

ELMIRA
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2013



FROM THE PASTOR'S CORNER

Should We Celebrate Christmas?

I have been asked more than once in my life if I believe Adventist Christians should be celebrating the Christmas holiday as done by the rest of the western world. In one sense, as I look at the obsessive consumerism that takes place in relation to Christmas – stores filled with intense shoppers, some of them sleeping overnight in the parking lots so they can be the first to get a great bargain on some gadget; advertisements overwhelming our senses, whether on the radio, the television, in our newspapers; our whole culture seemingly given over to the "Santa Claus" version of Christmas – in this sense I'm personally ready to scrap the whole notion of Christmas and just hunker down for the winter. That's because much of our culture has stolen from us the original meaning of Christmas.

Christmas was originally intended to celebrate the truth of the birth of the baby Jesus into this world so that we sinners could be saved for eternity. While it's true that we don't know for certain when Christ was actually born, we do know that He was born, and for that we should be happy all the year.

Some are quick to point out the pagan origins of many of the Christmas trappings, such as the Christmas tree, holly bows, yule lights, etc. My response to this is found in the Bible, in 1 Corinthians 8:4, where it says, "we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other god but One."

Paul here was addressing the controversial issue of Christians eating food that had been previously presented before an idol as a way of having the "god" represented by that idol bless that food. Paul's answer to the people concerned over this was basically; If yours or another's conscience is bothered by eating food sacrificed to idols, then don't do it; otherwise, don't make it a moral issue. As I apply this principle to the celebration of Christmas, my position is that I celebrate it as an American holiday – not a holy day – as in some churches. It is a time to be with family, to share love gifts, and, above all, to remember that Jesus loved me so much He came to this world to redeem me from my sins.

So I try to keep a balanced view of the issue. I don't like Santa Claus. I have little use for Frosty the Snowman, or even the Grinch that Stole Christmas.

I do, however, enjoy the beautiful Christmas decorations that brighten my home that time of year, and the fact that my children will – Lord willing – be home to share this joyous time with us.

May you have a wonderful holiday, and may the Lord Who was born – whenever that was – be the Lord of your whole year.

Pastor Kevin

CHURCH NEWS



SOUTHERN TIER DISTRICT TOWN HALL MEETING

Sabbath December 14, 5:00 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. New York Conference personnel: Elder Angel Rodriguez, President and Elder Elias Zabala, Treasurer, will be leading out.

Agenda

Welcome	Secretary/Treasurer's Report
Devotional	Recommendations to the Constituency
President's Report	Season of Prayer

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study is held Tuesday evenings, 6:30 p.m. at the church. Note time change.



HOLIDAY HYMN SING



Mac Dwyer will be leading out in a holiday hymn sing Sabbath, December 14 during the worship service.

COMMUNION SERVICE



As we close the year and look forward to the new one, Sabbath, December 28 will be our service of foot washing and the Lord's Supper. *Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour. It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence....All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed.* The Desire of Ages, p. 656.

The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love. Fundamental Beliefs, 15.

CONGRATULATIONS!



...to Alexa Stanton who was inducted into the National Honor Society November 7 at Southside High School.



IN MEMORY



We extend our sympathy to the family of Harold Washburn, Sr. Who passed away November 7 at the age of 98.

VISIT A SHUT-IN



Let us remember to send a card or letter, or stop by and visit our sick and shut-in members, not only in this holiday season, but throughout the whole year: Doris Burgess, Alice Congdon, Bill Kaiser, Frances McMillen, Lorraine Parker, and Doris Stewart.

FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEONS



Luncheons continue the first and third Sabbaths of each month. The first Sabbath is Soup and Sandwiches and the third Sabbath is a regular luncheon. All are invited to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please bring a dish to pass.

HOLIDAY DINNER

Our luncheon for Sabbath, December 21, will be a planned meal. Bring whatever you did for Harvest Sabbath or call Joan Van Galder, 732-8775, if you wish to change.

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE



The next drive is scheduled for Tuesday, January 07, 2014, 1:30 – 6:30 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. Donation Types: Double Red Cell and Whole Blood. To make an appointment, call 1-800-RED CROSS. (1-800-733-2767)

BAPTISM

It was a very special occasion when Carlos Bautista Pablo and Berlina Santiago Ortiz entered the waters of baptism, Sabbath, October 26. They have been studying with Bible worker, Michael Belknap. They were baptized by Elder Kevin Dunn.

CONGRATULATIONS!

. . . to Carlos Bautista Pablo and Berlina Santiago Ortiz, who were married October 27. Pastor Kevin Dunn officiated at the ceremony, with Michael Belknap translating. The ceremony was followed by a reception at the church. We extend our best wishes and pray for God's blessings in their new life together.



LAY TRAINING INSTITUTE

The New York Conference Lay Training Institute will be held in Auburn, February 7-9.

Check out our Church website at: www.elmirasda.com

Downloadable sermons are available at this site.



LABELS AND BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION



Please continue to save your General Mills Boxtops and Campbell's UPC symbols for the Holbrook SDA Indian School in Arizona. Boxtops and UPC symbols can be given to Joyce Cmelko. Thank you for your help.

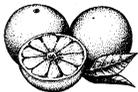
PRAYER LIST

Doris Burgess
Alice Congdon
Bill Kaiser
Frances Mc Millen
Lorraine Parker
Linda Probst



Alta Raymond
Doris Stewart
Harold Washburn, Jr.
Ongoing Bible Studies
Our Shut-ins

If you have someone to be added to our prayer list, please let us know.



CITRUS FRUIT SALE

Fruit shipments are scheduled for December 15, January 19, February 16, and March 16, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 P.M. in the Nature's Garden building. Oranges and Pink Grapefruit are available by the full case, half, or quarter. To order fruit or to offer your help, contact Malcolm Dwyer, 739-7748.

Pathfinders will hold a Bake Sale each month during our Fruit Sales. Our customers always look forward to your baked goods, especially during the holiday season. Thank you for your support.



SABBATH SCHOOL



Our Adult Sabbath School lessons during the first quarter of 2014 will be entitled *Discipleship*. "We will look at discipleship as the process by which we become followers of Jesus and, as such, become better soul winners." Adult Bible Study Guide, p. 112. All are encouraged to study daily and join in for our class discussion on Sabbath morning.

Please join us each Sabbath morning. Song service begins at 9:20. Classes are provided for adults and children.



Mission DVDs are shown each month.

INVESTMENT



Thank you for saving your newspapers, magazines, cans and bottles, and health food labels for Investment. See Alvin Jackson, our Investment leader, to donate magazines and newspapers. Please be sure the UPC symbol is on the food labels. Labels that are accepted are Worthington, Loma Linda, Morningstar Farms, Morningstar Farms Organic, and Natural Touch. Labels not accepted are: Cedar Lake and Vibrant Life.

NATURE'S GARDEN STORE HOURS

Thursday, 4:00-6:00 p.m., OR by appointment,
Call Larry Taft – 732-0463, Or Mac Dwyer – 739-7748.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE – January 20 – CONTACT Sharon and Jim Reynolds at 734-1560 with newsletter information. You may also send your articles to: 813 Maple Avenue, Elmira, NY 14904 or e-mail us at: shareyn@gmail.com





*Heaven and earth are no wider apart today
than when shepherds listened to the angel's song.
Humanity is still as much the object of heaven's solicitude
as when common men of common occupations
met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers
in the vineyards and the fields.
To us in the common walks of life,
heaven may be very near.
Angels from the courts above will attend the steps
of those who come and go at God's command.
The Desire of Ages, p. 48*





For unto us a Child is born,
unto us a Son is given:
and the government shall be upon His shoulder:
and His name shall be called
Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God,
The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6

Elmira Seventh-day Adventist Church
c/o Jim & Sharon Reynolds
813 Maple Avenue
Elmira, NY 14904



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED