



CHURCH OF GOD BANNER



www.onalaskachurchofgod.com

DECEMBER, 2013

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD: 3RD. AVE. & HWY. 508 ONALASKA, WASHINGTON 98570

GOLD, COMMON SENSE AND FUR

My husband and I had been happily (most of the time) married for five years but we haven't been blessed with a baby. I decided to do some serious praying and promised God that if he would give us a child I would be a perfect mother, love it with all my heart and raise it with his word as my guide.

God answered my prayers and blessed us with a son. The next year God blessed us with another son. The following year, he blessed us with yet another son. The year after that we were blessed with a daughter. My husband thought we'd been blessed right into poverty. We now had four children, and the oldest was only four years old. I learned never to ask God for anything unless I meant it. As a minister once told me, "If you pray for rain, make sure you carry an umbrella."

I began reading a few verses of the Bible to the children each day as they lay in their cribs. I was off to a good start. God had entrusted me with four children and I didn't want to disappoint him. I tried to be patient the day the children smashed two-dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for baby chicks. I tried to understand when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom, although it took me nearly two hours to catch all twenty-three frogs. When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself

and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the humor rather than the mess.

In spite of changing over twenty-five thousand diapers, never eating a hot meal and never sleeping for more than thirty minutes at a time, I still thank God daily for my children. While I couldn't keep my promise to be a perfect mother (I didn't even come close), I did keep my promise to raise them in the Word of God.

I knew I was missing the mark just a little when I told my daughter we were going to church to worship God, and she wanted to bring a bar of soap along to "wash up" Jesus, too. Something was lost in the translation when I explained that God gave us ev-



erlasting life, and my son thought it was generous of God to give us his "last wife."

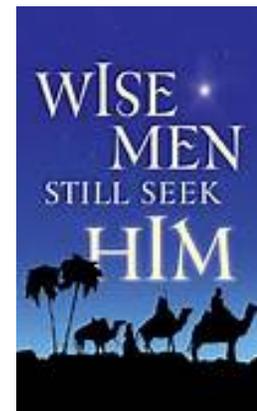
My proudest moment came during the children's Christmas pageant... My daughter was playing Mary, two of my sons were shepherds and my youngest son was a wise man. This was their moment to shine. My five-year-old shepherd had practiced his line, "We found the babe wrapped in swaddling

clothes." But he was nervous and said, "The baby was wrapped in wrinkled clothes."

My four-year-old "Mary" said, "That's not wrinkled clothes silly. That's dirty, rotten clothes." A wrestling match broke out between Mary and the shepherd, which was stopped by an angel, who bent her halo and lost her left wing.

I slouched a little lower in my seat when Mary dropped the doll representing Baby Jesus, and it bounced down the aisle crying, "Mama-mama." Mary grabbed the doll, wrapped it back up and held it tightly as the wise men arrived. My other son stepped forward wearing a bathrobe and a paper crown, knelt at the manger and announced, "We are the three wise men, and we are bringing gifts of gold, common sense and fur."

The congregation dissolved into laughter, and the pageant got a standing ovation. "I've never enjoyed a Christmas program as much as this one," Pastor Brian laughed, wiping tears from his eyes. "For the rest of my life, I'll never hear the Christmas story without thinking of gold, common sense and fur."



THE 'W' IN CHRISTMAS

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations - extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending. Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.



My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six-year-old. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's 'Winter Pageant.'

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats. As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by

one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as Christmas, I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment - songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer. So, when my son's class rose to sing, 'Christmas Love,' I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads. Those in the front row-center stage -- held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing 'C is for Christmas,' a child would hold up the letter C. Then, 'H is for Happy,' and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, 'Christmas Love.'

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet, girl in the front row holding the letter 'M' upside down totally unaware her letter 'M' appeared as a 'W.' The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding her 'W.' Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together. A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

'CHRISTWASLOVE'

And, I believe, He still is. Amazed in His presence, Humbled by His love.

Received from Velma & Norm Chilson

LUKE 1:26-38 (KJV)

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art highly favored*, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

ALASKA'S HAPPENINGS

**MORNING WORSHIP 8:15 AM
& 11:00 AM**

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM

WEDNESDAYS

SOUP & SANDWICHES
5:45 PM

BIBLE STUDY
6:15 PM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14th

MEN'S BREAKFAST
IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL
8:00 AM

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
9:30 AM

LADIES LUNCHEON
12:00 NOON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th

FOOD BOX SUNDAY

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

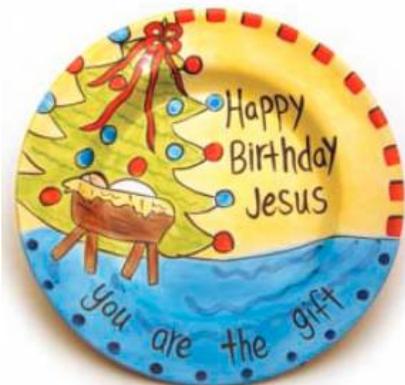
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22nd

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
PLEASE BRING YOUR FAVORITE
COOKIE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24th

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25th



COMMUNITY EVENTS

TUESDAYS

AL-ANON
6:00 PM

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9th

TEA AND PRAISE
10:00 AM
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th

COMMUNITY CANTATA
SHOESTRING CHURCH
5:00 PM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18th

SENIORS ON THE GO
12:00 NOON

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19th

AMERICAN LEGION
6:00 PM

I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was filled with sorrow at the tragic death of his wife in a fire in 1861. The Civil War broke out that same year, and it seemed that this was additional punishment. Two years later, Longfellow was once again saddened to hear that his son had been seriously wounded as a lieutenant in the Army of the Potomac.



Sitting down to his desk one Christmas Day, he heard the church bells ringing and ringing. It

was in this setting he wrote:

*"I heard the bells on Christmas Day,
Their old familiar carols play.
And wild and sweet the words re-
peat
Of peace on earth, good will to
men."*

Received from Jim Sparks

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

On Sunday, December 15 we will be having our Christmas Pageant. The Sunday School under the directions of Patty Dillard & April Fleming have planned a very special Christmas Program. Kathleen Mulkins has written a play about the meaning of Christmas. She is directing the kids both younger and teenagers along with puppets to portray the real Christmas Story.



Following the presentation we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for **Christmas Cookies**. Please come and join us and bring your family and friends.

HOME BOUND FLIGHT

A pastor had been on a long flight between church conferences. The first warning of the approaching problems came when the sign on the airplane flashed on: **FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS.**

Then, after a while, a calm voice said, "We shall not be serving the beverages at this time as we are expecting a little turbulence. Please be sure your seat belt is fastened."

As the pastor looked around the aircraft, it became obvious that many of the passengers were becoming apprehensive. Later, the voice on the intercom said, "We are so sorry that we are unable to serve the meal at this time. The turbulence is still ahead of us."

And then the storm broke . . .

The ominous cracks of thunder could be heard even above the roar of the engines. Lightning lit up the darkening skies, and within moments that



great plane was like a cork tossed around on a celestial ocean. One moment the airplane was lifted on terrific currents of air; the next, it dropped as if were about to crash.

The pastor confessed that he shared the discomfort and fear of those around him. He said, "As I looked around the plane, I could see that nearly all the passengers were upset and alarmed. Some were praying. The future seemed ominous and many were wondering if they would make it through the storm."

"Then, I suddenly saw a little girl. Apparently the storm meant nothing to her. She had tucked her feet beneath her as she sat on her seat; she was reading a book

and every thing within her small world was calm and orderly.

"Sometimes she closed her eyes, then she would read again; then she would straighten her legs, but worry and fear were not in her world.

When the plane was being buffeted by the terrible storm when it lurched this way and that, as it rose and fell with frightening severity, when all the adults were scared half to death, that marvelous child was completely composed and unafraid." The minister could hardly believe his eyes.

It was not surprising that when the plane finally reached its destination and all the passengers were hurrying to disembark, our pastor lingered to speak to the girl whom he had watched for such a long time. Having commented about the storm and the behavior of the plane, he asked why she had not been afraid.

The child replied, "Cause my Daddy's the pilot, and he's taking me home."

There are many kinds of storms that buffet us. Physical, mental, financial, domestic, and many other storms can easily and quickly darken our skies and throw our plane into uncontrollable movement. We have all known such times, and let us be honest and confess, it is much easier to be at rest when our feet are on the ground than when we are being tossed about a darkened sky.

Let us remember: Our Father is the Pilot...He is in control and taking us home. Don't worry!

◇ *Received from Mary Noland*

BETHLEHEM'S STAR

*Mary Warner
2008*



Many years ago on a still and Holy Night,

Wise Men traveled from afar following its light,

They had read the prophecies of a promised King,
And were laden down with many gifts to bring,

The star shown over sleepy Bethlehem so bright,

Wondrous star guiding them to Him that night,

Angels sang and glorious was their Holy song,

Listen pilgrims listen, and join the angelic throng,

The manger that cradled Him was made of common wood,

Oh! Never had it held anything quite so pure or good,

Shepherds gathered round to hear the angel's sing,

To welcome God in flesh, the arrival of the King,

Bethlehem's star was a bright compass in the night,

Shining over Christ, the true Eternal Light,

All of Heaven rejoiced on that sweet and Holy morn,

Nothing would ever be the same now that Christ was born!



THE WOMAN AND A FORK

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things 'in order,' she contacted her Pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes.

She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in.

Everything was in order and the Pastor was preparing to leave when the young woman suddenly remembered something very important to her.

'There's one more thing,' she said excitedly.

'What's that?' the Pastor's reply.

'This is very important,' the young woman continued. 'I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.'

The Pastor stood looking at the young woman, not knowing quite what to say.

That surprises you, doesn't it?' the young woman asked.

'Well, to be honest, I'm puzzled by the request,' said the Pastor.

The young woman explained. 'My grandmother once told me this story, and from that time on I have always tried to pass along its message to those I love and those who are in need of encouragement. In all my years of attending socials and dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, 'Keep your fork.' It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming...like velvety

chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie, something wonderful, and with substance!'

So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder 'What's with the fork?' Then I want you to tell them: 'Keep your fork ...the best is yet to come.'

The Pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the young woman good-bye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see her before her death. But he also knew that the young woman had a better grasp of heaven than he did. She had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice her age, with twice as much experience and knowledge. She KNEW that something better was coming.

At the funeral people were walking by the young woman's casket and they saw

the cloak she was wearing and the fork placed in her right hand. Over and over, the Pastor heard the question, 'What's with the fork?' And over and over he smiled.

During his message, the Pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the young woman shortly before she died. He also told them about the fork and about what it symbolized to her. He told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either.

◇ Received from Marcie Eidsmoe

22 PURE WITTICISMS

1. I started out with nothing...I still have most of it.
2. I finally got my head together, now my body is falling apart.
3. Funny, I don't remember being absent minded.

4. If all is not lost, where is it?

5. It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser.

6. If at first you do succeed, try not to look too astonished.

7. The first rule of holes: If you are in one, stop digging.

8. I went to school to become a wit, only got halfway through.

9. It was all so different before everything changed.

10. Nostalgia isn't what is used to be.

11. Old programmers never die. They just terminate and stay resident.

12. A day without sunshine is like a day in Seattle.

13. I wish the buck stopped here. I could use a few.

14. It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.

15. Living on Earth is expensive, but it does include a free trip round the sun.

16. If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would have put them on my knees.

17. Lead me not into temptation (I can find the way myself).

18. If you're living on the edge, make sure you're wearing your seat belt.

19. An unbreakable toy is useful for breaking other toys.

20. It's not hard to meet expenses...they're everywhere.

21. Jury: Twelve people who determine which client has the better attorney.

22. Old people shouldn't eat health foods. They need all the preservatives they can get.

◇ Received from Joe Downs

