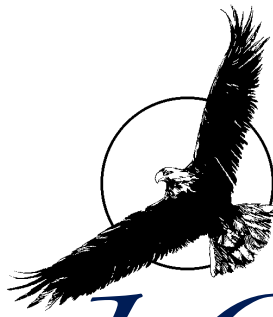


The

VOICE of Faith



Volume 23 Number 12

Speaking the truth in love
Faith Evangelical Free Church

December 2014

A Christmas Story

by Pastor Mike Jacobson

In past years I have shared some of my favorite Christmas stories. I would like to do that again this year.

A Christmas Story by Karyn Charles

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past 10 years or so.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas but the commercial aspects of it — overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma — the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties, and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way. Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church, mostly black. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes.

As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford. Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. As each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly. "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids - all kids - and he knew them, having coached little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came [to me].

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year...and in succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition — one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and so on.

The envelopes became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure.

The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree. In the morning, it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad.

The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelopes. Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

May we all remember Christ, who is the reason for the season, and the true Christmas spirit this year and always. God bless.

*On behalf of my entire family,
have a wonderful Christmas.*

Pastor Mike

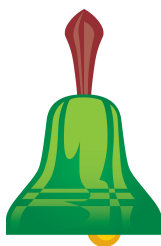




Happy Holidays??!! I don't think so. It has and will always be MERRY CHRISTMAS! I love Christmas! I love everything about Christmas – the aroma of cookies baking, (doing) the decorating, the haunting fragrance from the pine tree, caroling followed by cookies and hot chocolate. I enjoy the hustle and bustle - the excitement in children's eyes and the mischievous smile in the eyes of parents. I love buying presents for those I love and remembering the joys of Christmases past. I love family being together and engaging in the activities of this blessed season. Yes... even the snow. This is such a glorious and joyous time of year.

However... often the reason for the holiday is lost in the process. And with Christmas, the world has commercialized it to such a degree that it's difficult to recognize its true reason. What we need to be mindful of is that Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year because it starts the salvation process. Without Christmas, there is no Easter and without Easter, there is no salvation. And Jesus really is and has always been the ONLY reason for the season because if He hadn't been willing to be our propitiation, we would be eternally lost.

Presents are lovely, but... it is the inexpressible joy of knowing that I have been saved that is the grandest present of all. I pray that it will mark the beginning of a joy filled and fruitful year for you – that is an indescribable gift.



Our church is scheduled to ring the Salvation Army bell for 2-hour shifts at Wal-Mart Friday through Sunday, December 12-14. If you would like to enjoy that activity as a group, individual, or family, please sign up at the Welcome Center in the foyer.

If you want to ring another time outside of that weekend you may call 326-8321 to sign up.

Early Deadline

Due to the Christmas holiday, the newsletter and calendar deadline has moved up a week to **Sunday, December 14.** Thank you!



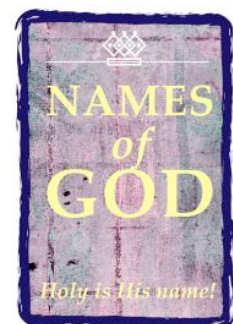
If you would like to contribute to a financial gift for Pastor Mike and his family, please see Cindy Ostrander or Deb Yearous. If giving by check, please write it to one of these ladies instead of to the church. We would like all the gifts received by **Wednesday, December 17**, so it can be given to them on Sunday the 21st. Thank you!



Blanket me with Your peace
 to be covered in the warmth of Your love
 filled with contentment in Your presence
 my desires filled with Your promises
 energy nourished by Your joy
 Knowing my destiny by the wisdom-word of God
 my strengths, my weaknesses
 covered by the blood of Christ
 clothed in Jesus' righteousness
 radiant in His beauty
 I am covered completely by my Savior

Emmanuel
God with us

Isaiah 7:14
 Matthew 1:23





Senior Lunch

Tuesday, December 9, 12:00 p.m.

We welcome all of you who are 55 and older to a lovely luncheon once a month from September through May. There is also a time of singing, a devotional, and plenty of fellowship. Free will offerings welcomed but not required. Deb Yearous and her kitchen crew, Dorothea Horsfall and Arlene Yearous, do an excellent job taking care of us! Hope to see you there! And please, feel free to bring friends!

Menu: beef roast, potatoes and carrots; pineapple delight salad, lettuce, fruit, Christmas cookies



Looking for a gift for that hard-to-buy-for lady in your life?

Think about giving her a weekend retreat with other ladies in the church, April 10-12, 2015, at Village Creek Bible Camp. See Jennifer or Sandy about a gift certificate!



Fun & Games Night

for the whole family on Saturday, December 13, 6:30 p.m. Bring a snack to share and your favorite board or card game. Hope to see you there!



If you were the leader of a board, committee, team, or special activity, we would so appreciate a report to include in our church's Annual Report. It reflects the history of our congregation. The deadline is Sunday, January 4. Thank you!



Caroling

Wednesday, December 17

Meet at the church at 5:00 p.m. to go caroling. Afterwards, there will be a soup supper. Bring cookies or bars to share.

*Her children arise up and call her blessed.
Proverbs 31:31*

I Love My Mother

by Irma Cantu Giricz

Sweet and lovely Mother,
fills my life with joy;
I love my Mother dearly.
She loves her girls and boys.

Jesus truly is our friend;
sticks closer than a brother;
Many times through trial's door,
I saw Him helping Mother.

A little old man traveling
the dry and dusty road,
she gave a glass of water;
her kindness quenched his load.

As a child, she almost drowned
while rescuing a tot;
in the fierce canal she dug
her toes into the mud.

I thank Thee, Lord, for saving Mom
from drowning 'neath her load;
perhaps You were the thirsty man
that walked the dusty road.

Or were you, Lord, the little man
who brought his violin strings
to soothe and mend a lonely heart,
and comfort broken things?

The Lord, my mother's Teacher,
taught her many things;
to read, to write, and how to sew,
especially how to sing.

I love to hear her angel voice
to Thee her praises ring!
We harmonize together,
and In the Garden sing.

Oh, thank You, Lord, for Mom and Dad;
my friends they'll always be.
Keep our family in Thy care —
throughout eternity.

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Editor's note: Irma Giricz is Lynda Coon's sister. One week before their mother died, she received this poem from her daughter in honor of her birthday. Lynda wrote, "My mother's life was a gift to her family, friends, and even strangers. Many people have been blessed and saved because of her commitment to the Lord."



Do you have Jesus Christ
on your gift list this year?

The Lord Jesus Christ is:

My God	John 20:28; Colossians 2:9, 10
My Life	Colossians 3:4
My Peace	John 14:7; Ephesians 2:14
My Praise	Jeremiah 17:14
My Savior	Matthew 1:21
My Shepherd	Psalms 23:1; John 10:11, 14
My Bishop	1 Peter 2:25
My Rest	Matthew 11:28
My Wisdom	1 Corinthians 1:30
My Righteousness	1 Corinthians 1:30
My Sanctification	1 Corinthians 1:30
My Redemption	1 Corinthians 1:30
My Provider	Philippians 4:19
My Strength	Psalms 28:7
My Light	Psalms 27:1; John 8:12
My Helper	Psalms 54:4; Hebrews 13:6
My Door	John 10:9
My Refuge	Deuteronomy 33:27
My Fortress	Psalms 91:2
My Habitation	Psalms 91:9
My Rock	Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Corinthians 10:4
My Way, Truth, and Life	John 14:6
My Strong Tower	Proverbs 18:10; Psalms 18:2
My Keeper	Ephesians 4:1
My Resurrection	John 11:25
My Hiding Place	Colossians 3:3
My Everlasting Consolation	2 Thessalonians 2:16
My Purgatory	Hebrews 1:3
My Captain	Hebrews 2:10
My Brother	Hebrews 2:11
My Portion	Psalms 73:26
My High Priest	Hebrews 4:14
My Hope	Jeremiah 17:6
My Shield	Psalms 28:7
My Amen	Revelation 3:14
My Deliverer	Psalms 18:2
My Reward	Genesis 15:1
My Salvation	Psalms 35:3
My Defense	Psalms 94:22
My Beloved	Ephesians 1:6

I am created for His glory.

Isaiah 43:7; Revelation 4:11

December 2014

Faith Evangelical Free Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
	6:30 PM Elder Board meeting		Bulletin Deadline 5:45 PM Family meal served 6:15 PM "Bridge" 6:15 PM One Way Club			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Communion Community Needs Fund 10:15 AM Worship Service 6:00 PM Students: Gym 7:00 PM Students: Study	12:00 PM Young at Heart Senior Lunch 6:30 PM Trustee Board meeting	Bulletin Deadline 5:45 PM Family meal served 6:15 PM One Way Club 6:15 PM "Bridge"		Salvation Army Bell Ringing 6:30 PM Fun and Games Night		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Newsletter Deadline Salvation Army Bell Ringing 10:15 AM Worship Service 6:00 PM Students: Gym 7:00 PM Students: Study		Bulletin Deadline 5:00 PM Caroling & Soup Supper				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:15 AM Worship Service 6:00 PM Students: Gym 7:00 PM Students: Study			Bulletin Deadline 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service	Christmas Day 		
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
Food Pantry Sunday 10:15 AM Worship Service 11:45 AM Potluck Lunch 6:00 PM Students: Gym 7:00 PM Students: Study		Bulletin Deadline				

December Volunteers

Date	Greeter	Ushers	Nursery	Church Cleaning	Ministry Highlight	Fellowship Time
7	Bob & Sharon Meier	Keith Henderson Erv Jones Howard Slotman Lauren Smith	Bob Meier Annalisa Velasco	Part one: Melgosa Part two: Rachel Peak		Jean Titlbach
14	Bob & Sharon Meier	Keith Henderson Erv Jones Howard Slotman Lauren Smith	Diane Slotman Rachel Peak	Part one: Collins Part two: VOLUNTEER NEEDED	Prison	John & Sandy Goree
21	Bob & Sharon Meier	Keith Henderson Erv Jones Howard Slotman Lauren Smith	Shelly Gruber Sue Mathre	Part one: Henderson Part two: Slotman	Seniors	Erv & Mary Jones
28	Bob & Sharon Meier	Keith Henderson Erv Jones Howard Slotman Lauren Smith	Jane Collins Emma Hollenbeck	Part one: Lorenz Part two: Jacobson	Prayer	Deb Yearous

"Away in a Manger" PLATE



Make this special plate as a gift to give this Christmas.

What you need:

- Clear glass plate
- Acrylic craft paint
- Paintbrush and water
- Black permanent marker

What you do:

1. Turn plate upside-down on table. Paint one of your palms brown, and press it on the center of the plate.
2. Rotate the plate so fingers point down. Using yellow paint, make a straw bed in the palm.
3. Mix white and brown paint for Jesus' face. Use white paint for a swaddled body.
4. Paint a yellow star above Jesus and a yellow border around the plate rim.
5. When paint is dry, turn plate over. With the marker, draw dots for Jesus' eyes and write the words of Luke 2:12 around the plate rim.



Born king of the Jews

Matthew 2:1-2 says that after Jesus was born, wise men came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?" Complete the puzzle to discover what they found in Bethlehem.

Directions: In the grid below, draw lines by starting at the first number in each list and stopping at the last.



☆ ☆

16-17	28-17-6	61-50-39	8-7-18	106-96-85-97-107-106	42-41-52-63-64-53
3-14-25	36-47-58	104-105-106	38-49-60	89-100-111-123	107-108-109-120-130
2-3-4	5-16-27	19-18-29-30	69-79-89	80-92-103-104	125-135-134-124-123-133-134
40-51-62-39	37-47-59	105-95-84-96		124-125-126-127-128	69-80-91-102-103
				129-130-142-141-129	141-140-128-129

• 1	• 2	• 3	• 4	• 5	• 6	• 7	• 8	• 9	• 10	• 11
• 12	• 13	• 14	• 15	• 16	• 17	• 18	• 19	• 20	• 21	• 22
• 23	• 24	• 25	• 26	• 27	• 28	• 29	• 30	• 31	• 32	• 33
• 34	• 35	• 36	• 37	• 38	• 39	• 40	• 41	• 42	• 43	• 44
• 45	• 46	• 47	• 48	• 49	• 50	• 51	• 52	• 53	• 54	• 55
• 56	• 57	• 58	• 59	• 60	• 61	• 62	• 63	• 64	• 65	• 66
• 67	• 68	• 69	• 70	• 71	• 72	• 73	• 74	• 75	• 76	• 77
• 78	• 79	• 80	• 81	• 82	• 83	• 84	• 85	• 86	• 87	• 88
• 89	• 90	• 91	• 92	• 93	• 94	• 95	• 96	• 97	• 98	• 99
• 100	• 101	• 102	• 103	• 104	• 105	• 106	• 107	• 108	• 109	• 110
• 111	• 112	• 113	• 114	• 115	• 116	• 117	• 118	• 119	• 120	• 121
• 122	• 123	• 124	• 125	• 126	• 127	• 128	• 129	• 130	• 131	• 132
• 133	• 134	• 135	• 136	• 137	• 138	• 139	• 140	• 141	• 142	• 143

Hey, Kids!

Ask your parents if you can check out

- www.hiskids.net
- www.answersingenesis.org/kids
- www.christianitytoday.com/kids
- www.jonathanpark.com
- www.fancymonkey.com
- www.whitsend.org
- www.kidsofcourage.com
- http://mostimportantstory.com
- www.patchthepirate.org



Semantics

by Sharon Meier

I was reading aloud one of the passages in Scripture that lists sins of the natural man (a person who does not have the Spirit of God living within) to an inmate who has been a member of a notorious gang in another state. When I asked him if he identified with any of those characteristics, he readily admitted to most of them. However, when asked about stealing, he proudly replied by naming the gang he belonged to — “We are _____! We don’t steal. We take!” I said, “Pardon me?” So he repeated himself very aggressively. When I questioned him about this remarkable statement, he insisted there was a difference. “Do you take things that belong to someone else against their will?” I asked. “Absolutely!” he replied. “But you don’t consider that stealing?” He said, “No! We don’t steal. We take.”

I remember one man telling me he beat up his sister because she was dating a man he didn’t trust. I asked him why he would do such a thing. He said in a tone of voice that let me know he thought it was a dumb question, “Because I love her, and I don’t want her to mess up her life.” I said I certainly didn’t understand that kind of “love”. “Well, my sister does!” was his reply.

I read some pages from a book by an author I like to an inmate in segregation (also known as “the hole”). He looked very serious as he said, “That dude is a beast.” I have learned not to take offense at things I hear at the prison, so I merely asked him what he meant by that. He explained it was a very high compliment, about the highest one could give. I thanked him and said I agreed with him wholeheartedly.

Don’t we sometimes have difficulties understanding what God is saying to us? I find that sometimes I am reading a “tone of voice” that perhaps God did not have when speaking His Word. I am drawing conclusions and making presumptions when trying to understand His meanings. This was probably true of those who translated Scripture for us in English as well. Lately, I have been asking God to reveal to me His tone of voice, the meaning He wants to convey, and to bypass my preconceived ideas or the way I’ve heard it presented by others. I need to pursue God’s semantics; I need to learn His ways, motives, and nuances. I want to hear His voice speaking clearly without misunderstanding His heart. One thing I am sure of...His love and regard for us is unfathomable. He has put His price tag on us and then paid what it cost to purchase us. That price tag was His Son Jesus. Do you want to know how valuable you are (how valuable prison inmates are) to Him? Just take a look at the value of His Son. Then you will understand your heavenly Father’s semantics a little bit better when He says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love.”

A Tinker Toy Fossil...

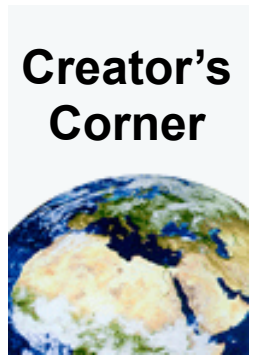
In October of 1999, scientists announced the discovery of a new fossil at the National Geographic Society in Washington. Scientists from the Dinosaur Museum in Blanding, Utah, and the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology in Beijing, China, announced the discovery of a so-called "missing link." The feathered fossil was clearly a bird, but it had the tail of a small dinosaur. They named it Archaeoraptor.

The fossil from China was not excavated by scientists and its history was uncertain. It possessed the specialized shoulders and chest typical of birds, but it had the long tail identical to some small dinosaurs. After the announcement, scientists proceeded to study the fossil in detail. They found that a few bones that would have connected the tail to the bird body were missing. After more study, they concluded that they had been fooled. Someone had taken the fossilized tail of a dromeosaurid and made it look as if it had been part of the fossil bird. The scientists involved admitted they made a mistake by not examining the fossil before they announced the discovery of a "missing link." Like so many "missing links" before, this one was a hoax.

Every uncontested "missing link" that was ever "discovered" has suffered the same fate as Archaeoraptor. That these "discoveries" are announced before they are studied illustrates that evolution is nothing more than a faith. It is a deceitful faith, and the truth will only be found in the Bible.

~ Pastor Paul Bartz

(Taken from www.creationmoments.com)



Creator's Corner

Missionary of the Month



Duane Dietze

serving the Lord in Japan with ReachGlobal, the missions arm of the Evangelical Churches of America (EFCA)

Pastor Mike's Blog

Christ Followers: Back to the Basics

A study of the fundamentals of the Christian faith at www.thechristfollowers.com



Thank you to all who have and painted the children's hallway and the nurseries, as well as laid carpet and painted the pastor's and secretary's offices. It was a labor of love and is greatly appreciated!!!

Food for Thought

- * Instead of regretting the opportunities I have missed, I should be taking the opportunities I have. ~ Randy Alcorn
- * There are grave difficulties on every hand, and more are looming ahead — *therefore, we must go forward.* ~ William Carey
- * I used to think that prayer should have the first place and teaching the second. I now feel it would be truer to give prayer the first, second, and third places, and teaching the fourth. ~ James O. Fraser
- * A good thing to have up your sleeve is a sanctified funny bone. ~ C T Studd
- * How often do we attempt work for God to the limit of our incompetency rather than to the limit of God's omnipotency. ~ J Hudson Taylor
- * With thee, O my God, is no disappointment. I shall never have to regret that I have loved thee too well. ~ Henry Martyn
- * Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what you want them to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity. ~ George Patton
- * I thank God for my handicaps, for through them, I have found myself, my work, and my God. ~ Helen Keller
- * Nothing is more costly, nothing is more sterile, than vengeance. ~ Winston Churchill

mission

**The mission of our church is to
glorify Christ,
proclaim the Gospel,
reach the lost,
and train and instruct
Christians in the faith
for service and daily living.**

The Voice of Faith newsletter is a publication of Faith Evangelical Free Church. Lead Pastor is Mike Jacobson. Editor is Sharon Meier. Sunday Worship is at 10:15 a.m. Website is www.faithchurchpdc.org
Visitors are very much welcome!



Faith Evangelical Free Church
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Prairie du Chien, WI 53821

Merry Christmas!



DECEMBER 2014

If you wish to mail this, fold it in half, tape the open sides, and place a postage stamp here.