



December 15, 2017

Greetings friends,

As we prepare to share the 2017 Sunday school Christmas program, “Make a Joyful Noise”, I find myself filled with nostalgia for Christmas programs of my youth.

Life was far, far different in those days. Church and Sunday school participation was huge. In my own grade level class we had at least 11 kids up through our Confirmation year. Other classes were much the same, so a Sunday school Christmas program was a big deal on a family’s holiday social calendar and the church was packed.

The program had its own special time of day – late afternoon or evening. I don’t remember what time for sure, but it was dark outside. And that in itself was special – going to church at night was exotic and exciting!

A few of the older kids who performed Nativity roles wore costumes, but for the rest of us – we were decked out in our special Christmas outfits or Sunday best. I’m sure my sisters and I had our hair re-curved and the special “Sunday” barrettes were brought back into service. Oh, we were fancy and that too, was exciting.

Each class level had a series of one-line verses individually delivered and a class song to share. We didn’t do plays as such. This was basically the only time many of us ever stood before a microphone and that was a little bit scary and yes, exciting also!

At the end of the program we would return to our classrooms and be given small brown paper sacks full of yumminess like shell peanuts, pieces of hard candy or those Brach’s soft chew candies, and a big red Delicious apple. For kids growing up in a far less affluent, much simpler culture, these sacks were a huge thrill! We also received other goodies like a miniature plastic Nativity ornament (see picture) or a candy cane with the hook portion encased in a felt, stamped Christmas stocking or perhaps a hand-made felt horse head complete with a sparkling mane. These were regarded as precious treasures and provided all sorts of pleasurable play time entertainment for the remainder of that holiday season until everything was packed away with the rest of the Christmas decorations.



It was a much simpler time, those exhilarating days of my childhood. It is a special privilege to be part of the team that is helping today’s Grace kids share their Christmas program with you. I hope they can look back on this experience with the same fondness and joy I have for my own Sunday school program memories. Please plan to attend, “Make a Joyful Noise” this Sunday at 11:00 AM in the sanctuary.

This Week at Grace – This Sunday on the third Sunday of Advent, Pastor Fred is back and brings us the message “Finding Our Way Home”, which is inspired by Psalm 126. The Chancel Choir will share “Tell the News”. Dan & Marilyn Webster will serve as Advent Candle lighters. Terry Gustason is our liturgist this week with Lorijo Lounsberry, Vivian Whitmore and Sheri Allen serving as greeters. Kevin & Candi Holm and Hubert & Raejean Bicklehaupt will be acting as ushers. As always, worship begins at 9:15. Following our worship service, you’re invited to come down to enjoy a sausage gravy and biscuit brunch offered on a free-will offering basis with all proceeds to benefit Jerry Spencer’s quest for a ministry education. The Sunday school program “Make a Joyful Noise” will be presented in the sanctuary beginning at 11:00 AM. Please come worship and fellowship with us!

We are in need of volunteers to take charge of maintaining our pew racks. It only needs to be done about once or twice a month and the duties would include straightening the hymnal, song book and Bible, making sure there are offering envelopes, sharpened pencils and the attendance pads have paper and are in place. If this is something you’d be willing to take on, please let us know in the church office.

If you are planning to share a poinsettia plant in memory or honor of a loved one, please get your form turned into the office by Wednesday, December 20th. Anything received after that date may not get included in the Candlelight Christmas Eve service bulletin.

Poinsettias for Remembrance



Let's fill the sanctuary with beautiful poinsettia flowers for the Advent Season. Story City Floral & Garden is selling the plants for \$20 and will deliver them to the church if you ask them. *We will not be placing orders through the church office.* If you'd prefer, you may bring a poinsettia of your own. If you want to pay tribute to loved ones either as a memorial for those who have passed or in honor for those who are still with us, simply fill out this form and drop it in the offering plate on Sunday, December 17th, or you may deliver it to the church office no later than

NOON on Wed., Dec. 20th. **NOTE: Please do NOT include money with this form. If ordering your plant through the local florist, please call (515)733-2760 and deal with them directly.**

My name _____

In honor/memory of _____

Newsletter articles for the *January Visitor* are due in the church office by December 20th at the latest. The office will be closed Monday, December 25, Thursday and Friday, December 28th and 29th.

In this Season of Giving

As 2017 nears its end, we are thankful to all who have made pledges or financial gifts to support our Grace Church this year. If you have not yet made a contribution, please consider supporting our mission and ministries as you do your year-end tax planning. All checks for 2017 contributions must be dated by 12/31/17 and received in the office no later than 1/4/18 to be included as donations for 2017.

If you are interested in making a tax advantaged transfer of securities, please contact Dan Webster, who is agent of our account at Reliance State Bank. He notes that this needs to be done as soon as possible.

May you sense God's grace and presence in this holy season.

Grace Finance Committee

The Story Theater will present the animated Nativity movie *The Star again* this weekend on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Dec. 15, 16, 17, at the Story Theater in Story City, with showings at 7 p.m. each evening, plus matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 4:30 p.m. Admission is only \$4 and it's rated PG.

As you pray this week, please remember these friends and hold each up in special prayer: Natalie Tryon; Denny Michel; Sara Dappen; Julie Jacobson; Lois Johnson; Sharon Matson; Terry (niece of George Sellers); Norman Patti; Pam Hillis; Cooper Leeman; Taylor family in Africa mission

News You Can Use

Sunday, December 17

9:15 AM Worship – choir sings

10:15 AM 3rd Sunday Brunch – Biscuits and Sausage Gravy – to support of Jerry Spencer's ministry training

11:00 AM Sunday school Christmas Program – "Make a Joyful Noise!"

6:00 PM Choir Christmas party at Carlson's

Monday, December 18

5:30 PM Finance

7:00 PM Worship

Wednesday, December 20

NO ACTIVITIES

Sunday, December 24

9:15 AM Worship – choir sings

10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship

5:00 PM Candlelight Service

Monday, December 25 - *Merry Christmas!*

Faithfully,
Cathy