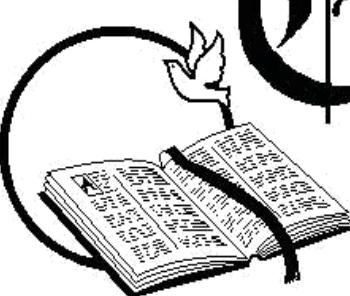


THE GOOD NEWS

FREE

Just Keeps Coming



"...GO HOME TO YOUR FRIENDS, AND TELL THEM WHAT WONDERFUL THINGS THE LORD HAS DONE FOR YOU AND HOW MERCIFUL HE HAS BEEN." MARK 5:19

Volume 11, Issue 12

Non-Denominational, Non-Church Affiliated

December 2016

The Gift of the Gospel

When our little group of three older women would enter a Harris County Jail pod of approximately 55 women, it was usually chaotic and loud and there was a heavy feeling of despair. When we announced that we were "bringing church to them!" we would receive looks ranging from indifference to irritation. But we would continue by passing out song sheets and inviting them to join us in singing favorite old songs like "When the Saints Go Marching In", "Do Lord", and "I've Been Redeemed". Even though we have been doing this for 27 years, we are always amazed at how the Lord draws these women to Him through music. As they gather around the concrete tables, the room has settled down, the TV volume has lowered, and the looks of irritation have turned to curiosity.

We assure them that we also love praise and worship but since our time is limited, we would like to talk to them about God's perfect Gift. Their attention is immediately captured when our presenter pulls out a beautiful purple box which she assures them contains a priceless gift—the gospel story. This purple box contains a set of nested boxes, which will be used to tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

With that introduction, the purple box with a purple lid is introduced: "This looks like a gift and it represents the gospel or good news of Jesus

Christ which is a gift to each one of us." The lid is taken off and the smallest box is taken out and displayed. The box is black and it is explained by saying: "This box represents our dark side. Each of us has a dark side. I wish we didn't but we do. God calls it sin. That is a word that you don't hear much these days. People would rather say that they have a bad habit or it is just their personality. In fact, most people don't even want to look at their sin. (The box is hidden behind the presenter's back.) If we don't have to look at it, we can act as though it doesn't exist so we don't have to deal with it. (She brings the box back to the table.) Regardless of what we do with our dark side or what we call it, God still calls it sin."

The second box is a larger red box and the presenter continues the story by saying, "God had a plan for dealing with our sin. When His Son, Jesus Christ lived on the earth, His life ended in crucifixion. When the nails went into His Hands and Feet, there was the shedding of blood. It is the shedding of Christ's blood that covers our sins. (The red box is placed over the black box). Now that is good news! Often someone may say, "But my sin is bigger than that small black box." But the answer to that is that regardless of the size of the sin represented by the black box, the red box is always bigger. There is no sin that the blood of Jesus cannot cover.

A larger white box is brought out to cover the black and red boxes. The presenter explains, "This box represents the righteousness of Christ. When God looks at those who believe in the sacrifice of His Son, He does not see the nastiness of our sins but rather the righteousness of Christ and His work on the cross. It is the work of Christ, not the work of anything that we have done, that saves us."

The presenter continues by making it clear how we can express our desire to have a personal relationship with Jesus: "We get into this wonderful relationship by saying a simple prayer using words that we have known since we were children. These words are "I'm sorry", "Thank you", and "Please." The words are secondary to the attitude of the heart but a prayer can be some-

(GIFT continued on page 7)



Andrea Evans and Devera Allday

MAY YOU HAVE THE GIFT OF FAITH,
THE BLESSING OF HOPE, AND THE
PEACE OF HIS LOVE.

Merry Christmas
from the Good News Just Keeps Coming Staff





A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

Proverbs 17:22

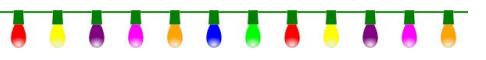
At a clearance sale, the wife of a federal district court judge found a green tie that was a perfect match for one of her husband's sports jackets.

Soon after, while the couple was vacationing at a resort complex to get his mind off a rather complicated cocaine conspiracy case, he noticed a small, round disc sewn into the design of the tie.

The judge showed it to a local FBI agent, who was equally suspicious that it might be a 'bug' planted by the conspiracy defendants. The agent sent the device to FBI headquarters in Washington, DC for analysis.

Two weeks later, the judge phoned the Washington office to learn the results of their tests.

"We're not sure where the disc came from," the FBI told him, "but we discovered that when you press it, it plays 'Jingle Bells.'"



A young man had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your bible a little, and get your hair cut, then we will talk about it."

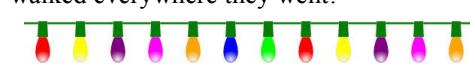
A month later the young man came back and again asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said, "Son, I'm real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied your bible diligently, but you didn't get a hair cut!"

The young man waited a moment and

replied, "You know dad, I've been thinking about that. You know Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair."

His father replied, "Yes son, and they walked everywhere they went!"



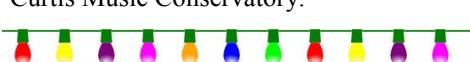
Did you hear about the doctor who wrote out a prescription in the usual doctor's fashion?

The patient used it for two years as a railroad pass.

Twice it got him into Radio City Music Hall, and once into Yankee Stadium.

It came in handy as a letter from his employer to the cashier to increase his salary.

And to top it off, his daughter played it on the piano and won a scholarship to the Curtis Music Conservatory.



A young man called his mother and announced excitedly that he had just met the woman of his dreams. Now what should he do?

His mother had an idea: "Why don't you send her flowers, and on the card invite her to your apartment for a home-cooked meal?"

He thought this was a great strategy, and a week later, the woman came to dinner. His mother called the next day to see how things had gone.

"I was totally humiliated," he moaned. "She insisted on washing the dishes."

"What's wrong with that?" asked his mother.

"We hadn't started eating yet."

What Does Christmas Mean to You?

Luke 2: 4-19 says:

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."

Why did He come? Why did God send His son to this sometimes cruel and hard world? He sent Jesus to us so that one day, He would grow up to become a very important part of history. His story (history) is one of truth, love, and hope. It brought salvation to all of us. Without Jesus, we would all die in our sins.

(CHRISTMAS continued on page 5)

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Hugs From Heaven

As you may know, I live in the old San Felipe Feed Store building. It was a big open space and we built walls to divide the rooms. It has always looked like an old store building inside and out.

When God saved my life with the flood in April and the black mold I didn't know I had was washed all over the house, we discovered what had been making me sick for over a year and was able to remove it. For seven months my house has had open wall studs and wiring and concrete floors, but that was okay. I knew God had a plan for me and He always knows what is best.

Getting bids from different contractors I discovered that I needed way more repairs than I could budget for. A lady I was talking to told me about a contractor she had used several times that was very professional and affordable and asked me if I wanted her to contact him to call me. Of course I agreed.

Several weeks later I received a phone call and answered it as I always do, "Thank you for calling The Good News Just Keeps Coming". The voice on the other end of the phone said, "What did you say?" I repeated it again. "Is this a Christian newspaper? I told him it was.

"I'm so glad to find you again. I picked up one of your papers at Hruska's in Ellinger a while back and I felt like I was supposed to advertise in this paper. I shared it with my wife and somehow the paper got misplaced. I

knew the next time I went through Ellinger I would pick up another paper so I could get your contact number."

He then told me he was calling at the request of a friend to see if I wanted him to give me a bid on repairing my home. We set a time to meet and while he was here he even suggested improvements I never thought about. When I got the bid it was less than half of some of the other bids I had received and was in my budget.

Two weeks ago they started on the job and it will be finished by Thanksgiving when all my family will be here. My house now looks like a real home and not an old store any more. I have never experienced the professionalism, integrity, quality of work and genuine caring for customer approval. Randy Rose, owner of Level Pro Home Improvements has made all of my wishes come true for my home. Projects started almost 20 years ago have now been completed. I am reliving the joy and happiness I experienced as a child on Christmas morning. I know God had this planned from the beginning and what another great Hug from Heaven. I am truly blessed.

May each of you have the peace, joy and love of Christmas all year long.

*In His Love,
Diana Boring
San Felipe, Texas*

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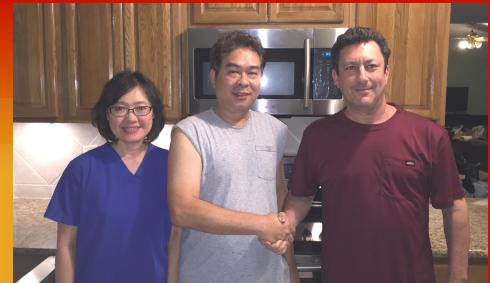
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God Bless the Little Children

My name is Dee Ann Smith and I am new to East Bernard. I arrived in town with my husband Lindsey T. Smith Jr., the new United Methodist preacher, in September of this year. We have moved and served in many places through the years and we are overjoyed to be a part of this community. Lindsey and I married in 1998 and the parsonage grew from a family of 3 to a family of 7 plus one dog. Today we are blessed with 10 beautiful grandchildren. Although my husband answered the call 30 years ago to be a minister, I too have felt the call and pull on my heart to be a servant of God.

In the spring of 1999 I answered God's call to begin a children's ministry

in West Orange. I had just completed an internship at the Social Security Administration doing disability claims. "My plans" were to go to work at the SSA with a tidy yearly salary. God, on the other hand, had other plans for me. At the time, my husband's charge was St. John's UMC in West Orange. As I stood in the church's parking lot one day God opened my eyes to a huge need and a wonderful new journey, service and commitment for me. As I gazed across the parking lot at the Section 8 Housing Unit there, I was amazed at what I saw. Where had all those children come from? I had stood in that very spot many times and had never noticed them before. Where were their parents? Why weren't some of them in school? Where were their shoes? Instead of going to work at the Social Security Administration I went to work for God's children in that community. I worked for free, as a volunteer, as a church social worker for 6 years ministering to, teaching, aiding families in need, and loving those children. God blessed me and the dedicated people that worked with me, in that endeavor. We also started an after-school program for the children and the number of children in that program doubled every year.

For the last 18 years Lindsey and I have served at various churches including Franklin UMC, Liberty FUMC, and now at East Bernard UMC. In all those years and in all those places God has

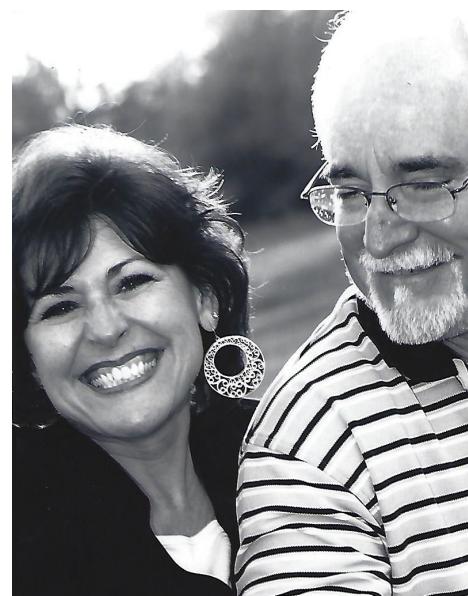
continued to use me to grow His church and to love His children. I have served as Youth and Children's coordinator in either a paid position or as a volunteer for 16 of those years. I have been lead to start two after school programs and to become a Director of a preschool. I went back to school to become a teacher and I have taught Kindergarten, and Pre-K. In Liberty, I took over a Mother's Day Out program and upgraded it to a thriving Preschool. My prayer then and now has been "Lord send me Your children". And God has!

In January of 2017, East Bernard UMC is beginning a new Preschool and Mother's Day out called Noah's Ark. I am overjoyed to be the new Director of this program. The school will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-

2:00. Registration is now open for children ages 1 year through Pre-k 4 and 5-year old's and enrollment packets can be picked up at East Bernard UMC. We are also looking for individuals who feel led to work with children, love children, and are experienced working with children. We are now hiring Teachers and Aides to work in the program. Please call me, DeeAnn Smith with questions at 936-776-2697.

I know God is not through with me! He still has a lot of work to do in me, with me and through me. I anxiously anticipate this new chapter in my life and adventure in Christ. Lord, Send me your children.

**Dee Ann Smith
East Bernard, Texas**



Dee Ann and Lindsey Smith

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and join us!**

(CHRISTMAS continued from
page 2)

Jesus was born so one day the price could be paid for the things we have done that are wrong. The Bible says that all have sinned. We are all born with a sin nature. We do things that do not please God. Through the sins of Adam and Eve, we have all inherited that sin nature. We need to have that removed. The only way is through Jesus. Jesus came so He could die on the cross for ALL of our sins. If we believe that Jesus died for our sins, we can ask Him to come into our hearts and forgive us. Then, we are clean and made whole. We can know that heaven is a place where we can go to when this life is over.

"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong." I John 1:9

We can truly be happy at Christmas! No matter what may be happening, we can know that we are His children. We then become sons and daughters of God. Heaven will be our home one day.

Look at Christmas in a new way this year. This is the year to invite Jesus



into your heart. You will then have a "Merry Christmas." The joy and peace you will receive will last all year as you look to God for all your needs to be met.

Remember, He is not like Santa that you leave milk and cookies out for to enjoy after he leaves the gifts you wanted all year. What do you give Jesus for His birthday on Christmas? The best thing you can give Him other than your life, or to give to your Church, a nice gift in His name.

Jesus' Birth Is The Reason For The Season! Rejoice!

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**"Whatever you do, work at it
with all your heart as working
for the Lord."
Colossians 3:23**

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2 eggs, slightly beaten	1 tsp. soda
2 cups sugar	2 cups chopped nuts
½ cup Wesson Oil	1 tsp. salt
2 cups flour	1 tsp. vanilla
1 can apple pie filling	1 tsp. cinnamon

Combine all ingredients – bake in floured and greased 9 x 13 inch pan at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Top with whipped cream or cool whip. Delicious served hot or cold.

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Ladies' Bible Study

Wednesday - 7 p.m. - Family Night
Pioneer Club: 4 yrs. - 3rd grade
Area 456 Club: 4th - 6th grade
Elevate: Youth; Adult Bible Study

Friday - 10 a.m. - Intercessory Prayer

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The GOOD NEWS Just Keeps Coming

FUN WITH GOD'S WORD

Use the scriptures below to find and circle the **BOLDFACED** words. UNDERLINED WORDS will be found together.

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O	E	E	T	S	O	H	Y	L	N	E	V	A	E	H	C	O	D
S	A	R	K	U	O	A	N	R	I	K	W	O	N	K	D	V	E
T	D	B	I	B	M	C	S	O	E	S	T	P	T	O	N	O	D
H	Y	F	N	A	F	O	R	T	R	E	E	S	L	R	P	T	F
I	G	R	E	A	T	J	O	Y	N	Y	R	O	L	G	T	A	S
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U	R	Y	S	L	M	A	E	H	S	R	S	N	O	I	W	A	P

⁸ And there were **shepherds** living out in the fields nearby, keeping **watch** over their **flocks** at night. ⁹ An **angel** of the Lord appeared to them, and the **glory** of the **Lord shone** around them, and they were **terrified**. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "**Do not be afraid**. I bring you **good news** that will cause **great joy** for all the **people**. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a **Savior** has been born to you; he is the **Messiah**, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a **baby** wrapped in cloths and lying in a **manger**." ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the **heavenly host** appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "**Glory to God** in the highest heaven, and on earth **peace** to those on whom his favor rests."

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(GIFT continued from page 1)

thing like this:

"Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the sins that I have committed including sins against other people, sins against myself, and sins again You. I am so sorry. Thank you for sending Your Son Jesus Christ whose blood was shed to cover my sins. Thank you for the forgiveness that this sacrifice brings. Please come into my life and be Lord of my life."

And again the presenter assures the listeners that, "When this prayer is spoken from your heart, we see from Luke 15:10 that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. There is a celebration in heaven when you come into a relationship with the Lord!"

The next box, the gold one, is then placed over the other boxes. Words such as these are used to further tell the story: "The gold of this earth is precious but even more precious than that are the promises from the Word of God or the Bible. From the Old Testament there is a promise from Jeremiah 33:3 which says that if we call upon the Lord, He will answer and show us great and mighty things that we do not know. As Christians, we know that calling upon the Lord is the act of prayer and we are told that the Lord will answer us. That is a promise. But the verse goes even further and says that the Lord will show us great and mighty things that we do not know. We need that wisdom, don't we? From the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation because the old things have passed away and, behold, new things have come. Again, this is another promise from the Word of God that gives us hope and builds our faith. The Bible is full of promises.

Take the challenge of finding them during your study of the Bible."

The next bigger box is the color green and is placed over the other boxes. And it is explained in this way: "The green makes us think of grass. Grass grows. We need to grow in our spiritual lives. Ways in which we grow are Bible study, scripture memorization, accountability groups, praying, listening to Christian music, reading and using devotional books. As we begin to walk in these new ways we are learning more about our love for God which in turn causes our love for others to grow."

The last and biggest box is the color purple. This box covers the black, red, white, gold, and green boxes. The presenter says, "Purple is the color of royalty. If your Father is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords that makes you as a believer, a prince or princess. You become a part of a royal family because you are in the family of God. Sometimes when someone dies, he leaves an inheritance. Well, guess what? When Jesus Christ died, He left an inheritance for His family. That inheritance includes eternal life with Him when we die and all of the promises in the Scriptures while we are living on earth!"

The seventh piece of the gospel boxes is the purple lid, which is now placed on top of the other boxes. And to finish the presenter says, "Seven is a number of wholeness in the Bible and this seventh piece represents the completeness of the gospel message. The lid also covers the boxes and represents the seal of the Holy Spirit which enables us to do all that we have talked about."

A final prayer is said, such as: "Heavenly Father, thank you for the ears that have heard this message and thank

(GIFT continued on page 8)



Eva's Inspirations

The Three Wise Men

Baby Jesus was born on Christmas day,
Knowing for our lives He would have to pay.
Sent down from His Father in heaven above,
So that we would know just how much we are loved.
The wise men followed the star that shined so bright,
So they could bring gifts, and see their Savior that night.
Lying in a manger with no room at the Inn,
They knew He was the one who would suffer for our sins.
Down on their knees they looked at Him in Awe,
Knowing that one day on His name they would call.
Dressed in garments of silk that were trimmed in gold,
They knew Jesus was the greatest gift they would ever behold.
They gave Him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh,
The best gifts that they had to celebrate His birth.
As they got up to leave they didn't want to ever part,
But they knew that one day soon they would give Him their
heart.



*Written by Eva Dimel
Inspired by God ©*

To order books, magnets, calendars, plaques, and other items you may contact Eva Dimel at 614-875-9263 or email at edimel9775@sbcglobal.net



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For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Psalm 139: 13-14



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(GIFT continued from page 7)
you for sending your Son Jesus Christ who died for our sins."

After the message has been given, there is always a beautiful sense of peace in the pod and the faces of the women have become amazingly soft and gentle. We very frequently hear the words: "I never understood what the gospel was before but now I do."

The simplicity of the message and the colors of the boxes make this visual teaching tool invaluable for sharing the good news! The gospel boxes have been used not only at the Harris County Jail but also at churches for both Sunday school, Family Retreat and Vacation Bible School, in retirement facilities, in hospitals, on the street with the homeless and on the mission fields. At present, the boxes are being used in Kenya, Nepal, Mexico, and Japan. People of all ages have been drawn to the message whether it is with an individual or a large crowd.

Andrea Evans and Devera Allday are involved with the Gospel Boxes Ministry, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and if you would like to receive information about how to obtain a set, please contact Devera@gospelboxes.org or www.gospelboxes.org.



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