



GraceNet

Knoxville, TN

December 2016

Will You Have That Christmas Spirit?

The Christmas music started playing way back in November. Andy Williams sings, "It's The Most wonderful Time of the Year." And you know it can be! It can also be one of the most stressful times of the year where conflicts arise and irritations mount.

The Apostle Paul writing the Word of God in 2 Timothy to his protégé declares: *"And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. In the Old Testament it is put bluntly: "He who loves a quarrel loves sin."*

Quarreling is accompanied by other equally troubling things like jealousy and envy. Paul had much concern and troubles coming out of the Corinthian church. He writes to them about an upcoming and hoped for visit. He writes: *"For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you many not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder."* Some people may have that very same fear as they gather with family and friends over Christmas.

What is the cause of quarrelling? In the Book of James he addresses this question. He writes: *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."* He goes on to say that this is a worldly attitude which is diametrically opposed to God and His will for your life.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, I know we don't want to act this way or to be this way. Especially at Christmas we want the love and joy of the season to abound. So how do we who love Jesus and want to honor Him defeat this temptation to quarrel and fight? Thankfully God's Word gives us a game plan.

1. First and most obviously, remember who you are. You are a child of God and He doesn't want you to quarrel. He wants you to walk away and sometimes keep your mouth shut. You can, however, speak the truth in love without getting into a quarrel. This too is very pleasing to our Father who wants us to speak up for the truth.
2. Proverbs 26:20 gives us this nugget of wisdom: *"Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down."* Gossip is a spark that alights many a fire. Don't gossip and try very hard to avoid hearing gossip.
3. What do we most quarrel about? It is little things – things of no consequence. Paul reminded Timothy that many want to *"quarrel about words."* At Christmas it is the little idiosyncrasies and the habits of



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Christmas Spirit?

(Continued)

others that set us on edge. Recognize and resist fighting over things that really don't matter.

4. One of the fruits of the Spirit is patience. Don't we all want to see the fruit grow in our life? In fact, we can tame quarrelsome people by exercising patience. This is what it says in Proverbs 15:18, "A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel."
5. Finally we may have to avoid quarrelsome people. Some people want to argue all the time. It is a matter of pride and a need to be right even in the smallest things. They want to draw you in and we are often tempted to want to go toe to toe with them. This is a great mistake and can in the end turn you in to a quarrelsome person. Avoid the divisive person.

I pray that you will have that loving Christmas spirit not just one month but every day of the year!

~ Pastor Rich



Our Grace Family

Meet Aileen Harper

Have you ever heard of San Marzano tomatoes? Well, according to Aileen Harper, you just cannot make a decent Italian recipe without employing these "gifts of heaven." And the only local place to obtain them is The Fresh Market! They cost in the neighborhood of \$4.00 per can, but oh so worth each and every dime of the cost. You can attribute this inside information to two things: (1) Aileen is Italian, comes from Staten Island, NY, and (2) she recognizes good food when she comes across it---so this explains the connection. She is married to Mike and son Joseph and they are listed as her "most wonderful memories in life." Small wonder that she appreciates great Italian food and also any good beef. But before Aileen came to us, she worked in Administration for a Sexual Assault Center in Orange County, California. She is a truly funny person, which you can tell by her admission listed under "Hobbies" as that "which she is in the mood for." Under the category of "If I had all kinds of time and money," Aileen visualizes a house all on one floor, with a basket ball court (inside and outside), a pool and the "ultimate kitchen" plus a large family room. It never hurts to dream, does it? Now down to the more serious things in life: our "star" would strive to be what God wants, citing her salvation as her greatest possession, and she would help the church in whatever way she saw fit while giving God the entire credit. Aileen feels that her best asset is making people feel important and does this by welcoming those folks around her. She is determined to wear her feelings on her sleeve, which means--there they are. If you don't want the truth, "don't ask." Kind of neat to come across a person who is this candid and, at the same time, dedicated to do whatever she can for those individuals surrounding her!



~ Pat Kopp

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Grace Lutheran Church – LCMS

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Articles for GraceNet are due by the **1st of each month** for the following month's edition.

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If you have a special event you would like to have publicized in GraceNet, please submit the information to Debbie Booher by

the 1st of each month for publication in the following month's newsletter.



The logo features the word "Christmas" in a large, blue, cursive font. A green Christmas tree with a yellow star on top and red and yellow ornaments is positioned behind the letter "i". To the right of the tree are two red swirls. Below "Christmas" is the word "ACTIVITIES" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

December 7, 14, 21 - Advent Services - Sermon theme will be *Christmas Profiles*

Noon Advent Services in the sanctuary with a light luncheon immediately following in the Fellowship Hall

6:30 p.m. Advent Services in the Sanctuary. The regular Wednesday night dinners will be available prior to the service at 5:15 p.m.

December 3 - **Decorate the church** for Christmas Season at 9:00 a.m. (donuts provided)

December 4 - **Congregational Voters' Meeting** at 12:30 p.m. in the Family Life Center

December 10 - All Grace women are invited to the **LWML Christmas Party** at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Carol Voorhees (Bring your favorite finger food and a \$10 gift if you want to participate in a fun exchange.)

December 11 - **Christmas Potluck Brunch** from 9:00-10:30 a.m. (See below what to bring, according to your last name). Grace Fellowship will provide ham, biscuits/gravy, cereal, and drinks. *Please note there will not be Sunday School or Bible classes.*

- A-J Breakfast casserole or quiche
- K-P Coffee cakes, sweet or cinnamon rolls
- R-Z Hash brown casserole, deviled eggs, or fruit

December 18 - **"Psalty's Christmas Calamity" Program** performed by the Sunday School Children at 5:00 p.m.

December 24 - **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services at 4:00, 7:00, and 11:00 p.m.**

December 25 - **Christmas Day - one service at 10:00 a.m.** in the sanctuary

January 1 - **New Year's Day - one service with communion at 10:00 a.m.** in the sanctuary





Births in the Church Family

Mason Paul Martin

Born: November 21, 2016

*Proud Parents:
Dylan and Taylor Martin*

Jesus Is The Word

To say that Jesus is the Word is another way of saying he is God speaking to us. While we struggle with our clumsy words, God needs only one Word to perfectly communicate the depth and mystery, the passion and the overwhelming grace of who He is. By that Word, Light became a living being. Manna became man. Wisdom became a person. In Him, Life came to life; all that God is came to us in that One Final Word we call Jesus.

*~ Michael Card,
Immanuel: Reflections on the Life of Christ*

December Scripture of the Month

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, NIV

Call on Christ

Early in the 20th century, Howard Bliss, a missionary to Syria, wrote an article about what Christ can mean to anyone who would take him seriously. Consider these insights:

Does Christ save you from your sin?
Call him Savior!

Does Christ free you from the slavery of your passions?
Call him Redeemer!

Does Christ teach you as no one else has taught you?
Call him Teacher!

Does Christ mold and master your life?
Call him Master!

Does Christ shine upon the pathway that is dark to you?
Call him Guide!

Does Christ reveal God to you?
Call him the Son of God!

Does Christ reveal ideal manhood to you?
Call him the Son of Man!

In following him, are your lips silent in your incapacity to define him and his influence upon you?
Call him by no name, but follow him!

Christ

Merry Christmas Wishes from the Library

Non-Fiction

Making Sense of God by **Pastor Timothy Keller** (231 Kel): As the Christmas season approaches, the thoughts of some seekers and even secular skeptics turn to a baby in a manger. Keller shines a light on the value and importance of Christianity, especially in this age of secularism and self-absorption.

Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ by **Pastor Timothy Keller** (232.92 Kel): Keller further explores our secular society as it gets caught up in the Christmas season. Keller takes his readers to the heart of the Nativity unraveling the message of hope, redemption, and salvation hidden in the Savior's birth in Bethlehem.

Because of Bethlehem: Love Is Born, Hope Is Here by **Max Lucado** (232.92 Luc): Lucado loves the sleigh bells, the Christmas carols, the trees and the mistletoe because in the midst of it all, someone is bound to ask what all the fuss is about? And then he can explain how Christmas begins what Easter celebrates—the life-changing story of God who came to live among us, a remarkable gift given to us, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Fiction Reads

The Christmas Secret by **Wanda E. Brunstetter** (Fic Bru): As Elizabeth's and David's Christmas Eve wedding draws near, she discovers a secret that could unravel her family ties and threaten their happiness.

The Christmas Angel Project by **Melody Carlson** (Fic Car): When Abby, the leader of a book club, suddenly passes away, the other four in the group decide to meet one last time to open a package Abby left for them—four personalized angel ornaments and a heartfelt letter that sends the quartet out to become angels to those in need.

Mistletoe Secret by **Richard Paul Evans** (Fic Eva): Evans continues his mistletoe Christmas stories, this time heading to the Mistletoe Diner in Midway, Utah. Alex is lonely and reads the blog of LBH, a sensitive, vulnerable woman whose feelings reflect his own. Clues to her identity lead him to Midway where he hopes to find her.

A Baxter Family Christmas by **Karen Kingsbury** (Fic Kin): The Baxter family approaches the Christmas festivities with the usual hustle and bustle that the season brings. Yet sadness lingers as the painful memories of their beloved Erin and her family's tragic car accident invade their thoughts.

Because It's Christmas by **Thomas Kinkade** and **Katherine Spencer** (Fic Kin): It's Christmastime in Cape Light once again. Sophie Potter convinces her children to let her stay in her historic home to host one last Christmas celebra-

tion before she considers moving out. Her grandson arrives to help her at the same time Zoey Bates arrives to assist Sophie.

The Angel of Forest Hill by **Cindy Woodsmall** (Fic Woo): Rose arrives in a tiny Amish vil-

lage to help Joel care for his children following his wife's death in childbirth. For proprieties sake, they marry so the children can have the mother they need. In the ensuing years, they fall in love, but each is afraid to confess it to the other. Christmas could bring a special gift to each of them.

Look for the Santa Christmas label on the spine of the books on the shelves to locate other Christmas titles as well.

Children's Materials

Humphrey's First Christmas by **Carol Heyer** (J Hey) Grumpy Humphrey the camel is hungry, tired and cold. Then three huge chests are placed on his back by Wisemen who speak of a king. But they don't even know this king whose gifts he bears. He remains grumpy until he meets Jesus.

Where Jesus Slept by **Norma Lewis** (J Lew): Lewis retells the story of Jesus' birth in a way that even 4 year-olds will enjoy.

A Royal Christmas to Remember by **Jeanna Young** (J You): Princesses Faith, Hope, Charity, Grace and Joy eagerly await the arrival of Christmas. But when a band of outlaws arrives, they fear their Christmas Eve will be ruined.

Good Good Father by **Chris Tomlin** (J Tom) based on his song by the same title.

On DVD

Owlegories—The Gift, The Star (DVD J Owl Vol. 4) This animated series teaches children about God through the use of nature and allegory. In **The Gift**, the owls throw a birthday party for Jesus, and in **The Star** the owls work at presenting a Christmas pageant.

Find these and other new materials on display in the library throughout the month.

~ Mary Schultz



Merry Xmas

From my early youth I remember people dismayed and upset whenever they saw “Merry Xmas!” as a Christmas greeting. Allegedly, it was/is an attempt to remove Christ from Christmas.

Actually, the “X” in “Merry Xmas!” is the Greek letter “chi.” It has a “ch” sound and is the first letter in the Greek spelling of “Christ.” “X” is used as an abbreviation for Christ in some early (handwritten) manuscripts of the New Testament. The greeting “Merry Xmas!” has been used in the English speaking world since 1551 AD and is not really new. While there are many attempts to make Christmas about something other than the birth of Christ, this really is not one of those. Still, many people, even those in our churches, do not know what the “X” really means. There is a good article on all of this at Wikipedia.org under “Xmas.”

As for “Merry,” we misunderstand this, also. We know the carol, “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen.” Notice the punctuation. It is “...Merry, Gentlemen.” It is not “...Merry Gentlemen.” “Rest” here means to preserve or keep. “Merry” does not mean full of frivolity, but “pleasant, bountiful, prosperous.” The carol is a wish that people might be kept in the blessings which are ours because “Jesus Christ Our Savior was born this Christmas Day.” See the Wikipedia.org article on “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen.”

The word “Christmas” means a Christ Mass. “Mass” refers to a service with Holy Communion. For early Christians, the most tangible expression of Jesus’ final promise to be with us always until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20) was His presence in the Lord’s Supper where He is present under the bread and the wine. It was only appropriate then to have the Lord’s Supper when Christ’s people began to gather in celebration of His birth. That is why the most important service in the Christmas season is Christmas Day, not Christmas Eve. But, Christmas Day services are rare many places. Part of this is our cluttered life in which we need to drive to more than one house to have Christmas celebrations with various sides of our families. Part is also due to the English heritage of those who broke with the Church of England during the time of Oliver Cromwell. The earliest English settlers to our country had this heritage. Town criers in Boston actually walked the streets proclaiming, “No Christmas today!” Those who stayed home from work to celebrate Christmas Day could be severely punished. But, people love to have a party, and stern prohibitions against celebrating Christmas were eventually overcome, especially when German immigrants who knew nothing of Puritan England arrived in North America and brought their celebrations with them.

Now there are many good articles about Christmas things at Wikipedia.org. Formerly, my best resource was “A Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs” by Francis X. Weiser (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World) 1958. You may find it in a library.

~ Rev. Philip Bohlken

HealthLine is a 30-minute Medical Education television show hosted by Grace member Sheila Wittke.

NEW AIR TIME: Monday evenings at 9:00 p.m.

STATIONS:

CTV COMCAST Cable Channel 12 (Knoxville)

CTV CHARTER 193 + WOW Channel 6 (Farragut)

AT&T U-Verse Channel 99



DECEMBER 2016 SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND GUESTS

- 05 - Binge Eating Disorder—Dr. John B. Robertson, Jr.
- 12 - Advanced State Prostate Cancer Treatment—Dr. R. Wayne Hatfield
- 19 - Vision Testing and Common Eye Disorders—Dr. William Williford
- 26 - Orbera Balloon-Assisted Weight Loss—Dr. Bergein Overholt

I have come into the world
as light

so that no one who
believes in me
need remain in the dark.

John 12:46



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Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. (Traditional) and
9:30 a.m. (Blended)/11:00 a.m. (Contemporary)
Wednesday Worship: 6:30 p.m. (Blended)
Sunday School & Bible Classes @ 9:30 a.m./11:00 a.m.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

TO:

