

Joy to the World!
The Lord has come!

Join VUMC during this wondrous time of year for
Soup Suppers - Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m.
(Starting November 28 - December 19)
Advent Services - 5:30 p.m.
Christmas Eve - 1:00 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.
Sunday Services:
Contemporary - 8:30 a.m.
Traditional - 10:45 a.m.
Sunday Schools for all ages - 9:30 a.m.

Village United Methodist Church
200 Carmona Road
Hot Spring Village, AR
[www. villageumc.net](http://www.villageumc.net)
Facebook: HSVUMC
501- 922-1030

Devotions written by VUMC Members and compiled
by the Witness Committee.

Advent *Book of Devotions*



*Unto to us a child is born,
Unto us a Son is given....
Isaiah 9: 6*

December 2
Hope

Hope in the Season of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14 “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing that I promised unto the house of Israel and the house of Judah.”

In the season of Advent, I find the greatest gift we can anticipate as Christians is that of hope! As we await the promised Messiah, we know that He is the One Hope we can cling to tightly in these times of stress and busyness.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, We come to You with thankful hearts for this season upon us. We pray that you will keep us focused on the Hope that is ours through the birth of your Son, Jesus. Amen

Connie Shoemaker

Your thoughts and prayers.....

December 3
Hope

Hope in the Season of Advent

Romans 15:13 “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

May this Season of Advent fill you with love, joy, faith, and peace, for these are stepping stones to hope. My mother used to say, “When you’ve lost hope, all is lost, because when you lose hope, you’ve lost your soul.” May the love of the Christ, who died in order that we may live a life abundant without the cares of the world, bless this world with all that gives hope to a broken heart, a torn land. May we always look up, not down; look forward, not backward for our future filled with God’s promises are straight ahead.

Prayer: Father, God, thank you for your precious son, Jesus, for through Him we find all the things that bring us hope when times are rough and our lives are bleak from wear. Pour out your grace on us that we may see you, Lord. Renew hope in the lost. In the wonderful name of Jesus we ask all these blessings as we praise and exalt you on high. Amen

Linda Black

Your thought and prayers.....

December 4
Hope

Scripture and Prayer:

[Hebrews 11:1](#) “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

What are you hoping for? Is it better health? Is it the right person to satisfy your longing for love? Is it more money to pay the shortfall every month? Have you lost hope?

Sometimes, focusing on these kinds of earthly needs, seems like the only option we have. But that is not true. The Advent Season comes alive with hope in the knowledge that the birth of Jesus brought to the world a different way of living. When we have faith in God’s Promise of salvation, we are able to see our problems — our world — through the lenses of love — God’s love. This changes our entire perspective from one of fear to one of hope and an assuredness that God is with us

Our God is the God of Hope, the God of Love and The God of Joy and The God Peace. The God that sent his son to bring these gifts to us to be used to nurture not only ourselves, but the world.

Carmen Edwards
Your Thoughts and Prayers....

December 5
Hope

Teaching children about giving at Christmas

It was many years ago when our children were young. They were 9, 7, and 5 years of age. My Methodist church always had a giving tree with tags for kids of all ages. I told our three kids to pick a tag of someone their age. When we got home, we talked about the purpose of the giving tree. We explained that these were children whose families did not have the money to purchase gifts for their children. And so, we went shopping. On the way, I asked each of my kids to choose a gift that they really wanted to receive for themselves, and that would be the gift they would give to the child whose name was on the tag they had chosen. Joyfully, they shopped and chose the gifts for someone less fortunate. We talked to our kids and told them that giving to others is always joyful. God smiles when we give with a joyful heart. And they were JOYFUL.

Years later, one of our sons who is married and has two children, were not doing well financially. Someone who worked for him, was a mother who was divorced with three children. It was Christmas time. What did he do? He bought a small tree and small gifts for her and the three children. When he gave them to her, she was overwhelmed. She asked him why? He told her that he knew it would be a tough Christmas for her, and just wanted to brighten things up a bit for her. Giving, Joyful Giving! Maybe it was a lesson from years past!

Matthew 6:3, 4 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Joyce Barone
Your Thoughts and Prayers....

December 6
Hope

Once upon a time Cindy had big plans for a future in Business Management. She was going to U. of A. when, out of nowhere, she was struck with a brain hemorrhage called AVM. At age 21, she was hospitalized for 31 days. She was in rehab and recovery for a year where she learned to walk, bathe, and use her brain again. In 1995, the cause of the hemorrhage was found and she had Gamma Knife radiation to obliterate it. She managed to live an independent life again.

Along came Brit, age 40. He had been a very successful business man, married with twin boys, when in 2001, he was struck with Rheumatoid Arthritis. His marriage failed and his job was terminated because of his crippling condition.

One day in 2008, Cindy and Brit met when they were walking their individual dogs. Their dogs got into a fight and to make a long story short, they became friends, got married in 2014 and are still living happily. Cindy drives and works part time and Brit does not drive but is a whiz with technology and is always helping friends in his church. Their disabilities have impaired them but their outlook on life and their individual abilities complement each other. God has given them a positive attitude and a thankful heart.

Each of them have hope. They are surrounded by caring, loving, Christian parents, family, and friends who never give up on them and have hope in a better tomorrow. They found their hope with God. And they are still faithful, Christian servants. (They are my friends.)

God, Thank you for providing for our needs. Help us never to lose hope. Amen

Susan Holick - True story
Your thoughts and prayers.....

December 7
Hope

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3-5

"A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley will be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'"

Reflection:

Many times in our lives, we find ourselves outcasts or exiled. We find comfort and hope in God's presence in our lives, and the fulfillment of his promise to guide and protect us. The words of Charles Wesley exemplify the hope found in the coming Christ.

Let us pray these words by Charles Wesley (The United Methodist Hymnal #196):

"Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.
Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit run in all our hearts alone,
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne."

Amen.

Debbie Perryman

Your thoughts and prayers....

December 8
Hope

In this season of Advent, we are called to seek Jesus. Have you seen Jesus lately? Hear these words from an old poem:

“I saw Jesus last week. He was wearing blue jeans and an old shirt. He was up at the church building; he was alone and working hard. For just a minute he looked a little like one of our members. But it was Jesus – I could tell by his smile.

I saw Jesus last Sunday. He was teaching Sunday School. He didn’t talk real loud or use long words, but you could tell he believed what he said. For just a minute, he looked like my Sunday School teacher. But it was Jesus – I could tell by his loving voice.

I saw Jesus yesterday. He was at the hospital visiting a friend who was sick. They prayed together quietly. For just a minute he looked like Bro. Jones. But it was Jesus – I could tell by the tears in his eyes.

I saw Jesus this morning. He was in my kitchen making my breakfast and fixing me a special lunch. For just a minute he looked like my mom. But it was Jesus – I could feel the love from his heart.

I see Jesus everywhere, Taking food to the sick,
welcoming others to his home, Being friendly to a newcomer,
And for just a minute I think he’s someone I know.

But it’s always Jesus – I can tell by the way he serves.”
Well, have you seen Him?

Pastor Chris
Your thoughts and prayers....

December 9
Love

Love in the Season of Advent

“And the angel said unto them, Fear Not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people.”
Luke 2: 10

The season of Advent brings us Love as we connect with family and friends near and far, often the only time of year we do so. For some, the connection comes as we travel to see one another, but for most of us the connection will come as we send cards and notes during the Christmas Season! And with those connections we share the good tidings of great joy and love...that Christ OUR Savior is born! Praise God!

Prayer: Father God, We ask that you bless the connections that we make during the season of Advent. May they be meaningful and share our joy and love in the good news of the coming of Jesus! Amen

Connie Shoemaker
Your thoughts and Prayers.....

December 10
Love

Is there anything sweeter than a content, newborn baby? They are so fresh and pure that we feel all is well with the world. A new baby in our arms somehow transforms us. Fourteen years ago, I had the pleasure of attending a three day spiritual retreat. It was a wonderful experience. I told my husband, "They loved me when I arrived, and they didn't know who I was; and even more amazing, they loved me when they waved goodbye and they did know who I was!" We listened to people tell exciting stories of their communication with Our Lord, we all shared stories of our trials and our blessings and we sang and sang praises to our King; but there was something special in those rooms, something I just couldn't describe. I could identify the joy in their eyes and feel the love in their hearts; yet there was something more.

At the close of the weekend we sang, "Have You Seen Jesus, My Lord?" I gazed at the sea of faces before me and saw pure, simple sweet love, the innocent look of a newborn in each face. It was then I realized, I was seeing Jesus in each and every one. My prayerful song, "Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord, I Want to See You", had been answered. There is nothing sweeter than when "The Christ In Me Meets The Christ In You." May you be blessed to find it in everyone you meet this Christmas Season and throughout the year!

Deanna Kincheloe
Your thoughts and prayers....

December 11
Love

Charles Schultz had a way of making us think about deeper things as we chuckled at his Peanuts cartoons. I remember one cartoon strip where Charlie Brown is reading the Christmas story as found in Luke, "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled." Charlie pauses and turns to Marcie to explain, "Caesar Augustus was the Emperor of Rome and the most powerful person on earth! One night in the little town of Bethlehem, a child was born, but no one paid any attention.... After all, he was born in a common stable. Who would have thought that this child would someday be revered by millions while Caesar Augustus would be almost forgotten?"

Marcie interrupts and says, "No one paid any attention when I was born either, but now everyone loves me, and I'm gonna get so many presents for Christmas, it'll make your head swim."

Charlie Brown turns to leave, Bible closed, and Marcie says, "Hey! Aren't you gonna finish the story?"

Charlie replies, "I think you finished it"

Consider for a moment that all the promises, all the prophecies, and all the proclamations of the Bible and of the Christian Faith have one basic focus – one message – you and I are loved by God in Jesus Christ. Accept the Love God sent into this world at Christmas – Jesus Christ. Realize that because of Jesus Christ your life has eternal significance, meaning and purpose. Make God's love the center of your life and watch the changes occur in you. Share God's love with others and see the changes occur around you. Let God's love in Jesus Christ shine through you like a light in the darkness and finish the story! See you in worship, as the Church gathers. ...

Charlie Settle
Your thought and prayers....

December 12
Love

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Words to remember: “Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other, and to everyone else.” (5:15)

Every group must have rules...and that includes a household--especially a household! When our two children were young, there were two rules of primary importance. 1: Be kind; 2: Do your job (and do it to the best of your ability).

The rules grew as the kids grew. When they were little, being kind and doing their job might be as simple as playing well with others and brushing their teeth. As they got older the rules encompassed more complex topics. Following these rules became an opportunity for meaningful conversations about what we are supposed to do as family members, neighbors, Christians---children of God.

Paul’s writings in this scripture aren’t just about behaviors or rules...He names some of the things that happen when people live in the joy of The Good News. Paul loves these people and wants them to do the right thing so they can participate fully in the promises of Christ. He reminds them to seek good for all; give thanks in all circumstances; greet others with delight; rejoice! (In other words, “be kind and do your job.”)

As we approach the 3rd and joyful Sunday of Advent, what can you do to make sure that this love, practiced joyfully, shows your own preparation for the coming of the Christ child? May we pray without ceasing; give thanks always; do good to all because it is good to do. In this way, we will welcome the Christ child with joy and love into our family. (some references from PTS devotionals)

La Verne Briscoe
Your Thoughts and Prayers.....

December 13
Love

The holidays can be so hard for many of us. Especially, if you have lost a loved one. You may find yourself asking whether you have the energy to manage the the holiday hustle and bustle. You may wonder, “Can I face the empty seat at the Christmas dinner table?” or “How can I possibly smile and feel joy, when my heart feels like it’s breaking?” So many questions. Are there answers to be found in all this sadness. YES!

This time of year is not only about giving, but receiving. One cannot exist without the other. It is a perpetual circle that must be completed. So, you may ask, what do I have to give? And how can I open my heart to receive?

Begin by renewing your spirit with the Christmas message of LOVE — God’s love and grace. This is the gift that the Christ Child came into this world to teach. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10: 27.

We are all deserving of this gift. Dare to open your heart and feel the gentle caress of this Divine Love. Even during the hard times, you can choose to live your life, with the remembrance of this precious gift. Receive it as well as give it to others, not only this time of year, but each and every day. Prayer: Lord open our hearts so that we can receive your love and share it with others.

Carmen Edwards
Your thoughts and prayers?

December 14
Love

Love in the Season of Advent

Scripture Luke 2: 16-19

"So they (the shepherds) went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherd's told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart."

Reflection:

It is so easy to picture ourselves as characters in the manger scene: the awe of the shepherds, the joy of hearing angels singing, and the hushed reverence of new parenthood. Imagine holding such a precious gift in one's hands! It was truly something to treasure, to love, and to ponder, as described in a favorite carol:

"There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky! There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry! And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing, for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!." (The United Methodist Hymnal #249) .'

Prayer:

Gracious God,

Please open our hearts to your abounding love, and allow us to share your love with others during and beyond the Christmas Season. Keep us mindful of the treasure you have given us in Christ, and instill in us a willingness to slow down and ponder your wonderful gift of love in our hearts. Amen

Debbie Perryman

Your thoughts and prayers.....

December 15
Love

"Unto us a child will be born, unto us a Son will be given. And the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9: 6)

Christmas has always been a noisy season. Census-time in Judea, with crowds of people trying to be counted, must have been wearing on everybody. Fathers worried about the accommodations, mothers fussed with the children, and people everywhere were wondering about this sudden interest of Caesar to get everyone registered.

The same is true for us today. We are well into the countdown of remaining shopping days, we're already behind, and we're feeling very uneasy about getting everything done, and perhaps we're a little resentful that the "holiday season" gets longer and longer. This is the very reason why "putting Christ back into Christmas" arouses such joy within our hearts. "Unto us a child will be born, unto us a Son will be given..."

Christmas then and now has an element of anticipation. In a world of darkness and difficulty, Christmas is our hope and our promise! As we remember the birth of a child in Bethlehem, we also look to that day when "unto us a Son will be given" again! One day, God will again share His Christmas gift to all the world when Jesus Christ returns for His church. Of this future we can be certain!

What a gift – and what a reason to celebrate this season!

Pastor Chris

Your thoughts and prayers.....

December 16
Joy

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs
employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

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, and wonders, of His love.

These familiar words penned by Isaac Watts have been a part of our Christmas music for almost 300 years. No matter how often we sing them, the sweet joy of Christmas comes to life again and again. We read in John 15, "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

As we observe this Advent season – a time of preparing ourselves for the coming of Jesus – and celebrate Christmas, I invite you to take a mental trip to Bethlehem and ponder the great joy given to us because of the birth of Jesus Christ. Love and grace came down to us on that first Christmas and the world has never been the same! Joy to the world, the Lord is coming again! Thanks be to God!

Pastor Chris
Your thoughts and Prayers.....

December 17

A favorite event for thousands of families, the Holiday Express, is a six-car train that brings Santa and his elves to our community. Visitors can meet Santa and check out special holiday displays in three of the train cars. In Addition to Rudy, the smiling tank car, you'll see a flatcar carrying Santa's sleigh and reindeer, a gingerbread boxcar, the elves' workshop, a reindeer stable, and a little red caboose.

Being a retired railroad man, I got a Christmas job (probationary job) as one of Santa's Helpers, an Elf, on the Holiday Express. As parents and children moved from the caboose to the next car, I got to greet them, help them step along, and "break the ice." I asked the kids if they had been naughty or nice, said something to them about their new Christmas coat or ask them what they wanted Santa to bring. Whatever I said, I was kind, and made them smile, laugh, or feel good. Little did I know that in the next car, another employ elf was listening and observing me. After the crowds dissipated, she asked me what in the world I had said or done because when they entered the next car, they were all laughing and happy. (I got the job. This season will be my 4th year--now spreading joy running the model train.)

Sharing joy is contagious! God gives us joy. When you have joy in your heart and you share it with others, somehow, you feel ENRICHED! CHOOSE JOY!

Story by Albert J. Pfeiffer, Jr. (written by Susan Holick)
Your Thoughts and Prayers.....

December 18
Joy

As we look forward to the coming celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, it amazes me how effective lying, fear, hatred and suppression affect our daily lives and our institutions including our churches.

It is my hope that we rededicate ourselves to obeying the directives given by God when he says in Jeremiah 29:11-14 "For I know the plans I have for you. They are plans for good not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In these days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find Me; when you seek Me, I will be found by you."

It is our responsibility to recognize that where we have been wrong, we must so state; where we have a need to re-think, let us re-think; and where we have been right, let us remain steadfast in our convictions.

In 3 John 4: 1, the Lord says, "I could have no greater joy than to hear my children live in the truth."
Have a blessed and joyous celebration of our Lord's birth.

O.W. Lollies

Your Thoughts and Prayers.....

December 19
Joy

The lighting of the advent candles has always been a special part of our family's celebration of the birth of our savior Jesus Christ. One of our family traditions in our home was the advent wreath and candles. We would celebrate with the advent wreath by reading scripture together with our son and then lighting the specific candle and praying together.

One Christmas Eve when our son was fourteen our pastor asked our family to light the Christ candle during the worship service. It was a cold Christmas Eve when our family, including my Mother, went to the front of the church to light the Christ candle. This was a very special event in our Christmas celebration and one we have cherished throughout the years.

To us Christmas is about the joy of the coming of Christ into the world. It's about the radiance of the glory of God. It's about the virgin birth of a child conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit. It's about Christ being the magnificent light of the world. This true joy is symbolized in John 8:12: Jesus saying to them "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Prayer: Dear Lord, we pray that we will continually seek the true light of Christ as we make our way through each day. And we are forever grateful for this magnificent gift you have given to us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Art & Jane Spicer

Your thoughts and prayers....

December 20
Joy

The year was 1968. The place is West Berlin Germany in a large stone church....the same church where the Christian martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer worshipped before Hitler's regime executed him just a few days before the end of World War II for resisting Hitler.

My first husband, David, and two other ministerial students were awarded a grant to spend a year in Berlin on a mission of post WWII reconciliation. David was working with the pastor of this church as a youth leader. We had arrived in June and so far, I had not been homesick.

During the Christmas Eve Candle Light Service. The massive organ launched gently into "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht." I knew the first verse in German but needed a Hymnal after that. However, as the lights dimmed to make that soft candle glow, the words were gone and listening was left.

That is when the thoughts of home and family rushed in for the first time. I had never been away from both sides of the family. I beautifully holy and peaceful. But then, drip, drip, drip, the tears rolled down my cheeks and fell where they may. The thoughts of missing family and friends, familiar church and traditions — Drip, Drip, Drip.

Ok Lynne get it under control before the lights come on. Deep breath. "Silent Night, Holy Night", Emmanuel - God is with us. Us....all Christians all around the world. Both of our families were in their churches (never mind a time difference); we were singing the same song and Emmanuel - God is with us. We are connected. Peace, wipe the tears, strained smile softens. We are all with God's people in God's house - connected. Emmanuel. Joy.

Lynne Harkleroad
Your thoughts and Prayers.....

December 21
Joy

Christmas is my favorite time of the year! My mother and father were so sweet about making it a very special occasion for my sister, 2 brothers, and I. They decorated our house beautifully, had wonderful, traditional food, and always celebrated with the real Christmas Story, the Birth of Baby Jesus.

These things brought our family together, giving us such joy, and I knew that is what I wanted when I grew up and had my own family. When I got married in 1971, we carried on the tradition with our daughter for 25 years. We had wanted more children and she had always wanted a sister or a big brother but due to medical reasons we could only have the one child.

This marriage ended in 1996 at Christmas time and my daughter and I were devastated - our joy was gone! But our family got us through it and I knew in my heart that God had a plan for us.

By December of 1997, His plan started to unfold. A dear co-worker of mine was also going through the heartbreak of divorce. We began dating and married in July of 1998. The beauty of this union is that my husband Daryl has 5 kids, 1 step-sister and 4 step-brothers for Jennifer! Her joy is off the charts! What's even more amazing is that we now have 19 grandchildren! Our Christmas is a very joyous celebration, all created in God's timing! Be Joyful, Thanks Be To God!

Betty Gress
Your thoughts and prayers....

December 22
Joy

Many years ago, when our family lived in Illinois, we had a December adventure. Someone had told us that during December that we should visit the zoo. And so, we went to the very large Brookfield Zoo. We had been there many times during the summer months with our children but never in the winter. So, with snow on the ground, we bundled up our kids and made the long drive to the zoo. We packed sleds so we could pull the kids, making it faster travel while at the zoo.

Not knowing what to expect, we entered the zoo. What a glorious experience! We saw animals that are usually asleep in the summer months. But now, we saw Polar Bears pounding around in their enclosure and sliding on ice into a pool that had frozen chunks of ice floating. They did this over and over again and a small crowd of people gathered to watch. They even chucked some blocks of ice into the pool.

Next, we saw the Snow Leopards prancing in the snow. We guessed that was familiar territory for them. And all of a sudden, an amazing thing happened. The Snow Leopard came up to the thick glass wall and put one of his paws on the glass. Our children reached up and put their hands on the glass where he kept his paw. We were all thrilled and the kids all squealed. It was a joyous day. All because we LISTENED to someone! Are you listening?

Joyce Barone
Your thoughts and prayers....

December 23
Peace

Scripture: Romans 12:18

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

“Let there Peace on Earth and let it begin with me.” Peace starts within each and everyone of us. And what a perfect time of year to renew that feeling. Depending on what is going on in our lives, it may be hard to find that peace, but with the help of our Lord, we can do it.

That Christmas night the skies were clear and the stars “shown brightly above”, but the one that shown over the manger was the brightest of all. The Prince of Peace was born. Our example for peaceful living.

He came into this world to teach love and peace. We can take that message into our hearts and choose to live in peace and spread the good news to all the world. When we have peace in our hearts, our thoughts and actions represent this to the world. It goes out into the world like a ripple in a pond. We may not know who is touched by it, but we can trust that it does.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to remember your message of love and peace. Help us to “live at peace with everyone”. We give you praise and adoration and gratitude for your remarkable gift of your son.

Carmen Edwards
Your thoughts and prayers.....

December 24
Peace

Scripture: Luke 2:19

"But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."

Dad and I were the Christmas tree decorators. Mom did the rest of the house, but tree was ours. Dad did the lights, then we added the ornaments. Our pride and joy, however, was the tinsel. Not a garland but the old fashioned narrow silver strips that glistened in the lights. Dad saved the tinsel from year to year by carefully wrapping it around notched cardboard pieces by the length of the strands from shortest to longest. He carefully taught me to start as high as I could reach and start at the trunk of the tree. Each side of each branch of this short needled pine was to have every strand of tinsel draped over it to hang straight and not touch another branch. Longer strands were chosen as we worked our way to the end of the branch. It was a work of art that took hours. Anyone who came to our home was amazed.

Now fast forward to Christmas 1975, the first Christmas after my divorce I was drawn back to using the strands of tinsel instead of the garlands. Of course, it looked nothing like what Dad and I did with my helpers of Danny age six and Amy age four. However, the tinsel was ON THE TREE.

Later when the kids were in PJs and ready to have some "run around time" before cuddling up on the couch; here comes Amy in her blanket sleeper. Guess what? You got it. Static electricity came into play. As she got near the tree, that tinsel reached out and attached itself to that blanket sleeper. At first I tried to pick some off of her and the dark blue carpet but off she went again over the couch and down the hall. As she came back, I looked at her and just started to laugh. "Look at you, you are decorated." I don't think she got it, but we soon happily settled down into our usual Saturday night routine.

These are two of many memories I ponder in my heart with joy. What memories do you ponder in your heart with joy?

Lynne Harkleroad

December 25
Merry Christmas

My First Christmas In Heaven

I see the countless Christmas trees around
the world below,
With tiny lights, like heaven's stars, reflection on the snow.
The sight? It is spectacular; please wipe away that tear,
For I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear,
But the sounds of music can't compare with the
Christmas Choir up here.
I have no words to tell you--the joy their voices bring.
For it is beyond description to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me, I see the pain
inside your heart.
But I am not so far away...we really aren't apart.
So be happy for me, precious ones. You know
I hold you dear.
And be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I send you each a special gift from my
heavenly home above.
I send you each a memory of my undying love.
After all "LOVE" is the gift, more precious than pure gold.
It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other as my Father said to do,
For I can't count the blessings of the love He has for you.
So, have a Blessed Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear.
Remember, I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

My Mom passed away on Christmas Day 1993. This has always
been a comfort to read. Lee Ann Branch
Your thought and prayers.....

Your thoughts and prayers for the coming year

Your thoughts and prayers for the coming year