

The Vine

I am the vine; you are the branches...John 15:5

A publication of Valley Falls Christian Church

December 2016

MOM'S EMPTY CHAIR

A woman's daughter had asked the local minister to come and pray with her mother.

When the minister arrived, he found the woman lying in bed with her head propped up on two pillows.

An empty chair sat beside her bed.

The minister assumed that the woman had been informed of his visit. "I guess you were expecting me", he said.

"No, who are you?" said the mother.

The minister told her his name and then remarked, "I saw the empty chair and I figured you knew I was going to show up.."

"Oh yeah, the chair," said the bedridden woman. "Would you mind closing the door?"

Puzzled, the minister shut the door.

"I have never told anyone this, not even my daughter," said the woman. "But all of my life I have never known how to pray. At church I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it went right over my head."

"I abandoned any attempt at prayer," the old woman continued, "until one day four years ago, my best friend said to me," "prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus. Here is what I suggest.

Sit down in a chair; place an empty chair in front of you, and in faith see Jesus on the chair. It's not spooky because He promised "I will be with you always"

"Then just speak to Him in the same way you're doing with me right now."

"So, I tried it and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm."

The minister was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old woman to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with her, anointed her with oil, and returned to the church.

Two nights later the daughter called to tell the minister that her mama had died that afternoon. "Did she die in peace?" he asked.

"Yes, when I left the house about 2:00 she called me over to her bedside told me she loved me and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found her. But there was something strange about her death. Apparently, just before mom died, she leaned over and rested her head on the chair beside the bed. What do you make of that?"

The minister wiped a tear from his eye and said "I wish we could all go like that."

What if It Was Me?

I sometimes think about the 'players' in the Christmas account. Some of them we know by name, others aren't even mentioned. What if I put myself in their shoes? How would I react? Would we still have the same story?

What if it was me? What if I was Mary's father?

"Where is that Joseph? I'll chase him down and have him stoned for what he did to my little girl!" "And where **is** Mary anyway? She's no daughter of mine!

What if it was me? What if I was Mary's mother?

"Honey, I thought we raised you better than that. Now look at what you've done-- gone and ruined your life. No respectable man will marry you now. I don't want to hear that lie about the Son of God any more, either!"

What if it was me? What if I was Joseph?

"Another man? How could you? I loved you and now you have betrayed me! I never want to see you again! You know I could have you stoned, right?" Even after Joseph was visited by an angel confirming Mary's testimony that the child was of the Holy Spirit, how would I react? "How do I explain this to others? Who will believe the child is of the Holy Spirit? I will get blamed. I'll lose business. I will have to endure the scorn of the entire community. Sorry God, this is too hard. Find someone else."

What if it was me? What if I was Mary?

"Why me, God? I can't do this. My mother and father will disown me. Joseph will hate me. I'll be an outcast to everyone in town. I don't want to. Find someone else. I won't do it! I can't do it. I'm not strong enough."

What if it was me? What if I was Jesus?

"Wait, what? I leave heaven and become human? For real? As a baby? Then I don't even get to marry or have children and have to die on a cross? Uh, I don't think so, Dad."

What if it was me? What if I was God? "Send my Son for...**THOSE** people? Why should I? They are murderers and adulterers and He has never done anything wrong. He doesn't deserve to die, they do!"

It is a good thing I'm not Joseph. *When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. **Matt 1:24***

It is a good thing I'm not Mary. *And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name. **Luke 1:46-49***

It is a good thing I'm not Jesus. *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! **Phil 2:5-8***

It is a good thing I'm not God. *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **John 3:16-17***

(continued on the back page)

Recipe Swap

SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

3 c. mashed sweet potatoes
½ c. sugar
½ tsp. salt
½ stick butter
2 eggs
½ c. evaporated milk
2 tsp. vanilla

Mix all of the above together and put in a lightly greased casserole dish.

TOPPING:

½ stick butter
¾ c. brown sugar
1 c. chopped pecans
1/3 c. flour

Blend butter, brown sugar and flour together with a fork or a pastry blender. Add chopped pecans and cover the sweet potato mixture with the pecan mixture. Bake at 350* for 30 minutes or until hot through.

Helen Grove

PRAYER REQUESTS

OUR SOLDIERS: Curtis Mitchell, Brandon Miller, Nic Byrd, Luke Cummings, Greg Morales, Ryan Kirby, Zach Stiffler, Josh Lackey, Dan Cook, Rick Heuertz, Steve Heinen, Ammin Spencer, Gates Kobuszewski, Leslie Bolz, Austin Everhart, Noe Garza, Brandon Hammons, Ruth Churchill, Jason Cherry, Aaron Cook, Jacob Mitchell, Matthew Branam

COPIES OF THE SERMONS ARE AVAILABLE ON CD UPON REQUEST: If you would like a copy please see Mike. You can also listen to them online at www.valleyfallsc.org.

POCKET CHANGE FOR PROGRESS: This will be a special offering every 3rd Sunday during church. The money will be split between Mission Lake Camp and the School Supply Giveaway Fund

RECYCLING: We have a recycling box beside the copier in the office.

COLLECTING FOR ALPHA: Alpha Christian Children's Home can use Campbell soup UPC labels and lids, Best Choice UPC labels and General Mills Box Top Symbols coupons (Box Tops for Education.) We will have a box in the hallway outside the nursery under the mailboxes.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1 Shirley Harris
- 3 Matthew Boyce
- 4 Allison Thomas
- 5 Elijah Phillips
- 8 Rachel (Arnold) Detring
- 11 Kacie Welborn
- 13 Misty Eaton
- 14 Chuck Toy
- 15 Mike & Gina Kirby (1984)
- 18 Janese (Farr) Temm
Jeff Starkey
Ray & Rhonda Mitchell (1982)
- 20 Sarah Haybarker
- 21 Dan & Janet Strang
- 24 Marty Gatzmeyer
Ty Gatzmeyer
- 26 CHARLES WATKINS
- 28 Sean & Jennifer Guffey
Chad Spencer
- 29 Morgan Diane Jean Turner
- 30 Jacob & Kari Mitchell (2005)
- 31 Grayson Haag

(Names in CAPS in Mission Field)

Serving in DECEMBER

Congregational Prayer:

Ray Mitchell

Scripture Readers:

4- Linda Durand-Isaiah 9:6-7
11- Brian Barrett-Matthew 1:18-25
18- Tiffany Spencer- Galatians 4:4-7
25- Christy Arnold- Luke 2:13-20

Nursery:

4- Debbie Gerstner/Libby
11- Nancy Gatzemeyer/Aleyna
18- Brittany Boyce/Jackson
25-Glee Hosler/Caitlyn

Greeters/Ushers:

4- Durand
11-Barrett
18- Spencer
25-Arnold

Lord's Supper Preparation:

4- Durand
11-Barrett
18-Spencer
25- Arnold

Communion Table:

4-Stan, Jay
Wayne, Chad
11- Jay, Stan
Clint, Jake
18- Stan, Jay
David, Lance
25- Jay, Stan
Wayne, Curt

Musicians

Worship Leader: David Grove
Organ: Leah Brown
Piano: Donetta Farr
Guitar: Mike Kirby
Worship Team: Stan Farr, Jay Welborn

Church Offerings

Oct.30-\$1309.00
Nov.6-\$1413.00
Nov.13-\$1139.00
Nov.20-\$1362.00
Our expenses average \$1500 a week.

Valley Falls Christian Church has a website!!

www.valleyfallsc.org

MEN'S BREAKFAST: There will be no men's breakfast in December.

LADIES CHRISTMAS PARTY: this will be on Saturday Dec. 10th at 10:00 AM. It is at Nancy Gatzemeyer's house. Bring a wrapped pair of socks for exchange.

FOOD BOXES: We will do the food boxes after church on Dec. 11th. We need wrapped shoe boxes, and food items to put in them. Suggested items: fruit, homebaked goodies, individually wrapped pudding, jello, teas, crackers, applesauce, cocoa etc. We will need some help delivering boxes. These boxes go to shut-ins. We will deliver some when we go caroling.

CAROLING: Christmas caroling will be on Dec. 11th at 6:00 PM. Dress appropriately. Bring a snack for afterward. Meet at the church.

ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION: Dec. 18th from 5-8 PM at the church. Games and food and fellowship. Bring your favorite games and snacks.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: The Christmas eve service will be on Dec. 24th at 7:00 PM.

CHRISTMAS DAY: Jesus' Birthday! No Sunday School, only worship service.

The greatest discovery of any generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude.

2016					DECEMBER					2016				
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
				1	2	3								
4 11:15 food boxes 2:00 PM Service at Midland 5:00 PM Youth Group 6:00 PM Caroling	5	6	7 JAMS 3:30-5:30 Worship Practice 6:15 Bible Study 7:00 Elders 8:00	8	9	10 SOS christmas party 10:00 AM								
11 5:00 PM Youth Group	12	13	14 JAMS 3:30-5:30 Worship Practice 6:15 Bible Study 7:00	15	16	17								
18  5:00 PM Youth Group 5-8 PM Game night	19	20	21 JAMS 3:30-5:30 Worship Practice 6:15 Bible Study 7:00 Elders 8:00	22	23	24  7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service								
25 	26	27	28 Worship Practice 6:15 Bible Study 7:00	29	30	31  New Years Eve								

Valley Falls
Christian Church
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Phone: 785-945-6757
Email: office@valleyfallsc.org
On the web: www.valleyfallsc.org
Find us on Facebook!

Mike Kirby, Pastor

You are welcome to join us!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Sunday Service times:

Bible Study (all ages) – 9:00 AM
Worship – 10:00 AM
Youth Group – 5:00 PM

Midweek Bible Study:

Wednesday 7:00 PM

(What if continued)

I guess if it was up to me, we wouldn't have Christmas, would we? That means we would be without hope. We would be without peace. We would be without joy. We would still be a people walking in darkness. We would be a people without salvation.

God had this plan before the foundation of the world. He chose Joseph and Mary. He knew who their parents would be. He knew the culture Jesus would be born into. His timing is perfect and His choices are perfect. Oh the wisdom of God that has brought us Christmas! Good thing it wasn't me!

Mike

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. **Isaiah 55:8-9***