

## Home for the Holidays

Rev. Deborah Shepperson Smith

No matter what your family size or ethnicity the one thing that we can all relate to are our memories of Christmas at home with mom and dad. Whether your family hung stockings on the mantle of your fake fireplace or your dad did brown paper bags filled with fruit, nuts and candies with your name written on the front believe it or not there was no place like home.



Our son left home after college and eventually joined the Navy a few years after that. So if you can imagine it has been 10 years that he has traveled around the country and all over the world serving our country. Occasionally he has shared a couple of days with us but we are blessed that this year he is on the East Coast in training for a few months not far away. So this holiday season will be a very special one, for our son will be home for one of the two most significant holidays.

Whether your child is age 2 or 52, or perhaps another loved one is away at college, fighting abroad, giving aide and assistance through Peace Corps or traveling the globe on self-enrichment we somehow feel incomplete without them. Home is the safe place of acceptance and a place to rest our weary bones at the end of the day. And yes we also remember fighting over the last piece of cake or arguing over who mom or dad loved the most... but there is no place like home.

As we remember with gratitude the much or the little that may have been under the Christmas tree or at the Thanksgiving table, we thank God for us being together saying grace and saying thank you for the gifts we received over the years. SO we are asking you this holiday season to give back to others that they may have warm memories of a time when a stranger or a friend sent love through the form of a gift to a family who may not have anything to look forward to.

This is our 20<sup>th</sup> year doing our Secret Santa Project. Way back in 1996 a small group of women started a church project to help people in the congregation who were struggling with small children and assisted them with gifts for their children that Christmas. It has been the mission of Angel Wings Ministries to expand and serve others in the community who may need a little assistance. We are a group of believers from all over, all colors, all shapes and beliefs who find it a privilege to bring joy to others. The spirit of Christ lives on and in each of us. You can help us by:

### Mission Statement

Angel Wings Ministries, Inc. is an interfaith spiritually-based outreach program dedicated to support children, individuals and families from crisis to wholeness.

*Educate..... Serve..... Inspire*

### Vision Statement

We envision an interfaith community where families and stakeholders work together to empower *all* to wholeness

- making a donation of money, gifts or toys
- make a donation of a week's worth of groceries
- adopting a child(ren) for Christmas (taking a child's name and providing clothes and toys)
- doing a bulk purchase of basketballs, footballs, dolls, games etc.
- sorting and wrapping at our annual "Elf Day" on Thursday, December 15, 2016 from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm.
- be a DELIVERY ELF. Helping to deliver gifts to our Secret Santa families who may not have transportation

Let's make HOME for THE HOLIDAYS a special treasured memory.  
BLESS A FAMILY for Christmas!

## Christmas Day

(reprinted from Daily Inspiration FOR BETTER LIVING)  
November/December issue 2016)

The nativity story is a metaphor for our own spiritual birth. It is a time to celebration our awakening to spiritual Truth. We celebrate us. We celebrate all God's children.

We celebrate that we are unique expressions of God. We celebrate our freedom as children of God with infinite potential. As we turn on the Christmas lights, we celebrate the Light of God shining brightly within us and through us.

The nativity story also reminds us that the will of God for us is absolute good. We have more good available to us than we can conceive. We celebrate the goodness of God on Christmas Day When there seemed to be no way, God created a way. We celebrate our Wayshower Jesus, who continues to show us the way to be the best self that God created us to be. Thank You, God!

## How Much I Love You (A Poem)

By D. Antoinette

How do I show my love?  
With smiles and kisses, cuddles and hugs!

If you ever question just how much,  
Just know, words are not enough!

You are kind and beautiful, sent from above,  
That's why it's so easy to my love.

This poem comes from the book  
"I... and other Poems, Articles, and Journal Entries"  
By D. Antoinette



# Elf Day

*(Gift Wrapping & Gift Delivery)*

Thurs., December 15, 2016

11:00 am - 6:00 pm

One God One Thought Center  
3605 Coronado Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Event Chairpersons:

Rev. Deborah S. Smith  
410-982-7647

Elaine Atlee  
410-944-2788



## Happy Thanksgiving

*Rev. Jeannette B. Gatewood-Johnson*

Happy Thanksgiving! So many of us say these words on Thanksgiving Day, but do we say them on any other day? We should, we could, and we can! Happy Thanksgiving! What does it look like to be thankful and to be thankful in all circumstances! However, we need a proper perspective of our circumstances and of God. Only then we will be able to give thanks always and in all ways to the Glory of God!

So, what makes us give up our joy and our attitude of gratitude? I believe there are at least three attitudes that steal away our gratitude. Three things that keep us from being thankful.

1. One is our pride. This is the attitude that says, "Nobody ever gave me anything, I worked hard for everything I have." For years you worked hard and "nobody helped me", but, now it is finally paying off. With this kind of attitude, we feel that we have no one to thank but ourselves.
2. Another attitude that keeps us from being thankful is a critical spirit or constant complaining. Instead of being grateful, we always find something to complain about. We develop a negative attitude and become a constant grumbler.
3. A third attitude that keeps us from being grateful is thoughtlessness. Someone once said that if the stars only came out once a year, we would stay out all night to watch them. But they are there every night and we have grown accustomed to them and take them for granted.

The remedy:

### 1. THANKSGIVING SHOULD BE EXPRESSED

One of the choruses we sing is found in Ps.100 which says, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving in your heart." And a thankful heart will endear others to us and us to others. For you see, thanksgiving is not only good for the giver but also good for the receiver. Daily, find ways to say thanks to God, to others, to yourself, and speak thanksgiving into ALL your circumstances. These circumstances are showing up to make us strong.

### 2. OUR THANKSGIVING MUST BE EXPANSIVE

- a) Include the blessings in your life - all blessings emanate from our true Source - God
- b) Include the challenges in your life - in all things, give thanks
- c) Include the benefits you are experiencing in life - Whatever may come, whatever may be, of this I am SURE, I'm forgiven and free and I will live like I believe it- It's good to be alive...

### 3. OUR THANKSGIVING IS EXPECTED

Think about it. On Thanksgiving Day, we expect everyone we meet to say "Happy Thanksgiving". I traveled to the Bahamas one Thanksgiving Day... and NOBODY said Happy Thanksgiving. It is not a holiday in their country. But still, I felt sad, I felt a little lost, I felt a little disappointed and slightly off. I expected Thanksgiving! I expected it to be said to me, I expected the turkey, I expected the dressing and cranberry sauce. I had to understand that I did not need all these things and I did not really need to hear it from others... but, rather, I needed to express it to myself, for myself, and to the Glory of being thankful.

When we express Thanksgiving, the God of our Being is praised and keeps on giving. This giving and blessing is activated by the praise in giving thanks. So, have Thanksgiving every day. God Bless and Happy Thanksgiving!



## The Gift of Giving

*William Craig*

As we look forward to the fast approaching Christmas season let us all take a moment to make sure that we have everyone within our circle covered this year. I am not talking about your circle of family members friends and associates, but I am speaking of those in your circle whom you pass on your way to work or your family's home or your friends homes. Those people in the street that are never thought about during these times that the majority of us find so enjoyable and memorable. Maybe it's the man or woman you see asking for change or holding a sign at the light. Whether you give that person change or not doesn't matter right now but during this upcoming season it will matter a lot to them.



Recently I was in a Dollar General store and was getting a few items for myself when I thought about how nice it would be to pick up a few extra items to give away to total strangers this year. It won't be anything big, it will just be me finding those around me (in my circle of travel) to help this year.

As for family and friends this year I will be still giving gifts but I'm gonna dial it back a whole lot. Of course I will look out for the kids in the family but as for the adults I will be giving creative gifts that are nice but very cost efficient. Gifts that I can make with my own hands and feel good giving them away. But I will purchase everyday personal items such as deodorants, mouthwash, toothpaste and brushes, gloves, beanie caps, socks, etc., to put into a little care package that I will be keeping with me in the car so when I see someone that is clearly in need I will give it to them.

Now don't get me wrong, I know that there are a lot of organizations that do similar things such as Angel Wings Ministries and they will still need our support again this year to continue to do the excellent job that they do every year to identify and assist those families in need during the Christmas holiday. By no means am I suggesting that you do this as a substitute for your support of Angel Wings Ministries. I am suggesting that you do it as a supplement to your support. As great an organization that Angel Wings is, they cannot reach every single person in need everywhere. They cannot see the single mom that you know that is seriously in need of help or the homeless guy on the bus stop that people totally ignore everyday or the child that plays with your child that you can clearly see needs help.

Step up and do more this year. It's time out for us adults to be waking up on Christmas day like we are kids and looking forward to what gifts we are going to get. We should all be shifting our focus to those who are truly in need this year.

On Christmas Day, Lord willing, my family will all meet together and eat a great meal and then we will watch everyone open gifts but especially the young ones in the family who will get excited over their different gifts and toys.

During this time I will also be thinking about those whom are less fortunate and pray that their day will be just a little more enjoyable this year.



## What Do You Do with Your Time?

Paulette Privott

Just a few weeks ago, I was in my swimsuit, standing ankle deep in beach water. Boy, how time passes us by. I'm glad I took pictures to remember that moment in time. What do you do to capture a significant moment? How do you remember the friends who spent time with you? Did you memorialize a special trip to some distant land? We have many options. We can create a travel log, where we record the miles, the stops, the scenery and the people we meet. We can use a personal journal where we write down our thoughts of the day and the feelings we had at a specific moment. We can take pictures. With modern technology, everyone with a smart phone can take a photo of the gathered guests at a special event. We can even take pictures of ourselves, when no one else is around. Whatever method that you choose, it very important that you do, CHOOSE, that is.



Time is one of those things that we never have enough of. We cannot control it. It gets away from us when we need it most. It will NOT stand still. We are constantly chasing it. When you are involved with other people, their time may not coincide with your time. You set a time for a meeting (or gathering), and inevitably, some one comes late, or not at all. Managing time is the greatest of all struggles. It may not always be your fault. It could be highway traffic or transportation systems that cause delay. It could be one's interpretation of it. 8 could be A.M. or P.M. Was it clear in the directions? Let's not talk about the weather because that always impacts the anticipatory meet up time.

In and around it all, it has never been ours to control. We did not decide our birthdate. Often pregnant women will respond to the question "When is your baby due?", with, "The doctor says the baby is due on \_\_\_\_\_, but the baby will come when he (or she) is

ready." In truth, it is not the baby's decision either. "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward." states Psalm 127:3. There is a higher power in control. He is in charge of all of our TIME. In fact, you should thank Him every morning when you wake up because without asking for it, He has given you another day. Every one does not get this gift. Yep, that's what it is, a GIFT. God planned for you to be born at a specific time on a special day. It is in His time, not ours. Be patient because God is intentional. So if you are in a hurry, please sit down and laugh at yourself. Romans 8:25 states "But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

What we can do in the time that we have been given is to chronicle our journey. You can record your story. It will be unique and different from anyone else's story. If we all were the same, then we would be tripping all over each other and getting in each other's way. That was not what God intended. To be a child of God, you want to be intentional and purposeful as you navigate through life's waters. Your struggle is your story, individualized and specialized. You can use all of the options at your disposal to preserve it for future generations. You may choose to share it with family members and friends as you encounter your many challenges because you will have some. You can publish it and share it with the world. You can tuck it away to be found by a future generation or two. Or you can write it down just for you and God. Whichever option you choose, remember to include your blessings, the wonderful things that have happened to you, for you and because of you.

The holidays are coming and it can be a joyous time of celebration and giving. How will you celebrate this season of Thanksgiving and the birth of Jesus the Christ? Record these moments because you are not promised tomorrow.

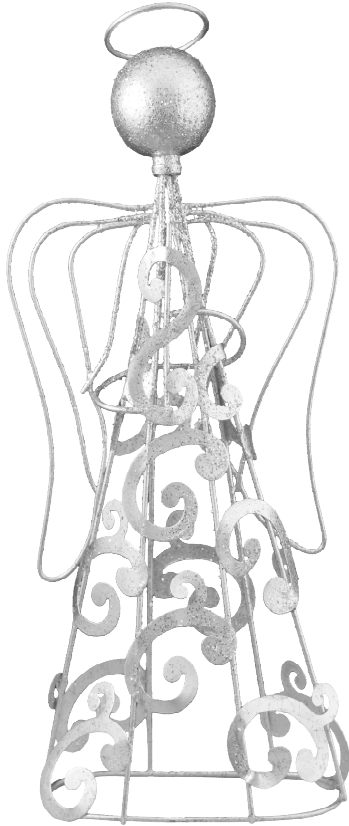




# *Angel Wings Ministries*

along with our

## *Board of Directors*



would like to take this opportunity  
to thank  
our family, friends and everyone who  
supported and participated in our 2016  
*9th Annual Crab Feast fundraiser.*  
Your ticket purchases and donations have  
helped fund our School Uniform Project  
and will help us, through our  
Secret Santa Project, give families a  
memorable holiday season.

Thank You once again for making it possible!

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