

Missionary Messenger

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A Very Special Gift

But the Angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! For Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! ~Luke 2:10-11 (BSB)

I want to write about a very special gift that I received from my daughter Danielle while she was here celebrating an early Christmas with us. The gift is an old fence post with five turtles painted on it. Also, there is a red scarf draped over the post and it is set up to hang on a wall. Each part of this gift represents things that are very special to me.

The post itself is from our home in Fort Wayne that was on the Saint Mary's River. This home was the place of so many great memories. Memories of Christmases, birthday parties, and playing capture the flag in the summer. This home was purchased from us by the city of Fort Wayne in 2008 and it was torn down to build a flood wall along the river. This post was from the fence that was along the side of the house facing our scenic view of the river. When I see the post, I remember the colorful leaves of fall that we had there, the white ducks that lived on the river who became our pets, and so many great memories.

The second piece of this special gift is the painted turtles on the post. My daughter is a skilled artist, and each turtle represents the five members of our family. (The reason she used turtles is that when it comes to ministry, I have always seen myself as a turtle on a fence post. That turtle didn't get there by itself. God placed me there. In fact the first time Joanne heard that I was preaching, she said "Ken, Preach?" Then when she heard me for the first time she said, "Where did that come from?" It was definitely a God thing.) The first two turtles are facing each other representing Joanne and I and our 33 years of marriage. The other three are our three kids: Danielle, Judah, and Jeshua. Their turtles are going away from us representing the continued legacy that started from us. Growing up in foster homes, orphanages, and children's homes was a difficult life for me. On June 10th, 1989, I became a part of my own family. A family that has been a place of unconditional love.

The final piece of this special gift is the red scarf draped around it. When I was living with my alcoholic father in the 1970's I met Mrs. Williamson. She was a very kind Mennonite lady that lived across the street. Her home became a safe place for me. However, there were times when she needed time away from the needy boy from across the street. She instructed me that if I saw a certain red scarf on her front door that I needed to come back later. I respected her right to have some personal time, so I stayed away when I saw the scarf. Then came the day when I came into her home, and she had an announcement for me. She had put the scarf away and that it would never be on the door again. This meant that I was welcome to come into her home any time that I needed a safe place. I had been welcomed into her family. Mrs. Williamson taught me what it meant to be in a family and modeled the love of God. After she passed, her family was cleaning out the house and found this scarf in a plastic bag in the basement. They knew the story of the scarf and gave it to me as a reminder of her.

All of this is at the heart of Christmas. The real meaning of Christmas is that there was a time when mankind was held at arm's length by God. Our sins had separated us from Him. Then came that quiet night in Bethlehem when the son of God was born and brought the gift of acceptance to God. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was his payment to rescue us and provide adoption for us into the very family of God. Through this adoption the "red scarf" has been put away and we now have the full privileges of being children of God. All of this is represented in this very special gift that I received from my daughter this Christmas. I hope that this story is also a blessing to you.

In Christ, Pastor Ken



"Miracles"

By Terri Blackstock

"Miracles" is actually 2 of Terri Blackstock's novels in one book.

WHATCHA READING?



The Listener: "Something strange happened to Sam Bennett this morning. He is hearing the thoughts of other people. . . . Simply by looking at them, Sam can hear their hearts' deepest needs. Is he going crazy . . . Or about to experience a miracle beyond his wildest dreams?"

The Gifted: "Three friends rescued from the rubble of an earthquake are just glad to be alive. They soon realize, however, that something much more miraculous happened during the earthquake . . . Something supernatural. . . ."

(from the back cover)

Memory Verse of the Month!



Luke 2:10-11 (BSB)

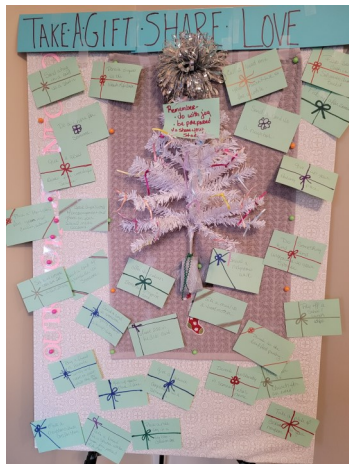
"But the Angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! For Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! ~Luke 2:10-11 (BSB)



Reminder: In case of bad weather, we will announce any closings on WBCL, Facebook, and through email.

Take a Gift & Share Love On the Outreach board

Gift ideas include but not limited to . . .



- Give up your place in line;
- Give a genuine compliment to someone;
- Send a card to someone going through a tough time;
- Send a card to a neighbor;
- And so much more . . .

**CHRISTMAS
EVE SERVICE
DEC. 24 - 6:30 P.M.**



Who Are We?

Pastor: Ken Sistrunk 260-229-5949 (cell)

PastorKenNMMC@gmail.com

Elders: Dave Jackson (vice-chairman),

Tim Baker, Jon Gnagy

Directors:

Outreach: Sue Howard

Prayer: Debby Gatchel

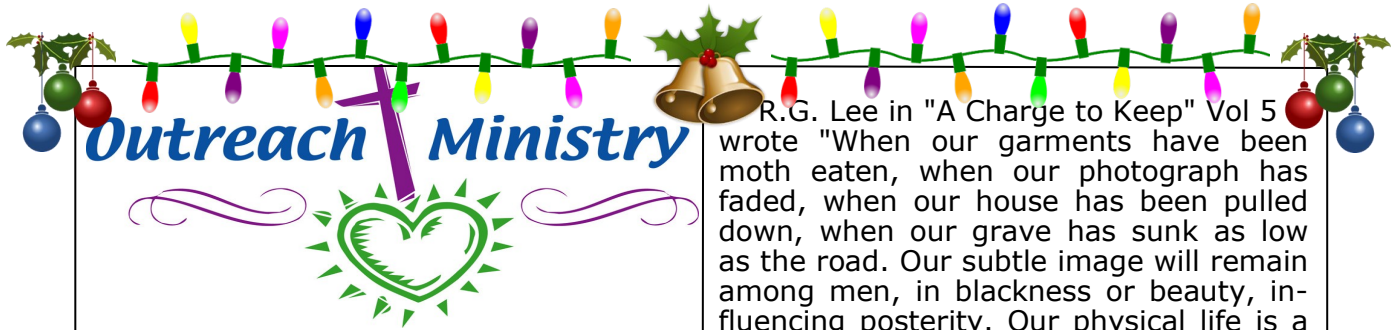
Stewardship: Tim Baker

Worship: Jon Gnagy

Secretary: Joanne Sistrunk

manchestermissionary@gmail.com





CONNECTION NOTES:

From My Dining Room Window

Looking out my dining room window recently I saw movement that caught my attention. Two squirrels were darting around. They seemed to have taken residence in two different trees within my view. They would chase each other then they would dart to their own tree. (color me smiling!)

The other thing I noticed was the mess in my yard. It was littered with narrow leaves and bare branches from the weeping willow tree on my neighbors property. If you have ever been "lucky" enough to have one in your yard you know the extent of the mess. (color me not smiling!) The tree is huge. And it was planted only about 1 foot from the property line. These trees grow to about 30 feet high and 35 feet span when mature; and it is mature.

While I hate the mess and extensive clean up this tree creates for me, this day it caused me to think of something else. This tree was planted by a renter of the property. He was an admirer of rarer trees and wanted them in his yard so he planted several trees. But within 5 years the renter moved away leaving his trees behind. For the last 20 plus years others have reaped the benefit (or consequence) of his labor.

We are about to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. John 3:17 says "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (ESV). Christ came many years ago. Yet through Christ's choice and redemption lives are still being changed! Maybe during this Christmas season, during our residence here on earth, we can share our lives with others and make an impact for Christ.

R.G. Lee in "A Charge to Keep" Vol 5 wrote "When our garments have been moth eaten, when our photograph has faded, when our house has been pulled down, when our grave has sunk as low as the road. Our subtle image will remain among men, in blackness or beauty, influencing posterity. Our physical life is a span, our moral life is a millennial."

Join me this month in making a difference for Christ: both now and forever. And if you need some ideas on things you can do check out the Christmas Acts of Kindness ideas posted on the Outreach board in the foyer.

Merry Christmas! *Sue*

CONNECTION ACTIVITIES:

Ladies trip to Wawasee Craft Fair:

Saturday, December 3, leave at 8:30a from the church. Please plan to go out for lunch together.

Church Christmas Party:

Sunday, December 11, @ 5:30p.

We will have a **meal** together so bring something to share (Party or finger food type items).



We will also be having a couple party activities:

1) "Ugly Sweater" Contest:

The contest is for the most original Christmas decorated clothing: sweater, shirt, dress.... Our first Ugly Sweater contest! Decorate your clothing and see if you can take the prize! Focus on the most original ugly clothing you can create and wear. We will have a treat for all of the adults who take the plunge! And a "special" award for the winner!



2) "Garbage" White Elephant Game:

If you want to participate bring 2 wrapped white elephant gifts from your home: shop your cupboard/closets. They can be used or new but make sure they are wrapped. This is a fun game that the Howard clan has asked to play for the second year in a row (and that never happens!)



Bring a friend or two and come join the activities!

