

# Attend Church Regularly

...and read your Bible daily



## WEEKLY SERMONETTE

**By Jeff Nielsen, Minister, Norton Christian Church**  
**Don't Miss The Grace**

"I'm not sure I'll meet the criteria on the Day of Judgment."

"I'm just not sure I'll measure up when I face God."

"I'm not sure I've done enough to get in."

OUCH! Those words of doubt and despair really hurt. I hope they're not your words.

Many of the world's religions make acceptance by its god the responsibility of the worshipper. If he or she works hard enough, is dedicated enough, does enough good works, then maybe that person can achieve his or her reward. If, however, that person doesn't do enough good works, too bad! They'll have to try it all over again on a return trip through mortality or have to settle for something short of the ultimate reward. Goodness is something to be achieved, earned, and accomplished by hard work, dedication, and personal sacrifice. So get with it and hope your god likes what it sees.

At first glance, and to many popular observers of Christianity, the Christian faith isn't a lot different. This, however, is not the case at all.

Jesus tells us we can be born again, this time into God's family (John 3:3-7). Once we're born of God, we are God's children and a glorious future awaits us (cf. 1 John 3:1-3). We're part of the Father's eternal family, adopted at the cost of Jesus' death on the Cross. We're not striving to get accepted by God; we're already accepted because of the price Jesus paid! We're not working to be righteous; God declares us righteous by the atoning work of his Son on the Cross and by the power of his incredible resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Romans 4:25). Our lives

are motivated by the joy of being God's children and our desire to reflect his character and grace.

"Is there really that big a difference between the two concepts? It sounds so much the same, what does it really matter?" Yes! The difference is everything. It matters eternally. It is the difference between a suffocating and depressing driven faith, or a liberating and exhilarating empowered faith. Don't trust me, read Paul's letter to the Galatians!

Doing good deeds to be accepted by God is to turn our backs on grace and try to gain our own sal-

vation based on our own merits, works, and efforts Galatians 5:4. Reaching, struggling, and striving for something that we will never accomplish is debilitating; we cannot be "good enough" to deserve heaven. Each of us will fall short of God's glory; none of us will be declared righteous if God is our standard (Romans 3). Bottom line: If we don't measure up to him, then we don't get in! If we have to reach that standard by our good works, then life is a journey of the damned and religion is divine mockery of our human failure.

On the other hand, Christians

know that God has made them full heirs of heaven by his grace Romans 8:14-17). Their passion is to be like their Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. They know that they have been accepted by God and made holy by the work of Jesus. They know they will never completely measure up to the perfection of their Father on their own. But, because they know they are already part of God's family and that he has given them eternal life (cf. 1 John 5:13), theirs is a journey of joy. They can rejoice in the outcome of their faith as well as the progress God is making in them (1 Peter 1:8-9). They know that God is at work in them through his Spirit to make them more like Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18). Their motivation is a heart of thanks because of the tremendous gift of salvation that God has given them. Their desire is to reflect God's glory and his grace to those around them. Their joy is to see others born into the Kingdom of God.

I hope your heart's desire is to be the kind of person that God wants you to be. But please, open your eyes. If you are a child of God, a disciple of Jesus, God wants you to live with passionate and holy joy at being ransomed, redeemed, and saved by his grace. He doesn't want you worried whether or not you're going to get in, meet the criteria, or you've done enough to earn your way in. God asks you to be faithful to who he has made you and to be honest before him about your imperfections, trusting in Jesus to save and perfect you.

Jesus has paid the ransom price to redeem us. Let's live like we're redeemed, not like we're afraid of where we stand!



**SUNDAY**  
John 1:1-18

**MONDAY**  
Isaiah 60:1-22

**TUESDAY**  
Isaiah 61:1-11

**WEDNESDAY**  
Isaiah 62:1-12

**THURSDAY**  
Isaiah 65:1-25

**FRIDAY**  
Revelation 21:1-27

**SATURDAY**  
Revelation 22:1-21

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Strains of "Auld Lang Syne" fade into the dawn of yet another New Year's Day. As we discard paper hats and streamers, we resolve to discard unwanted habits and negative attitudes. We make our New Years' resolutions.

Ahead of us are 365 opportunities to improve the quality of our body, mind and spirit. A brand new year is about to begin! How difficult will it be to change those unhealthy habits that have been a part of us for so long? How can we keep those resolutions?

There is one resolution that can be a great help to us as we try to reach our desired goals. That is the practice of attending our chosen house of worship each week to give thanks and praise to our God. We can ask God for His help. Psalm 90:17 says, "May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands."

Through prayer and meditation, God will provide the strength and guidance needed to make positive changes in our lives. Each week as we worship we can refresh our outlook and renew our hope. With God's help we can try to keep those resolutions!

Scriptures Selected by The American Bible Society  
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## PRAIRIE VIEW

By VIVIAN JANSONIUS

Thanksgiving Day guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Eddy DeBoer in Phillipsburg were Tammy Slayton, Briana and Brooke of Dodge City; Jerol and Jennifer deBoer, Kelsee and Taylor and Mark and Lisa Grieve, Kaiden and Megan of Hays; Kerry and Rhonda Kellerman, Jordan, Jaron and Jacey of Phillipsburg; and Vivian Jansonius, Prairie View.

The Lone Prairie 4-H Club held their Nov. 14 meeting at the First Christian Church in Phillipsburg. They met with other members of Phillips County 4-H clubs to pack "care packages" for the soldiers. Each member brought cookies and letters for the soldiers.

Later, members held a brief meeting. It was decided that the club would donate \$100 towards scholarships that would go to county 4-H members. Leader, Gloria DeWitt, reported that the club sold 161 pieces of greenery, the biggest fund raiser for the club. The Girard and Johnson families sold the most greenery. Members drew names for Christmas. Gifts will be exchanged at the Dec. 11 meeting.

Prairie Homemakers Family and Community Education Unit met Nov. 29 at "Willers at the Brooke" for the Christmas meeting. It was agreed that the club treasury would pay for the meal.

Health reports were given by LaVon and Linda. Cathy DeWitt is the newest member of the club. Wanda Schemper reported that the club had received a gold seal.

The lesson and hostess schedule were distributed to the members. Belinda will present the January lesson on the history of Kansas.

Members exchanged gifts and

revealed secret pals. Later, they drew names for next year.

Present were: Vivian Jansonius, Sue Newlan, Judy VanDerVeen, Belva Leydig, Anissa Kats, Bev Schemper, Wanda Schemper, Julia Schemper, Gloria DeWitt, Cathy DeWitt, Diana Greving, all of Prairie View; Pat Hammond, LaVon Kats, Beth Ponstein, Belinda Thalheim, Sara Nelson, Stenie Laubscher, Long Island. Linda Hultgren could not be there.

The Sunshine City Library Board met Nov. 21. Present were Danny, Carol, Darline, Dian and Gloria.

The library is collecting aluminum cans. The collection place is Darline Brown's garage. Pam Araujo is the new teen volunteer. It was announced that Liz, the librarian, has resigned, but will continue to work two mornings a month.

The next story hour session will begin in January.

The Gleaner's Circle of Prairie View Reformed Church met Dec. 15 for a Christmas party at the home of Linda Van Der Weele. Eight members attended. Members exchanged gifts with their secrees pals and drew names for 2006. Those present were Wauneta Schemper of Long Island; Linda Van der Weele, Goldie Barker, Hazel Jansonius, Vivian Jansonius, Julianna Lasniewski, Darline Brown and Erma Jean Nyland, all of Prairie View. Linda Hultgren was unable to attend.

On Dec. 14, Craig and Julia Schemper became the parents of a baby boy. They have named him Drew Ellis. The Schempers have two other children, Isabel and Deacon. Calvin and Wanda Schemper are grandparents.

## JENNINGS NEWS

By LOUISE CRESSLER

A lovely "Winter Wonderland" scene was the setting for the program at the school Dec. 20.

A public hearing will be held Jan. 13 at 9:30 a.m. at the Jennings school building, in regard to a petition filed by the Board of Education of Unified School District, Prairie Heights, requesting the State Board of Education to disorganize the school district and transfer the territory thereof to Unified School District Nos. 211 (Norton), 294 (Oberlin), and 412 (Hoxie). At the hearing, all interested persons will be given the opportunity to present their views in regard to the proposed school district disorganization.

Guests for Christmas Saturday at the home of Stan and Ramona Shaw were Chris Gillespie and Tom Neff, Marion; Elliott Gillespie, Marion; Aaron Gillespie, Hays; Kevin and Colleen Wagoner, Sharon Springs; Lisa Wagoner, Sharon Springs; Mark and Shelley Shaw, Ethin and Erin rural Logan; Cindy Black, Logan and Bowen, Carlsbad, N. M.; Katie Wahlmeier, Colby; Jeff and Mary Wahlmeier rural Clayton; Adam Wahlmeier, Dodge City; Nick Wahlmeier, Hays. The same group except Chris, Tom, Elliott and Aaron spent Christmas Day at Selden at Stan's mother's, Carol Shaw, for the Christmas dinner. An additional guest was Zach Golemboski, Colby.

Josh and Michele Ivans, Shawnee stopped by Wednesday December 21 to show Mary Votapka her new great-granddaughter, Brooklan LaLee. They were on the way to Goodland.

Guests of Mary Votapka and Tom Christmas weekend were Ann and Rex Rowh, Cimmaron; Jodi Inguanza, Samatha, Meagan and Christopher, Kalesta; Kip and Steph Rowh, Tim and Luke, Hastings, Minn.; Rollie and Jean Halligan, Goodland; Jay Dee and Angie, and Brianan Brumbaugh, Owasso, Okla.; Ashley Halligan, Lawrence; Lori Schiefin and Katyln of Overland Park; Jason Rowh, Brecken and Drake and Sue Long. Ann was the cook.

Christmas Day guests of Mike and Joan McKenna were Brock and Rebecca Peterson, Will and Henry, DeMotte, Ind.; Amy McKenna, Kansas City, Mo.; Brett McKenna, Manhattan; Trudy and Norm Stockham, Norton; Nathan, Nikole, Ethan and Macy DeWitt, Inman; Lyle, Amanda and Spencer Davidson, Delphos; Keith and Maxine Sauvage; Bill Sauvage and Pat Chard; Michael, Cheryl, and Tyler Sauvage; Justin, Nikki and Brecken Sauvage, Oberlin; John and Donna Sauvage, Heath, Shani, Bodie, Colton and Belle Sauvage; Danielle Sauvage and Micheal Sciltz, Selden; Kayla Sauvage; Aaron and Kambrey Woods, Hays; Jerry and Patty Foster and Peggy.

The McKennas and Petersons spent Christmas Eve with Greg and Paula McKenna, Marlee, Landee, Hallee and Baylee. Other guests included Pat and Shelley McKenna and Marcus; Sarah McKenna, Pratt; Jacques McKenna, McComb, Ill.; Chris McKenna, Hays; Nick and Kathy Otter and Sean, Hoxie; Justin, D'Ann, Jalen and Ryan Basart, Mankato; Nathan and Pam Diekmann, Woodbine; Father George Kochuvelikkakam of Oberlin.

## ALMENA NEWS

By ESTHER MARBLE

Christmas Day was celebrated with a family dinner at the rural Logan home of Bob and Sue Jackson. Present were Sue's mother, Joyce Eckhart and Aunt Jean Leuszler, Bob's parents, Jim and Wilma Jackson, his sister, Karen Navis, Emily and Channing and their children, Joe, Hill City; Sam, a student at Bethany College, Lindsborg and Val, a student at Colby Community College. The day was warm and windless, however, the big yard was still covered with snow drifts.

Those present for supper December 25 with their Aunt Fleta Hanlon were Mike, Cindy, Brianna and Charles Brown of

Norton and Mark and Chaim McMillin, Almena. Evening callers were John, Dana, Michel and John Hanlon, accompanied by Barbara Ballinger, all of Norton. Camilla Ballinger and a friend from Hays; Linda Hanlon, McCook, Neb., were there also. They all enjoyed watching the grandchildren open gifts and sharing snacks. Brianna was an overnight guest. She was home for Christmas from Wichita where she is a student at Friends University.

Brant Marble spent the weekend at home visiting his mother, Esther Marble; his brother, Blaine and Susie, Chance and Bryce and his uncle, Harold Shearer.

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