

Quotes To Consider . . .

"Where there is much prayer there will be much of the Spirit, where there is much of the Spirit, there will be ever increasing prayer."

- Andrew Murray

"Prayer is absolutely the most significant power available to mankind. Yet sadly, it is significantly neglected, even within the Church."

- Joel Richardson

"I learned that life is not just a destination but a journey. While the expedition can be long and arduous, it can be full of beauty and pleasure as well."

- Wayne Holmes

"Our God is the most extraordinary, fascinating, intriguing, exciting, mysterious, yet accessible Being in the universe." - Joy Dawson

"Women friends become the face of God to one another, the face of grace, of delight, of mercy."

- John & Stacy Eldredge

"God might want you to extend His love by babysitting for the single parent down the street. He might want you to prepare a hearty meal for that lonely old man who lost his wife, and to sit and visit with him while he eats. Who knows He might even want you to reach out and touch the life of a total stranger in some way you can't imagine right now. Are you willing to set aside your own comfort to touch someone else with God's love???" - Amy Nappa

The following is rather long but it does have some meaningful thoughts about our "church family....and its importance."

"You Were Formed For A Family"

By Rick Warren (in his book Meditations on the Purpose Driven Life)

Ephesians 1:5

From the beginning of time, God has always wanted a family. The entire bible is the story of God building a family who will love Him, honor Him, and reign with Him forever. He wants you to be a part of that family—a family that will last for all eternity.

Hebrews 2:11 says Jesus and the people He makes holy all belong to the same family. That's why He isn't ashamed to call them His brothers and sisters. Jesus calls us His brothers and sisters! We're not just called to believe. We're called to belong—to belong to the family of God.

God has given us the privilege of being born again so that now we are members of God's own family. That family is the church of the living God, the support and foundations of the truth. 1 Peter 1:3

What does the family of God look like? Where can it be found?

If a building has no support and foundation it collapses. In the same way, you need support from other people and a foundation to keep you strong in your walk with God. You find that loving support when you join your brothers and sisters in Christ's church.

Not only is the church God's family, it is called the Body of Christ. When you become part of the family of God, you also become a member of Christ's body. We are all connected and dependent upon each other. Romans 12:4-5

The church is a body, not a business, a family not an institution. God said, "I formed you to be a part of my family." 1 Cor. 12:25-27

Whenever you feel discouraged, remember that you are not alone, God has a family to support you and encourage you. Reach out to your brothers and sister for support.

The more you grow spiritually, the more you're going to love and treasure the church, because Jesus died for the church. Nothing is more valuable to God than His church. He paid the highest price for it, Jesus loves the church so much that the Bible refers to it as His beloved bride. Ephesians 5:25-27

"As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you." Isaiah 62:5

Just like in an earthly family where we receive love, but also give it, in God's family we are called to love and care for our fellow members.

There are 58 "one anothers" in the Bible that teach us how to treat our brothers and sisters in the family of God.

They include:

- Love one another 1 John 4:11
- Encourage one another Hebrews 10:25
- Serve one another Galatians 5:13
- Pray for one another James 5:16

1 Peter 3:8 says You should be like one big happy family full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds. And 1 John 1:7 tells us that if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.

When you participate in God's family by loving and caring for each other, that's called fellowship. Fellowship is the second purpose of your life. Real fellowship means being as committed to each other as we are to Jesus. * John 3:16 says We understand what real love is when we realize that Christ gave His life for us. That means that we must give our lives for other believers. (NJB) Giving of yourself and putting others first, isn't easy, but God asks you do it because He did first. He loves us even though we aren't perfect and His purpose for you is to do the same. Jesus wants you to love real people, not ideal people, because there are no perfect people.

When we place our faith in Christ, God becomes our Father, we become his children, other believers become our brothers and sisters and the church becomes our spiritual family. The family of God includes all believers in the past, in the present, and all who will believe in the future.

Ephesians 2:19

In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:5

Being included in God's family is the highest honor and the greatest privilege you will ever receive. Nothing else comes close. Whenever you feel unimportant, unloved, or insecure, remember who you belong to.

A Christian without a church family is an orphan.

Most of all, let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony. Colossians 3:14 (LB)

Since God is love, the most important lesson he wants you to learn on earth is how to love. It is in loving that we are most like Him, so love is the foundation of every command He's given us; God's whole law can be summed up in this one command; Love others as you love yourself.

God wants us to love everyone, but He is particularly concerned that we learn to love others in His family.

When we have the opportunity to help anyone, we should do it. But we should give special attention to those who are in the family of believers. Galatians 6:10

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ - Galatians 6:2

A CALL TO PRAYER

Please mediate on the following verses....we must devote ourselves to prayer....not just when it's convenient but "without ceasing"....in the spirit and from the heart. These are not all the verses on prayer by a long ways and I would encourage you to get a concordance and look up and study all of the times prayer is encouraged /commanded by God through the various writers He chose to convey His Words to us. We cannot/must not ignore these instructions from our Lord, if we are to live as He wants us to and if we are to bring others to Him, or save our nation.

Can our prayers and requests make a difference in our world???

Ask Moses....Exodus 32:9-14 - But he was talking directly to God's presence you say....so are we!! Same God now as then.....just waiting to hear from us. He acts only when we ask.

Zephaniah 2:3

"Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what He commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be delivered on the day of the Lord's anger.

Joel 2:12-14

"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious he releases and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing."

Author Joel Richardson in his book, AntiChrist: Islam's awaited Messiah, says this "I personally believe that we are now living in a crucial time when the future of many nations is hanging in the balance. Now is not the time to fear. Nor is it the time to gripe. Now is the time to pray!!!

Perhaps the second most important thing for us as Christians (Prayer being the first....it is always the first thing in any circumstances, good or bad and the first line of defense as well as offense.) is sharing the Gospel. Mr Richardson also says this in his book. "while the power and necessity of prayer is indisputable, there is also another dimension to our response that is also absolutely necessary. We must also reach out with the consummate Christian message of good news.

Romans 1:16

"It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes."

And Romans 10:14

“How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”

To all of his statements I can only add a heartfelt Amen! I recommend his book also. Whether you agree with his thoughts or not, it will definitely give you something to consider as far as our response to what is going on in our world and nation today.

Have you talked to God today????? And have you listened to Him?? (a conversation is always two sided!)

“It is good to keep some account of our prayers, that we may not ‘unsay’ them in our practices.”
– Matthew Henry

This And That . . .

Berry Bowl Center Piece

Ruby red cranberries lend festive color to many holiday recipes. Their brilliant color can brighten your table as well as part of the this simple centerpiece. It’s “berry easy to assembly because it requires just a few supplies.

Choose a shallow glass dish...like a fluted serving bowl with a decorative rim, about 10 inches in diameter.

One with a pedestal will give your arrangement some height. ...or if your bowl doesn’t have a pedestal you can create one by

inverting a smaller bowl and setting your chosen bowl on the bottom of it.

Fill the serving bowl partway with water ...about 2 cups. Then add fresh cranberries until you have enough floating to almost cover the surface. (about 1 ½ cups)

Gently place a few floating candles or tea lights into the bowl among the cranberries. For the final step, light the candles right before dinner to add warmth to your special gathering.

Place Markers

These can be used for any occasion and can be kept to use again with other pictures or...can be given to the guests to take home.

Instead of using ordinary paper cards with the guests name, use a miniature picture frame to display his or her photo. You can buy inexpensive small frames , these then could act as favors too. Or put the guests baby pictures in them instead of

current photos. This will spark conversations and rekindle childhood memories.

The most difficult part of these is gathering all the pictures, if they are of people you don’t have pictures of. So need to plan ahead and get the pictures...either from them or take some of your own on your digital camera and print them off in the size you will need.

“O Holy Night”

“The star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.” - *Matthew 2:9* NKJV

The words of “O Holy Night” were written in 1847 by a French wine merchant named Placide Clappeau, the mayor of Roquemaure, a town in the south of France. We know little about him except that he wrote poems as a hobby.

We know more about the man who composed the music, a Parisian named Adolphe Charles Adam. The son of a concert pianist, Adams was trained almost from infancy in music and piano. In his mid-twenties, he wrote his first opera and thereafter wrote two operas a year until his death at age fifty two. Near the end of his life, he lost his savings in a failed business venture involving the French national opera, but the Paris conservatory rescued him by appointing him professor of music.

It was John Dwight, son of Yale’s president, Timothy Dwight (“I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”), discovered this French Carol, “Christian Midnight,” and translated it into the English hymn, “O Holy Night.”

After graduating from Harvard and Cambridge, John was ordained as minister of the Unitarian church in Northampton, but his pastoring experience wasn’t happy. In 1841, George and Sophia Ripley founded a commune named Brook Farm “to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent and cultivated person, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life.” John was hired as director of the Brook Farm School and began writing a regular column on music for the commune’s publication.

Greatly influenced by the liberal views of Ralph Waldo Emerson, he became fascinated by the German culture, especially the symphonic music of Ludwig van Beethoven, and it was largely his influence that introduced Americans to Beethoven’s genius.

When Brook Farm collapsed in 1847, John Dwight moved into a cooperative house in Boston and established a career in music journalism. He penned articles on music for major publications, and in 1852 he launched his own publication, Dwight’s Journal of Music. He became America’s first influential classical music critic. He was opinionated, sometimes difficult, a

great promoter of European classical music and an early advocate of Transcendentalism.

How odd that a wine merchant, a penniless Parisian and liberal clergyman should give Christianity one of its holiest hymns about the birth of Jesus Christ, Savior of the world.

O Holy Night

**O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees, oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O Holy Night, O night divine!**

**Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
So led by the light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here came the wise men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our friend.
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger,
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend.
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!**

**Truly He taught us to love one another.
His law is love and His gospel is peace,
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord, Oh praise His name forever!!
His power and glory evermore proclaim.
His power and glory evermore proclaim!!**

On Marriage ...

Debbie Pearl has written a book titled Created to be His Help Meet. The following are some thoughts from this book; I believe they are worth our consideration as wives.

- + When you are a help meet to your husband, you are a helper to Christ.*
- + A woman trying to function like a man is as ridiculous as a man trying to be like a woman. A unisex society is a senseless society – a society dangerously out of order.*
- + Discontentment is not a product of circumstances; it is the state of the soul.*
- + Being thankful and grateful is the key to spiritual victory.*
- + She was totally deceived into thinking that her female intuition, sensitivity and passions were spirituality.*
- + If you fight his inadequacies, both of you will fail. If you love him and support him with his inadequacies and without taking charge, both of you will succeed and grow.*
- + It is very important for you to learn how to make an appeal without challenging his authority.*
- + A King wants a Queen, which is why a man in command wants a faithful wife to share his fame and glory.*
- + Greatness is a state of soul, not certain accomplishments.*
- + It will be your face he looks into to see the marvel of what a great thing he has done.*
- + He is like deep, deep water. The very depth makes the movement almost imperceptible.*
- + Your husband's gentleness is not a weakness; it is his strength. Your husband's hesitation is not indecision; it is cautious wisdom.*
- + Let him be the one God made him to be, a still, quiet, thoughtful presence for you!!*
- + God is not looking for happy women to make them into help meets for men. He is looking for women willing to be true help meets, so he can fill them full of joy.*

Think of these things!! I will have more thought provoking excerpts from her book next month for us to consider.

Things / Thoughts on Christmas

The painter and author Thomas Kinkaid has several books that incorporate both his paintings and inspirational thoughts. The following are a few from his book Christ the Light of the World. I shared one of these a few years ago so some of you may remember part of this but it's worth sharing again I thought.

On Tiptoe.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; Let the sea roar and all its fullness; Let the field be joyful and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord.....For He is coming! *Psalm 96:11-13*

If there is any image that summarized Christmas for me, it's that of tiny children standing on tip toe or jumping up and down, breathlessly, anticipating the days to come. The month or so before Christmas is a kind of delicious torture for little ones. They're not exactly clear on how long it is until the big day, but they know they just can't wait.

As we grow older, of course, we lose a lot of that eager impatience. We think instead of how much there is to do and how little time is left to get everything done. Eagerness turns to anxiety. "Only ____ more shopping days....."waiting on tiptoe turns into trying to survive the season.

That's why I think we need to take a step back sometimes again and again to remember what this getting ready for Christmas time, the season traditionally known as Advent, is all about.

Quite simply, it's about waiting with the right attitude. And the right attitude for advent is a child's attitude, eyes wide open, watching for the wonder.

Remember what Jesus said about little children and the kingdom of heaven? He said we need a child's spirit in order to live in God's kingdom. And surely part of this required childlikeness, especially in the before-Christmas season, is relearning what it means to wait in breathless anticipation.

What specifically are we waiting for?

On the surface, we're waiting for the holiday itself—for the joys of family togetherness, for a day, when the daily grind (plus the accelerated grind of the preparations) finally grinds to a halt and celebration takes over. We wait for a day of

giving and receiving, of worship and play. That's certainly worth waiting for and planning for.

In a spiritual sense, we wait once more for the coming of Christ. We're reenacting the drama of prophecy and longing and joyous fulfillment that climaxed with Jesus' incarnation. We're reliving all those centuries of waiting in darkness for the great light to shine, as well as those personal eons in our lives when we feel like we too are waiting for the light of Christ to shine in us.

In the ancient cycle of the Church calendar, Advent has also been a time when Christians remember that we're still waiting for the final arrival of the kingdom of God in all its fullness. Yes, Christ has come into our world. Yes, the battle between light and darkness has been won. Christmas has happened. Easter has changed everything. But the final chapter has not yet been played out. There's more to come. And we're waiting for that too.

When I remember this, I realize that the Advent message of waiting on tiptoe is even more important. It ties in with the Scriptures that remind us to watch and wait always, because we just don't know when the next events are going to unfold. And it reminds us that this is something to wait for not with fear and dread, but with careful preparation and eager anticipation.

The Scriptures tell us this over and over again. Wait! There's more. Keep your eyes open. It could happen at any moment!

Like little children at Christmas, we don't exactly understand the timetable, and that makes some of us little edgy. But there's nothing really wrong with that. We're not supposed to be blasé or complacent about the coming of Christ—either at Christmas or at the end of the age.

Even as we throw ourselves into all the "to dos" of getting ready for Christmas, all the responsibilities of our daily lives and the extra responsibilities of the season, part of us needs to be waiting for our Lord with eyes wide open, watching, for the big moment.

Waiting to celebrate that His kingdom has come on earth.

Waiting to renew our understanding of His coming in our lives.

Waiting for His final coming again in glory.

Waiting on tiptoe—like a little kid waiting for Christmas.

Dear Lord,

In this season of anticipation, renew my sense of wonder and excitement. When the days speed by, help me to slow down enough to open my eyes. Remind me why I'm waiting—and why it's worth waiting for. And remind me always that the waiting is not in vain—that You have come, and that You are coming and that it's all going to be good.

In Jesus name...Amen.

The sense that triggers my memory above all the others is the sense of smell. So in reading from the same book as mentioned above, I could relate to the following. And it gave me pause, as I recalled the scriptures about the bowl of incense in Revelation which it says is the prayers of the Saints, and I Corinthians 2:15 which says, "For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing," as well as my own experiences with fragrances!

The Signature Fragrance

Have you ever noticed that the sense of smell works like shortcut to your emotions?

One sniff of something familiar—a perfume, a blossom on a bush, a particular brand of disinfectant—has the immediate power to make you feel happy or sad or fearful or loved. And one sniff is surely all it takes to plunge you immediately into Christmas!

What aromas do that for you? The piney fragrance of wreaths and Christmas trees? The tang of wood smoke in the air? The candle smell of warm paraffin or the Christmassy bouquet of potpourri? One woman told me the plastic smell of dolls in a toy store is all it takes to make her feel like a child at Christmas!

For me, though the quintessential Christmas aroma is surely the smell of baking. To walk in the house and breathe in the warm, Yeasty fragrance of rising bread...the crispy brown sugar cookie smell...the zing of ginger and allspice—that's almost an automatic shortcut to a sense of well being of happy anticipation. (In this I'm fortunate to have married a woman who loves to bake) The fragrance of baking tells me in powerful emotional shorthand that someone is home, that someone cares, that all will be well. The aromas of yeast and fruit and

spices leave their mark on the atmosphere of a house that is as distinctive to me as a signature—a signature fragrance of love.

In Jesus' day, too, aromas carried powerful emotional significance. And that was exactly the point of two of the gifts that the Magi brought to commemorate Jesus' birth. The gifts of frankincense and myrrh, in fact, were actually gifts of evocative fragrance.

For many of us, who have never actually smelled frankincense and myrrh, the emotional impact of these gifts has been lost. But from the story itself we can gather a sense of just what they meant. They exuded the aroma of something costly, something beautiful, something sacrificial. In addition, like many of our Christmas memories, they evoked feeling both joyful and bittersweet, for these very fragrances were ones used to prepare bodies for burial.

I suspect their essence was similar to the expensive oil of spikenard that Jesus' friend Mary would pour out years later on His feet. The Scriptures say that fragrance "filled the house," the same way the perfume of Nanette's baking wafts through our own household. Jesus Himself clearly understood—and told His disciples—that the fragrance was really the signature of Mary's love.

Surely this was part of what the apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote that we, Jesus' followers, are supposed to be the fragrance of Christ in the world. We are to live in such a way the lovely aroma of His love floats through the air around us, attracting others by its evocative power.

Now, that's an interesting thought for this Christmas season!! Can you imagine your life being as irresistible to others as the smell of bread baking...of Christmas trees.... Of candles and dolls and all those Christmas smells? Can you imagine the fragrance of your life writing a signature of God's love in your own home, in your workplace, in your world?

It's something worth thinking about as you go about your pre- Christmas business. This Advent season, in the midst of all your preparations, don't forget to breathe deeply. Sniff for the scent of frankincense and myrrh so you can recognize the signature of God's love in your life.

And then think how you could live today so that God's signature fragrance of divine eternal love wafts gently and irresistibly toward everyone you meet.

Dear Father,

Amid all the intoxicating smells of this season, remind me that love is the sweetest scent of all—and it is both costly and precious. Write Your signature on my heart, so that others may breathe in the scent of Your love in my life.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Joyous or Stressful?

(Excerpt from Readers Digest)

According to our poll this month roughly 90 percent of people from 16 countries report joyful feelings during the holiday season—whether they celebrate Christmas or Diwali. (Here's the list.... Wonder if it tells us anything?)

Philippines	97%	United Kingdom	91%	Canada	83%
Russia	96%	Australia	89%	Netherlands	83%
Germany	95%	Malaysia	89%	United States	82%
China	94%	Brazil	88%	India	79%
Mexico	94%	South Africa	87%		
Spain	93%	France	85%		

Deck the Halls

Some ideas for inexpensive and simple ways to give your home a festive look for the Christmas season.

- ❖ *Deck your house with free evergreen branches gathered from Christmas tree lots.*
- ❖ *Trim a grapevine wreath with cookie cutters and red checked bows to spice up a kitchen.*
- ❖ *Make individual place setting decorations by sticking candles in shiny red apples.*
- ❖ *Set a basketful of wrapped candy canes near the front door*
- ❖ *Stick three red candles in a short, hollowed out log section draped with evergreen*
- ❖ *Fill an old bucket with popcorn balls wrapped in red cellophane.*
- ❖ *Make a pretty centerpiece by filling a crystal bowl with shiny Christmas tree balls.*
- ❖ *Fill a large apothecary jar with gingerbread boys or red and green M & M's.*
- ❖ *Wrap your front door with holiday paper and a big bow.*

- ❖ Tie some jingle bells to your front doorknob.
- ❖ Group white candles on a mirror to make a centerpiece.
- ❖ Keep a teakettle of spiced cider simmering on the stove. Decorate a small evergreen in your yard with red vinyl bows and food for the birds.
- ❖ Dismantle evergreen sprigs from a wreath and adorn household items.
- ❖ Layer red or green plaid table covers with smaller battenburg lace coverlets.
- ❖ Stack red bowed teddy bears on your stairs.
- ❖ Make holiday throw pillows from an old holiday tablecloth stuffed with torn nylons.

A simple pre-cooked holiday meal of ham, yams and mincemeat pie from the grocery store far exceeds a meal that took hours to prepare during the time you should have been relaxing with and enjoying your family. Remember Solomon's wise advice in Proverbs 17:1: "Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife." NIV.

Sometimes the main thing that is in our way is pride. After all, if your friend Jenny can cook a wonderful meal and make all her own holiday gifts, you should be able to also, you reason.

Pride should have no place in the Christian woman's life. She knows that greater priorities are having time to love and enjoy her family. As Helen Young once said, "If a cake mix saves you time to do something more important, then it is scriptural!"

A night lying on the floor in front of the Christmas tree playing monopoly will create a more permanent memory for your kids than making the perfect fruitcake or eggnog, neither of which most people particularly like anyway!

So this year, instead of spending hours doing things that exhaust you and make you dread the holidays, simplify!! Send cards only to those people: you treasure the most and never see...or given in and send those speedy but newsy computer letters printed on pretty Christmas paper. One friend even sends her annual greetings for Valentine's Day, a very appropriate time to mail out messages of love and at a time that is a lot less busy.

The real pleasure of the fabled "old fashioned Christmas" was not in the elaborate preparations and productions but in the simple pleasures of relaxed, loving relationships. So when you feel yourself succumbing to the "holiday hectics", stop and ask yourself what is really necessary and why. Then let the child in you resurface and find again the real joy of a simple, non exhausting holiday season. (excerpted from Christian Woman magazine, article by Annette Hendrix.)

Did You Know? (A bit of trivia)

Ancient Greeks viewed the pomegranate as a symbol of fertility because of its many seeds – up to eight hundred per fruit.

Egyptians invented a form of glittery eye makeup around 4000 B.C. It was made from iridescent beetle shells, crushed and mixed with paint.

Louis Prang, an early master of color printing, marketed the first line of American Christmas cards in 1875.

Tuiles is the French word for “tiles.” These classic cookies resemble curved roof tiles that are common in the South of France.

Poppy seeds come in many colors, depending on the poppy. Blue gray seed are most popular in American and European in kitchen. Brown poppy seeds appeared in Turkish and Middle Eastern dishes, and white ones are used in Indian cuisine.

Lighted Paper Doily Wreath

Working on a covered surface, lay a 24 inch wreath form inside a 30 inch one. Attach them with 24 gauge wire at 6 to 8 evenly spaced points. In a ventilated area, coat combined wreath form with white spray paint. Let dry. Wrap wreath form with a 20 foot strand of white holiday lights (test lights beforehand), leaving the plug end unwrapped (as much as is needed to plug in). With scissors, widen the center hole slits slightly in paper bouquet holders (we used ten 8.8 inch ones, twenty 6.4 inch ones, twenty 4.8 ones and fifty 3.2 inch ones) Poke a finger through center hold of each bouquet holder (from front to back) to create

openings large enough to accommodate a light bulb. Beginning with largest ones, place bouquet holders evenly around wreath, slipping a light through each hole so that bulb bases, not bulbs, rest against paper. (From time to time hang wreath, and step back to ensure that the arrangement is balanced and attractive.) Add remaining bouquet holders in descending size order. Use smallest holders to cover centers of larger ones and to fill in any gaps. Hang near an outlet. Unplug when unattended. (Very pretty!! For the holiday season ... or all year if you wish!!)

Food

Some Things to Do With Cranberries . . .

Mini Scones

Combine 2 cups flour, 7 tablespoons sugar, 1 tablespoon baking powder, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Work in 6 tablespoon cold butter, diced, until well blended. Stir in 2/3 cup light cream. Add 3/4 cup fresh cranberries. Flour dough and pat into a 10 inch round. Cut into 10 wedges. Place on baking sheet. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoon sugar. Bake a 425° F for about 15 minutes.

Johnny Cake

Blend one 8.5 oz box corn muffin mix, 1 egg, 2 tablespoon melted butter, 3/4 cup milk and 1 cup cranberries. Spread in a greased 8 inch square pan. Bake at 400° F for 20-25 minutes.

Cranberry Cookies

Add 1/2 cup dried cranberries to 1 roll refrigerated chocolate chip cookie dough. Form into small balls. Arrange on a baking sheet. Bake at 375° F for 8 to 10 minutes.

Pork Chops with Cranberries

Combine 2 cups fresh cranberries with 3/4 cup sugar. Brown 6 thick pork chops in 2 tablespoon olive oil for 5 minutes. Add 1/4 cup water and 1/4 cup chicken broth; simmer for 20 minutes. Add cranberries, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper. Simmer 10 minutes, or until chops one done. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro.

Cranberry Ketchup

In a food processor, combine 1 cup fresh cranberries, 1/2 cup cider, 1 clove garlic, 1 scallion, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1 tablespoon sugar. Process until smooth. Stir in 1 Tablespoon finely chopped parsley.

Crumble

Combine 1 cup flour, 1/2 cup brown sugar, 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon, and 1/2 cup butter. Sprinkle over 4 cups cranberries, 1 cup sugar and 3 tablespoons cornstarch in a casserole. Bake at 375° F for 45 minutes.

Cinnamon Oat Bars

In a saucepan, simmer filling for 15 minutes. Pulse crust in a food processor until well mixed, spread two thirds in a 9 x 13 inch pan. Top with filling and remaining crust mixture. Bake or 350° F for 40 minutes.

Ingredients:

For filling: 2 cups fresh cranberries, 3 peeled, cored and chopped apples, 3/4 cup sugar.

For crust: 2 1/2 cups rolled oats, 2 cups all purpose flour, 1 1/4 cups light brown sugar, 2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 stick butter, melted, 1/2 cup canola oil.

Turkey Cranberry Sandwiches

Slice whole wheat rolls and spread with light mayo. Layer half with turkey and provolone. Broil briefly. Spoon on a dollop of cranberry sauce and make sandwiches.

Cranberry Squares

Beat 2 eggs for 1 minutes. Add 1 cup sugar and beat for 2 minutes more. Whisk in 1 cup flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder and ½ cup melted butter . Stir in 1 cup fresh cranberries. Spread into a greased 8 inch square pan. Bake at 350 deg F for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool completely before cutting into 16 bars.

Cranberry Orange Relish

Slice 2 oranges in half and squeeze to extract juice. Cut 4 long strips orange zest from 1 of the oranges. In a saucepan, combine zest, 2 bags fresh cranberries, 1/1/4 cups sugar, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, or until very thick. Stir in orange juice. Serve chilled.

More That I Never Knew About Colorado

excerpts from the book by the same name compiled by Abbott Fay

“Christ of the Rockies” Statue . . . a momentary blessing for motorists

People driving along U.S. 285 between Denver and Fairplay are sometimes amazed to look up and see a huge statue of Christ overlooking the Catholic Camp Santa Maria del Monte. It is located about two and a half miles east of the town of Grant.

At the time it was placed there in 1934, it was the largest religious statue in North America. A gift of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Dower, it stands 1500 feet above the South Platte River Canyon.

The statue itself is thirty seven feet tall and is mounted on a base designed by the famous Denver architect, Temple Buell. The pedestal is twenty two feet high, thus giving the structure the size of a five story building. It was built of terra cotta by the Denver Terra Cotta Company and was inspired by smaller statue on the J.R. Mullen plot in Denver” Mount Olivet Cemetery. Wes Teeple drew the sketches and supervised the construction.

The Legendary Chalk Cliff Treasure . . . Death to those who would seek it!

It seems that the most inaccessible places in Colorado are those about which hidden treasure stories are told. One site that continues to intrigue the curious is the formation known as the Chalk Cliffs at the southern edge of Mount Princeton, near Buena Vista. This geologic oddity towers over Chalk Creek between the village of Nathrop and the ghost town of Saint Elmo. It is composed of kaolin clay, the result of the weathering away of feldspar material. It is more than somewhat inadvisable to go climbing on those cliffs. They tend to collapse suddenly from the weight of a human clinging to the crumbly surface.

At Mount Princeton Hot Springs, below the cliffs, there was once the magnificent Antero Hotel. Vacationers would enjoy dips in the warm water pool which has survived to the present day. They would also hear the story of the treasure in the Chalk Cliffs.

When the region was still a part of Spanish territory, covetous gold seekers raided an Indian pueblo in present New Mexico and looted the gold and silver trinkets. Followed by the angry Indians, they sped up through the San Luis Valley and into the upper Arkansas River area overlooked by what is now named Mount Princeton. Realizing it overlooked by what is now named Mount Princeton. Realizing it was the heavy burden they were carrying that threatened their progress, they decided to hide the loot. Placing the treasure in two mule skins, they dropped it from above into the chalk cliff formation. It seems that the Spanish thieves were caught and all but one were killed. The survivor was wounded but eventually made his way back to civilization where he told the location of the treasure but died before he was able to return to the chalk cliffs.

According to legend, at least two men have fallen to their deaths in saying to find the treasure. One of those was as late as the 1880's. If there is any gold and silver in the formation, it was probably covered centuries before from the natural erosion of the cliffs which tower hundreds of feet.

Bible Trivia Quiz For December

Godly Government Workers in Ungodly Places

1. What Hebrew governed Egypt?
2. What upright young man was made ruler over the whole province of Babylon?
3. What island was Sergius Paulus, who became a Christian, the deputy of?
4. What Persian king did Nehemiah serve under?
5. What church in Greece had believers that were workers in "Caesar's household"?
6. From what country was the eunuch that was baptized by Philip?
7. What Jewish man served as an honored official under Ahasuerus of Persia?
8. What roman centurion of Caesarea was a godly man?
9. What three Hebrew men were appointed Babylonian administrators for Nebuchadnezzar?

"Our Nation's Godly Heritage"

An excerpt from America, A Call To Greatness by John W. Chalfant

"George Washington's favorite book of the bible was Deuteronomy, chapter 28 begins:

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth."

That was precisely the commitment of America's Christian founding Fathers and the colonists, and God kept His promise. The noted French statesman and author Alexis de Tocqueville observed: **"Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power...The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive of one without the other."**

Freedom is a holy concept, because it is from God our Creator. The willingness of the citizens of our nation to live by Biblical morality determines whether our nation and freedoms will survive or perish. Founder Dr. John Witherspoon stated: **"Nothing is more certain than that widespread immorality and corruption of manners make a people ripe for destruction. Beyond a certain point even the best constitution will be ineffectual and slavery must ensue. On the other hand, when the morals of a nation are pure; when true religion (Christianity) and moral principles maintain their vigor, the attempts of the most powerful enemies to oppress them are commonly baffled and disappointed. God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable."**

You might question, **"The bible was written thousands of years ago. Surely, it doesn't apply to contemporary times."** What is God's answer? **"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away, ... His truth endureth to all generations. (Matt. 24:36, Ps. 100:5)**

Throughout the Old and New Testaments God says the same thing in different ways so nobody can possibly misunderstand what He means. In Deuteronomy He makes it clear that our fate is our own choice. **"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life (obedience to the Lord's precepts of freedom) that both you and your descendants may live. (Deut. 30:19 NKJ)**

God who is in control, offers us freedom and His blessings, or slavery and death. But we have to choose—and if we choose life, huge responsibilities will accompany that election. **Isn't there only one choice? What is your answer to God's call?**

"Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Ps 94:16

America—a call to greatness will give you an understanding of the priceless treasures of freedom we inherited from the Christian founders of our country who brought forth the brilliant and death. It will show you what we have let, and continue to

let slip always from us. Then, it will give you an understanding of Christ the warrior, and what He demands of us if we choose to recapture and perpetuate those freedoms.

First recognize that even though time may seem short, God is still in control and has promised to intercede no matter how hopeless our condition may seem, **IF WE WILL UNCOMPROMISINGLY TURN BACK TO HIM;**

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. Jer. 18:7-8

TIS' THE SEASON OF MANY WONDERFUL MEMORIES!

Once again the sights and sounds of the Christmas season are upon us. It's a time of happy memories and far away times for me....whether its my own childhood, (of which I have few if any negative memories,) or of my own children's growing up years or the grandchildren and now the great grandchildren....it's a special time for me.

I love the fragrance of evergreen, and the memories of the trees that the grocery stores would have setting in front at this time of year. Mom buying candy one week, nuts the next, and fresh fruit the last week before Christmas. (We couldn't afford to buy it all at the same time.) We put it in one of the bedrooms which were not heated so it kept well!

And then the getting ready for grandparents to come on Christmas Eve and the meal and the excitement we felt. We used half of the "goodies" for Christmas and the other half for New Years! Mom had special bowls which she put each of the three treats in. I recognize those bowls today whenever I see them...my brother has them and sometimes uses them and I always recognize which one was for what!!! We were not allowed to eat any of it until everyone was there....and so my grandpa would go immediately upon arriving and get a piece of candy from the pretty bowl that mom always put it in that set on the table. He knew that once he had taken a piece we were allowed to!!!

While these things may seem rather mundane to many in this day and age....they are wonderful memories for me!! Our tree was so pretty, with handmade decorations and a few glass balls and tinsel. When we would light the kerosene lamps it would shine and sparkle!! I loved the music of this season also...and the smells of mom and grandma's cooking. And later enjoyed doing all of these things with my own children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren!

Enough of my rambling, and thank you for allowing me to wander back in time a bit...I guess the reason for wanting to share just a couple of things and how the season is so special for

me, is to pray that we will all truly recognize the "Reason for the Season" which is Jesus. The love I received as a child (and my whole life) was given me because not only did my family love me but Jesus loved me...and wanted only good things for me. When you have your tank filled with good memories, when the tough stuff comes along you can get through it knowing that He is still there and still loves you.

So I encourage you to not let the hustle and stress of the season's preparations, or spending or whatever it is that gets in the way... take you from the important things...show the love of Christ, whose birth we remember especially at this time to your family and friends or anyone you can. How? By spending, not necessarily money, but time and effort, sharing whatever things that will make memories for them and you. Keep it simple and from the heart...and not only will you have wonderful memories but your children or friends or whomever...will be able to think back on those times together and smile in years to come.

I wish for you all a blessed Christmas season and may our Heavenly Father's presence be very real and close to you all through the year to come.

*Blessings and the Peace of God,
Lila*