

THOUGHTS FOR THE JOURNEY — DECEMBER 2015

A Lesson From a Red-Nose Reindeer

Beloved, we can learn nuggets of truth from any number of sources, if we slow down and listen. Let me explain. The children's Christmas classic, Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer has been a favorite Christmas show for many people. When I was a child, it was one of the few Christmas cartoons we could watch. I still like watching it.

Most of us will watch, because it's tradition, because it's fun, clean and a memorable. I always liked Burl Ives' voice as the Snowman and narrator. I must admit I never considered it a source to learn from. However, I did learn from this story after I read a recent article on the internet.

A lady was reading the story of Rudolph to her 3 year old granddaughter. The book reads . . . "now Rudolph was different than all the other reindeer?" What makes Rudolph different than all the other reindeer? Why, it's his red nose of course; even a 3 year old would know that. The grandmother innocently asked her granddaughter, what makes Rudolph different than the other reindeer? Quick as she could the child replied, "God."



Matthew 21:16 reads, "and they said to him, do you hear what these children are saying?" And Jesus said to them, yes, have you never read, from the lips of children and infants, you, Lord, have called forth your praise." Are we different? Do we feel a little odd, peculiar or weird? God created us and it was God who decided that no two people would look the same. Those from the school of thought that say we must all think alike have missed that it was God who made us individuals with separate free wills and with a variety of personalities. The beauty and love of God is that each of us IS different. What a marvelous God we serve. A God who loves us for our unique and different gifts and graces. Please let me invite you to read, Romans 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:12 and Ephesians 4:15-16.

Blessings for Journey,

Rev. Chuck

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DATE— DECEMBER 2015

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Secretary: Londa Blaine

Music Director: Miki Saito

Pathways Counseling and Growth Center: Dr. Ralph Thompson

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DEC. BIRTHDAYS & ANNIV.

3	Donna Burdick
4	Cindy Thompson
5	Leslie Klein
9	Ken & Cindy Hicks
11	Gerry Piscola Marty & Sally Belfi
12	Randy Kuhn Diana Tyler Buz Bokman Robin Galvin Brandy Burdick
13	Sandy & Jim Hales
14	Nicholas Rodak Antonia Spector
15	Ralph Thompson
17	Glen Thompson Helen Walkden
18	Jeff Brunger Doug Blaine
20	Holly Hill
21	Stephanie Szuch
24	Barry Daniels
25	Jan Brooks
29	Debbie Cihla

Welcome New Church Members

We want to welcome back to NECC Geraldine (Gerry) Piscola. Gerry has transferred her membership from Community of Faith, UCC in Elyria formerly named St. Paul, UCC back to NECC. Gerry has had a long-time relationship with NECC. She began attending when she was five years of age and became a member at twelve. Gerry is a member of Rebekah Circle and an aunt to Dick Blaine and Carol Busche.

David Bakos and his parents, Mike and Ginger were baptized in a special ceremony on Sunday, November 15, 2015 at 2:00 pm. It was a very special time for the family and those from the NECC congregation to witness and participate in this worship experience. David is the nephew of Chris Hensley and the grandson of Dave and Mary Schofield. We welcome David, Mike and Ginger into our NECC family.

Blessings,

Rev. Chuck

Butcher Family Annual Christmas Eve Reception

Pastor Chuck, Carol and Gabby would like to extend to our NECC church family a warm invitation to join us for some Christmas cheer and fellowship on December 24, 2015. We will be serving from 5:30 to 6:30, just prior to the start of the 7 pm worship service. We will begin serving again at 8:15 pm until 10:30 pm., just prior to the start of the 11 pm service. Please invite your families and friends to come and celebrate the blessed birth of our Savior.

A BIG Thank you to the NECC family for your support of:

TOWER OF TOWELS: NECC donated 147 wash clothes and towels of varying sizes, along with one comforter. Our donations were added to the Tower at the Chi Rho Rally on Saturday, November 21. 70 youth and adults met for a day of learning, fun and worship. They brought towels as well, for a total of 961 wash clothes and towels. There were also a few sheets and blankets that were not added to the total but were given to the Free Store at Camp Christian. Wendy Taylor the coordinator of the Free Store was blown away by the Tower. The Store routinely gives out 300 towels a month. They have been out of towels for about 2 months so the Tower is greatly appreciated.



Wendy also related a story to us that recently a regular client of the store had need of a new bed. With Wendy and the Free Store's help they had located a bed but hadn't been able to get sheets for it yet. The clients looked through the Free Store with no luck. Wendy had been planning to buy sheets for them to pick up next Sat. But she won't need to, because mixed in among the Towels was a set of sheets that would work for the client's new bed. Wendy said it was just one more example of how God works to fulfill the needs of His children.

THANKSGIVING TREE: The JYF has a Thanksgiving Tree on the bulletin board in the Educational Wing. On November 22, everyone in worship was asked to write on a 'leaf', one or more things for which they were thankful. The leaves were then put on the tree. The JYF invites you to take the time to walk down the hall to look at and read the *leaves of thankfulness* on the tree.

ADVENT ACTIVITIES

The Christian Education Team will be providing Advent Calendars for all our members. Everyone is encouraged to spend a little time each day leading up to Christmas preparing for the coming of the Christ Child. We know that this time of year gets busy with extra parties, school performances, etc so we have pulled a few of the activities out to do as a group to help you stay on track.

Christkind: *One of our activities is ongoing throughout Advent. On Sunday, November 29th we were encouraged to take the name of a child or youth that is a member or related to a member of our church. The child/youth whose name you drew represents your "Christkind." During Advent, secretly do good deeds and pray for your Christkind.*

Advent Activity Nights: We will in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 PM on Wednesday evenings for a light dessert and to do a couple of activities together. These activities are open to all ages. Bring a friend or two.

Wednesday, December 2 – We will watch O. Henry's Gift of the Magi and make Christmas Cards

Wednesday, December 9 – We will listen members telling stories of their Christmases, while wrapping Giving Tree presents.

Wednesday, December 16 – We will watch a Christmas movie (to be determined) and make Christmas ornaments.



Sharing Christmas

On Monday, December 21 we will be Sharing Christmas with the Eaton community. We will be holding a Christmas Eve style service at the Fraternal Order of the Police Lodge #54 at 36854 Royalton Rd, Grafton. The purpose is to offer a service to those who may have an unhappy relationship with 'church' or would like to experience a Christmas service but have some reason for not wanting to walk in the doors of a church building. We will also be offering a coffee bar and light snacks. If you would like to help: decorate, serve, host or offer some other talent, please see Polly Tallos or Pastor Chuck.



In The Arms of God

Years ago, the church held a workshop to examine the gifts and talents of the church members. We discovered three intervention specialists in the congregation. They willingly formed a team to consider ways to sensitize members to the needs of those with disabilities. Cody became a focus of that sensitization. We thought of Cody as we invited the choir from Murray Ridge to share in the worship service. The automatic entrance doors were easily approved by the trustees and the official board because of Cody. The family, allowing the Cans for Cody collections, kept him on our minds and in our hearts. Cody will have a lasting influence on the congregation because members of the congregation were able to meet him, witness his smile, and be the object of our love. The North Eaton Church was allowed to place their loving arms around him.

Whenever I think of Cody Wilson, I think of him in the arms of those who loved him. When his mother brought him to church, she brought him in her arms. She held him during the service. The day would come when he would be placed and removed from his wheelchair by loving arms. Loving arms would get him up in the morning and put him to bed at night. He depended on loving arms and loving arms were willingly there for him. It is of great comfort for those who loved him to know that he died in the loving arms of his father.

Cody died just before Halloween. He was buried after All Saints Day. Halloween is the Christian holiday where we acknowledge the reality of all the evil that is in the world. We remember the pain and suffering that we and our loved ones have suffered. We look fear in the eye. All Saints Day, the very next day, is the Christian holiday that declares the power of God to overcome all that evil, all that fear, and death itself. All Saints Day proclaims the resurrection and eternal life. So, we can be assured that Cody Wilson is in the loving arms of God.

My life has been enriched by Cody and by the strength and love I have known through his family.

Dr. Paul H. Durbin

■ **CANS FOR CODY** — We will continue to collect cans and the money, at this time, will go towards a special headstone and then a Brick to be placed in the Memorial Garden at North Eaton Christian Church.

Christmas Shoeboxes

Oh my! You folks outdid yourselves this year. **FIFTY EIGHT shoeboxes** were delivered to the shipping center in North Olmsted along with enough money to ship many, many, many more boxes. (\$500.00 from a NECC Fair Grant and \$400 in donations to help with the expense of shipping the boxes!!) Some folks can't afford to fill boxes AND pay for the postage. With the high cost of shipping we are pleased and thankful to be able to fully support this mission project.

God Bless,
Pat Ables



Missionary Report

On Nov. 11th, Kristine Tisinger did a stellar job of informing 21 of us about her two years as a missionary in Ghana. Once you've seen and heard about living conditions in a 3rd world country you can better appreciate all the blessings we enjoy here in America. Kristine shared that the Week of Compassion and other special offerings go to support the work that she and others do. Good to know! The children in her village received "shoeboxes" last year. Great news.

Thanks to all who helped prepare for the evening and to those who brought delicious food to share. We were all enriched spiritually by the information shared and the fellowship.

NEWS AMONG THE PEWS...

To the Prayer Shawl Ministry: I recently learned of your prayer shawl ministry and actually received one as a gift. It is beautiful and reminds me of my grandmother's love to quilt and knit. Receiving this gift and using it is a reminder of the love and support God provides us each day.

Thanks to everyone for all the cards, calls, meals and prayers sent to us. Your thoughtfulness has given us hope and encouragement and has been overwhelming. We truly appreciate it. In Christian Love, Genene & Chuck Slusher

Thank you for your prayers, cards and phone calls during my recent hospitalization and rehabilitation. Your love and kindness are appreciated.
With a Grateful Heart, Fran Early

OUR HEARTS, PRAYERS & SYMPATHY ARE WITH THESE FAMILIES:

Sherry and Jim Wilson, families and friends on the death of their son, CODY WILSON.
Susie Naylor and her family on the sudden death of her son, ROY NAYLOR
Lois Brasse on the death of her partner of 20 years, DAN FRAWLEY.
Becky & Ralph Thompson on the death of Becky's father, WILLIAM BINGHAM.

