



INTO THE FOLD

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January 2019



Ponderings by Pastor JoEllyn....

Welcome to 2019

It sure is amazing how fast 365 days can pass. The last year was certainly wonderful, the blessings here at RPUMC have been numerous. Have you ever questioned who walked beside you during the last year?

How comforting it is to know that wherever we go, God is there with us. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations and wonder if God is paying attention. We may feel so alone and even depressed. We can't feel God's presence, and we need His guidance and help.

Sometimes friends, spouses, and parents don't really understand what we are going through. But God does and He cares. God told Joshua to be strong and to have courage. Then He told him a wonderful truth: "The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Yes, that's right... wherever! We don't have to feel all alone. God is with us. He is working out the problems, and we don't even realize it.

But now ... the Lord who created you ... says: "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters,

I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through

the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. From eternity to eternity I am God. No one can snatch anyone out of my hand. No one can undo what I have done. (Isaiah 43:1-3, 13)

God is with us, leading us, guiding us, loving us, providing for us -- all with His unlimited resources. What do we need? Do we need strength, peace, love, joy, or hope? He has it all. He is longing to pour out His favor and blessing upon us. We need to be open to Him and to trust Him. We need, by faith, to receive what He has for us. It is essential we realize how much He loves us and that He has a good purpose and plan for us.

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.
(Ephesians 3:14-16)

This Scripture is awesome. There is nothing that God doesn't know and can't do for us. He walks with us every moment of every day. We need to speak these Scriptures to our hearts. The devil can't stand it when we, in confidence, speak God's Word. It builds faith in us and gives us the strength to stand.

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I

travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! (Psalms 139:1-6)

Like David let us declare:
Show me the right path, O LORD; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. (Psalms 25:4-5)

You can trust God. No matter what is going on in your life, He is there! God goes where you go.

So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. (Hebrews 10:35-36)

Can God change your life? The answer to this is most definitely, YES. God has made it possible for you to know Him and experience an amazing change in your own life. Enjoy 2019 and all the exciting possibilities, that are yours, through Jesus Christ. [Copyright 2013 Martha Noebel.]

Praying You Through,
Pastor JoEllyn

When cheese gets it's picture taken, what does it say?

The Creative Hands Group,
 The groups mission, of making fleece, hats, scarves, crocheted gloves, & hats has ended. We handed out a plethora of the gloves, hats, scarves to the patrons of the food pantry, who appreciated the gift of warmth. Perhaps, our next mission could be making lap blankets for people in Nursing Homes or some other worthy project could be taken on.. Please prayerfully consider what project to do next. Thursdays, @ 9 am in the Adult Sunday School Room the Quilters continue to meet. Come, fellowship, share some fun & laughter and join Creative Hands ...

If Thursdays and/or the time not good for you, please let us know



when a better time might be that you would be able to come...

How can we expand our

mission of caring? I'm thinking dog & cat beds (for the small animal shelter.)

Let me know other projects that would interest you and benefit our community?

Pastor JoEllyn

Bette's Pen:

By time you get this newsletter we will have celebrated bringing in the New Year, 2019.. Seems impossible but it seems that time is in warp speed... Hope you all had a great & quiet New Year celebration.



We collected \$400 for our deserving family. We were able to pay \$200 to the family's landlord toward their January rent. We purchased two \$50 gas cards for mom & dad. We bought Noah's Ark, Veggie tales, How to Catch an Elf, & the Napping House books, for the parents to read to the two boys, Crayons & Coloring books. Members of our church family brought in trucks, & toys for the two boys to have under the tree, A Gingerbread House to put together with the boys, was brought in. A crock pot, cook books, including our cookbook "Feeding the Flock" were given to the family along with a whole chicken, chuck steak, carrots, potatoes, and other fixings. The mom was very touched and appreciative that we would do this for their young family. The boys were excited to see the presents wrapped for them. We got the dad a blue tooth speaker & mom got some Bath & Body lotion. Pastor JoEllyn & I delivered the gifts, and were very much rewarded to be part of helping this deserving family have a brighter Christmas... Thank you everyone for your generous giving, support & gifts... Once again we were the hands and feet of Jesus..

In 2018, As is a part of life, we had to say goodbye to two of our church family as God called them from their earthly homes...

Roberta Fisher – June 10, 2018 and Pamela (Blint) Sudlow – July 11: 2018

In 2012 I saw this prayer on facebook and shared it as it touched my heart. It recently was back on my page as a reminder if I wanted to repost & share again. I am reposting it here to share with you now....

Lord Jesus, when I draw near to You, You brighten my spirit. Even on the darkest days, You bring sunshine into my heart. Please continue to do that

for me, my family, friends & others. Thank You so much, for being my wonderful Saviour! ♥

Blessings & Peace,
 Bette

Chairpersons please start planning your budgets for 2019. Budget need done by end of Jan 2019. So can be ready for district Feb 13th..

Saved by Grace.

EVENTS & MEETINGS 2019

UMW MEETING

Tuesday, January . 8 9:30 a.m.

Council/Board Meeting

Tuesday, January. 8 6:30 p.m.

Best Years

Wednesday January 19,
 Noon Black Smith Shoppe

MAD HATTER TEA PARTY

Saturday Feb 9, 2019 .. Come have a HAT-tabulous day with us....

UMW Cabin Fever FUNdraiser Event

Mar 9th, 2019 5 – 7 pm.

"YOUR TREASURES"

OPEN AIR MARKET

SATURDAY JUNE 1ST, 2019

January 2019 Greeters:

Jan 6 Sue Flagg

Jan. 13 Deb & Mike Harris

Jan 19 - ? Jan 26 - ? Feb ?

I'm sure Linda will be out & about asking if you would like to Greet...

Which Bible Character had no parents?

Joshua, son of Nun

How fast do Hotcakes sell?



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Because of the busyness of holidays we missed a few Sundays of the Study thus we are still studying Max Lucado, **Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World.**

We have a couple more chapters yet to wrap up... Chapter 10: Cling to Christ. We bear fruit by focusing on God. Make it your aim to cling to Christ. Is he not true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and worthy of praise? Chapter 11: C.A.L.M: Chose the tranquili-tree over the anxie-tree. Life gives lemons to good people, bad people, old people, young people, all people.. Seems like Life comes with lemons. But we don't have to suck the bitterness from them..

Please come & join us. The class meets at 10:30 right after fellowship hour.

CHILDRENS CHURCH:

The Children continue with the Winter Series of Deep Blue Connects. Escorted by Asia, Kat, Caleb, & Edgar..

Thank You, Grace, Grant, Maddy, Alana, Kayla, Mackenzie, Brianna, Elizabeth, Olivia, Aiden, Brandon, Henry, Ben, Noah, & Emily, For super job of lighting and extinguishing the candles.. You guys Rock!!!

Why do they put Braille on drive through bank machines???



The Dec 19th meeting of Best Years met at the Blacksmith Shoppe hosted Iva Wasielewski. Iva said grace.

Each seating had a festive napkin & chocolate marshmallow Santa. A lot of laughter & visiting ensued.

January Birthdays are: Joe Knowlton 1/10, JoEllyn Chadwick 1/29. No Anniversaries....

Prayers were requested for Herb Scofield, Bobette Elkins, Pam Dixon, & Jim Williamson who are all having health issues. Wayne Kirkham is having surgery at the end January. Attendance prizes were won by: Harold Carlson,, Mary Kessler, Connie Reynolds, JoEllyn & Lester Chadwick, Sharon Campos, Karen Rison & Bette Schaefer...

Others present were: Art & Rose Lenig, Wayne & Shirley Kirkham, Joe & Susan Knowlton, Linda Everingham, Ann Riedstra, Terry & Joann Nickerson, Myrna Everill, Evelin Hamilton, Ben Rison, two guests, Lisa Tucker & Marguerite Schroeder.

The January 19th meeting, will be at the Blacksmith Shoppe, hosted by Mary Kessler..



- 12 Rob & Amy Manuszak (Bill & Jean Dare daughter)
- 13 John & Linnaea Arford (Myrna Everill Daughter)
- 24 Troy & Jaime Nickerson (Terry & Joann Nickerson son)



- 01 Jaclyn Hunn
- 03 Madison Lenig
- 04 Donna Cain
- 06 Linnaea Arford
- 06 Kris Moody
- 07 Morgan Porter
- 08 Luke Kovalcin
- 09 Wendy Hakes
- 10 Suzanne Syverson
- 10 Nicole Richardson
- 10 Sean Everingham
- 10 Joe Knowlton
- 11 Marilyn Livinghouse
- 12 Debra Harris
- 16 Kameron Coffinger
- 17 Bobby Siford
- 20 Jay Dare
- 20 Nicole Adams
- 21 Reese Armstrong
- 22 Aiden Chadwick
- 23 Cassie Porter
- 23 Stefanie Obenchain
- 26 Sydney Moody
- 28 Tim Wheatbrook
- 29 JoEllyn Chadwick
- 30 Ella Wheatbrook
- 30 Karen Swanson
- 31 Barb Bealor
- 31 Jacob Goodspeed
- 31 Courtney Masek



If you have a need or you know someone that needs prayers, Call Pastor JoEllyn and she will relay to the next person to activate the Prayer Chain.

Pastor JoEllyn's Cell phone # for After Hours Emergency & Prayer Chain Request (219)-363-5061



FOOD PANTRY DONATION

Always Need plastic bags
January: Canned Fruit, Canned Carrots, Canned Green Beans

YEAR END FOOD PANTRY REPORT

By Rose Lenig

First of all the Pantry Board wishes to thank all of you that contributed food, time, money or participated in the money making projects the Food Pantry sponsored. Without your support the clients would not be able to be provided for. Thanks so much.

Last January when the budget for 2018 was established, the projected income was placed at \$14,800 a decline of \$2,700 from 2017 as the donations were down almost \$4,000. The expenses were projected at \$18,200. The Board felt the projections could be realized since there was a carryover of several thousand dollars. It can be reported that the income exceeded the projected figure. It was \$18,316.23. But our expense projection was off by \$418.78. The total spent was \$18,735.01.

Now please note that not all of that was food dispersed to the clients. There was a need to purchase insurance which cost \$500. and the freezer purchased three years ago needed to be replaced as it would have cost more to have it repaired. Thanks to Alice Lenig, one was purchased for \$543. The two together resulted in over a thousand dollars more than put in the budget for expenses. Only \$300 had been placed in the budget for miscellaneous expenses such as filing fees, bonding, office supplies.

The income came from many sources. The Christian Church gives each quarter a percentage of money given for missions. The Rolling Prairie

United Methodist Church donates the facility and individuals in the church contribute which goes through our treasurer. Organizations in St. John Kanty, Maple Grove UM and Sauk town Church of Christ give donations at various times. Gleaner Life Insurance Society, the Lion' Club, and individuals make donations at Christmas time or at other times donations are given by individuals for no reason other to help support the Food Pantry. Sometimes a gift is given as a memorial to a person. The Food Pantry has been fortunate to receive a \$3,000 grant from the Unity Foundation three years in a row. At Christmas time large donations of food come from the community drives at the schools. The Girl scouts and boy scouts donate food periodically. The gardeners in the community bring in a wealth of fresh vegetables which the clients really appreciate. And finally, the collection of aluminum cans brought in \$200.

Thanks to Wayne and Shirley Kirkham for being willing to take the cans to be recycled. The price for the cans has gone down about 40 cents since we started collecting years ago, but every bit helps.

The fund raisers sponsored by the Board of Directors brought in \$5,139.96. The Port-a- Pit \$2,144.16; Dollars for Dogs and bake sale \$463.55 and \$483.00; 5-K Run \$1,840.25 and Culvers \$189.96.

When you purchase items or participate in these events, everyone wins - you get something in return for participating and the money received helps those who are in need. Please be willing to support

the events planned for 2019.

Who and how many clients were served during the year 2018? There were 185 families that were given food and 3,984 individuals fed. These clients live in Galena, Hudson, Kankakee and Wills Townships. If you divide the expenses by the families served, a modest \$95.87 was spent on each family and each individual cost \$4,45 for the year. Most of the clients are on social security, Medicare and Medicaid. Many have physical problems that keep them from working. Some have gotten themselves in a position where they can now get a job. One was excited on December 20th that she had gotten the position for which she had interviewed and would start working the first of January. We are constantly providing information about job availability, If you know of places hiring, please let Sue Hartwick know. She will post it.

The volunteers don't just hand out food. Hugs and love are given to the clients. We listen to their problems and joys. Offer suggestions if asked and prayer with and for them. It is a joy and blessing to be part of this service for God. Any of you who have some time on your hands and want to be of service to God, please come any Thursday from 8:00am to 12 noon and witness what is happening. If that is what God leads you to become a part of, know you are needed. Just tell Sue which Thursday and which time - 8:00-10:00 or 10:00 - 12 noon you could join the team.

A story to let you know the affect the decorations and people at the church

have on the clients. December 20 this client came up to the volunteers and said, "I wasn't in the Christmas mood when I came today, but then I went into the bathroom. The decorations and beauty changed my mood completely. Thanks for uplifting me." She was taken to Iva who was in the adjacent room sewing. Here is the lady who is the decorator and the lifter of your spirits. Such small things can change a person's attitude and that is what the volunteers do each Thursday.

The following are the members of the Board of Directors:
Christian Church - Leeann Alcalá,
Dawn Ackerman

Maple Grove Methodist - John Taylor, Sue Sanders

St John Kanty - Phyllis Austin (looking for another member as Mary Smith resigned to help her brother)

Rolling Prairie UMC - Harold Carlson, Dave Schaefer
Sauktown Church of Christ - Joy Simmons, Sue Hartwick (Sue and husband Dan are doing a fantastic job. They are constantly on the lookout for bargains for the pantry. They put in a great deal of time besides Thursdays. May God continue to bless them and the Food Pantry with volunteers with passion as strong as their's.)

Thank You from the Gabryszak Family

Thank you for the sympathy card the church and members sent when my mom passed away. It's a blessing that the church offers and does so much for the community. Thank you for allowing the Gleaners to use your

church hall for their meeting which my mom was a member of. They too are a wonderful group that does a lot for the community.

My Mom enjoyed all the meetings she attended there with her friends..

Big Hugs.

Thank You, - Joann

p.s. Thank you for all the prayers and kindness..



Thank you so much for your generous Christmas Love Gift. I really, really appreciate the continuous support and caring that everyone provides for me. May you always feel as blessed as I do,

With Love, Pastor JoEllyn



Thank you so much for the generous Christmas gift you gave. It is a joy to come to work! Many thanks for all of the ways you support and encourage throughout the year. I thoroughly enjoy being a part of this RPUMC family.. I pray this year will be filled with God's abundant blessings for us all. You are a wonderful blessing!

Love & Hugs, Bette

Thank you to all the ladies & gents who made hats, scarves, mittens, etc. for our Creative Hands Gift of Warmth Project..

Rolling Prairie UMC, We are very thankful for your donations and all you do for us. At this holiday time of year, we really see the appreciation our clients have! We are very proud of the support you give us and contribute to our success.

Sincerely, Comm. Food Pantry of GHKW Townships Inc. RP In 46371



By Penny Derucki

Rolling Prairie United Methodist Women-December 11, 2018
Heavenly Father, we are ready to receive whatever you want to give us today.

Peace for our fears. Hope for our future.

Forgiveness for our sins. Grace to forgive those who have sinned against us.

Lord, we look to you to meet our needs, help us to do what we can do to help others in need.

Guide our steps into the next year, for the future you have designed for **US**.

Bring us to the celebration of Your Son's nativity in Peace.

Use us to bring glory to your name, in Jesus name Amen

Myrna Everill read from our Prayer Calendar. Sharing with you a **Mission Witness** – We held a contest among the children who frequent our boys and Girls clubhouse to come up with a drawing we could use on a T-shirt to give as Christmas gifts to all the children who attend. The winning drawing depicted a dog sled, lots of little people and the words "where everyone is accepted." Not only do those words convey our true mission, but it is the message of United Methodist women that the kingdom of God is "where everyone is

accepted." What a beautiful reminder as I proudly wear my T-shirt!

Rhonda Schneider, Executive Director, Nome Community Center, Nome, Alaska.

Donna Cain and Rose Lenig delivered flowers, in celebration of Christmas, to five of our members; Betty Corbin, Barb Bealor, Mary Eddy, Helen Bennett and Barbara Nickerson.

This year we donated \$200.00 dollars to NP Christmas Caring & Sharing, serving New Prairie families in need and \$100.00, along with other donations from our members, to a deserving family in our community.

Join Us and Don't be Late! For a Very Important Date!

February 9, 2019 at noon. This will give you time to pick out a favorite hat to wear or design your own for our **Valentine's day tea party**. There will be prizes!

For our Christmas Program this year, Barbara Parker read a heartfelt tribute and gave thanks for the community of women that come together as Rolling Prairie United Methodist Women.

We would love for you to join us. Our first meeting of the new year will be January 8, 2019 at 9:30am at the church, and usually lasts until 11:00am.

Come, Join us... Don't forget we are saving you a seat.....

Why & who do we donate to our various UMW Missions will be back in February...

Music Sunday Worship

December 16th

By Rose Lenig

For Christmas one of the gifts I received was Charles Krauthammer's recent book, "The Point of It All". As I began reading it, a sentence jumped out at me and resonated. "You are betraying your whole life if you don't

say what you think -- and you don't say it honestly and bluntly."

Therefore, I am saying what I think as honestly as possible, realizing that not everyone thinks the same as I do and therefore will not agree and that is okay. That is why America is great.

The worship service on December 16th was well planned by Pastor JoEllyn and Scott Lenig, presenting in word but mostly in song our affirmation of FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, JOY. This was done with the choir, solos, duets, children and the congregation. All this to heighten our growing anticipation of the coming of Christ. A true worship service, but for me it was spoiled because the congregation seemed to treat it as a concert applauding each song, even the song which was a prayer! The choir and the individual singers definitely needed to be complimented on the wonderful job they did in bringing the congregation closer to the presence of God in their songs, but to applaud after every song disrupted the flow and continuity of the worship service for me.

There are many ways in which we can let those in the choir or soloists know how much their voices added to the service and our worship experience. We can actually talk to them and let them know our feelings. In some church's individuals say AMEN when they agree with what has been said. I, personally, don't appreciate the applauding after a song by the choir or a soloist. I have spoken what I think. Thanks for reading my thinking.

The Christmas Eve service was filled with words and songs by soloists which told the story of Jesus' birth, but there was no applauding. What a difference the worship service meant to me. The spirit of God filled the sanctuary. What joy. Thanks to all who participated to make The Story

meaningful even if we all knew it. It never gets old.

The prayer list has begun anew in January 2019... If you want someone to remain on or add please fill out new request card or call Pastor JoEllyn or Bette 219-778-2910



Betty Corbin (recovering from pneumonia) Diann Stienbarger (3rd arm surgery) Jerry Stienbarger (Health issues, sister & brother-in-law Sue Flagg) Richard Asvitt (kidney failure, brother Virginia/Dave Bradford) Pam Dixon, (health issue) Scott Thieme (recovering pneumonia), Bobette Elkins (recovering at home from procedure) Roseann Woolverton (gallbladder laparoscopy Jan 18, daughter Dave & Bette) Ray Irons, (brain bleed) Sharon Welty (Aortic valve replacement, friends of Pastor JoEllyn)

We have a few very special people in our church family that are struggling with various health concerns who wish to not be named. It seems, they all say there is someone else that needs it more. We are all in need of prayer, sometimes a little more at times than others, Please keep their UNSPOKEN REQUESTS lifted in prayer, as God knows who each of them are and what it is they need. Give them strength Oh Lord, to deal with whatever their struggle... Let them feel your arms embracing them with your warm, wonderful, love.. Bless them with your Peace. Thank You, God....

Don't let yesterday eat up too much of today.....

What was the best thing before sliced bread?



Jacob Adams US Army- States grandson Chris Adams
Craig Carlson, (pilot) US Air Force son Harold & Carrie Carlson
Matthew

Chadwick US Army - son Lester & JoEllyn Chadwick
Michael Showalter Marines, grandson Wayne & Shirley Kirkham
Matthew Rompca Air Force nephew Shirley & Wayne Kirkham
Katelyn Williamson U S Marines Daughter of Al and granddaughter of Jim Williamson

If you have someone serving and would like on our prayer list please let Bette know...

Please lift all those serving our country, who are struggling, for whatever the reason; being alone, illness, divorce, loss of job, loss of loved ones, going through the firsts after death of loved one. Give thanks for everything....

Hear our Prayers, Oh Lord!

GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS AND PERFORMS MIRACLES

By Rose Lenig

Four or five years ago unbeknownst by me, I offended and hurt a person's feelings by an article I wrote. When I discovered this, I tried speaking to her and explain the situation. She refused to talk about it. I wrote her a letter again apologizing for any hurt or offense I'd given her. She did not acknowledge the apology.

We shop at the same grocery store so periodically I'd see her and speak, but she would turn her head and move quickly along. If she saw me, she would turn and go down a different aisle to avoid me. This went on for many years. I prayed about this asking that God would heal her

hurt and I could be released from an unresolved conflict.

The week before Christmas I was in the last aisle finishing my grocery shopping when I looked up and my hurt friend was standing in front of me. Startled I said, "Hi." She looked at me and replied, "When I saw you, I was about to turn around and go a different direction when God put on my heart that I needed to speak." She continued, "I need to put the past in the past." I agreed, and we hugged each other. As she departed, she said, "God works in mysterious ways!" I agreed and responded that this was one of the best Christmas presents I could have received. Thank you God for this blessing for her and for me.



New Year's Resolutions

Did you begin a New Year's resolution this year? How many weeks will it be until you break your resolution and go back to your old habits? For most of us it will be a matter of days to weeks. The idea of making a New Year's resolution is good, it is just the follow through part that is so hard.

To make the most of our resolutions it is important to choose a goal that is realistic and obtainable. Also, focus on adding positive behaviors versus stopping negative ones. For example, instead of giving up sweets, try adding more fruits and vegetables into your diet or instead of trying to lose weight, try being a little more active each day.

Here are some positive behaviors you can try to improve your overall health and wellbeing:

- Spend more time with God either in prayer or reading His word (the Bible)
- Spend more time with family and friends, enjoy their company
- Cook more meals at home
- Try to make at least ½ of the grains you eat in a day whole grains
- Drink more water or substitute 1-2 drinks each day with water
- Try infusing your water with lemons, cucumber, mint, strawberries, or another flavor for a refreshing twist
- Move a little more. Take frequent trips to the printer, bathroom, water fountain, or to a colleague's office.
- Be thankful for what you have and don't focus on what you don't have.
- Find an accountability partner, someone who can encourage you at whatever you decide to take on.
- Be more positive, turn negative thoughts into positive ones.

Whatever your resolution may be, keep in mind that changing behaviors takes time and taking small steps is the best way to become the best you can be.

Happy New Year,

Gretchen Krivak MS, RD, CGFI

Time is a precious gift, to be handled with care and opened with love...



Epiphany Sunday
Matthew 2:1-12
The Guiding Star
Good morning!
And Happy New
Year to you!

How many of you have ever looked up at the sky at night and seen stars? They are beautiful, aren't they? Sometimes there are lots and lots of stars, and other times not so many. It depends on how cloudy the sky is and how many lights are on the ground where you are. People in cities don't see as many stars as folks out in the country. But on a clear night, almost everyone can see the North Star. In fact, the North Star has been used by sailors to help them steer their ships in the direction they want to go.

There are scientists, called astronomers, who study the stars. There have been astronomers for thousands of years—people have always been interested in studying the stars. At the time Jesus was born, there were astronomers (wise men) living far away from Bethlehem, studying the stars. One night they were looking up at the night sky when they noticed something surprising—something they had never seen before. It was a new star! How amazing!

These ancient astronomers (wise men) believed that new stars didn't just show up for no reason. They believed the new star they saw meant something important was happening in the world, so they decided to follow it. They packed for a long journey across the desert sands. They traveled for days and weeks and months, using the star to guide them. Finally, the star stopped over a house in Bethlehem. The men who

had traveled so far for so long were filled with joy.

When they entered the house, they found Jesus with Mary, his mother. The astronomers (wise men) knew the baby was someone special—someone to be honored. And so they immediately knelt down and worshipped him. Then they opened the treasure chests they had packed and offered Jesus precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Sometimes the astronomers (wise men) who followed the star to Jesus are called Wise Men. Some may think they were wise because they were scientists who understood about the stars. I think they were wise because they knew to worship Jesus the minute they saw him. They understood that he was no ordinary child, but was someone special sent by God to lead the people, like a king.

Let's pray together.

Dear God, thank-you for sending the star to lead the wise astronomers to Jesus. Thank-you for sending Jesus into the world to lead all the people. Help us to be wise and follow Jesus where He leads. Amen.

<http://childrens sermonstoday.blogspot.com/2011/12/epiphany-sunday.htm>

A Prayer for 2019

Always pray to have eyes that see the best in people

A heart that forgives the worst...

A mind that forgets the bad...

And a soul that never loses faith in God...

Received following from the Lutz Family

LUTZ LORE 2018

The Lutzes wish you a Happy New Year and hope that you had a very Merry Christmas.

Phil & Malinda continue to cope with the challenges of declining health, so we all treasure opportunities to spend time together as family, especially at Christmas. Phil remains at Heritage Health and since they didn't have any luck getting the house sold, Malinda moved back into it in May, so she is once again just a few houses away from Phil.

This came in handy, as Tom & Ellen decided it would be easier to just wheel him down the street in his wheelchair than try to get him back into the care after he spent most of the day at the house for Christmas day. Malinda continues to play piano at the two local nursing homes and at church once a month.

Tom celebrated (?) his 50th Birthday in September, and with a couple of teachers retiring last spring also moved up to third on the seniority list at North Montgomery High School. (now year 27)

He continues to teach chemistry, sponsor Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and coach football (8th grade) and basketball (freshman) at North Montgomery.. He also continues to play bass guitar at church and spends lots of time hiking at Shades and Turkey Run state parks.

Ellen is in her 5th year as a Science and Engineering Librarian at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, working primarily with students and faculty in the College of Nursing and the School of Public Health and Health Sciences. She participates in several campus and regional committees. She also continues to sing in the choir at church and serve as chair of the worship committee and enjoys doing crafty projects when she can find time.

We had nice Skype chat with Daniela, Edmund, Tobias, Kilian and Moritz in Germany after Christmas. They are all doing well and keeping busy with work and school.

We pray that your 2019 is filled with loving and joyful time spent with family and friends!

Love,
Phil, Malinda, Tom & Ellen