

Happy Birthday to our Seniors!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:

02—Jeanene Hill
20—Ron Ludwig
22—Jerry Ludwig



WISHING YOU
A HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!

COMING UP IN MARCH:

Russell McVaugh—March 3
Louise Styer—March 13
Bud Bowman—March 18
Art Gordon—March 19
Joe Smith—March 19
Lois Beam—March 20
Mim Spence—March 30

Did we miss anyone? If you are a “Senior” Member over age 55 and wish to be included on the birthday list, please call the church office at 610-856-7242.

PARISH REGISTER:

BAPTISM:

12/24/17—Malachi James Shepherd, son of Andrew and Jessica Shepherd.

FUNERAL:

1/1/18—Norman Ebersole, 88. Funeral was held on 1/5/18 at Robeson Lutheran Church.



Watch for the Lenten mailing coming out soon!
Ash Wednesday is February 14th!

Vol. XXXXVII
No. 2

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

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February 2018

The Parish Digest

From the Pastor:



¹⁶So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?’ ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰Then he said to them, ‘Whose head is this, and whose title?’ ²¹They answered, ‘The emperor’s.’ Then he said to them, ‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’

(Matthew 22:16-21)

Politics From The Pulpit??!

Part I

The Separation of Church and State

I have been meditating about writing about this matter for almost a year, and now, thanks to some recent conversations I have had with several folks both here at Robeson and among fellow clergy elsewhere, I thought it a good time to address various issues regarding preaching that touches on the area of politics.

Question I – Doesn’t Separation of Church and State mean that no one is allowed to speak “politically” from the pulpit?
(continued on page 4)

A mailbox is located outside the church office for anyone who has written information for staff, chairpersons, preschool, or other leaders.

Rev. Michael Ware, Pastor

Home: 610-875-0015 Office: 610-856-7242

Office hours: Wednesday 9-12 and 1:30-3:00; Thurs. 9-12;

Day off: Monday;

Email address: revmikeware@gmail.com

Susan J. Creed, Minister of Christian Ed. —Home 610-779-0179

Office Hours: M-TH 1:30-4:00 610-856-7242

Email address: screed@dejazzd.com

Tyler Werner, Youth Ministry Leader—610-781-4004

Office Hours: TH 10:00-1:00 610-856-7242

Email address: twern9@gmail.com

Louise Wilson, Minister of Music—Phone: 610-273-3911

Email address: weeziecow2@yahoo.com

Debbie DeMarco, Parish Secretary

Home: 610-856-7386 Office: 610-856-7242

Office Hours: M-TH 9-4; Friday 9-12:00

Email address: ddemarco@dejazzd.com

Linell McCormick, Office Assistant, T & Th, 12-4

Home: 610-775-2571 Email: lmm52@aol.com

Dale Creed, Maintenance Supervisor—M-Th mornings

Robin Werner, Sexton—Phone: 610-698-0688

Email: robinbaskets@aol.com

Julia Bond, Preschool Director— Phone: 610-856-7613;

Email: preschool610@dejazzd.com

Council Officers: Chris Gerace, President

Julia Bond, Vice President

Jessica Shepherd, Secretary

Dorothy Martin, Treasurer

Kay Good, Treasurer Special Funds

Lori Sifford, Financial Secretary

Other Council Members:

Amanda Baylor

Ed Haag

Wayne Kercher

Walt Hamilton

Mike Wisniewski

Karen Kercher

Ava Gerace (youth)

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SCOUT TROOP:



DINNER

**Boy Scout Troop
543
Taco/Movie
Night
Fundraiser**

Friday, March 2, 2018 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Robeson Lutheran Church in Plowville

**Featuring Beef and Chicken Tacos or Salad
Bowls for \$2.50 each**

Rice, Beans and all the fixings included plus
drinks

Pre-Purchase of Tickets recommended but not
required

Additional tacos/bowls can be purchased this
evening as well as we will have baked goods
and popcorn for sale with the showing of Rio 2!

Feel free to bring blankets or sleeping bags to
sit on for the movie

Come out and support your local Boy Scout
troop in helping these great young men attend
many more adventurous camping trips as well
as camping gear.

Please see a scout member or contact Mandy at
hinkel.mandy@gmail.com or call/text 600-533-
8723 for tickets and/or questions.



RECYCLING OPPORTUNITIES:

HELP YOUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY:

Please bring in your used **ink cartridges** (any kind) and we will recycle them at Staples earning \$2 each for the church.

Cell phones, eyeglasses, and hearing aid batteries also continue to be collected for local ministries.

Paper Recycling Bins are located at the rear of Hoeffler Hall to accept your **newspaper, magazines, office paper, “junk” mail, and now phonebooks and cardboard (must be smashed flat)**. Please no plastic; take your paper out of the plastic bags before you throw it in the bin. Thanks for your help!

DID YOU KNOW? We have wheelchairs, potty chairs, shower chairs, canes, crutches, and walkers to loan out to anyone who might need one for a time. Please call the church office (610-856-7242) to make arrangements for pick-up of items.

OUR ONGOING FUNDRAISER:

REDNER'S RECEIPTS. We continue to collect Redner's receipts as an ongoing fundraiser. We have just received another check for \$188.73 bringing the total this year to \$939.86. Marion would like to thank everyone who participates and remind you to always use your gas card when making a purchase at Redners.

Receipts without the gas card number printed on them are invalid and will not be accepted by the store. If you don't yet have a card just ask for one—it's free!

COMMUNITY NEWS:

BREAKFASTS: Geigertown Fire Company—First Sunday; Brecknock Fire Company—Second Sunday; Joanna Furnace—Third Saturday, 7-11 a.m.

FEBRUARY SERVICES & EVENTS

Every Sunday: 9:00 SCS for 7th grade through Adults
Children's SCS is held during the worship services.

FEBRUARY 4—SOUPER BOWL & SCOUT SUNDAY

7:45 & 10:15 **Holy Communion**

Our Youth Group, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts will be holding soup kettles to collect money for the hungry in our community following the worship service on this day. They will also hold a soup lunch fundraiser following the 10:15 service. You will receive soup, bread, dessert and a drink for \$7. All proceeds will go to the local food banks. Please plan to attend.

FEBRUARY 11—7:45 & 10:15 Transfiguration of Our Lord;

Holy Communion

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING will be held following the 10:15 a.m. service. Please plan to attend. Annual reports will be ready for pick-up by Sunday, February 4th in preparation for the meeting. Thank you!

FEBRUARY 14—3:00 & 7:00 Ash Wednesday Services

Optional imposition of ashes

FEBRUARY 18—7:45 & 10:15 Worship; 9:00 SCS

FEBRUARY 25— 7:45 & 10:15 Worship; **Praise Service** with Laudate Praise Team; Joyful Noise Offering for Still Waters Counseling.

LENTEN SERVICES: Beginning February 21, **Lenten Supper** in Hoeffler Hall at 6:00 p.m. (**please bring a dessert to share**) followed by the **Lenten Service** at 7:00 p.m., a discussion series in Hoeffler Hall.

Feb. 21: 6:00 p.m. – Supper provided by Outreach & Staff
7:00 p.m. – Worship and Discussion in Hoeffler Hall
Feb. 22: 6:00 p.m. – Supper provided by Music Dept.
7:00 p.m. – Worship and Discussion in Hoeffler Hall

Please take some time and read the following – it is the 1st Amendment of our U.S. Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

As you may have noticed there is nothing in this text that forbids any religious person from speaking about political matters. In fact it actually opens up all sorts of free speech. As it says though, it does prevent the Congress from establishing any one religion as the religion of the United States. This is why it is a massive misnomer to claim America as a “Christian Nation” because it simply cannot be defined by religion as per the Constitution. You are welcome to freely debate if Christians make up the majority of the United States, but nevertheless Christianity is not THE religion of the United States – in the same way that English, while it may be our primary language, is not the Established language of the United States (feel free to look this up!)

By the way, the phrase separation of church and state actually comes from President Thomas Jefferson who on January 1, 1802, wrote a letter to the Baptists of Danbury, Connecticut, offering clarification about the meaning of the First Amendment to the Constitution. Jefferson described the Establishment Clause of First Amendment by writing, “I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof, **thus building a wall of separation between church and state.**”

Question 2 – But isn’t there some amendment that forbids non-profit organizations like churches from talking politics?

Yes, sort of. What you may be thinking of is the



MINISTRIES AVAILABLE TO OUR SENIORS, SHUT-INS, SICK, ETC.:

CD Ministry—CD’s of the weekly services are being mailed out to all those senior, sick or and shut-in members who cannot attend church services.

Large Print Devotionals—these are the same as our small, daily devotionals but have larger print for those needing it.

Prayer Shawls—These are available for sick, hospitalized, shut-in or senior members who would like one. They are very comforting to those who have received them. Recipients do not need to be a member of Robeson so please take them for others who would like them.

Robeson Hammers—Helping members in need with minor repairs at home, mainly small projects that would make their homes safer or more comfortable.

Home Visits—Our visitation team now trained to bring Holy Communion is visiting a number of our seniors and shut-ins and would be more than happy to visit others if invited. It is our hope to visit with and bring Holy Communion to each shut-in and homebound member of Robeson up to 6 times a year. If you would like a visit, and have not yet been visited by a member of our team, please feel free to contact Pastor Michael or call the church office 610-856-7242.)

If you have a need or request for any of the above ministries, please call the church office and we will be happy to help you.

The **Berks County Area Agency on Aging** is available to help you over the phone. Please call their office at 610-478-6500 and a staff member will be able to explain available services, answer questions and provide information on programs and community resources for you, family members or anyone you know who is 60 years of age and older. Please don’t hesitate to give them a call.

Men's Group

MEN'S
BREAKFAST



The men of Robeson Lutheran Church continue to meet for breakfast and fellowship on the second Saturday of each month at 7:30 a.m. (usually here in Hoeffler Hall). This is a great opportunity to get to know your brothers in Christ and learn more about your faith through brief bible study and mutual conversation. Come and see how the men of Robeson live out their discipleship. The next Men's Breakfast is scheduled for **February 10 at 7:30 a.m. in Hoeffler Hall.**

Robeson Robins Senior Group

The Robeson Robins will hold their monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 20 beginning with a covered dish luncheon at 12:00 noon followed by a program about Valentine History presented by Pastor Michael.



The Robins always welcome new members so if you are 50 or over and able to attend Tuesday meetings/trips once a month please consider joining the group. Programs and trips are planned by the Robeson Robins Board. There are several openings on the board at the present. Call Billie at 610-401-8496 if you would like more information about serving on the board or joining the Robeson Robins.

QUILT TILL YOU WILT every first Saturday of the month from 9-2. If you like to “quilt” which includes cutting, sewing, and knotting, (no experience necessary) then maybe Quilt Till You Wilt is for you. More sewers, quilters, knotters are always welcome. If you would like to try this art, please feel free to join the group on the first Saturday in Hoeffler Hall, or call Cindy Stewart for more information (610-856-7041).



QUILTING GROUP

Johnson Amendment; which is a provision in the U.S. tax code, since 1954, that prohibits all 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates. The amendment is named after Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, who introduced a preliminary draft of the law in July 1954.

You may note that the issue here deals with endorsing of opposing political candidates, and this is why many churches (and their pastors) will not tell their people who they should vote for, but instead seek to offer a balanced and informative perspective from all sides during election season.

Unfortunately because this is a Tax Code issue, and the IRS has done very little to enforce it, there are plenty of pastors, churches, and especially TV ministry personalities who shamelessly tell folks who they must vote for on a regular basis whenever an election is near.

I personally consider this very unprofessional and can state that I have never used the pulpit as a platform to demand votes for any politician or their party. I wholly support and respect the Johnson Amendment and that is also why you will never see a political party (or candidates) sign on the parsonage lawn, nor would I desire any such signage as such to be on the church property.

Question 3 – But isn't it wrong or at the very least a possible abuse of the pastoral office to talk politics from the pulpit?

That is a fantastic, well thought out, and complicated question, and I can't wait to address it more thoroughly in March's Digest. I Promise!

Your brother in Christ,
PASTOR MICHAEL

YOUTH NEWS:

The Senior Youth continue to hold fundraisers to help cover costs for their 2018 Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas. The youth continue to have Weaver's coupons for sale for \$5 for a small sandwich of your choice, and also GIANT Gift Cards in different amounts.

The next big fundraiser to benefit the youth and our pre-school, will be the Spaghetti Dinner/Valentine's Dance to be held on February 10th. You won't want to miss this Youth/Preschool Fundraiser! (more information on page 7) Contact Tyler at twern9@gmail.com to support fundraisers.

The West Berks Mission District Youth Event will be held here at Robeson Lutheran on Saturday, February 24! Contact Tyler if you plan to attend or would like to help with the event.



**WBMD 2018 Youth Event
Calling All Youth
in Grades 5-12!
Saturday, February 24
10 AM to 8 PM
Hosted by Robeson Lutheran**

We are trying a **one-day event** this year. The day will include games such as:

**Human Hungry, Hungry Hippos; LaserTag;
and more...**

You will also have the opportunity to participate in several workshops, Bible Study, and the "Party in a Bag" service project. The evening will end with a worship service featuring our guest musicians: **LAUDATE**

The event will include lunch, a snack and dinner. Cost for the event is **\$20** plus a small, unwrapped child's birthday gift that can be included in our Party Bags.

Deadline for registration is February 12th! See Tyler!

THIS AND THAT AT ROBESON LUTHERAN:



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!! We have posted volunteer sheets on the bulletin board in the new foyer. If you are willing to help during any of the worship services please sign up on this board. There are lists for acolytes, lectors, ushers, greeters, sound technicians, worship assistants, and communion servers. We appreciate and need our volunteers!

ALTAR GUILD: Altar care volunteers are always needed. If you are willing to serve on altar care for a month with at least one other volunteer please call Marion Kachel (610-856-1683) or the church office.

REMINDERS:

Committee reports are due in the church office on the first Thursday of the month for the council meeting which will be held on the 2nd Thursday.

All Property concerns and requests should be brought to the attention of Dale Creed or the church office. Please do not take concerns directly to the Property Committee. Thanks for your help with this.

PARISH DIGEST DEADLINE: Articles for the March newsletter are due in the office by February 15.

ALTAR FLOWERS and BULLETIN SPONSORS: Please check with Linell in the church office for any openings. Reminder: **Altar flowers cost is now \$38** and bulletins are \$25.

IMPORTANT:

- Any group or individual sponsoring special projects, collections, etc. please contact Bill Haney (Social Ministry) for coordination purposes and Debbie at the church office for advertising these events and projects.
- Any committee or group that has events etc. to advertise in the area papers should please copy to Linell at lmrm52@aol.com.



LEAVING A LEGACY THAT GOES BEYOND DEATH

When we recall the names of the faithful who have died, our minds are often filled with precious memories. In our thoughts we are reminded that we are their legacy, that is to say, much of what we have – in both material and non-material things – has been handed down to us from them. But what will we hand down to those who follow? How will we be remembered by those who come after us? Will we leave more than an empty spot in a pew?

As you plan for the distribution of your assets at your death, please consider a charitable bequest to Robeson Lutheran Church. This is one way your faith can be transferred to the next generation. This, and other types of planned gifts, can undergird our congregation's ministry in perpetuity, providing resources that will allow future generations of Christians to worship, serve others, and continue the vital ministries of this church.

If you have questions about planned giving, you can talk to your personal financial advisor or speak to our congregational Thrivent representative John Lauer at his Morgantown office (610)-286-5986.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS: Our thanks to those members/friends of the congregation who have designated Robeson Lutheran Church as the charity of choice for their Thrivent Choice Dollars. If you have received a letter from Thrivent indicating that you are eligible for this plan, please consider our congregation as you help direct Thrivent Financial's charitable funds.

PRESCHOOL FUNDRAISING:

Here is an opportunity to participate in and earn CASH for our preschool from the **Giant A+ School Rewards program**. Visit www.giantfoodstores.com and select Savings and Rewards. Create your online account. You will need your 11 digit BonusCard number and the School ID# 26822. Support our youth by buying gift cards and then designate your school rewards to our preschool! Thank you!!!

Do It Local, an online coupon membership, is now available. Purchase your \$25 membership (\$15 goes to our preschool) and complete registration online at www.doitLOCALapp.com using fundraiser key 9F598676. Questions? Call 610-856-7613.



Spaghetti

Dinner & Dance

To Benefit Robeson's Preschool & Youth Group
Saturday, February 10, 6-9 p.m.

in Hoeffler Hall

(snow date is Saturday, February 17)

All ages are invited to come out and enjoy a nice dinner followed by music provided by our very own DJ and Youth Leader Tyler Werner!

All you can eat Spaghetti Dinner, Desserts, and Drinks
Basket Raffle

Opportunities to win prizes during the night

Donation: \$10 adults; \$5 children 12 and under,
3 and under are free. (\$30 cap per family)
Tickets are available from Tyler, or in the
preschool and church offices.



Dear Friends at Robeson Church,
Thank you all very much for the beautiful birthday and Christmas cards I received.

They were greatly appreciated and I enjoyed each one of them. It means a lot to me that people think of me and

take the time to visit me at Country Meadows and send me cards.

Thanks again,
Bill Moore

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who supported the Breakfast With Santa which was held on Sat. Dec. 16th & also on Sun. Dec. 17th following the Christmas Cantata. Because of your generous support, we were able to raise \$500 toward our 2018 Relay For Life team goal. This will be the 3rd year that TeAmy is participating in the Daniel Boone Relay For Life. In 2016 & 2017 we were one of the Gold Teams who proudly raised over \$5,000 toward fighting cancer and finding cures for cancer. We are hoping to do the same this year. The 2018 Daniel Boone Relay For Life will be held on May 19th at Daniel Boone High School. I encourage you to go online and sign up to join TeAmy but, whether you are a team member or not, everyone is welcome to stop in on Relay day and walk a lap or two with my "TeAmy" family! Participating in Relay For Life is a positive way to help in the fight against cancer and also a wonderful way to remember loved ones lost to cancer, to honor all cancer survivors, and to recognize the commitment of caregivers. The special ceremonies and events at Relay are all very uplifting!

Again, thank you for supporting our breakfast and hope to see you at Relay!

Amy Kunkel & TeAmy

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Income for December:	\$ 20,514.98
Other Income:	\$ 1,282.66 (in/out)
Checks issued for December:	\$ 35,804.38
Checking balance brought forth:	\$ 129.03
Transferred from Special Funds	\$ 15,000.00
Checking balance as of 12/31/17	\$ 762.29
Unpaid Bills:	none
I/O Accounts:	\$0.00

Respectfully submitted, Dorothy Martin, Treasurer

SPECIAL FUNDS REPORT:

Income:	
Donations received in December	\$ 945.00
Outflow:	
Organ & Music Fund (repair piano)	\$ 1072.00
Charitable outreach	\$ 125.00
Checking Account balance 12/31/17	\$23,431.92

-Kay Good, Treas. Spec. Funds

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE SIGNED UP FOR E-GIVING. We would like to remind those who are using E-giving that you now have the option to enter 999 to keep your giving going indefinitely until you choose to stop giving.

E-giving is an ongoing service offered here at Robeson Lutheran. You can sign up on our church website at www.robesonlutheranchurch.org and look for the "Donate Now" button. Thank you for considering this giving opportunity that allows you to be good stewards of God's gifts even when you are unable to attend services.

Robeson Lutheran Church,
 We would like to take this opportunity to thank all for helping keep the magic of Christmas alive for our 3 beautiful children. Our family was turned upside down a year ago when we lost a 9 year old daughter who went to bed a happy healthy little girl never to awake the next morning. As you can imagine our family has been devastated and it has been a very difficult year for us all. Through it all we have tried to keep some sort of "normality" for our other children and thanks to your generosity we were able to provide Christmas for our children. We would like to thank all of you for helping make this happen. We are so very grateful and appreciate it more than words could ever say. God bless you all!
 Jay and Jennifer

THINK AHEAD: How can you help organize a fund-raising event and receive \$250 in start up funds? It's easy if you form a **Thrivent Action Team!** If you would like more information about forming a team for a fundraiser in our church or your community please contact John Lauer (610-286-5986) or the church office (610-856-7242).

BAD WEATHER INFORMATION:

Please see that we have your email address so that when possible, we can send out an email blast to alert members of cancellations.

Also, please tune in to channel 69 (WFMZ-TV) and channel 8 (WGAL) if you have questions about our schedule when the weather is bad.

If roads in your area are hazardous please use your own judgment and **do not risk your life** trying to get to church. Thank you.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR A PIANO PLAYER! If you play the piano or know someone who does and would be willing to substitute for Louise when she is ill or on vacation, please call the church office. This is a paid position and you would be put on a list of substitutes and called when needed. Thanks for your consideration.

Hi Robeson Church Family,
 After a rough seven weeks in and out of the hospital and rehab I am back home.
 I would like to thank all of you for your generosity. We appreciate you more than words can say. We couldn't do this with out love, support and the power of prayer from everyone.
 Wishing a happy and healthy 2018 to all.
 Thank you,
 Jeannie & Doug

Merry Christmas to all at Robeson Lutheran.
 Thank you so much for all the cards. It means a lot to be remembered. - Mim Spence

Christmas blessings. Thanks to all that send that beautiful Christmas card. I was overwhelmed to know that so many people remembered me! I wish you all the best, a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I hope to see you in 2018 but remain in therapy at the Oarland Recovery Center in Oarland, NJ. -Robert N. Johnson

To My Family at Robeson Lutheran Church,
 Thank you for the Christmas card. God truly blesses me. I am happy to be a part of your family.
 Sincerely, Yvonne O.

Charlotte O'Neill would like to thank everyone who touched her life this Christmas. She is so appreciative of the cards, flowers, gifts, and especially the prayers and visits from all of you. She wishes to extend a special thank you to the members of the Praise Team who provided the concert at Mifflin Court, and the carolers who took the time to sing to Charlotte and other residents there. Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2018 from Charlotte.

MORE WORDS OF THANKS....

Dear Friends at Robeson Lutheran,

Thanks so much for the cards and carolers.

-Roger and Joyce Mauchline

The Mauchlines also included their Christmas letter which I hope you enjoy as much as I did when I read it.

December 2017

A Christmas Letter

Dear _____

We wanted to tell you about all the wonderful and exciting things that we have been doing since last year: So.....?.....??.....?.....?.....?.....? Whoops, seems like I am having a “senior moment” and can’t remember any of them! As you can see, I left a space in case I remember them before this letter is mailed. I’ll just have to tell you about what I do remember.

Well there are pills three times a day, eye drops three times a day, four nighttime events. Never a time that something doesn’t ache a little (or a lot). Innumerable visits to doctors and blood labs. You get tired and just want to nap all the time. Nothing tastes like it did at 16, 36, or even 56. Difficult to see at night. A sore throat probably means that you have cancer. A missed heartbeat could mean the heart is trying to quit.

In addition, hardly anyone talks loudly or plain enough. Most kids talk some strange language and they talk it fast. No kind of entertainment thrills us. We hate computers (but less than smart phones). Then there are all those people who want to fix my computer for me. No one “likes” us and I’m not sure we care. We don’t work. We don’t do much socially useful. We are seemingly almost irrelevant, using up government financial resources at an appreciable rate via Social Security and Medicare.

Is this a bad life. Nope! As I remember life always had its challenges and struggles even when we mostly caused our own. But we had moments and times of happiness, or peace, or satisfaction, or hopes for the future and this kept us going. We still do. When the doctor slapped our bottom and we began to breathe, we had a big assumption: life was worth living and there was a purpose why we were her. No reason to give up on that assumption yet.

We have beautiful sunshine more days than not and we never get sunburned. We have the nourishing rain and it seldom interferes with our plans. We have the beautiful transforming snow (and someone else is shoveling it). We have a warm home. We have scrumptious meals, tenderly prepared by personal chefs. We have excellent medical care often given compassionately. We have pets that depend on us. We have family and friends that care for us. We have time to look at each other and think how lucky we are.

And then, we are BIG spectator fans. We are rooting for our teams every day and excited about their next “game.” Not the Eagles or the Nittany Lions or the Raiders. Our teams are the Mauchline teams, the Kroener teams, the Rowley team, the Robeson Church team, the Prison Fellowship team, the Salvation Army team, and innumerable other wonderful teams working to keep or make the world a good place to be. We are thrilled when they win and they always do when they play right.

This brings us to Christmas. The birth of a man who said that he represented God and was believable to many. He demonstrated God’s love to his people, but they could not fully accept or understand it. He died of a broken heart. God raised him from the dead to show us that his love cannot be defeated. Now therein are our plans for the future. So Merry Christmas everyone! Roger and Joyce

We also received very nice thank you cards from two of the families who were recipients of our angel tree gifts. One family expressed their thanks for our help. The other family included this touching note: