



December 2017

December is one of the most fun months of the year

The first thing we think of after Thanksgiving Day is "Christmas is just around the corner," and then commercially we are provided with what is called "black Friday." A massive shopping day not only here in the USA but many other countries. Thank goodness for the internet, the majority of the billions of dollars in sales for the three days after Thanksgiving are online Christmas shoppers, they are sitting at home doing their Christmas shopping.

Raylene and I went shopping Friday thinking it would be utter chaos, I was totally surprised. It looked like an early morning weekday. We got a lot of shopping done and was home within a few hours. My how things have changed in such a short period of time. Just a few years ago, no way I would go shopping on black Friday.

Thanksgiving is the day to slow down to a crawl and give some thought to what God has done for us. It is a day of giving thanks and showing our appreciation for all His blessings. Doing as Jesus taught us to love one another as He loved the Father and the Father loved Him.

The bible tells us in the gospel of John as Jesus was speaking to his disciples, Chapter 15: 9-14, ***9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command.***

In verse 14, Jesus called them his friends and we are his friends today if we obey His commands. This year God has really blessed His little church in Shady Shores. We are small but God uses us in a mighty way, if we follow His commands he will bless us in a mighty way as well.

Christmas will be here before we know it, as I get older the years pass really fast. It seems like just a few weeks ago I was taking down the Christmas lights. In fact some of that stuff I didn't put back in its place is still laying there where I left it. Well at least I know where it is!

Traditionally we always say “Christmas is for the children,” and as I reflect back over the years I can understand what this statement really means. When I was a child I couldn’t wait for Christmas, Popcorn balls and paper chains... fruits and nuts in our stockings ... Christmas carols by the fire...a fir tree cut in the nearby woods-that’s the Christmas most rural Appalachian children knew. We didn’t put up any lights, God provided us with His majestic galaxy of stars. If you have ever been in the backwoods at night you know what I’m talking about, it is so dark the stars seem to be w within your reach.

Family get-togethers were lots of gatherings. All my cousins were in the kitchen preparing the sledding, making snowmen or hav- up and sneak a cookie or if you my favorite Christmas treat.



fun, my grandmothers were the catalyst of the there, the men would bring their string instru- ing and singing Christmas carols, the women best meal of the year while the kids were snow ing a snowball fight. We would come in to warm were lucky a piece of peanut butter divinity, still



Christmas was special, it was the birth of Jesus Christ. Growing up in Appalachia is something that is incredibly difficult to explain. As a product of Eastern Tennessee, I have been fortunate enough to view things in a unique way that many people will never have the opportunity to do. Culturally speaking, Appalachia is extremely rich. As a community that is poor, monetarily speaking we learned to find the wealth in our land and our surroundings. As Christians and farmers, we were dependent on God. We knew without God we could do nothing. Some people don’t see it that way, they want to plan it their way without considering God or others. Every year I look forward to celebrating the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ.

What does our Bible tells us about the birth of Jesus. In [Micah 5:2-5](#), the prophet foretold that Messiah would come from the small and seemingly insignificant town of Bethlehem:

**But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past ... And he will stand to lead his flock with the LORD’s strength, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. Then his people will live**

**there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored around the world. And he will be the source of peace...**



Appalachian culture is marked by the strong belief that God is our source of peace, we were raised with pragmatic Christian views and close relationships with family. Our existence depended on those values. As Christians we were taught to love and take care of one another.

For me, those simple values and the work ethic that I learned as a child have kept me on that narrow path that leads to the gates of heaven. Matthew 7: 13-14 **<sup>13</sup>“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell<sup>[a]</sup> is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. <sup>14</sup>But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.** Those that feel more comfortable without God’s help choose the wide road.

I will take the lessons that I have learned growing up in the mountains and will use them to serve God as He has commanded. Matthew 28: 19-20 **<sup>19</sup>Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, <sup>[a]</sup>baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have you. And be sure of this; I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

I want to take this opportunity to tell all of you from my heart, I love you all, you are my brothers and sisters in Christ. I also want to wish you a joyful, peaceful and loving Christmas holiday.

Without Jesus we would not have Christmas, without God we would not have life. We thank our mighty God for giving us the choice of everlasting life through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus, who suffered and died on the cross for our sins and was resurrected on the third day. I love you father.

From the voice of one who loves Jesus. Merry Christmas, Rob Price



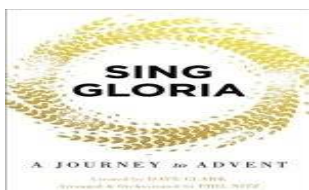
## UPCOMING EVENTS

### CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Sunday Evening

December 10th 6pm

Presented by Shady Shores Choir



### CHURCH-WIDE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

On Sunday, December 17th, At 6pm, we will have Christmas music and singing. Then we will have a pot-luck dinner. Please come and celebrate.



### LADIES BIBLE STUDY

February 11, 2018  
6pm

Linda Smith will be leading the ladies in the study of

*GIDEON*

### GIFT OF LOVE

December 9 10am-12:30pm

Please bring men and women's gifts for the Gift of Love. There is a limit of \$5.00 for each gift. If you don't like to shop...Suzette will shop for you, just give her your money.

We need volunteers to help with the **Gift of Love**. We need help with the craft, walking with the children as they shop and help with gift wrapping. Please bring refreshments for the children. Contact Rose for information.

On Thursday, December 7th, we need help setting up in the Fellowship Hall. Please contact Suzette Jones with any questions and to let her know you can help. 214-796-1835.

**THERE IS A BOX IN THE FOYER.**