

## *We Give Thanks, for the Child*

by Larry Harris, CEO

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung,  
Of Jesse's lineage coming,  
As men of old have sung.  
As men of old have sung.  
It came a flow'ret bright  
Amid the cold of winter  
When half-spent was the night.

Theodore Baker  
1851-1934

Janet and I put our Christmas lights up early this year. They were plugged in and fired up before Thanksgiving. Oh I know, we crossed holiday orbits, thus violating a tacit neighborhood taboo, but our infraction was not without logic or good reason. First, we simply caught the spirit early. What can I say. Janet was playing carols on her piano as the October leaves were turning, and I was

popping holiday CDs into my car stereo by Veterans Day.

But I had a self-serving reason far more compelling than “we simply caught the spirit early”: I am averse to pain. Each year I string sixteen hundred blue mini lights on the junipers out front. In seasons past I sometimes put off the chore beyond the last minute, well into the Yule season, and found myself pressed

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*Illustrations accompanying the Harris and MacLaughlin writings were created by Marlene Andersen, Director of Resident Life Activities.*



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to string them in 10° hateful conditions when the wires were stiff as coat hangers and I wasn't sure my brittle fingers hadn't snapped off in their gloves. Hey, it could happen. There have been years

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## While I get the “Merry” we generally attach to “Christmas,” Janet and I have never been Jingle Bells-styled revelers on December 25th.

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when it certainly felt like it had. I was always relieved to find all ten still attached when I unsheathed them in the warmth of our home.

Cold is pain in my book. So I put the lights up early this year. When I could choose a tolerably mild day. When I could head off a ghastly holiday finger mishap.

Blue has always been our holiday hue of choice. At our first Christmas together way back when, Janet and I could afford only two strands for a scurvy little tree in our apartment window. For no particular reason, at least none we perceived at the time, we purchased two blue mini light strings at Sears, and we were off to the races for the rest of our lives. Each year we'd pick up a couple more. To this day, they've all been blue, outside and in.

Looking back, maybe there was a reason Janet and I didn't grasp at the time. As I introspect a bit now, blue better fits our Christmas mood – reflective, ponderous, meditative. Blue. Not sparkling confetti reds and greens and golds. Sober blue.

While I get the “Merry” we generally attach to “Christmas,”

Janet and I have never been *Jingle Bells*-styled revelers on December 25th. Each year as Christmas Day draws near, our thoughts always incline toward Bethlehem. The story of the holy birth in a backlot stable is but the first chapter in a tragic narrative that spans 33 years and ends on a blood-drenched cross at a hill called Calvary. The celebrated child of the manger becomes the rejected man of the cross. The Bethlehem baby was born to die.

That calls for blue lights on the junipers.

And so in December you are more apt to catch *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* or *Some Children See Him* wafting from Janet's piano or my stereo speakers. The hymns quietly contemplate the meaning and gravity of a Savior's birth, a blessed event imbued with pending tragedy.

The birth of a child is routinely marked with joy and celebration. A new life is presented to the world, immersed in innocence, and charged with hope for a meaningful eighty or ninety years ahead. What's not to celebrate?

For sure, the birth of Jesus two millennia back brought forth joy, as any birth would, from Mary and Joseph, from the shepherds in a nearby field, from the old man Simeon who had been waiting a lifetime for the promised birth. A child is born; go and tell!

But we who read today in scripture of that glorious birth know how it turned out. Or let's say, *seemed* to turn out. The life story of Jesus is one of cascading sorrows and terminal tragedy, a tale of unreciprocated love, a divine call waiting for a mortal response.

And there the story ends – or so it would appear. But read on. In three days, the cheerless account takes an abrupt one-eighty turn and reignites as Jesus steps forth from his tomb. Therein lies the great eternal hope of Christmas.

But the path to that hope is a chronicle of scorn and injury heaped upon the one sent to redeem us. His story reveals the depth of human depravity and our capacity for evil – measures without bounds, I do believe.

So I put the lights up early this year. Blue lights, to better fit our Christmas mood. Always blue. Oh we exchange gifts with those we love, we sing the carols and steep



the cinnamon cider. We holiday shop and hope for snow. But we do it all in a worshipful frame of mind. For through it all, above it all, and for it all, we give thanks, for the child, the cross, and his vacated tomb.

This Christmas, you will find Janet and me bowed in prayerful thanksgiving as we remember the birth of our Lord and Savior, our Redeemer, our Shepherd, our King, the Prince of Peace, the Lamb of God, our precious Jesus.

Merry Christmas, my dear friends.

## Celebrating Life-long Love

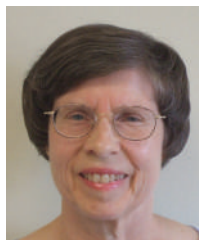
Willow Brook is proud every year to present *Beyond Golden*, a celebration for couples who have been married for 50 years or more. With the *Delaware Gazette*, we offer our long-married guests fabulous food, great entertainment, lots of conversation, and prizes.

Willow Brook residents Jim and Lois Perkins received the award for “Most Life Experience” because combined, their ages total 181 years. CEO Larry Harris is behind them. And at the far right, Tom and Joan MacLaughlin sample hors d'oeuvres.



## Winter Flights

*The day after Christmas began  
With a sky of pink and crystal blue,  
The pond its still reflection. Out of that  
Sky and onto that mirror came flight  
After flight of big Canadians, wide  
Wings banking in to splash down,  
Spreading concentric wave after wave.  
I could not count them all, so many.  
There must have been eighty avians,  
No gable or challenges issued, just  
Peacefully floating, long necks erect,  
Occasionally taking a watery sample,  
Gently paddling from east to west,  
Then back again. They rested for  
Perhaps a half hour. Then, as  
Unexpectedly as they arrived, they  
Began takeoffs in patterns as though  
Guided by the manager of air traffic  
In some control tower. Small group  
After small group, lifting their heavy  
Bodies with powerful wings,  
Till the pond again was quiet,  
Somehow bereft.*



by Marilyn Schroeder, resident

## Fleak Honored by Ohio Assisted Living Association



Village Assisted Living Director Susie Fleak, RN, was named Outstanding Administrator Nurse Manager by the board of trustees of the Ohio Assisted Living Association at its annual conference in November. And if you knew Susie like we know Susie, you'd understand why this honor was so fully deserved!

# Tribute Gifts

## Memorial Contributions September 20 - November 22, 2015

**Richard C. Atkinson**

Carol A. Roden

**William A. "Bill" Bardelang**

Greg & Macy Layer

**George Billman**

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

**Hazel B. Blose**

Dennis & Sharon Blose

**Esther Bunker**

Corinne D. Esau

Donna J. French

Charlotte A. Gallant

David & Rosalie Miller

Helen J. Reppart

Lois K. Smith

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Phyllis M. Wood

**Frances Carlton**

April L. Jackson

**Joseph Caudy**

Roger & Jane Sagar

**Margaret Caudy**

Roger & Jane Sagar

**Michael Chucta**

Teresa J. Ryan

**Mary Kay Cochran**

Marilyn J. Terry

**Dorothy J. Dale**

Joy D. Lackey

**Ruth L. Dennis**

Jerry & Mary Bishop

**Nancy DeTray**

Lisa Mack

**Irma Extenkamper**

Lois K. Smith

**George Foster**

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

**Charles Gerhart**

Rebecca L. Gerhart

**Lloyd Gray**

Betty Jean Gray

**Margaret V. Harper**

Ed & Stephanie Harden

**Shirley M. Harper**

Ed & Stephanie Harden

**Audrey & Alberta Harris**

Larry & Janet Harris

**John T. Hayes**

Karen S. Hayes

**Marjorie Heffelfinger**

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

**Carl Hertwig**

Joy D. Lackey

**Harry A. Humes**

Julie Bardelang

Mariella C. Dunnan

Corinne D. Esau

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Mitchell & Dyana Welch

**Elwood "Woody" Kaler**

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Linda A. Raber

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Thomas & Kathryn Brod

**Bette J. Meyer**

Josephine G. Bichsel

**Wilda Musgrove**

Sam & Mary Musgrove

**Robert Nichols**

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**Mary R. Page**

Julie Bardelang

**James Patterson**

Dorothea Patterson

**Edward Pawlik**

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

**Gertrud Petrovich**

Warren & Mary Lea Bailey

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

**Florence Poulson**

Thomas & Sara Poulson

**Emma "Maude" Prince**

Rebecca L. Harris

**Gene & Maude Prince**

Larry & Janet Harris

**Elizabeth S. Raber**

Linda A. Raber

**Mary C. Roden**

Carol A. Roden

**Don Rost**

Thomas & Sara Poulson

**Leonard N. "Len" Russell**

Mariella C. Dunnan

Corinne D. Esau

Colin & Janet Messaros

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**Mark E. Ryan**

Teresa J. Ryan

**Corrine Snyder-Poulson**

Thomas & Sara Poulson

**Matthew Troyan**

Mariella C. Dunnan

Alan & Kimberly Veatch

**Myra Weber**

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Jackie Dudley & FAS Directors

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Corinne D. Esau

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Tom & Beverly Russell

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Phyllis M. Wood

Betty Zuercher

Deb Zuercher



*This page is presented in memory of James Leslie, former resident of Willow Brook Christian Village.*

*Tribute Gifts*  
made to honor  
the living

**Marilyn Laubacher**  
Grace Lang

# Generosity and Gratitude

No tipping is allowed at Willow Brook. Our restaurant servers are nice because they are good people, not because they want a larger gratuity. And staff members know that they are not to accept gifts, except maybe a plate of cookies now and then. We do our best to pay everyone a living, albeit modest, wage so kindness is never for hire.

But we have learned in the most awesome way that residents of all three campuses want a means of showing their appreciation to the staff for their service throughout the year.

Every autumn the residents have an opportunity to make gifts to the Staff Christmas Bonus Fund. And my, are they generous!

Last year 281 residents and families on all three campuses gave more than \$80,000 in gifts ranging from \$10 to \$3,000. It amounted to \$250 for each staff member, after senior management opted out to give the others a little more.

A couple hundred bucks at Christmastime may or may not seem like a lot, but every year without fail a grateful, teary-eyed housekeeper or aide will say “When I opened the envelope and saw the check, I cried because I have never received a Christmas bonus before.” And “Now I can give my children a Christmas!”

It is a beautiful thing the residents do for the staff, and in return, the gratitude is abundant.



Community Relations Director and Reflections editor Teri Ryan and Director of Housing Becky Gerhart decorate a lobby tree that thanks residents and families for their generosity to the Christmas bonus fund. Similar trees adorn all three campuses.



## Caring Connection

*Lucy Ngebeh immigrated from Sierra Leone after its 11-year-long civil war more than a decade ago. A fight over diamonds, the conflict was based on greed and led to many years of human suffering.*

*Lucy was able to start a safer life, and first came to us as a nursing assistant in 2007. Here she has found a place where love reigns over greed, compassion over suffering, and kindness over all.*

*Willow Brook is proud to welcome team members whose hearts, minds and arms are open to those in their care. You can see on Betty Griffith's face that the caring connection has been made.*

## To be even a Tiny Part

Every Thanksgiving, The Hamburger Inn, a main street institution in Delaware, Ohio, opens its doors for a Thanksgiving dinner free for the asking. As in the past several years, Willow Brook has given partner Bill Michailidis space in our room-size coolers to refrigerate his marinating turkeys.

Hamburger Inn is a tiny place, with only 37 stools, but volunteers from the sheriff's department, mayor's office, politicians, and just plain folks helped, and Michailidis estimates they fed 740-780 people on Thanksgiving Day – including their staff and extended families, and anyone else who walked through the door.

“What a generous heart!” says CEO Larry Harris. “We are so grateful to be able to be even a tiny part.”

# Roses in Winter

Gray, cold dawn;  
Leaden skies;

Chill wind drawn

From the north.

Life stirs not.

Stalks stand in silence,

Iced thorns line desolate canes and bite like frozen wavelets of the wind.

Leaves, crisp and brittle, scratch and scrape, tormented by the

Chill wind drawn

From the north.

Mounds of soil and bark and cobs and leaves preserve the spark of life;  
The spark that awaits the wakening call of Spring.

Life stirs not.

From the north

Chill wind drawn

Leaden skies;

Gray, cold dawn.

by John T. Dickman, resident



## 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

Reflections is published quarterly by  
Willow Brook Christian Communities.

Teri Ryan, designer & editor

not for profit • Church of Christ



The gazebo at Willow Brook  
Christian Home is lighted and  
ready for Christmas.

It was Christmas Eve, and the house was silent. All of us were sound asleep, including our resident mouse, Mickey (named by our children). He was on the fireplace mantle, his regular nightly perch. I had just settled down and was comfortably in slumberland when suddenly I heard a strange whooshing sound outside our window.

“What the –,” I muttered under my breath, as I clambered out of bed and rushed to the window, opening it wide to get the best possible view. The full moon illuminated the snowy scene, spreading wondrous beauty across the landscape. The wooshing had diminished, but returned like a strong gust of wind as a giant sleigh pulled by nine reindeer hove into view. And the driver – of course! It was Santa himself! They sped toward the house, Santa shouting directions: “Rudolph! Up! Up! Dasher! Dancer! Pull hard! Head for the roof! Prancer! Vixen! Watch out for the chimney!” Up they rose as if jet-propelled, and with a graceful swooping maneuver landed right next to the chimney.

“Wow! What a show!”

Immediately the pawing and scraping of nine sets of hooves raised my hackles. “Hey! Easy does it!” I complained. “That’s a new roof as of last summer!”

I quickly hustled downstairs to the living room just in time to see Santa in an uncontrolled descent down the chimney with an enormous pack of toys on his back. He landed on the andirons with a loud thud, uttering a piercing “Oww!” Poor Mickey, rudely awakened, took off like a shot. Santa’s radical manner of approach raised a horrific cloud of ashes and soot, and the poor fellow, rubbing his sore behind, was coughing and hacking, his clothes covered with the stuff. “You really need a chimney sweep to clean out your flue,” he sputtered. How on earth did this corpulent visitor and his portly pack manage to squeeze through a flue that has an opening that’s one-third of his girth? Beats me! Must have something to do with the miracle of Christmas.

But he hacked and snorted the soot out of his nose, shook out his red suit, and soon his whole being took on a countenance of merriment. His eyes sparkled, and his ruddy face radiated great joy. He



Tom MacLaughlin, resident

## A Visit from Santa

by Tom MacLaughlin

(with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore)

had a lustrous white beard, and gripped a little pipe in his teeth, issuing smoke which enveloped his head. I feared he would set his beard on fire. His roly-poly stature reminded me of a huge red beach ball, and I couldn’t suppress my laughter. He chuckled with me, gave me a wink; then went straight to work trans-

forming flat, fluttering stockings into irresistible bulging receptacles of joy. And, boy, was he good at it!

He finished in a jiffy, gave a strange gesture, and *zoo-ip!* – up the chimney he went. He hopped into his sleigh, shouted, “Up, up, and away!” to his team, and they were off in a flash.

And I heard him shout, as he flew out of sight, “Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”

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The next morning I thought, “What a dream I had!” After the children had emptied their stockings, I was about to tell my wife about it.

But suddenly she said, “Hey–what is this funny little object on the floor by the fireplace?” She bent down and picked it up. “Why, it’s a pipe–and the bowl is–warm!” she exclaimed.

“Well,” I stammered, “I have no–I–I can’t even imagine –where–how–ah–strange–I–I just don’t–ah–know–”

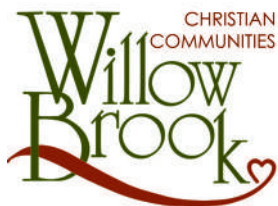


# Reflections

Willow Brook Christian Communities  
100 Delaware Crossing West  
Delaware, Ohio 43015

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Santa, aka Wes Jordan, and resident  
Helen Reppart share an inside joke.



*Merry  
Christmas!*