

## The Miracle of Bethlehem

by Larry Harris, CEO

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.*

Christina G. Rossetti  
1830-1894

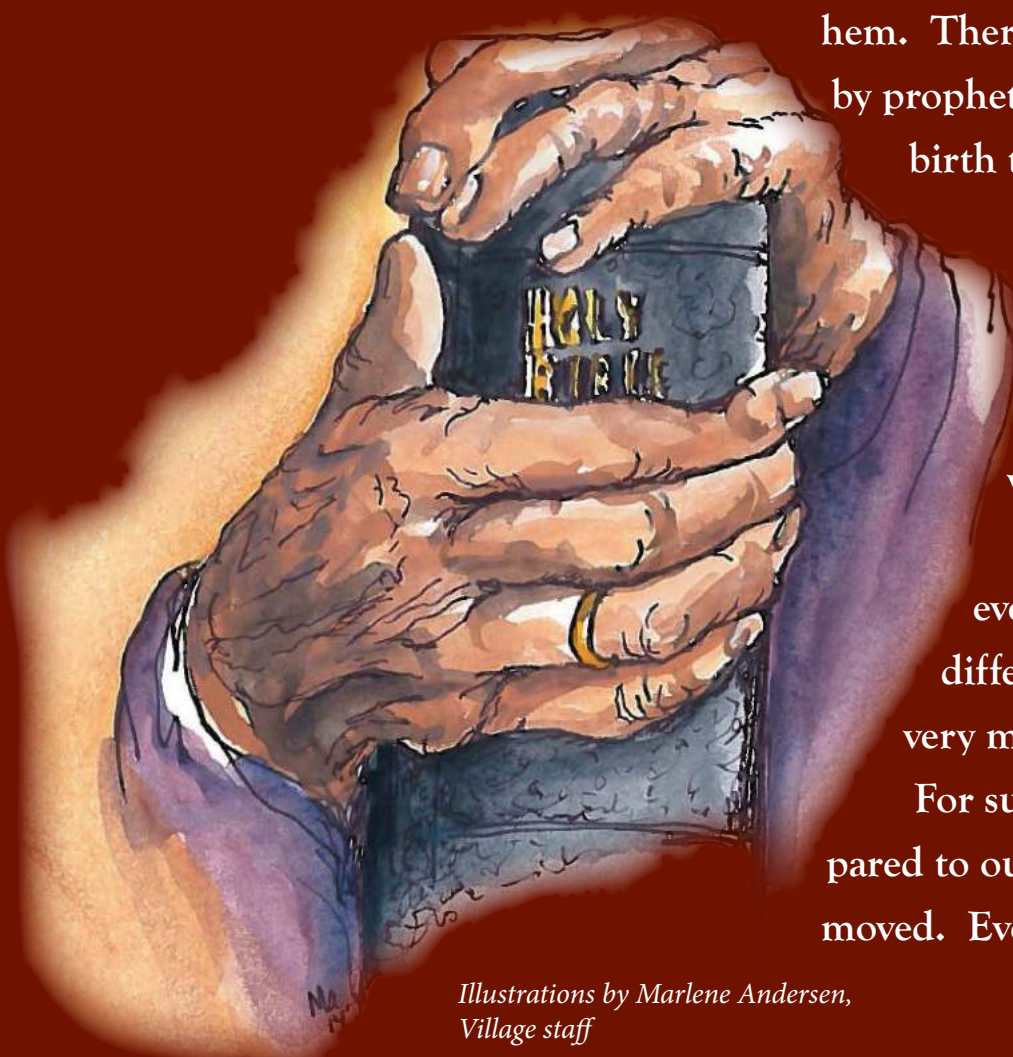
Call rings out across this snowy winter land. It's a heaven-sent plea for people of every clan and nation to give ear to the Christmas proclamation issued long ago from the little village of Bethlehem. There in a drafty stable, as foretold by prophets of old, a young woman gave birth to a son on a still, dark night.

Her tiny child was rightly heralded as a promise kept: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

The baby born on that distant eve emerged into a world greatly different from ours today, and yet very much the same.

For sure, we are working magic compared to our kin twenty centuries removed. Every day we pull off stunning

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feats beyond their most bizarre fantasies. Our machines fly to Paris, Johannesburg, Singapore, and Mars. We hold in our hands or fix to our walls gadgets that bring us news of the day, the voices and images of loved ones far away, and the collected learnings and accumulated writings of all time.

We give no thought to the warm air that fills up our homes on the coldest winter night, the crystalline water that gushes into our cups and pitchers at the lift of a shiny lever, or the garden vegetables and tropical fruits delivered fresh to our tables in midwinter. Our days are filled with jaw-dropping wizardry when viewed through the eyes of a Judean herder or Bethlehem innkeeper.

But all our magic is nothing more than new stage props and updated costumes for the kaleidoscopic human pageant that has been playing since time immemorial. Our mortal hearts today are unchanged from those of ancestors buried deep in our foggy past. Our passions and motivations are those of the ancients. Young people still fall in love. A mother's devotion still would drive her to die for her child. We still can be wonderstruck by a star-swept sky. We love, we quarrel, we jockey for social position the same as those living at the time of Moses, Jesus, or Shakespeare.

While there sometimes come gracious moments when we give heed to the counsel of better angels walking among us, much of our existence is handed over to greed, jealousies, and evil pursuits.

Read the headlines. Oh my goodness, we treat each other so poorly! We freely practice deceits, thieveries, and swindles on each other. We shun and often kill those who vary from our tribe in skin tone, faith practices, and lifestyle. We bomb and drone-zap our sojourners at will.

Back in the day, our ancestors could only throw rocks at each other. Today we are poised to lob bombs across oceans that each can take out an entire city in a single



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boom. We popped off the first two over Japan 69 years ago. The remaining 16,000 now are entrusted to seven billion humans whose collective mental state often registers just shy of crazy.

These weapons absolutely must be kept under lock and key until the far end of forever. Better yet, let's gather them all up and dump them into the deepest ocean trench. The human capacity to inflict pain now is multiplied beyond imagination, and we simply cannot be trusted with such

God-like power.

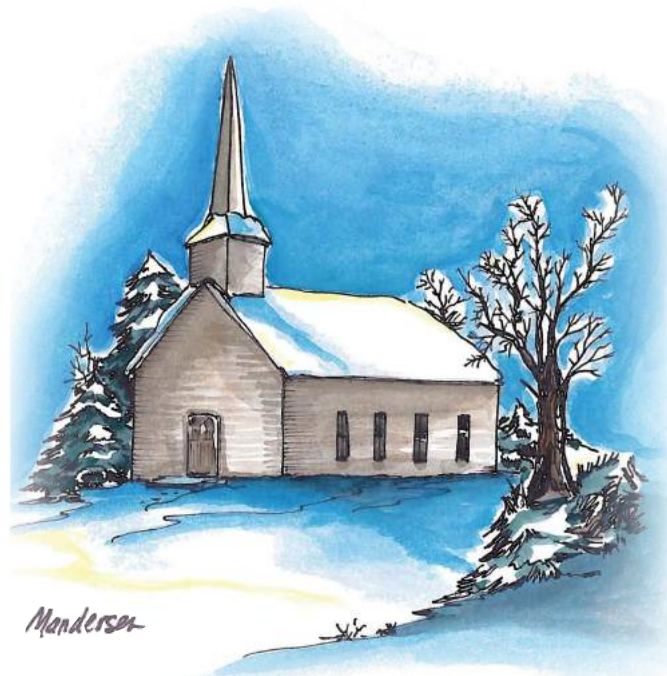
**W**e need a miracle this Christmas. Dear Lord of Bethlehem, teach us, lead us, inspire us, forgive us.

I have long believed that we are put on this earth to help each other make it to the next sunrise. And the next. And the one after that. I am my brother's keeper. It's just that we sometimes forget that charge. Check that. *We often forget.*

The miracle of Bethlehem reveals to us a pathway through this messy existence to a place with no meanness and sorrow. Christmas presents us with a choice to walk that path or not.

But humanity is never transformed en masse. Change comes one heart at a time. I can only control my own response to the Christmas call. And you, the same. That's two. It's a start. But there are 6,999,999,998 to go, so let's get busy.

Christ is born, go and tell!



*At Christmas time our thoughts return to those we've known so long ago. We see them clear and hear their voice, the source of unforgotten joys.*

*Friends now near in time and place are also precious, here and now. Surrounded by their caring love we see, through them, our God above.*

*More sure, it seems as decades pass, that loved ones, friends, grow closer still. The years but show eternity and help us to more truly see.*

*Stable and manger tell it all, as truth and love on all descend.*

*The passing things we grasp and hold are naught compared to God's great gold.*

James W. Perkins,  
resident of Delaware Run



Willow Brook Christian Home nursing assistant Theresah Agyeman and resident Joann Stash do their part to deck the halls this Christmas season.



Shelly Stewart serves hors d'oeuvres to Village residents Dave and Edna Edwards. Harpist Wendy Barlow (upper right) adds a special touch to the event.

**Beyond Golden . . .**

**Event Celebrates Life-long Love**



Seventy-six couples joined Willow Brook and the *Delaware Gazette* for the fourth annual "Beyond Golden" anniversary event. Held in October at Delaware Run, we honor couples who have been married for fifty years or more by inviting them in for good music, great food, contests and prizes, photos, and a celebration of life-long love.

# Tribute Gifts

## Memorial Contributions

September 23 – November 13, 2014

Richard C. Atkinson  
Carol A. Roden  
Anita Blaszkowiak  
Irene C. Blaszkowiak  
Marion Blaszkowiak  
Irene C. Blaszkowiak  
Michael "Mike" Chucta  
Teresa J. Ryan  
Dorothy J. Dale  
Joy D. Lackey  
Joan Deaton  
Thomas & Joan MacLaughlin  
Mary DelMoro  
Julie Bardelang  
Verne Edwards  
Corinne D. Esau  
Lois K. Smith  
Phyllis M. Wood  
Audrey & Alberta Harris  
Larry & Janet Harris  
John T. Hayes  
Karen S. Hayes  
Carl Hertwig  
Joy D. Lackey  
Lydia Landis  
Linda A. Raber  
James E. Jackson  
Mitchell & Dyana Welch  
James Leslie  
Thomas & Blanche Allchin  
Corinne D. Esau  
David & Rosalie Miller  
Raymond & Helen Nally  
Myles Nelson  
Helen J. Reppart  
Lois K. Smith  
Myra Weber  
Edward & Evelyn Winter  
Phyllis M. Wood  
Lois M. Lewis  
Marilyn J. Terry  
Laura M. "Lolly" Newman  
Christine Newman  
Florence Poulson  
Thomas & Sara Poulson  
Emma "Maude" Prince  
Rebecca L. Harris  
Gene & Maude Prince  
Larry & Janet Harris

Elizabeth S. Raber  
Linda A. Raber  
Alice B. Rister  
Grace M. Lang  
Mary C. Roden  
Carol A. Roden  
Don Rost  
Thomas & Sara Poulson  
Mark E. Ryan  
Teresa J. Ryan  
JoAnne Skipton  
John & Sue Dickman  
Grace M. Lang  
Alvin T. Stein  
Thomas & Blanche Allchin  
Corinne D. Esau  
Helen J. Reppart  
Myra Weber  
Corrine Snyder-Poulson  
Thomas & Sara Poulson  
George F. Wellman  
Lucretia M. Wellman  
Stephen Whipple  
Grace M. Lang  
Max Wildermuth  
Jayne W. MacKay  
A. Gale Winnett, Jr.  
Delaware Run Residents'  
Association  
Kathleen K. Snapp  
Pat Zimmerman & Carolyn  
Howard

*A Gift  
was made to honor*

Harry & Mary Jo Humes  
by Larry & Carol Humes

### Willow Brook Christian Communities

Delaware, Ohio

#### Willow Brook Christian Village

100 Willow Brook Way South  
Delaware, Ohio 43015  
Phone: (740) 369-0048

- Independent twin-single homes and apartments
- Assisted living
- Memory care
- Skilled nursing
- Rehabilitation
- Adult day care
- The Courtyard Restaurant

#### Willow Brook

##### at Delaware Run

100 Delaware Crossing West  
Delaware, Ohio 43015  
Phone: (740) 201-5640

- Independent twin-single homes and apartments
- Transitional apartments
- Assisted living
- Memory care
- Corporate offices
- The Water's Edge Restaurant

Worthington, Ohio

#### Willow Brook

##### Christian Home

55 Lazelle Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43235  
Phone: (614) 885-3300

- Skilled nursing
- Rehabilitation
- Assisted living
- The Grapevine Grill

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The photo behind this list of memorial gifts is presented in memory of Charles Lang, a former resident of Willow Brook at Delaware Run.

# The Christmas Crisis

by Tom MacLaughlin  
Delaware Run resident

Santa was in a blue funk. Noon on Christmas Eve, and everything was going wrong.

Even with new batteries Rudolf's nose was working intermittently. Four of his best elves were down with the flu. And in mid-December lice got into his beard, forcing him to shave it off.

This morning when he test-drove the sleigh, the support to the left runner gave way and two elves were now frantically working on repairs. "I'm getting too old for this," he grouched.

Ms. Claus was no help. "Now, dear," she said sweetly, "everything will work out just fine. You'll see."

"Bah Humbug!" he replied.

"Oh, now, you don't really mean that. Here, have a chocolate-chip cookie fresh out of the oven."

Santa, his blue funk now a foul mood, retired to his den and slammed the door.

After an hour, Ms. Claus began to worry, and was about to knock on Santa's door when it burst open and out he strode. "I've made a decision!" he shouted. "No more trips! No more presents from Santa Claus! I'm retiring as of right now!"

"Oh my," Ms. Claus said, "you can't really mean that."

"Oh yes I can!" he shouted even louder. "Read my lips! **No More Santa Claus!!**"

"Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear," she murmured as she reached for the phone.

"Hi, Sven - I hate to interrupt your work on such a busy day, but your father's talking retirement again. We've got to talk with him after supper—and come up with a solution."

\*\*\*\*\*

"That was a fine dinner, my dear," Santa said, as he finished off the apple pie. "An excellent start to my retirement!"

"Ah—yes, dear," she said. "Since you brought it up, Sven and I—"

"Nothing you say can *change my mind!*" he bellowed. "*My decision is final!*"

"*Santa!*" Ms. Claus's ire was up. "Think of all those children who spoke with Santa stand-ins in department stores all over the world! They're all

excitedly anticipating Santa's coming! And instead of joyful discoveries they'll find empty stockings!"

That got his attention. So she continued. "Sven has some ideas to share." Having come up empty herself, she looked expectantly at Sven and hoped for the best. She and Santa had watched him grow, were greatly challenged by his early teen-age behavior, but now saw him, at age nineteen, an innovative and responsible worker in Santa's workshop. Surely he could dissuade his stubborn father . . . ?

Sven took a deep breath. And with a gleam in his eye and excitement in his voice, he spoke. "Dad. The elves have repaired the sleigh—it's as good as new—and the toys are all securely packed, the reindeer are pawing the snow anxious to depart, and—"

"*Sven! Be realistic.* Times change, legends die out. The world is a different place. Besides, you don't know the route, and—"

Sven pulled something from his pocket and thrust it under Santa's nose.

"What's this?! Another electronic gadget?"

"It's a GPS, Dad. I have it all programmed."

Now Ms. Claus weighed in. "This legend that you have devoted your life to must endure. As we age, we—all of us—must hand the reins to those who are younger, have new energy, fresh ideas."

Santa sat quietly for a long time with his wife and son as dusk approached on that frosty Christmas Eve. Finally, he placed his hand on his son's shoulder and said, "Godspeed . . . Santa."



Illustration by Marlene Andersen, Village staff

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When *Reflections* published the above photo on our front cover in the summer of 2012, we neglected to tell you that among the players above are three retired ministers, including Lutheran minister and German descendant Alvin Stein in the center of the group. He hesitated to join until he discovered that he would be playing with and competing against fellow preachers. That made it okay.

Al died this summer. Team member Steve Wells created a traveling trophy (an ornate German stein, of course) to memorialize him. Teams from The Village and Delaware Run compete every two weeks, and the stein goes home with the winners. After the first competition, Al's widow, Betty, right, presented the trophy/stein to George Ankeney, representing Delaware Run, as Dave Edwards, representing The Village, looked on.



The Home's culinary director Kristen Waby is a renowned pastry chef. Here she presents petit fours and pastries she created for a reception following the 2014 Memory Tree service at The Home. The annual ceremony honors residents who have died in the past year.

*The golden winter's sun  
through my window shines,  
touching the starched ruffles of my curtains,  
greening up my ivy vines.  
It caresses the flowers  
in my window vases,  
imparts a glow upon my children's faces.  
I thank God for eyes to see  
all of the beauty that is surrounding me.*

Written in 1968 by former Village resident  
Dorothy Patrick, 1920-2014.  
Illustrated by Dianne Almendinger, of Delaware Run

## Volunteers from Ghana share in Service

The Northland Church of Christ in Columbus hosts a "church within a church" made up of immigrants from Ghana. The Ghanan members became missionaries in their new land, spending a Saturday morning serving residents of The Home. They played games, went on walks, and even helped with housekeeping tasks. By the time they left, everyone was feeling thankful and blessed.

# Reflections

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Delaware, Ohio 43015

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## Christmas Morning At The Run

The houses are nestled on Christmas morn  
'neath glistening blankets of snow;  
As the orange winter sun peeks and smiles  
at the peaceful scene below.

*John Dickman  
resident of Delaware Run*

*photo by Ken Fischer  
resident of Delaware Run*

