

The Vine

I am the vine; you are the branches...John 15:5

A publication of Valley Falls Christian Church

December 2012

This poem was written by a Marine.

Twas the night before Christmas,
He lived all alone, In a one bedroom house
Made of plaster and stone

I had come down the chimney, with presents
to give
And to see just who in this home did live.

I looked all about a strange sight I did see
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stocking by mantle just boots filled with
sand,
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.

With medals and badges, awards of all kinds
A sober thought came through my mind.

For this house was different, it was dark and
dreary,
I found the home of a soldier, once I could see
clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone,
Curled up on the floor in this one bedroom
home.

The face was so gentle, the room in such
disorder,
Not how I pictured a United States soldier.

Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?

I realized the families that I saw this night,
Owed their lives to these soldiers who were
willing to fight.

Soon round the world, the children would play,
And grownups would celebrate a bright
Christmas day.

They all enjoyed freedom each month of the
year,
Because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,
On a cold Christmas eve in a land far from
home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

The soldier awakened and I heard a rough
voice,
"Santa don't cry, this life is my choice;

I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,
My life is my God, my country, my corps."

The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours, so silent and still
And we both shivered from the cold night's
chill.

I didn't want to leave on that cold, dark, night,
This guardian of honor so willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft
and pure, whispered, "carry on Santa, it's
Christmas day, all is secure."

One look at my watch, and I knew he was right.
"Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good
night.

Christmas Love

I was looking at Christmas songs this week and was amazed by how few of them use the word love. Now that doesn't mean that God's love isn't implied in the songs not using the word, but other themes are more often covered in Christmas songs. We sing of the actual events – the manger, the shepherds, the angels. We sing of peace and joy. We sing worship and adoration. We sing about the radiance of God's glory. We even sing about the weather; it was clear (at midnight) and all was calm and bright. Yet the song *In the Bleak Midwinter* speaks of a frosty wind. Maybe weathermen 2000 years ago were no better than they are today!

We do find mention of love in the fourth verse of *Silent Night*.

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from Thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

Love is also declared in the fourth verse of *Joy to the World*.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove,
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

That's about it. All the other Christmas songs are great. I love singing them (yes, even the ones that are not quite biblically accurate). I was just surprised more of them didn't express God's love in coming down to earth. Isn't that the reason Jesus came in the first place? For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son...Why did Jesus come to earth? To save us. Why save us? Because He loves us!

The account of the birth of Jesus is just bursting with love. A young virgin named Mary is visited by an angel. The angel tells

her she is going to bear the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit. What is her response? May it be to me as you have said. With all the negative ramifications of being found with child before consummating the marriage, she says, 'OK God, whatever you want.' That is a response born out of a love for God. *This is love for God: to obey his commands. 1 John 5:3*

Joseph finds out that Mary is with child. He has three options. The law said he could have her stoned to death. He could make a huge spectacle of it and divorce her with much fanfare, bringing shame and disgrace to her. His third option was the only loving option he could think of. Divorce her quietly so she would not have to bear the shame. Because he loved Mary so much, he chose to put her well being over any possible thoughts of revenge or retaliation. By the way, marrying her really wasn't an option for any good Hebrew man.

Joseph is visited by an angel in a dream. The angel tells Joseph what was going on and that he should not be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Joseph shows his love for God by obeying Him and resolving to stay with Mary.

Elizabeth and Zachariah show Mary love by taking her into their home. Joseph lovingly cares for Mary as they travel to Bethlehem and I am sure his heart was broken as they spent the night where animals bed down.

Then Jesus was born and God's love that had been trickling out into this obscure Hebrew family exploded into the world. Angels filled the skies over shepherds' fields. Shepherds rushed to the place where Jesus was to witness the wonder, bringing encouragement to Mary. They told everyone and went back praising God.

Think of the love of Jesus this night. God the Son willingly left his majesty and glory behind to become a little baby. He left everything wonderful to be born among the refuse of an animal stall.

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Recipe Swap

BUTTERSCOTCH BUBBLE BREAD

1 pkg. frozen bread dough rolls
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ c. chopped nuts
½ c. melted butter
1 c. brown sugar
½ pkg. dry butterscotch pudding, cooked
kind- do not cook
2 T. milk

Place frozen rolls in a well greased bundt or tube pan. Sprinkle brown sugar, cinnamon, nuts and dry pudding on top. Pour on melted butter and milk. Cover with foil and a towel. Let stand on counter overnight. Bake at 350* for 30 to 40 minutes. Invert on a platter. This sometimes overflows the pan overnight so I put it on a cookie sheet. This is our favorite Christmas morning breakfast.

Christy Arnold

PRAYER REQUESTS

OUR SOLDIERS: Luke Cummings, Ryan Meyers, Jacob Mitchell, Brandon Miller, Greg Morales, Ryan Kirby, Zach, Josh Lackey, Dan Cook, Rick Huertz, Steve Heinen, Ammin Spencer, Gates Kobuszewski, Leslie Bolz, Steve Grove, Carl Herring, Austin Everhart
June Dedeke needs prayers.
Amy Cummings passed away, please be praying for her family.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: The service will be at 7:00 PM on Dec. 24th.

YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY:
The party will be at Kirby's house on Dec. 16th from 5-8 PM.

COPIES OF THE SERMONS ARE AVAILABLE ON CD UPON REQUEST: If you would like a copy please see Mike. You can also listen to them online at www.valleyfallsc.org.

POCKET CHANGE FOR PROGRESS: This will be a special offering every 3rd Sunday during church. The money will be split between Mission Lake Camp and the School Supply Giveaway Fund

RECYCLING: We have a recycling box beside the copier in the office.

COLLECTING FOR ALPHA: Alpha Christian Children's Home can use Campbell soup UPC labels and lids, Best Choice UPC labels and General Mills Box Top Symbols coupons (Box Tops for Education.) We will have a box in the hallway outside the nursery under the mailboxes.

SISTERS OF STRENGTH (S.O.S.)-

(Mission Statement: We are a lifeline to glorify God through service to the church and community and to build personal relationships with our Christian Sisters.)
We will not be having our regular meeting in December.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

4- Allison Thomas
5- Elijah Phillips
7- Jordan Cummings
8- Rachel Arnold
11-Kacie Welborn
14-Chuck Toy
15-Mike &Gina Kirby (1984)
18-Janese (Farr) Temm
 Jeff Starkey
 Bud & Norma Bryant (1960)
 Ray & Rhonda Mitchell (1982)
23-Tom Brown
26-CHARLES WATKINS
28-Sean & Jennifer Guffey
29-Morgan Diane Jean Turner
30-Jacob & Kari Mitchell (2005)

(Names in CAPS in Mission Field)

Serving in DECEMBER

Congregational Prayer:

Jay Welborn

Scripture Readers:

2-Welborn's-1 Cor. 11:23-29
9-Tichenor's-1 Cor. 10:23-11:1
16-Arnold's-1 Cor. 11:2-16
23-Thomas'-Luke 2:8-14
30-Kirby's- 1 Cor. 12:1-11; 29-31

Nursery:

2-Debbie Gerstner/Glee Hosler
9-Carol Welborn/Curtis Mitchell
16-Laura Reich/Jarret Mitchell
23-Jo Tichenor/Curtis Mitchell
30-Rachel Arnold/Debbie Gerstner

Greeters/Ushers:

2-Welborn's
9-Tichenor's
16-Arnold's
23-Thomas'
30-Kirby's

Lord's Supper Preparation:

2-Welborn's
9-Tichenor's
16-Arnold's
23-Thomas'
30-Kirby's

Communion Table:

2-Stan, Jay

Steve Carson, Cylus Tichenor

9- Jay, Stan

Dennis Tichenor, Jarret Mitchell

16- Stan, Jay

Ray Mitchell, Clint Thomas

23- Jay, Stan

Dennis Turner, Andy Arnold

30-Stan, Jay

David Grove, Cylus Tichenor

Musicians

Worship Leader: Mike Kirby

Organ: Leah Brown

Piano: Donetta Farr

Guitar: Mike Kirby,

Mandolin: Erin Thomas

Vocals: David Grove, Rachel Arnold

Church Offerings

Oct.28-\$1775.00

Nov.4-\$1273.00

Nov.11-\$2977.00

Nov.18-\$795.00

Our expenses average \$1500 a week.

Valley Falls Christian Church has a website!!

www.valleyfallsc.org

MEN'S BREAKFAST: There will be no men's breakfast in December.

LADIES CHRISTMAS PARTY: Something unusual will be occurring Sunday, Dec. 2nd from 2-4 PM at Ronda Turners. You are invited to come and join in sweet fellowship as we go about preparing what we'll be nibbling on. The goodies have already been selected... see Ronda for the list of food items that you can sign up to bring. If you haven't signed up there will be lots of preparing to do when you arrive! We want all the ladies to come and have fun and enjoy the goodies. The holiday homes tour is also the same day from 2-6. There are several homes east of Valley Falls on the tour if you are interested in seeing them before going home. Tickets are \$6 and can be purchased ahead of time at: AAHH SOME BLOSSOMS, PETRO, KENDAL BANK, AND HAIR BY LAURIE. They can also be purchased that day in the music room at school. Proceeds benefit "After Prom".

CHRISTMAS FOOD BOXES: We will be doing food boxes on Sunday Dec. 9th after church. Please bring plenty of homemade goodies (individually wrapped), tea bags, cocoa mix, pudding and jello cups, fruit etc.

CAROLING: The church caroling party will be at 5:30 on Dec. 9th. Meet at the church, bring a snack for later.

ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS DINNER: The dinner will be at Famous Dave's in Topeka on Dec. 12th at 6:30 PM.

SHOW ME TRIP: Some of us are going to help Charlie Watkins and staff on Dec. 13th.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM: The Christmas program will be on Dec. 23rd. There will be practice on Sunday Dec. 16th during Sunday School, Dec. 22 at 10:00 AM and on Dec. 23rd during Sunday School. All children are invited to participate.

Valley Falls Christian Church

511 Oak Street
Valley Falls, KS 66088

Phone: 785-945-6757
Email: office@valleyfallsc.org
On the web: www.valleyfallsc.org
Find us on Facebook!

Mike Kirby, Pastor

You are welcome to join us!

Sunday Service times:

Bible Study (all ages) – 9:00 AM
Worship – 10:00 AM
Youth Group – 5:00 PM

Midweek Bible Study:

Wednesday 7:00 PM

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The love of Jesus didn't end that night; it was just the beginning of His physical manifestation on earth. He lovingly endured twelve stubborn misfits and made them apostles. He touched the untouchables and healed the unhealables. He associated with and loved women, sinners, gentiles and Samaritans.

Then he went to the cross and died to pay the price for my sin. That is why the babe was born. To show his love for me and the whole world by sacrificing himself that I might live.

God so loved the world that he gave... Can we do any less this Christmas?

God bless you as you seek His will in blessing others this Christmas season!

Mike

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CHRISTMAS ADOPTION

The church will be adopting 2 families this year. Each family has 5 in it. The sign up lists will be in the foyer this Sunday. Please sign up to help. The gifts need to be back at the church by Dec. 12th. Thank you for helping.

