

A Season of Faith

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

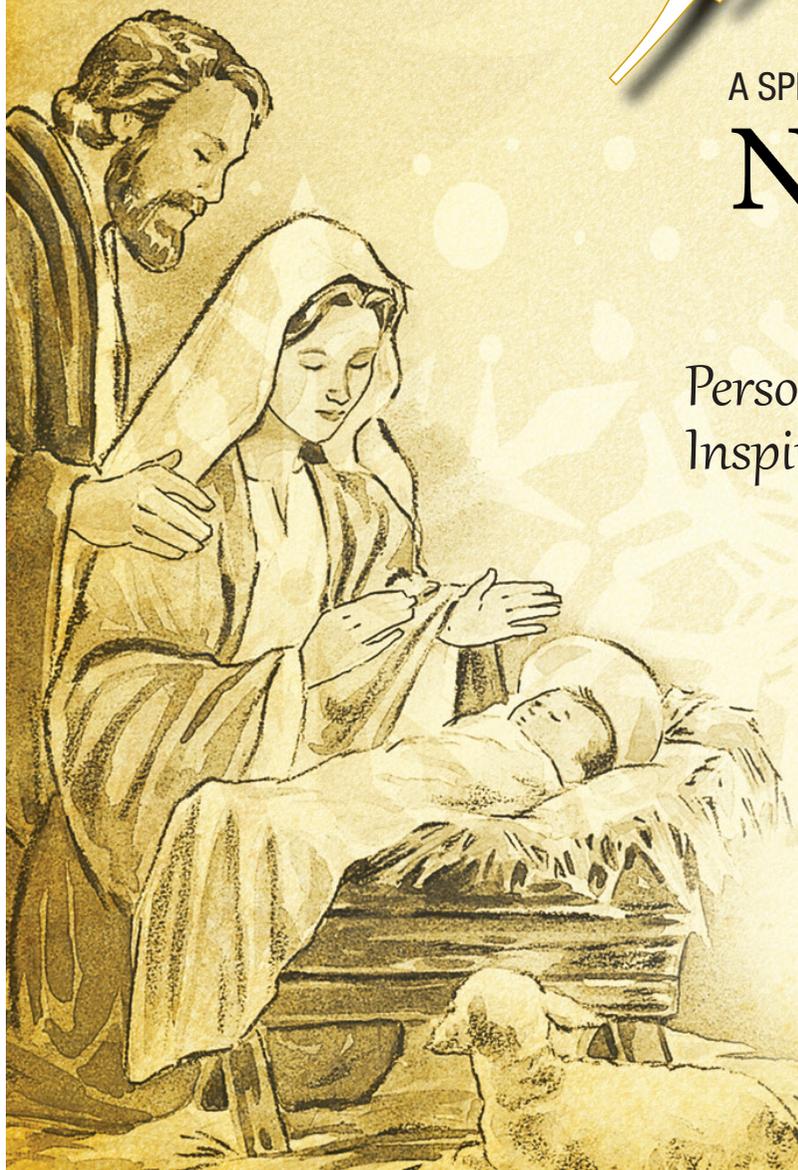
News Journal

Personal Stories of
Inspiration & Good Will

Family Traditions

Seasonal Messages from
Area Religious Figures

The True Meaning
of the Season



Have an attitude of gratitude

By Bryan Golden - Guest columnist
Thanksgiving is much more than a big meal with family and friends. It's a time to reflect on, and be thankful for, all of the good things you have.

It's important to be grateful, not just on Thanksgiving, but each and every day. Rather than lamenting what you feel is lacking in your life, begin each new day by developing an attitude of gratitude. Take inventory of your blessings and you will be surprised at just how much you have to be thankful for.

If you have enough to eat, a place to live, a way to get around, people who care about you, or people you care about, then you are wealthy. If you lack any of

these elements, you must still be grateful for what you do have, while striving to obtain whatever is absent.

Focus on all positive aspects of your life. Take nothing for granted. Every morning, recharge your appreciation. Be happy for everything there is, not upset over what you feel is missing.

Dreams of the future shouldn't diminish appreciation for the present. If all you do is concentrate on what you want, you won't enjoy today. Don't be jealous of others; what they do or have has no bearing on you.

You can feel bitter or resentful for a variety of reasons. Perhaps you feel something is missing from your life, things

aren't going your way, or you have been treated unfairly. You may wonder, "why do these things always happen to me?"

Life's problems tend to dominate your thoughts, turning your focus to what you feel is wrong. You may start to resent those who appear to be better off. You're apt to dwell on things you think would make your life better if you had them. If only you had more money, more time, a bigger house, a different car, a different job, a different boss, had picked a different career, etc.

Once your attitude becomes one of deficiency instead of abundance and appreciation, you can become overwhelmed by feelings of frustration and feel like a victim. As this happens, a consuming vicious cycle starts.

Being bitter or resentful blows situations out of proportion. People who are bitter frequently find that their situations deteriorate and their mental and physical health decays.

It's difficult, if not impossible, to achieve your goals while you are bitter or resentful. Regardless of what challenges might befall you, bitterness makes finding solutions much more elusive.

There is no point to feeling bitter since it accomplishes nothing, harms you and makes things worse. Filling yourself with gratitude on a daily basis makes you feel good, while driving out negative feelings.

Begin your practice of gratitude each morning as soon as you wake.

Every day is a great day. If you have any doubts, try missing one. Take inventory of everything, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, that is good in your life.

If it helps, make a written list of all things you are grateful for. Read your list every day. As you do this, you will build and reinforce your attitude of gratitude. Don't waste any time with what you feel you don't have.

Keep things in perspective. Consider all the people who have overcome difficulties far worse than yours. Don't be consumed by your problems, there is always a solution. Maintaining an attitude of gratitude allows your mind to devise a resolution for your circumstances.

Make every day a day of Thanksgiving and you will be amazed how much better your life will become.

Bryan is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact Bryan at Bryan@columnist.com or visit www.DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com © 2016 Bryan Golden



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“Our Special Angel”

Our story began on February 5th when my wife, Linda, had her Mitral Valve replaced. She had the surgery at Kettering Medical Center. The surgery went very well. She was released on February 13th. As we sat in the family room on February 15th, I heard Linda call my name in a very soft voice. I turned and she was not breathing and had no heart beat.

I called 911, and then called our neighbor, Shannon McGowan. She was at our house within a couple of minutes and performed CPR. That was the moment “Our Special Angel” arrived. She continued performing the CPR until the emergency squad arrived, approximately 10 to 12 minutes, even though a police officer volunteered to take over the CPR. When the emergency squad arrived, they applied the paddles and Linda responded on the first try. She was transported to Kettering Medical Center, where Dr. Pavlina, who had performed her heart surgery, took over her case. He told Shannon if she had not performed the CPR for that length of time, Linda would not have survived.

Linda spent 21 days at Kettering Medical Center, and was then transferred to The Laurels in Blanchester for rehab, where she spent another 21 days. I lost track of the many times that “Our Special Angel” went to see Linda.

Shannon and her partner, Bob Gomez, had moved next door to us approximately one year earlier. Several of our friends have mentioned they believe God placed them there.

THIS WE TRULY BELIEVE

Jim Hartman










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The Teddy Bear

Christmas 1954 Mom & Dad and I lived up over Donahue's Grocery Store on South South Street in Wilmington, Ohio. Money was rather scarce so our apartment consisted of one room (the kitchen) on one side of the tenants hall and one room (living room/ bedroom combination) on the other side of the hall.

I slept on a roll away bed that folded up during the day. There was not going to be any Christmas presents that year. Dad went to Keller's drug store uptown Wilmington where he won \$5.00 So on Christmas morning under my roll away bed was a brown cardboard box and in the box was a brown and yellow bear. My dad always found a way to take care of us

Barbara (McCoy) Cochran daughter of Hobert C. McCoy

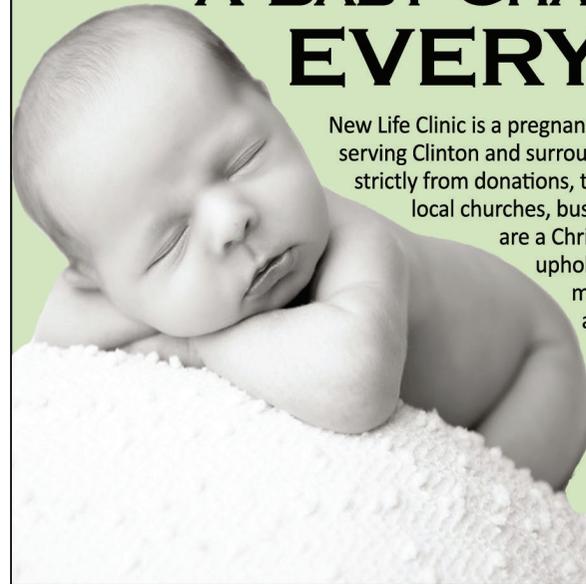


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At New Life Clinic, we understand that a baby changes EVERYTHING, and that the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, changed mankind for all time. May you experience New LIFE this Christmas season!

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Riding the Christmas Train

It was a few nights before Christmas and the streets and sidewalks of Washington D.C. were covered with a glistening layer of new fallen snow. Our Nation's Capital is always special, but walking downtown among the old historic buildings is extraordinary, particularly for the purists and the romantic who love the traditions of Christmas.

The Union Station was alive with shoppers looking for last minute bargains, passing the busy commuters heading home to their loving families in the suburbs. Our shopping was done, and Brenda and I had just boarded Amtrak's Lakeshore Limited, and began to slowly pull out of the station.

Within minutes we were out of the city and making our way to picturesque Harper's Ferry. The snow was now falling heavily, much like a scene from the Polar Express or a Frank Capra movie.

It felt good to sit back, relax, and watch the scenery pass as the train sped through Virginia, on to the flats of Maryland, and into the scenic river valley of Pennsylvania.

The Lakeshore Limited was especially enjoyable because the train contained a dome car, an elevated car wrapped in a wide expanse of glass. The seats in the dome car afforded an

exceptional view of the snow that was steadily falling upon the tracks, as well as, the upcoming railroad signals further down the road.

It was fascinating to watch the twinkling lights on the houses in the country, and the red signals turn green as we passed under each switch spaced about a quarter of a mile apart. The dome car was crowded, so I sat near the front listening to Christmas music and watching the miles go by.

As the music and thoughts flowed, a young man of about eighteen years of age climbed the stairs to the dome car. Walking in with a swagger, he asked if he could sit in the seat next to me. Since this was the only seat available, I said, "Sure, sit down."

As the young man took his seat, I

noticed he was wearing a large cowboy hat that looked several sizes too big for his head, and a T-shirt emblazoned with "The University of Wyoming" on the front. He was talkative. He told me he had boarded the train at the previous station, just a few miles back. As he continued to talk without a pause, I silently removed my headphones. I could tell the young man needed someone to listen.

As we slid through the hushed countryside, the boy told me he was a freshman at the University of Wyoming and was returning to school after spending Thanksgiving with his family. He said it would take a three-day train ride to return to college.

All of a sudden, the boy abruptly caught sight of a small farmhouse sitting on a nearby hill overlooking the railroad tracks. As he pointed to the distance he said with great passion, "That's my house!"

Then, as his home rapidly disappeared in the distance, I asked him if he ever got homesick being so far away at school?

"No," he said. "I love being away from home. In fact, I just broke-up with my girlfriend who I've known since first grade. I outgrew her. I told her to find someone else, because I'm going to date other girls in college."

Suddenly, the train passed over a country road guarded by a railroad crossing with a gate adorned with bright red, flashing lights. Although it was dark outside, there was a full

moon reflecting off the radiant snow. I could see the crossing arm fall across the tracks, and at that moment, a bell on the crossing sign began to ring. I glanced out the window and noticed a dirty old car parked next to the crossing arm. Sitting outside, on the front fenders of the automobile, were a man and a woman about sixty-years old and a young woman about eighteen. They were waving their hands and arms wildly to a faceless group of railroad cars speeding by, hoping for one last glimpse of their son and boyfriend.

"That's my dad and mom," the young man shouted, "..... and Annie."

As he said the name, "Annie" I saw his face begin to crumble. The tears were now falling hard upon his cheeks, and the sobs began to shake his whole body. Not knowing what to do, I patted his shoulders and shared a few words of comfort.

After composing himself, the young man left his seat quietly. I placed my headphones back on my ears, and resumed listening to the soft music.

Ironically, the mournful voice of Iris Dement was singing Our Town.

"Now I sit on the porch and watch the lightning-bugs fly.

But I can't see too good, I got tears in my eyes.

I'm leaving tomorrow but I don't wanna go.

I love you, my town, you'll always live in my soul."

Amid the most unlikely of circumstances, to the most unlikely of people, once in awhile in this life we are allowed to comfort and, in some

way, to lessen the pain and suffering of others; sometimes simply by listening.

Maybe that is what happened on a train, a few nights before Christmas somewhere in the cold, snowy mountains of Pennsylvania many years ago.

Pat Haley



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Sunday, December 25th

10:30 AM

Morning Worship

6:00 PM

Candlelight Service

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- 9:15 am - Bible Classes For All Ages
- 10:30 am - Morning Worship With The BBC Choir & Orchestra
- 6:00 pm - Evening Worship With The BBC Choir & Orchestra
- Kids Praise Children's Choir

Wednesdays:

- 6:30 pm - AWANA Children's Ministry (ages 2yrs-6th grade)
- 7:00 pm - Bible Studies
- Student Ministries (7th-12th grade)





People of the Cross

Bible Baptist Church - Wilmington

Who are the People of the Cross?

I Corinthians 1:18 tells us "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." A person of the cross is someone who unashamedly believes in the power of the cross to save all those who come to Christ in simple faith and repentance. They are people who believe in preaching the gospel to every creature, as Christ commanded us. And they are people who are willing to bear the testimony of Jesus and His cross before a lost and dying world. It is our goal as a congregation to lift high the cross of Jesus Christ in our worship, our fellowship, and our attempts to reach our community with the gospel message.

We are People of the Cross!



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The spiritual discipline of confession

Dale McCamish - Contributing Columnist

Last Sunday I confessed before our church one of my personal sins. Verbal confession brings a certain kind of freedom and healing that is found in no other practice.

This month my columns are about spiritual disciplines. Every Christian should pursue the spiritual discipline of confession because of confession's healing properties.

Right up front, we need to understand what confession will do for us. First, confession provides forgiveness and cleansing. The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ¹ John 1:9. When we are honest with God we can trust Him to begin removing the thoughts, words, and actions that have been holding us back from reaching our full potential.

The healing properties of confession include opening our eyes to hidden sins and cleansing our consciences from past mistakes.

The second healing property of confession has to do with our physical health. Some physical sickness is caused by sin. James, the brother of Jesus, explains that our physical heal-

ing is sometimes linked to our verbal confession: "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." James 5:16. After we humble ourselves and confess our sins, our prayers become more powerful, too. "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." James 5:16.

Third, confession sets us free from habitual sins. Someone once said, "Sin will always take you farther than you wanted to go, keep you longer than you wanted to stay, and cost you more than you intended to pay." But confession breaks that chain of events and releases us back to fulfilling our God-given purpose. "You can't whitewash your sins and get by with it; you find mercy by admitting and leaving them." Proverbs 28:13.

Finally, the steps to practice confession are simple to understand, but difficult to put into practice. Sin, pride, and spiritual warfare regularly keep us from practicing obedience in confession. Step one: Go to God in prayer and confess to God your sin. Stop what you are doing and pray to God your confession. Try praying, privately, out loud. You can use these words if you like: "God, I know I wasn't supposed to _____. I don't want to do _____, again.

Please forgive me and help me to obey your ways instead of my own."

Step one is vertical, between you and God. Step two is horizontal: After you confess to God go and verbally confess your sin to a trusted Christian friend. Your friend may offer you advice on how to make things right, but your friend will also be able to remind you of the forgiveness that God offers you through faith in Jesus Christ.

You can experience the healing properties of confession when you begin pursuing this spiritual discipline. Start practicing today as soon as you finish reading this column.

If you would like to hear my confession from Sunday you can listen at www.wcconline.org just click the drop-down resources tab followed by the



link to sermon series. If you have any comments or questions about spiritual disciplines please email: dale@wcconline.org.

Dale McCamish is Senior Minister of Wilmington Church of Christ.



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The creation of a miracle

Randy Riley - Contributing Columnist

There was something going on in his mind that could only be described as magical.

He was a young man – late 20s or early 30s. He wasn't dressed for airport travel. His clothing would have been more appropriate for drinking a few beers on a chilly back porch. He had long hair and a slightly tattered jacket. Most people, including us, would consider his behavior to be, well ... odd.

As we stood waiting in line at Heathrow Airport, he was on his knees, bending forward, working on his laptop computer. His computer was lying flat on the floor. Every few minutes, as the line slowly moved forward, he would scoot the laptop ahead a few feet. He would then crawl up behind it and continue working – tapping, tapping, tapping on the keyboard.

His total attention was riveted to that computer screen. I had to see what he was doing, so I peered over his shoulder. The screen looked like a nearly blank page of sheet music. As his tap, tap, tapping continued, I could see what looked like musical notes popping up on the screen. Apparently, he was using a program to write music on his laptop computer. While he was waiting in a crowded airport line and crawling on his knees, he continued writing. He did not waste a single minute of creative time.

He wasn't singing or even humming. He was obviously writing music on the laptop, but what was he

hearing in his head? It seemed like magic. I could only imagine what he was hearing in mind. Was it rock and roll? An anthem? Something classical? The only thing I could think of was that something miraculous or magical was happening in that long, slow line at Heathrow Airport.

I saw him again on our short flight from Heathrow to Dublin. He had his laptop on the fold-down tray. Still, he was quietly tapping out music that existed only in his head. Oh, how I would love to know what music, what magic, what miracle came out of that experience. Was he part of a band or a musical group? Did he work for a church or choir? I'll never know, but I want to believe that the music he was writing brought smiles and joy to the hearts of the people who eventually heard or played his music.

Music is an absolute miracle to me. I have no musical talent. Occasionally, and totally by accident, I might hit the right note or sing a melody in tune, but the whole concept of harmony amazes me. How anyone can shift from melody to harmony is beyond me, but the blending of notes, tones and voices into various harmonic sounds is pure beauty and magic. I think it borders on miraculous.

The haunting beauty of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera" brought tears to my eyes and filled my soul. The pounding beat and rhythm that is combined with humor that makes the stage performance of "Stomp" such a mountain-

top happening is music at its most majestic and magical.

We are blessed here in Wilmington that we don't have to go to Broadway or even the Ohio Theatre, the Aronoff Center or the Schuster Theater to experience the magic of live musical theater, or the sheer miracle of combined voice, music and story.

In that incubator of talent that is the Theater Department of Wilmington College, our dear friend Hugh Heiland spent a lifetime teaching, grooming and setting a standard for excellence that has carried on from 1947 to today. Hugh's passion for performance and talent has been passed, like a torch, to people like Wynn Alexander, Steven Haines, Bryan Wallingford, Becky Haines, Timothy Larrick, Cole Haugh, Gina Beck and Matt Spradlin.

This new generation of artists continue to entertain and inspire this whole community with drama, comedy and music. What a blessing they are to all of us.

For many of us, the Christmas season starts with the Murphy Christmas Show. Maybe that young man in line at Heathrow Airport was writing a Christmas carol or maybe he was preparing a Christmas show. He certainly seemed to be inspired. Regardless, the holiday season is now upon us.

When you see a friend next week, smile. In your heads, you may both be hearing the same Christmas music.

Miracles do happen.

A message of hope on eagle's wings

Debbie Linville - Contributing Columnist

"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." 1 Peter 1:24-25

It has been a little over a year and half since I was called to serve the Presbyterian Church here in Wilmington. My husband and I have found a true home here and we have been made to feel not just welcome, but wanted as well.

For a couple of Hawkeyes living amid the Buckeyes, we could not ask to feel much more like "family" than we do in our adopted community.

However, as in all things in this life, there is one exception to the warmth and love we feel from our neighbors. The deer have made my life here very difficult in that they have taken from me one of

God's gifts that I treasure most ... flowers.

Apart from faith, family and friends, flowers have been my life for as long as I can remember. I love to grow them, write about them, preach about them, smell them and just generally be around them.

Last summer, my first in Wilmington, I planted all of my Midwest favorites that I could not grow in the 13 years we lived in Florida before we moved here. Very soon I found out that, while I thought I was planting a dream garden of fond memories, what I had actually planted was a delicious smorgasbord of tasty morsels for the deer that live in our neighborhood. By mid-July, I had nothing to show for all my efforts but bare stems and deep hoof prints all across my flower beds.

Never one to give up without a fight, I vowed this

year would be different. I studied up on plants deer don't like to eat. I asked the advice of seasoned local gardeners and planted what they suggested. I tried every home remedy and commercial product available to deter deer munching.

Things were a little better by early June and so I boldly gave into my desire to see a nice patch of impatiens amid the shade of our backyard. Impatiens are candy to deer, so I bought super-strength deer repellent guaranteed to stop not only deer, but moose and full-grown elk as well.

For several days all was well and resplendent in shades of red and coral blossoms. Then one morning as I walked my dog in the early morning, I gasped in horror at a dead circle of withered grass surrounding fallen, chewed flowers that had

See HOPE | 11



Sugartree Ministries has played a key role in the Wilmington community reaching out to those in need.

With the support of more than 30 area churches and a host of volunteers, meals are served six days a week. Lunch is served on Wednesday and Saturday at noon, evening meals are served Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Allen Willoughby, director of Sugartree Ministries, recalls the beginning of the ministry that was started more than 15 years ago.

"We started out as a coffee shop to provide a faith-based place for people to come and have fellowship and to feel safe," Willoughby said. "We started serving soup and sandwiches and realized there was need for more. We never imagined it would become what it is today."

Today, Sugartree serves more than 1,000 meals a week and gives out groceries to about 200 families every week. There's also an emergency shelter for men, a recovery meeting weekly and the coffee shop still provides a good cup of coffee and a place to fellowship.

"We are fortunate to have a community that is as supportive as they are. It's amazing how God can take such a meager beginning and turn it into something that has become so much more. We have seen the Lord change lives, meet the needs of the broken, the addicted, the poor," Willoughby said.

"Our mission is to put into practice what Jesus tells us to do in the gospel of Matthew," said Willoughby. He referenced the following Scripture, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... I will tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

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