |
| Pianist      | Heather Featherstone |
| Deaconing    | Ken & Awilda Thomas  |
| PA           | Eldora Engebretson   |
| Greeters     | Cliff & Sue Praast   |
| Hall Monitor | Judi Walton          |
| Nursery      | Judi Walton          |

#### Schedulers

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Worship                      | Mike Alexander       |
| Piano/Organ                  | Heather Featherstone |
| Choir, Solos & Choral Groups | Connie Denton        |
| Deaconing & PA               | Eldora Engebretson   |
| Greeters                     | Irene Clark          |
| Hall Monitor                 | Judi Walton          |
| Nursery                      | Diane Sloan          |

## Vespers by Merle Zirkle - Dec 2011

It is early evening and the farm animals are wending their way back to the place they call home shelter. The chicks are headed for the roost, the pigs for the little shed, the cattle for the feed lot, the horses for the stable, the sheep for the fold. And the non-farm animals are making their way to their shelters; the birds to flock in the tree, the rabbits into their burrows, the fox into his den, the wolf into the lair; while above all the great bald eagle circles and settles to his aerie to be greeted warmly by Mrs. Eagle, yes, tis true.

And in the homes of the two legged animals, we humans, the evening fires are lit, the warm and cheery welcome back home after a full day brings smiles and hugs and joyous anticipation of sharing in the family's love. That is, for some: for those who are so fortunate as to have homes and families and warm loving evenings. Then there are some whose companionship is found in the local bar, followed by a lonely flop in a rented room; or who are confined to a bunk in a row of beds operated by some institution from which they are not free to stray; or who sleep under the bridge, or cuddle with others round a fire in an old oil drum, in an alley, in a cold big city.

And so the day becomes evening, the heat and the light become cool and mellow, the vibrant energy of a busy time becomes a relaxing quiescence; a reflective time in which to ponder the meaning and the purpose; to evaluate and modify, to correct the course, or to pray once again that there be a course open and recognized; to gradually realize the dawning of awareness that the Creator, God, has provided for all His creatures who are seeking the nest this evening: that He has provided the raw materials, the ability to learn and to achieve, and the capacity to live successfully within His creation, whether in the den, or the aerie, the burrow, the cot or the mansion: all have a provision made by the love which has created and sustained all.

And so in vesper time we are grateful for what blessings we have: but we seek also toward a better fulfillment of the potentials, the gifts of capacity to do, and to know what is right to do, and to be responsive to our Creator in the doing of His will. We praise Him and renew our lives to His purposes in us. Amen



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