

## For the Man Who Hated Christmas

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past ten years.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it – overspending and the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma – the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was on the wrestling team at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes.

As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids – all kids. He so enjoyed coaching little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came.

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes, and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed a small, white envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done, and that this was his gift from me.

Mike's smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year. And that same bright smile lit up succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition – one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on.

The white envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children – ignoring their new toys – would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the small, white envelope never lost its allure. The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree. And the next morning, I found it was magically joined by three more. Unbeknownst to the others, each of our three children had for the first time placed a white envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing to take down that special envelope.

Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit will always be with us.



## Auburn

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH  
Community Newsletter

December 2019  
Issue

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## Baptism and Baby Dedication



On November 16, 2019 Will Gannon took the plunge and was baptized into the Auburn SDA church. He is shown above along with his wife Jaimie with baby Sebastian who was dedicated, along with their children, Zeva, Jacob and Colten and other family members. His reason for choosing the Auburn Church was, the church members were so friendly it just felt like home.



## Pastor Mel's Corner

### Four Visions of Christmas

Christmas season is here! At my house, the countdown has started. Actually, it started the day after last Christmas.

Every family has its own Christmas traditions. I imagine that you have started to set them in motion. These are the very reasons why Christmas is the happiest time of the year.

To coincide with the season, I am starting a new sermon series this Sabbath titled, Four Visions of Christmas. In it, we will look at three Old Testament and one New Testament visions about the birth of Jesus Christ. Our goal is to have a well-rounded biblical understanding of what Christmas means.

In Christ,

Pastor Mel Baga

Dec 7 - Micah: Vision of a Just Christmas (Pastor Mel Baga)

Dec 14 - Isaiah: Vision of a Peaceful Christmas (Pastor Mel Baga)

Dec 21 - Daniel: Vision of a Cosmic Christmas (Pastor Mel Baga)

Dec 28 - John: Vision of Apocalyptic Christmas (Pastor Dana Rae De Tar)



## Prevention Not Cure

### More Reader's Digest – Health Truths & Myths

**Reading in a dim light will harm your eyes-Myth**  
It might tire your eyes temporarily but there is no evidence that it will do any lasting damage.

**Coughing too much can make you throw up-Truth**  
Little kids are especially prone to vomiting after coughing fits because their gag reflexes are extra sensitive, but it can happen to adults too. It usually isn't a big deal, but if you keep puking, see a doctor.

**Cracking your knuckles will give you arthritis-Myth**  
Recent studies haven't found a link between cracked joints and arthritis. But some studies showed that cracking your knuckles can result in soft-tissue damage, which can cause swelling and a decrease in handgrip strength.

**You don't need eight classes of water every day-Truth**  
There's no scientific evidence that eight is the magic number. You might need more or less than that, depending on climate and body size. To make sure you are getting enough, inspect your urine, clear urine means a well hydrated body.

**People with dark skin can't get skin cancer-myth**  
Dark skin is less likely to burn, but it isn't immune to harmful UV rays and the damage they cause. People of all skin types need to use sunscreen.



## Coming Events

Dec 13-PHAA 7-12 Christmas Program at Gracepoint

Dec 19-PHAA K-8 Christmas Program at PHAA

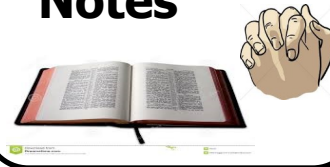
Dec 21-Jan 5-PHAA Christmas Break

Dec 24-Auburn Church Christmas Eve Service 6-7pm

Dec 25-Merry Christmas!

Dec 31-New Year's Eve Church Social 6-9pm

## Sermon Notes



Dec 7: Pastor Mel Baga  
Dec 14: Pastor Mel Baga  
Dec 21: Pastor Mel Baga  
Dec 28: Pastor Dana Rae

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## Healthy Recipes

### Pecan “Meatballs”

By Nan Sutter

Ingredients (Meatballs)

- 2 cups whole wheat bread crumbs (5 slices of bread)
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp salt or Mrs. Dash
- 1-1/3 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1-1/2 cups 2% low-fat cheddar cheese
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 6 T fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 cups egg whites

Ingredients (Sweet & Sour Sauce)

- 1 cup Apricot jam
- 2 cups V-8 Juice
- 2 tsp Lemon juice
- 2 tsp maple syrup
- Dried onions

Directions:

To make bread crumbs toast bread in toaster until very toasted. Place them into blender with salt and other seasoning, on low. Mix all ingredients together and form into balls. Place on baking sheet and freeze them for about 10 minutes. Then bake them at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. Serve with the sauce. They make about 36 meatballs, 57 calories/ball.

## Church Birthdays

Esther Borlean.....Dec 02  
Nicole Toppel.....Dec 03  
Donald Wallace.....Dec 05  
Joanne Pierson.....Dec 07  
Viktor Shchedrov.....Dec 07  
Viktoria Shchedrov.....Dec 07  
Abigail Hidalgo.....Dec 09  
Milton Kindrick.....Dec 09  
Tim Excell.....Dec 09  
Sandy Moss.....Dec 14  
Jeffrey Pierson.....Dec 15  
Joe Mogollon.....Dec 15  
Vilma Pooler.....Dec 15  
Jett Whitson.....Dec 18  
Mamie Hao.....Dec 19  
Abel Vargas.....Dec 20  
Kenneth Alm.....Dec 26  
Jordan Brower.....Dec 28



## Positive Choice

### Your Kids and the Internet

Posted by Fred Hardinge on March 25th 2015

The average age of a U.S. child has a smart phone by age 11.5! Did you know the average U.S. teen types over 150 texts each day? Texting consumes at least one hour of time normally used for sleep by that same teen! Are you looking for some practical tips on tech savvy parenting? Brian Housman shares realistically how parents can prevent the dangers 'out there' from waltzing in through the front door of their home!

PositiveTip: Make your home a *safe*, tech-savvy place for your kids.

### What Helps Kids Choose Healthier Foods?

Posted by Brian R. Bell on March 24th 2015

Your child CAN enjoy healthier foods; here's three simple tips.

Three behavioral patterns that help kids eat healthier emerged from an editorial by two physician-scientists at the University of Pennsylvania.

1. It's logical to choose food that tastes better; take the time to find healthy foods and recipes kids enjoy.
2. Keeping healthy snacks visible and available (e.g. fruit bowl on kitchen table) increases their consumption. Incentives work. One study found even \$0.25 reward doubled fruit & vegetable consumption, even after the testing period.

PositiveTip: Make the healthy choice the easy choice in your home.