



INFO



Words From The Path.

By Pastor Ben Murphy

THE COLORS OF CHRISTMAS

I read an article this morning in the *Kingsport Times* (Kingsport, Tennessee) about Christmas lights. The writer said that many years ago his family's tradition was to load up in the car and set out into the community to see how folks had decorated their homes for Christmas.

This brought back memories from childhood when my family did the same thing. It was a major event for us back in the 50's. Dad would load us up in the station wagon and we would set out to see the lights. We knew the parts of town that would be the best decorated and always went to those places first. But it made little difference to us who had the most influential home or the most elaborate decorations. We just enjoyed the sights and sounds of Christmas.

I think my favorite part of the whole experience was seeing the many different color schemes employed by the different families. Some had all red lights on their tree. Some had all blue, some all white, some all green. Some had solid white trees and some had alummmm; alooomm, (I never could say aluminum much less spell it. Thank you Spell Check!) Some had 8 foot ceilings and 16 foot trees, so they would cut off the top and put it up on the roof giving the illusion that the tree was going right through the ceiling and roof!

Then there were those wooden sleighs and reindeer and Santa's, expertly carved in some dad's wood shop or garage and painstakingly placed in the yard complete with outdoor music playing "Deck the Halls or Joy To The World!"

There were also many decorations in the store windows and on the lawn of the Frankfort Public Library and The City Hall. Back then, many churches would even have live nativity scenes. I recall being in a few of those at my home church. My favorite memories include the one where our church had some live sheep and a live donkey in the manger setting. My cousin, (twice removed) Chucky Seagle was portraying a shepherd or a wise man and got into the stall with the donkey and proceeded to set upon it. Chuckey was a tall lad of about 6'4 at that time and his feet drug the ground by about 10 inches! I remember thinking, "No wonder Joseph didn't have two donkeys. His feet would have drug the ground!"

I also recall playing the angel one year. It didn't matter about the gender of the angel, because the costume disguised the body so fully that no one could tell. I stood upon the roof of the manger. I was about 12 or 13 at the time. I know that year we had two persons for each role in the nativity due to the unusually cold winter that we were having. Every half hour or so, we would 'switch out'! One group would

go into the church and drink hot chocolate and warm themselves while the second shift would be in action. And oh yea, we were in action. We didn't just stand statuesque. We moved around, partly for effect, and partly for warmth. I can also recall how this angel bit sure beat the daylights out of those "one liner's" and those fake shepherd beards in the dreaded children's plays from long, long ago! (See last month's Newsletter for more on this.)

And speaking of lights, I think my hometown is one of the very best at having awesome light displays at Christmas. For nearly two decades, Tim "Timbo" Murphy, (no relation, but a good friend in our high school days) an art teacher in the high school, had convinced his neighbors to block off several streets and all go together for some very elaborate lighting displays. It all started in Tim's yard. He - with some help from his art students - designed some cartoon characters for his yard. It caught on with the neighbors, and for 17 years, *Candy Cane Lane* has been a great seasonal attraction. In fact, the state of Illinois in 2006 recognized *Candy Cane Lane* as a state tourist attraction. People literally come from coast to coast and from around the world to witness it. It is estimated that there are well over 5 million lights that create one of the

Cont'd on page 3

Newsletter

Articles or information to be published in the Newsletter are due by the third Sunday of the month. Please submit to the church office.

Singers and Musicians

If you are on the monthly music schedule to sing and find you cannot do so, it is your responsibility to find a replacement. Please notify the church office of such a change. Our thanks to each of you who serve.

—The Ministries & Programming Council

When There Is A Death In The Family

If there is a death in your immediate family, (Parent, Sibling, Spouse, Child,) or in the family of a church member, please notify a member of the Benevolence Committee (listed below) so the church may send flowers and for food preparation when applicable.

—The Benevolence Committee

Mona Orr—Chair

Phyllis Belcher

Sue Ellen Fleming

Diania Murphy

And the Winner is...

The Sunday School winner for the month of November was Will Hayes!!

Congratulations Will !



Bible Quiz



In Revelation 22:16, Jesus says: "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of _____, the bright morning star."

Choose the correct name from the list below:

- A. Isaac
- B. Jacob
- C. David
- D. Solomon

Answer: C

A Winning Pattern for the New Year

Some anonymous wise person penned the following directions for living without bringing pain to others or oneself:

"You will never be sorry — for thinking before acting, for hearing before judging, for forgiving your enemies, for being candid and frank, for helping a fallen brother, for being honest in business, for thinking before speaking, for being loyal to God and the church, for standing by your principles, for refusing to participate in gossip, for holding your words when tempted to demean another, for not entertaining impure or hateful thoughts, for sympathizing with the afflicted, for being courteous and kind to all."



Cont'd from page 1

most spectacular Christmas displays that most people will ever see. Compare that to Bristol Motor Speedway's *Speedway In Light's* that boasts over 1.5 million lights, and you get the picture. It is a really big deal in West Frankfort. It's great for the economy, I'm sure, but it is even greater for the spirit of Christmas. I'm not really sure how long that event lasts, but when I was home for Thanksgiving, it looked as if they were already displaying it and getting people into the spirit!

Well, where did all this "light" business come from? We know they had no electrical lighting at the manger when Jesus was born. What is the purpose?

The tradition of using small candles to light up the Christmas tree dates back to at least the middle of the XVIIIth century. However, it took two centuries for the tradition to become widely established first in Germany and soon spreading to Eastern Europe. Candles for the tree were glued with melted wax to a tree branch or attached by pins. Around 1890, candleholders were first used for Christmas candles. Between 1902 and 1914, small lanterns and glass balls to hold the candles started to be used. Eventually, the tree was brought into the home, and someone got the "bright idea" to place the candles on the tree for display.

Christmas 2009 was truly a wonderful experience for each of us. The Church was so beautifully adorned again this year. We had been so used to the poinsettia tree for so many years, and it did add much color, but this year there was the "C" word. (Change) Phyllis Belcher and crew decided to display a beautiful nativity setting and I think it and the large trees were a wonderful change.

And oh those productions. The children again, outdid themselves. I vote right now to have the choir cantata first from now on. Those kids put too much pressure on us. "The Best Christmas Present Ever" and the Choir singing "The Wonders of His Love" was truly gigantic productions of value. We were all moved closer to the Christ Child through these works. Thanks to all who helped.

I look forward already to Easter and then to next year's Christmas lights and plays and Cantata's. The colors of Christmas just made everything beautiful and warm. And most of all, Jesus was so wonderfully celebrated. As the two young girls sang in the production, "Happy birthday Jesus. Jesus we love you!" Have a Happy New Year and remember to *stay on the path with Jesus in 2010.*



Just a few of the many scenes of beauty from *Candy Cane Lane*, West Frankfort, Illinois.

First Church of God

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We're on the web

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January

This Month:

- 5 WCG Meeting
- 6 Ministry & Programming
- 13 Finance Council Meeting
- 20 Christian Ed. Council Meeting
- 31 "Two Cup of Joy"

Feb.

Pastor's Wife Appreciation Month

- 2 WCG
- 3 Ministry & Programming
- 10 Finance Council
- 14 Pastor's Wife Appreciation Day

2010

"A coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous."

First Church of God

Sunday:

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| Sunday School | 10:00 a.m. |
| Worship Service | 11:00 a.m. |

Wednesday:

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| Adventure Club Choir | 6:30 p.m. |
| Mid-Week Bible Study | 7:00 p.m. |
| Adventure Club | 7:00 p.m. |
| Youth Meetings | 7:00 p.m. |