



# The Newsletter

December 2024

*glorify God in all we do,  
Grow with Him daily &  
Go with Him to share His love.*



**Operation  
Christmas  
Child**

## Way To Go First Reformed!!

Thanks to your generosity,  
we were able to pack  
**134 shoeboxes** this year!!  
Thank you for making 134 children's  
Christmases extra special!



### December at a Glance

1. Advent Begins
- 2-13: FRC is in charge of Meals on Wheels
- 8: **5:30pm** Children's Christmas Program
  - Sharing Christmas Family gifts are due at the church
- 9: **6:00 pm** Elder & Deacon Meetings (New 2025 Elders/Deacons are invited to attend all meetings)
- **6:30 pm** Consistory Supper followed by Full Consistory Meeting
- **7:00 pm** Full Consistory will meet
- 11: **6:30pm** Remnant Evangelism Night
- 16: **11:30am:** Faith Bible Study salad luncheon at Heartwood
- **3:00pm:** Patience Bible Study Christmas Gathering
- 18: **5:30-7pm** FRC Christmas Caroling
- 22/29: **No Sunday School**
- 24: **5:00pm** Christmas Eve Service
- 25/1: **No Bible Classes & Youth Group**
- 25-Jan 1: Pastor Brian on vacation

#### \*Sundays:

- 9:00 am Praise & Worship Service
- 10:10 am Sunday School for 3yrs-Adult
- 10:10 am Coffee Fellowship Time
- 6:30 pm Fellowship Bible Studies

#### \*Tuesdays:

- 8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet

#### \*Wednesday Evenings:

- 6:30-7:30pm 1st-5th gr. Bible Classes
- 6:30-7:30pm MS Remnant will meet
- 7:30-8:30 pm HS Remnant will meet

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[www.sibleyfrc.org](http://www.sibleyfrc.org)



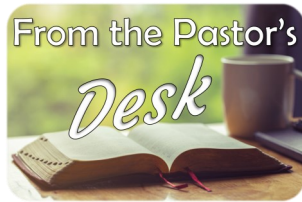
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**No more let sin and sorrow grow, nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his mercies known far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found; Far as, far as the curse is found.**

**-Joy to the World**

Our world lies under a heavy curse and it affects everything. A brilliant, titanically powerful heavenly being went rogue, and tricked our first parents into withdrawing their allegiance to God and setting it on themselves (and thus onto him.) A world that was perfect, and should have stayed that way, was shattered. This shattering produced sickness, death, decay, violence, predation, sin and evil, destruction, hell on earth and hell in the spiritual realm. The curse means sweaty brows and backbreaking labor to produce a harvest of weeds. It means increased pain and danger in childbearing. We were meant to live forever in a magnificent body, doing important work by channeling the power of almighty God to do what needed done. What we have now is arrogance, cancer, lies, thievery, 9/11, muggers, brussels sprouts, and mosquitos.

As God was pronouncing the particularities of the curse on each being who participated in the Fall, he said something interesting to the Serpent. He said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. He shall crush your head, and you shall strike his heel." Theologians call this "the protoevangelium" or the first telling of the gospel. A seed of the woman, a male heir, shall defeat the Devil. He shall "crush" or wound or bruise his head. The serpent shall wound him too. He shall strike his heel.

God's plan of redemption was already in place and working in the moments after the Fall of Man. That is the significance of God killing an animal and dressing Adam and Eve in a bloody skin to replace their clothing of fig leaves. Many thousands of years later, a child was born to a virgin in a little Podunk village in the backwater of the Roman Empire. Here at last was the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the Serpent. Here was the one about whom it was said, "He came to destroy the works of the Devil." (1 John 3:8)

The observable facts of the curse should teach us that the works of the Devil include much more than simply human beings ending up in hell. I'm not saying that human beings ending up in hell is somehow not a part of the problem. It is. But it is only a part. There is much more. There's still the cancer and the brussels sprouts and all that. Those problems need to be solved. And they will be. Christ came precisely for this purpose. He will rescue both his ruined people and the ruined creation they dwell in. He is the one who says, "Behold, I make all things new." (Rev 21:5)

In the movie The Passion of the Christ, Mel Gibson puts that line in the Savior's mouth as a horribly abused Jesus is carrying his cross to Golgotha to be crucified on it. "See mother, I am making all things new!" he says to Mary with quavering voice through the blood and the sweat and the spittle. Moving that sentence of scripture from Revelation 21 to that scene on the Via Dolorosa was absolute genius, for that is precisely how he went about doing it. In the breaking of his body, in submitting to the worst that the Devil and his servants, the worldlings, could do to the Incarnate Jesus, the ruined creation will be made whole again, "far as the curse is found." Us included. Whenever I see that scene in the movie it makes me love Him more than I've ever loved anyone in my whole life. And yet I still do not love him enough. I doubt that even in glory I shall ever love him as much as he deserves.



So, you see, Christmas isn't about nice people trying hard to be a little nicer because "It's the holidays." It isn't about presents or candy or family get-togethers or Jack Frost nipping at your nose. Not really. It's fine to enjoy those things so long as we don't end up placing too much importance on them. Rather, Christmas is to God's plan of redemption what D-Day was to Eisenhower's plans for the liberation of Europe: The first real move that makes ultimate victory possible.

Right now we're living somewhere between the landing at Normandy and the conquest of Berlin. We don't know the precise timetable, nor the order of battle, nor what our part will be. We only know that we will be a part of the battle and that we must be ready to fight when it's time. But we also must remember that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, and that our weapons are not worldly weapons, but spiritual weapons. Someday our Captain will come back and lead us to final victory. If we truly belong to Christ, we will not merely be witnesses to this event, but participants. In the meantime, let us make merry with our friends and families. Victory is assured. In the words of Lady Julian, all will be well, and all manner of things will be well.



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A background image for a Christmas Eve candlelight service. It features a dark wooden wall with several lit red candles in the foreground. There are also some greenery and a gold star decoration. The text is overlaid on this background.

*Christmas Eve*  
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE  
**December 24 at 5:00 PM**  
**All Are Welcome**



## Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through November 30:

- **General Fund: \$333,270.03**  
Budget: \$443,532.29; 75% of budget
- **Benevolent Fund: \$14,190.81**  
Budget: \$68,275.23; 20% of budget
- **Building Fund offerings to date: \$1935**  
**Building Fund - Parsonage Updates: \$6750**

**Average Monthly Offering Needed:**  
**\$42,650**

**Total Benevolent/General Offerings for November:**  
**\$42,542.16**

*Total Ben/Gen offering does not include  
"Special Monthly Offering" donations as they  
are technically not part of the estimated budget.*

## Faith In Action for December: Sharing Christmas Families

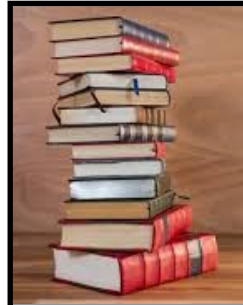


Gifts need to be brought to Church by:

## December 8

### Special Offering for December

**Bethany**<sup>®</sup>  
CHRISTIAN SERVICES



### FRC Book Table

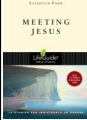
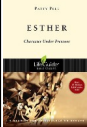
There have been new books added to our book table. Take a minute to stop by and pick up something new to read on these cold days.

## Trivia Time!!

1. Only two Gospels include any details about the birth of Jesus. Which of them starts with a genealogy to establish that Jesus is the Messiah to whom Old Testament prophecies referred?
2. How many days after the birth of Christ did Joseph and Mary give him the name Jesus?
3. To whom did Luke write his Gospel? What purpose guided his writing?
4. What was the name of the prophet whom Christians believe predicted the birth of Mary's boy child?
5. According to the Bible, which animals were specifically mentioned as being present in the stable when Jesus was born? (NKJV text)
6. Who spread the news about baby Jesus throughout Bethlehem?
7. According to the Gospel of Luke (KJV), why did Joseph have to travel to Bethlehem?
8. In which New Testament book do we read about the angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."?
9. How many Magi does the Bible say worshiped the baby Jesus and then presented gifts to him?
10. Matthew 1:21 States that these words were spoken to Joseph in his dream. "She shall bring forth a son and you shall call His name Jesus." Why was the name "Jesus" given to this special child?





**Faith Bible Study**, will meet on **Monday, November 18 at 11:30 am** at Heartwood Heights for their Christmas Salad Luncheon. Please bring a salad to share!

**Patience Bible Study**, will meet on **Monday, November 18 at 3:00 pm** will be meeting together for their annual Christmas Party. Please bring a snack to share with the group!

**6:30 pm Sunday Evening Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities!**

**\*\*Message Discussion and Application Bible Study\*\***

\*FRC Fellowship Hall

**\*\*Digging into God's Word\*\***

This group is currently studying the book of **Genesis**.

\*FRC Fireside Room\*

*All ages, singles and couples are invited to attend. Childcare can be arranged.  
Come, join a group and let's grow together!*

<h3 style="margin: 0;">Consistory Meeting Highlights</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current membership was discussed. Letters of encouragement, transfer, inactive and dropped were sent.</li> <li>MMSA for FRC Sibley to accept the following ARC statement. "We, the Consistory of The First Reformed Church of Sibley, Iowa, endorse and embrace the foundational statements of the Alliance of Reformed Churches."</li> <li>MMSA to accept Derek Ackerman into the membership of FRC Sibley.</li> <li>MMSA to accept Karen Keiper into the membership of FRC Sibley.</li> <li>Church decorating will be taken care of by the decorating committee.</li> <li>Christmas Eve service will be at 5pm</li> </ul>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">November 11, 2024</h3>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">Congregational Meeting Highlights</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Election of Elders resulted in the election of Merlyn Janssen and Duane Vande Hoef</li> <li>Election of Deacons resulted in the election of Cody Hurlburt and Clayton Wagenaar</li> </ul>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">November 13, 2024</h3>



## December Celebrations

### ~~Birthday's~~

- 1 Marlys Dykstra
- 2 Trudy Dykstra  
Brent Wassman  
Michael Block Jr.
- 3 Jamiey Bevers  
Witten Julius
- 4 Kaden Maxwell
- 6 Marcia Van Ruler  
Reka Post
- 7 Alyssa Bruxvoort
- 8 Amelia Hoekstra
- 9 Laurel Klaassen
- 10 Davis Beyer  
Brysen Alexander

- 13 Meggan Block
- 14 Gracie Odens
- 15 Ella Bruxvoort
- 16 Easton Beyer
- 17 Merlin Doorenbos  
Brynna Loerts
- 19 Curt Van Kley  
Sarah Loerts
- 20 JoAnn Calsbeek  
Jodene Kruse

- 21 Mike Hustoft  
Dave Stofferan  
Alfreda Verdoorn
- 22 Gert Gaalswyk  
Melissa Hisek
- 24 Glenn Doorenbos
- 29 Ryan Van Marel
- 31 Deb Hulstein



*I have found*  
**THE ONE**  
*Whom my soul Loves*  
SONG OF SOLOMON 3:4

### ~~Anniversaries~~

- |                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| 18 Mike and Andrea Block     | 32 years |
| 19 Elesson and Kelsey Joseph | 9 years  |



### Praise and Worship Greeters

- 1: E: Gretchen Bartelson  
C: Tony and Jamiey Bevers/family  
W: Davis and Kristen Beyer/family
- 8: E: Josh and Hannah Lucas/family  
C: Troy and Meggan Block/family  
W: Jerrad and Tracee Brouwer/family
- 15: E: Jamie and Jennifer Bruxvoort/family  
C: Nathan and Angie Buysman  
W: Joann Calsbeek
- 22: E: Levi and Kira Christensen/family  
C: Larry and Melissa DeBoer/family  
W: Marcus and Angie DeBoer
- (Christmas Eve Service)**
- 24: E: Stan and Abby DeZeeuw/family  
C: LaVon Dykstra  
W: Ron and Nancy Dykstra
- 24: E: Luella Eggink  
C: Jon and Amy Elser  
W: Anita Ernst

### Worship Service Nursery

- 1: Teresa Hurlburt and Maria Mans  
8: Maureen and Amelia Heilman  
15: Amy Van Marel and Jodi Wagenaar  
22: No Nursery  
29: No Nursery

### Fellowship Coffee Servers

- 1: Dwayne and Janice Heikes  
8: Burt and Jan Henrichs  
15: Scott and Jamie Hulstein  
22: Ken and Wilma Loerts  
29: Leona Meendering & Joanne Klaassen

### Children & Worship during the service



- | Leader          | Helper |
|-----------------|--------|
| 1: Deb Kusters  |        |
| 8: Deb Kusters  |        |
| 15: Deb Kusters |        |
| 22: No C & W    |        |
| 29: No C&W      |        |

### Willing Hands Group



**November:  
Group #6**  
will be responsible for  
services during the month.

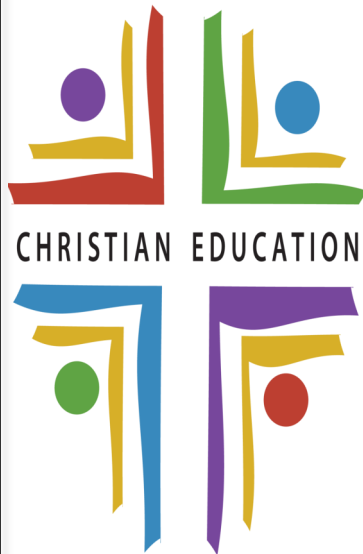
#### Co-chairpersons are:

- Peg/Curt Van Kley
- Rhonda/Larry Riebeling

### Library Volunteers



- 1: Jan Henrichs  
8: Jamie Hulstein  
15: Jan Juffer  
22: Jeannette Juffer  
29: Leona Meendering



## Education Schedule:

Please remember the following Weather Cancellations Procedure:  
If there is NO school, or school is released early due to inclement weather, there will be NO WEDNESDAY Night activities.

### Sunday School 3 yr - Adult:

- No Class on December 22 & 29

### ◇ Wednesday Bible Classes (1st-5th grades):

- No Class on December 25 & January 1

### ◇ MS and HS Remnant Youth Group:

- No Youth Group on December 25 & January 1

## College Addresses

### **Andrea Leusink**

BVU Box 2461  
610 W. Fourth Street  
Storm Lake, IA 50588

### **Carter Brouwer**

2013 Fox Run Trail  
Brookings, SD 57006

### **MacKenzie Beyer**

610 W 4th Street  
Storm Lake, IA 50588

### **Ted Van Gelder**

617 Jackrabbit Ave  
Brookings, SD 57007

### **Grant Brouwer**

1235 SE University Ave  
Apt. #205  
Waukee, IA 50263

### **Marissa Ackerman**

#313 Caldwell Hall  
Box 2805  
Brookings, SD 57007

### **Halle Block**

1343 SW Prairie Trail Pkway  
Apt. #302  
Ankeny, IA 50023

### **Madison Brouwer**

901 Rose Street  
Apt. #244  
Vermillion, SD 57069

### **Keegan De Zeeuw**

812 University Street  
Box #173  
Pella, IA 50219

### **Makya Dykstra**

1631 4th St NE  
Apt 115  
Watertown, SD 57201-8797

### **Maverick Elser**

612 S. 16th Street  
Ames, IA 50010

### **Jared Kruger**

410 Campus Drive  
Apt. 4  
Calmar, IA 52132

### **Emma Langstraat**

Meadows South  
#120C  
Brookings, SD 57007

### **Matthew McDougall**

Room #701  
IA Lakes Comm. College  
3200 College Drive  
Emmetsburg, IA 50536

### **Gannon Rockman**

3099c Nest Ave.  
Sheldon, IA 51201

### **Ella Bruxvoort**

405 5th Street  
Sibley, IA 51249

### **Aiden DeZeeuw**

Stalnaker Hall  
2875 University Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50311

### **Michael Block Jr.**

208 8th St. SW  
Unit 103  
Orange City, IA 51041

### **Apiyo Harberts**

The Boundary  
5350 W. Vision Dr.  
#102  
Sioux Falls, SD 57107

### **Uchan Harberts**

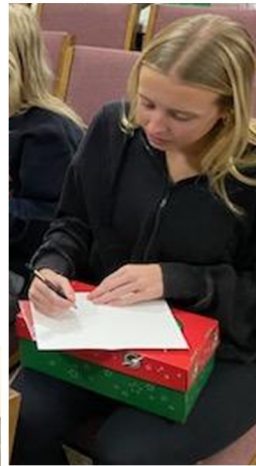
The Boundary  
5360 W. Vision Dr.  
#216  
Sioux Falls, SD 57107

### **Grace Bevers**

Beede Hall  
Room 227-2  
702 E. Cherry Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069

If your student will have a different address for the 2024-2025 school year please let the office know.







## PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Pray for our Church                        | 16. Leona Meendering              |
| 2. Ken and Wilma Loerts                       | 17. Steve and Lynn Mulder         |
| 3. Josh and Hannah Lucas; Joanna, Allegra     | 18. Lisa Nissen                   |
| 4. Nick and Maria Mans; Loryl, Nolan          | 19. Vanessa Odens; Gracie, Landon |
| 5. Frank Martinez                             | 20. Dick and Marcia Oldenkamp     |
| 6. Darcy Martinez                             | 21. Pray for our College Students |
| 7. Pray for our College Students              | 22. Pray for our Church           |
| 8. Pray for our Church                        | 23. Lyle Peelen                   |
| 9. Cory and Anne Maxwell;<br>Kaylee, Kyler    | 24. Reka Post                     |
| 10. Kaden Maxwell                             | 25. LaVonne Prins                 |
| 11. Alex McDougall                            | 26. Junior and Imogene Rasmussen  |
| 12. John and Kim McDougall; Matthew           | 27. Larry and Rhonda Riebeling    |
| 13. Dave and Jessica McDyer; Lincoln, Addison | 28. Pray for our College Students |
| 14. Pray for our College Students             | 29. Pray for our Church           |
| 15. Pray for our Church                       | 30. Daren Rockman; Gannon         |
|   | 31. Marlin Roelfs                 |

<b><u>College Students:</u></b>			
Grace Beavers	Marissa Ackerman	MacKenzie Beyer	Carter Brouwer
Michael Block Jr.	Halle Block	Teddy Van Gelder	Andrea Leusink
Ella Bruxvoort	Tayler Bremer		
Aiden De Zeeuw	Madison Brouwer		
Apiyo Harberts	Regan Crichton		Dalten Bremer
Uchan Harberts	Keegan De Zeeuw		Natalie Klaassen
	Makya Dykstra		
	Maverick Elser		
	Jared Kruger		
	Emma Langstraat		
	Matthew McDougall		Grant Brouwer
	Gannon Rockman		Ryan Van Marel



BE A  
*Prayer*  
WARRIOR  
*Like 21:36*

Luke 21:36

## Our Missionaries

Dr. Bernadeth Kelly &  
Adrian Bobb  
Sayuri Kist—Okazaki  
Brian & Donna Renes  
J.J. & Tim TenClay  
Rowland & Jan Van Es  
Grace Covenant Ministries  
Jeff and Chelsea Lampen

# PRAYER JOURNAL

# PRAYER JOURNAL

## A Fun Family Alternative to Traditional Advent Calendars. Advent Hygiene Item Collection Calendar

This year we are teaming up with the Sibley-Ocheyedan schools to help provide hygiene items to students in need. We encourage you this Christmas to read each day's devotion and collect the hygiene item for that day. By the time you get to Christmas you will have a full box of items to donate to our students. Thanks for participating!!

 **December 2024** 

[illegible]



# Sportsmen's Devotional

**Today's Photograph . . . Like The Lone Tree Brand We Are Also Branded.  
" I Have Indelibly Imprinted (Tattooed A Picture Of) You On The Palm Of  
Each Of My hands"**



## **Bible Study Verse**

II Corinthians 1:20-22

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through Him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (NIV)

Whatever God has promised gets stamped with the Yes of Jesus. In Him, this is what we preach and pray, the great Amen, God's Yes and our Yes together, gloriously evident. God affirms us, making us a sure thing in Christ, putting his Yes within us. By His Spirit He has stamped us with His eternal pledge-a sure beginning of what He is destined to complete. (Message)

## **Thoughts**

In Wyoming we still brand our horses to prove ownership. I was able to retrieve a stolen horse 300 miles from home just because he bore my brand.

If I value them, I brand them. If I'm traveling out of state, it's easy to prove ownership at the borders. Even if they get lost in the wilderness, a game warden or forest service personnel is likely to come across them and I'll get them back.

## **Action Point**

I Peter 2:24 reminds us, "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed," (NCKJV). Our brand pictured above is called the "Lone Tree" brand, the cross on the hill. Isaiah 49:16 says, "Behold, I have indelibly imprinted (tattooed a picture of) you on the palm of each of My hands; [O Zion] your walls are continually before Me," (Amplified). That makes for a pretty iron clad relationship. I'm branded His and He's branded mine.

## **Sportsmen's Tip of the Day**

If you're an "outlaw" you won't like this idea cause it will reveal you. But, we all fill out the luggage stickers at the airport to get our lost luggage back. Something a lot more convenient than three sentences of address information is to brand your valuables. I've branded a wood pistol, knife ribs, leather saddle bags, and scabbards. When the grand kids inherit the stuff, they'll know it was Grandpa's.

## **Trivia Time Answers:**

1. Matthew
2. Eight
3. The Roman leader Theophilus, to tell him the truth about Christian teaching
4. Isaiah
5. None
6. The Shepherds
7. Ceasar Augustus levied a tax to be paid/ called for a census in his ancestral home
8. The Bible doesn't state that..the angels didn't sing
9. No number is given
10. Because his name means "savior"

Hello First Reformed Church,

There are so many things that are happening here at FRC Remnant Youth, but there is one thing that I want to talk about here in my newsletter, Food Find. This is my favorite event of the year, next to the Agape Supper, but that has a different reason.



Food Find was brought back when I first started here seven years ago, and I know there is a rich history of Food Find here at this church. I decided back in November 2017 that we should partner with the Presbyterian youth group and Maggie, who was the youth pastor at that time, agreed that we should do this together.

So we worked together to do this event, until two years later in 2019 it was brought up at OCMA that other churches would like to do it also. That year we started incorporating every single youth group in the town of Sibley. We even started inspiring other towns to do it, George, Little Rock, and Ocheyedan.

What does the Food Find actually do? Well simply put we collect food and other donations for Upper Des Moines and other food pantries. On average, in the past, we would collect anywhere from 1,000-2,600 pounds of food every time we did this. However, in recent years we implemented a new system of passing out bags for promotional reasons. With that change, we started collecting around the 2,200-2,600-pound range of food items.

Through this outreach opportunity we learned that the 2,000+ pounds of food we gather each year not only stocks the shelves of Upper Des Moines food pantry for the remainder of the current year it usually lasts until about May of the following year. This is an event that helps give hungry people food, materials, and even a gospel tract or two as well.

I love doing this event and so do the students, if you have not been involved in this event please prayerfully consider being part of it. We do it every year on the Wednesday night a week before Thanksgiving. So mark your calendars now for next year!

Thank you for all of the donations this year as we were able to collect 2,200 pounds of food! Thank you so much for being a blessing to the community and serving others. If you have any other questions about Food Find, please let me know and I would love to talk more about it with you!

Blessings,  
Josh

### **Dad Jokes with Josh:**

**Fun Fact! If you cut off your left arm. Your right arm will be left!**



Let's find the  
**FOOD**

**Sibley Youth Food Find**

**2200lbs of food was collected!!  
Thank you City of Sibley for  
your generosity!!**







## *Random Musings Devotional*

By Brenda Sandbulte

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of disbelief, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us."

No, I don't write that eloquently, but Charles Dickens from *The Tale of Two Cities* does. And no, my thoughts this morning have nothing to do with the election. I was remembering that normally this time of year, I teach the concept of antithesis in American Literature. (I know -

snooze.)

Antithesis in literature means "a contrast or opposite of two things with the intention of drawing attention to that contrast," and last night as I watched the Sight and Sound production of *The Miracle of Christmas*, one line of antithesis seared its place in my thoughts. It was the last thing I thought of as I fell asleep and the first thought I had this morning.

There's a shadow of a cross on the manger wall.

So now I'm sitting here thinking of Mary and Joseph and the antithesis in their lives - their best/worst scenarios. Mary, newly betrothed to Joseph, with all the hope and happiness a young engaged girl can experience finds herself pregnant. Now the Savior of the world isn't something to think of as the worst-case scenario, but the societal backlash must have been frightening!

And Joseph - newly betrothed to a woman who by all accounts was a catch - discovers she's pregnant! Where's the good in that? But then an angel visits him - always good - and he takes her as his wife.

They probably settled in, ignoring all the gossip, feeling the community's outrage, and their lives began to have some sort of routine. Then a census was to be taken. Mary needs to travel, not only because the King has decreed it, but to fulfill prophecy (always good, but horrible timing.)

They arrive in Bethlehem (good as she probably was exhausted), but no room anywhere (bad). They find someone friendly who provides them a place to rest, and the baby decides to come. None of this sounds good, except - well, it's the Savior of the world.

No one would have blamed those two for questioning God's timing and plan. After all, they obeyed - Mary, her angel and Joseph his. Maybe they had expectations how this was all going to play out. They might have expected a palace for the birth or at least a bedroom with a midwife, but here they were in a stable experiencing labor pains.

We have no idea if anyone attended Mary's birth, maybe it was just her and Joseph and the animals, but regardless, I can imagine how frightened she must have been. Girls want their mothers or grandmothers to be there, but she was essentially alone going through what can be one of the scariest moments of her life...in a stable...after days of being on the trail...and the smell...the itchy hay...the darkness with nothing but a bright star to see...

And then He was born.

And she looked into his eyes...

*Continued on next page*

The eyes that saw creation at the beginning...the eyes that witnessed the Red Sea parted...the eyes that watched the fall of Jericho...the eyes that saw Daniel thrown into the lion's den...the eyes that witnessed the miracle of the widow's oil...

... and the eyes that would see a Samaritan woman and tell her she is forgiven...the eyes that would look upon a leper and make him clean...the eyes that would see beyond simple fishermen to their impact on the world... the eyes that would see the worst mankind could and can offer...the eyes that would look down on her from the cross...

And the angels sang.

And the shepherd arrived.

And the gifts were given.

And the Season of Light began.

So as you begin to celebrate the best season of the year - Advent - remember it was born out of our worst.

For without the Babe in the manger, there would be no Cross on the Hill.

And without the Cross on Golgotha, there would be no empty Tomb...and that's the best antithesis I can think of.



## From the library--

The following are synopses of three new books added to the church library.



SAVED BY THE MATCHMAKER by Jody Hedlund (Book 2 of 'A Shanahan Match' series). "After her annulment is finalized, Enya Shanahan finds herself caught in a web of scandal and obligations while carrying a secret that threatens to shatter her family's reputation. Determined to find a suitable marriage for Enya, her father turns to a wily matchmaker to save them from their circumstances.

Sullivan O'Brien, a steamboat captain committed to aiding enslaved people on their path to freedom, is faced with an ultimatum from his father. Forced to marry or lose his livelihood, a marriage of convenience seems to be the only solution. As he and Enya face the trials of their past and a city consumed by fire, they must confront their deepest fears and learn to trust in love, even when darkness threatens to engulf them."



The next book will help put you in the mood for the holidays, THE CHRISTMAS TREE FARM by Melody Carlson: "When Madison McDowell returns from teaching overseas, she has high hopes to picking up where she left off at her family's Christmas tree farm on Oregon. But between damage from a recent wildfire and the neglect due to her sister Addie's unwillingness to invest, the farm is in sad shape. In fact, Addie is intent on selling the property. And to top it off, Madison's

former high school flame, the now-widowed Gavin Thompson, has plans to break her heart again by turning his neighboring property into a dusty, noisy dirt bike track for his daughter. With the odds stacked against her, Madison decides there's only one thing to do: double down on her dreams. It will require a ton of hard work—and some help from an unlikely ally—to save the farm she so dearly loves. But it may take a Christmas miracle to restore her relationship with her sister."



And for those of you who like Amish books we have Wanda E. Brunstetter's, LETTERS OF WISDOM, book #3 in the 'Friendship Letters' series. "Irma Miller thought having a family of her own would bring her joy and a sense of accomplishment, but she struggles with memories of the abuse she suffered as a child at the hand of her stepfather. When she becomes physically and emotionally abusive to her own children, she reaches out to her friend Doretta for prayer and wisdom. But Irma may find herself at an even darker emotional place before she will admit she needs professional help to heal the past traumas. Will Doretta's letters of wisdom help Irma and her family, or will too much be broken to ever be repaired?"

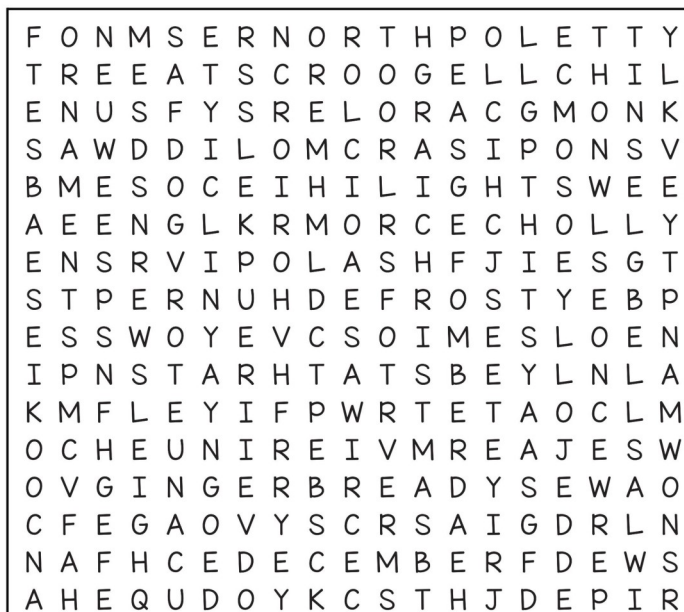
Don't forget to check out the small bookcase containing "Love Inspired Suspense" books. They are small in size and easy to carry in your purse for easy access.

~~Jeannette Juffer



**If your family would like suggestions as to what to donate this Christmas to the local food pantry for those in need, this was compiled by a lady who spoke to people getting food at a food bank. These are some things she learned.**

1. Everyone donates Mac and Cheese in the box. They can rarely use it because it needs milk and butter which is hard to get from regular food banks.
2. Boxed milk is a treasure, as kids need it for cereal which they also get a lot of.
3. Everyone donates pasta sauce and spaghetti noodles.
4. They cannot eat all the awesome canned veggies and soup unless you put a can opener in too or buy pop tops.
5. Oil is a luxury but needed for Rice a-Roni which they also get a lot of.
6. Spices or salt and pepper.
7. Tea bags and coffee make them feel like you care.
8. Sugar and flour are treats.
9. They fawn over fresh produce donated by farmers and grocery stores.
10. Seeds--in Spring and Summer because growing can be easy for some.
11. They rarely get fresh meat.
12. Tuna and crackers make a good lunch.
13. Hamburger Helper goes nowhere without ground beef.
14. They get lots of peanut butter and jelly but usually not sandwich bread.
15. Butter or margarine is nice too.
16. Eggs are a real commodity.
17. Cake mix and frosting makes it possible to make a child's birthday cake.
18. Dishwashing detergent is very expensive and is always appreciated.
19. Feminine hygiene products are a luxury and women will cry over that.
20. Everyone loves Stove Top Stuffing.
21. Diapers
22. Wipes
23. Buns
24. Baked goods
25. Potatoes
26. Nuts
27. Seeds for eating or cooking
28. Raisins
29. Dishwashing pods
30. Rags and cleaning supplies
31. Pet food
32. Pet supplies





# TRUNK OR TREAT!

