

## A Two-Thousand Year Journey

*Greeting cards have all been sent,  
The Christmas rush is through,  
But I still have one wish to make,  
A special one for you...  
Merry Christmas, darling,  
We're apart, that's true,  
But I can dream and in my dreams  
I'm Christmasing with you.*

Music composed by  
Richard Carpenter 1946-  
Performed by  
Karen Carpenter 1950-1983

A couple weeks ago, as the Christmas season was just working up a good head of steam, Janet and I headed off to the mall for our nightly walk. (OK, I confess, we have become clichéd mall walkers, yes – and we rarely miss a night). The sliding glass doors magically parted as we approached, and welcomed us to a holiday dreamland of trees and garland and lights and music. The music at that moment was the syrupy vocals of Karen Carpenter dripping from the overhead speakers, singing her timeless Christmas heartbreak, *Merry Christmas Darling*.

The song was released in 1970, a year Janet and I – as a just-engaged couple

by Larry Harris, CEO



*Washington National Cathedral  
in Washington, D.C.*

– were unable to be together at Christmas. (Long story.) I remember hearing that song for the first time on the car radio, knowing that my Janet was 700 miles away. I couldn't help it, tears came rolling

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down right there in the traffic. Thank you for that, Karen. Yeah, thanks a lot. To this day, her song fills me with deep sentiment each time I hear her pleading voice express her longing at Christmas for an absent love.

For both Janet and me, this pretty much defines our Christmases. Not the song per se, but the mood. The holidays are for remembering what time has taken from us – all four parents, the squeals of little ones under the tree on Christmas mornings, all the friends and other family members who have crossed the great river ahead of us, beloved cats that have warmed our laps on winter nights.

Christmas for us is a time of quiet remembrance, not celebration.

I think back 11 Christmases as Janet and I sat in silence holding hands in room 133 at our Willow Brook Christian Home. I remember looking out into the night at the courtyard, *my* courtyard, with its strings of snow-covered white lights on low bushes. How peaceful. How beautiful. How utterly sad, for in the bed at our side lay Janet's mother, slowly drawing and releasing her dying breaths. Even now I can hardly bring myself to step into that room.

And so we consider each Christmas what has been taken from our lives. In the same spirit of quiet reflection, we contemplate a humble birth long ago in a Bethlehem stable that led to an unspeakable loss. A bed of straw, snorting livestock, animal scent hanging in the frosty night air – how much more humble could a birth have been? That is how Jesus came into this hate-filled world. From the start he never stood a chance, and after 33 spotless years, they killed him. They killed him! I do hope God has forgiven them, for they didn't know what they were doing.

Each year Janet and I pay homage to that

***...there is a somber reverence  
in the waiting throng, a sense  
that we are about to witness  
something at once both  
profound and heartrending.***



birth with a pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., for Christmas Eve worship at the Washington

National Cathedral. In the dark still of the night, often in shivering cold, we join a queue snaking up to grand doors of timber, hung on mighty wrought iron strap hinges. As we anticipate entrance to the majestic church, there is a somber

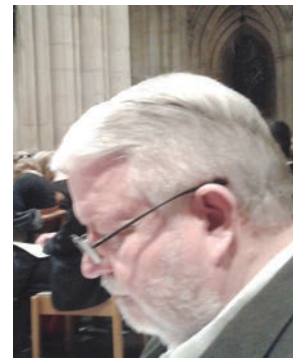
reverence in the waiting throng, a sense that we are about to witness something at once both profound and heartrending.

The doors open. We find our way to our seats and steel ourselves for some of the most inspiring lessons and beautiful music ever composed,

performed by a choir of angels, all to honor the divine birth. While waiting, I marvel at the stained glass windows, one with an actual moon rock embedded at the center. I gaze in wonder at the vast seven-story vaulted space above us, a wondrous Gothic cathedral indeed, with delicate stone ribbing in the high ceiling leading down to massive carved piers. An architectural masterpiece.

The choir enters and assembles before us. With no word of introduction, a baritone steps to the microphone and begins *O Holy Night*. The choir's angelic voices fill in behind his singing, softly, tenderly at first, then soaring to a glorious conclusion. We are off on a two-thousand year journey to the seminal event that forever changed our little blue-marbled world, wandering small and alone through the cosmos. Those nights in the Cathedral remind us that we are not alone, we have not been forgotten. God's son walked among us once upon a time. O holy night!

Larry Harris, CEO  
[lharris@willow-brook.org](mailto:lharris@willow-brook.org)





# Meet Remy, the Therapy Cat

Our Remy's story is an interesting one. He and his two sisters were found in July, alone in a hot empty RV with no food, no water, and no momma. He was found by the friend of a friend of our assisted living activities director, Amy. He has now found his furr-ever home with Amy, and he has settled beautifully into life as a therapy cat at Willow Brook at Delaware Run, accompanying Amy to work.

As Amy says, "I know he was sent from God just for us, because there has never been a cat so fine with being hauled back and forth in a car and passed from person-to-person five days a week. He has room visits with residents and sits in laps during activities. He brings joy to residents and staff alike. He rides around on my cart while I update bulletin boards and pass out our weekly updates and calendars." Amy even hears reports from residents who claim, "I'm not even a cat person, but there's something about Remy."

This kitty came into this world with a mission, and he fulfills it every time he comes to work and



*Willow Brook at Delaware Run Assisted Living Activities Director, Amy Santarelli, rescued Remy. He quickly became a therapy cat, coming to work with Amy every day, and the residents just love him!*

puts on his uniform. He has a soft crocheted harness and leash that Amy made him so if he were to get down or under something he'll be easy to fetch back. The funny thing is, we never have to use it. He is perfectly content being wherever he is needed.



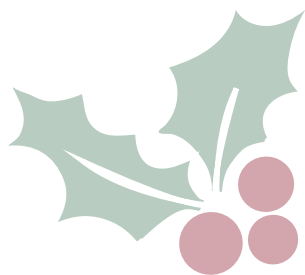
## Virtual Christmas Party - Again!

*In Decembers past, some 500 Willow Brook staffers and their guests have gathered for a rousing Christmas party celebration, with a live band, staff awards, and door prizes valued into six figures. Due to COVID-19, the party went virtual for the last two years. In order to keep our residents and staff healthy and safe we are going virtual again this year! Pictured above, a behind-the-scenes look at the filming of our main program in 2021.*



## Leaves & Lattes 5k

*Willow Brook Board member, Tim Sargent, and his daughters cross the finish line of the Leaves & Lattes 5k. The race is the brainchild of Willow Brook board member Becky Hickman, and has become an annual board-initiated event. Proceeds benefit the Willow Brook Church of Christ Retired Ministers Fund.*



# *Tribute Gifts*

## Memorial Contributions

### August 26 – November 28, 2022

#### **Margaret Alexander**

John & Sue Dickman  
Alan Johnston & Heather  
MacLaughlin

Dorothy M. Knight  
Robert & Nancy Rietz  
Richard F. Seebode

#### **Richard C. Atkinson**

Carol A. Roden

#### **Lucille Barkley**

Larry & Carol Gillespie

#### **Judy Bear**

Dan Bear

#### **John & Jo Ann Bill**

John & Nancy Bill

#### **Harriet M. Bracken**

C. Lee Bracken

#### **Margery D. Burkhart**

David & Carol Camp

#### **Verila "Virgie" Bussman**

Mark & Christine Bussman

#### **Mary Ellen Cerrato**

William & Marianne Burke

#### **S. Frank & Betty Chappell**

Anonymous

Larry & Janet Harris

Karen Susenna

#### **Bill Clatworthy, III**

Kent & Diana Morgan

#### **Warren E. Coate**

Francis & Nancy Rynearson

#### **William & Cathy Damron**

Margaret A. Dronsfield

#### **Linda Carol Davidson**

Gary & Judi Rutledge

#### **Nadine Davis**

Virginia N. Davis

#### **Delaware Run Residents**

Irene C. Blaszkowiak

#### **Nancy DeTray**

Irene C. Blaszkowiak

#### **Dorothy "Jean" Dopkiss**

Robert & Barbara Kimball

#### **Curtis Dunham**

Melissa Ashley

#### **Judith L. Earich**

Joseph & Jayne Otchy

Helen J. Reppart

Spring Road Church of Christ

Lucretia M. Wellman

#### **Judith "Judy" Ebling**

Robert Ebling

#### **Barbara England**

Michael & Judith England

#### **Ed & Jean L. Flahive**

Michael & Judith England

#### **Loretta Glowacki**

Ronald & Mary Wilcox

#### **Betty Godbold**

Daniel Call & Gerry Whinnery

#### **Betty Griffeth**

Gary & Sherrie Andrus

#### **Audrey & Alberta Harris**

Larry & Janet Harris

#### **John T. Hayes**

Karen S. Hayes

Ronald & Donna Moore

#### **Alexander "Alex" Heingartner**

Dan Jay

#### **Harry A. & Mary Jo Humes**

Bradley Humes

#### **James E. Jackson**

Mitchell & Dyana Welch

#### **Doris Jessie**

Brian & Sandy Arnold

#### **Thomas J. Lasley**

Thomas & Kathryn Brod

Thomas & Janet Lasley

#### **Betty J. Miller**

Larry & Carol Gillespie

#### **Martha Mong**

Gloria Brubaker

#### **Daisey Morgan**

Helen J. Reppart

#### **Joan Murchland**

James & Patricia Biehl

Helen J. Reppart

William Warner

#### **Twila Orians**

Michael & Judith England

#### **Florence Poulson**

Thomas & Sara Poulson

#### **Gene & Maude Prince**

Larry & Janet Harris

Rebecca L. Harris

#### **Judith Pruett**

Cynthia Pruett

#### **John R. & Mary Regalsky**

David & Carol Camp

#### **Mary C. Roden**

Carol A. Roden

#### **Don Rost**

Thomas & Sara Poulson

#### **Henry Shaw**

Robert & Linda Gaffey

James & Pauline Kossow

Robert & Nancy Rietz

Douglas & Kathryn Warnock

#### **Donald Sommers**

Dan Jay

#### **Doris Spratt**

Helen J. Reppart

#### **Corrine Snyder-Poulson**

Thomas & Sara Poulson

#### **Rose Toth**

John & Joanne Toth

#### **Dixie Walker**

Maxine Brunenn

David & Brenda Christianer

David & Carol Dolbeare

Patricia Doran

#### *Dixie Walker continued*

John & Karen Grawe

John Machusick Family

Paula Main

Carol Schien

#### **Evelyn Wildermuth**

Helen J. Reppart

Roger & Jane Sagar

Lucretia M. Wellman

#### **Elaine S. Williamson**

James & Pauline Kossow

#### **Harry E. & Mary Williamson**

James & Pauline Kossow

#### **Gale & Margie Winnett**

Terrie Winnett

#### **Phyllis M. Wood**

C. Lee Bracken

#### **Nicki V. Zanetos**

Lisa Mack

## *Tribute Gifts*

### To honor the living

#### **Dolores I. Edwards**

Thomas & Deborah Burke

#### **Corinne D. "Davie" Esau**

Michael & Judith England

#### **Donna J. French**

C. Lee Bracken

#### **Larry Harris' decades of service**

Larry & Carol Humes

#### **Jack & Susan Hendrickson**

Amy Rossetti & Family

#### **Willow Brook Christian Communities Staff**

William & Luanne Ball



## Second Mile Award Winners 2022



**Victor Koroma**  
The Home

*Each year around Christmas, at all three Willow Brook campuses, staff and residents nominate staff members for The Second Mile Award - an award which recognizes the staff member's dedication and hard work and their willingness to "go the extra mile."*

*Congratulations to our 2022 recipients; we are so thankful for all you do for Willow Brook!*



**Devin Hines**  
The Village



**Bruce Colvin**  
Delaware Run

## WILLOW BROOK CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

*not-for-profit • Churches of Christ*  
*willow-brook.org*

Willow Brook Christian Home  
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Phone: 614-885-3300

Willow Brook Christian Village  
100 Willow Brook Way South  
Delaware, Ohio 43015  
Phone: 740-369-0048

Willow Brook at Delaware Run  
100 Delaware Crossing West  
Delaware, Ohio 43015  
Phone: 740-201-5640

Independent Living • Skilled Rehab  
Transitional Living • Respite  
Assisted Living • Memory Care  
Long-Term Care • Adult Day Program

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Cathy Courtice, Editor  
Christina Dresdow, Designer

## In Memoriam



*Judy Earich, long-time Willow Brook trustee, died this fall, the victim of cancer she had battled for several years. She served on the board 25 years, from 1997 to the time of her death. She was president for two years in the early 2000s.*

*Judy joined the Peace Corps as a young adult and spent two years in Brazil. It was there that she learned to care about the "have nots" in the world, a burden that influenced her service at Willow Brook.*

*Says CEO Larry Harris, "Judy loved life. She was one of the most positive spirits I have ever known. We are missing her terribly."*



*Left, the late Bob Johnson describes his nativity scene to former resident Janet Enck.*

*This past summer Willow Brook lost beloved resident Bob Johnson. He was founder and former owner of the Diamond Cellar jewelry stores in Columbus. For a decade or so at Christmastime, Willow Brook at Delaware Run was honored to host a special Christmas ornament display by Bob and his son, Jeff. Bob and Jeff created three solid gold and bejeweled Christmas decorations for Lois, wife and mother, in the 1980s. Bob is missed by his Willow Brook family, but his legacy lives on through his two sons, his artistic creations, and the Diamond Cellar stores.*

*willow-brook.org 5*



# A Christmas Reflections Tribute to Larry Harris

by Cathy Courtice, Willow Brook Director of Community Relations

*‘T*was Christmas Eve night, a brisk chill in the air  
two lovebirds are strolling toward a building so fair.

*Hands clasped with love, and coats buttoned tight  
they looked to the sky on this most solemn night.*

*The stars were ablaze, the moon watching o’er:  
how God’s majesty on Earth made their hearts soar.*

*The night sky so stunning, and hope on the breeze,  
tousled their hair and rustled the trees.*

*Could anything be better? they wondered aloud  
as up ahead gathered a hushed nighttime crowd.*

*Then just in the distance, such a beautiful sight  
the National Cathedral, aglow and alight.*

*Awaiting the masses, this most holy eve,  
its walls housing joy and a silent reprieve –*

*A reprieve from division, a blessed pause from buying  
it soothes all who enter, without even trying.*

*O come, all ye faithful! the trumpet-sound blows  
this night holds a Mystery that God only knows.*

*With a tear in her eye, Janet sings her sweet song  
“Tis time, Larry, dear, you’ve been working so long.*

*So much has changed since those Will-O-Lock days,  
we’ve given our hearts, and had so much praise.*

*There’s been so much love, too much to say  
and Willow Brook, forever, will be in our DNA.”*

*A tear in his eye, Larry nods his assent  
“No one ever will know what these years have meant...*

*I’ve given my self, my time, and my soul,  
my love, and my life to this CEO role.*

*But perhaps it is time to pass this bright torch –  
you and I can go walking, or sit on our porch.*

*Or maybe we’ll delight in our backyard nook,  
Go to Vermont, or read Ora a book!*

*Janet smiles and nods, “All that and more!  
And still we’ll pass through ev’ry Willow Brook door.”*

*“Yes,” Larry says, “we’ll go out with a bang!  
It’s both bitter and sweet, and I’ll sure miss my gang.*

*But God, he does, have plans for me yet  
my memoir, it’s coming! Of that, you can bet.*

*So, Merry Christmas dear friends,  
you are blessed in my sight  
I love you so much, and I bid you  
Good night.”*



Larry and his beloved  
granddaughter, Ora Rose.

Editor’s Note: If you know Larry, you know he loves the Washington National Cathedral and ventures there each year, with Janet, on Christmas Eve. You also likely know that this issue of Reflections will be his last as CEO of Willow Brook. Leaving this ministry is very emotional for him, and yet, life is a series of beginnings and ends and beginnings. I wrote this poem imagining a solemn and beautiful Christmas Eve night; the tangle of emotions one must feel after giving their life to a cause; and to try to put into words the love that I know Larry has for Willow Brook, his staff, and his family. So Larry: please accept this little poem as a small token of my gratitude to you and your 48 years of service. I have tried to incorporate some of the things I know you love most: Janet, the Cathedral, your nightly mall walks, the natural world, Vermont, Ora Rose, and of course, *Reflections* and its readers, past and present. It is an honor to have known you and to have worked for you. –Cathy Courtice

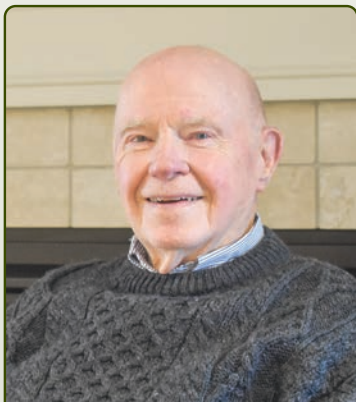




**Bruce Hardie**  
THE HOME



**Peggy Roach**  
THE VILLAGE



**Bill McCartney**  
DELAWARE RUN

## Gift of Love Award Winners

Every year, the Gift of Love Award is presented to volunteers who contribute their time and talent to enrich the lives of Willow Brook residents and staff. Volunteers serve in many ways, but no matter what they do, they do it out of the goodness of their heart and with no financial reward.

We are honored to present to you the Gift of Love Award recipients from each of our three campuses. These outstanding individuals exemplify the spirit of unselfish giving. Their contributions mean the world to us, and we are delighted to share them with you.



### Introducing Troy McKnight, New Willow Brook CEO

After an extensive search, Troy McKnight has been named by Willow Brook's Board of Trustees as the next CEO of Willow Brook Christian Communities. His appointment is effective in January 2023.

McKnight will succeed Larry Harris, who will retire on January 31 after 48 years.

For the past seven years, McKnight has been the executive director of a retirement community affiliated with Christian Care Communities and Services in Fort Worth, Texas. Prior to his service with Christian Care, he served as the executive director of Sagora Senior Living in Granbury, Texas. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Colorado State University. He also attended Abilene Christian University and is a Certified Assisted Living Manager. Welcome, Troy! We look forward to welcoming you to the Willow Brook family.

### A Farewell Message from Larry Harris, CEO

*After a 48-year run, I am retiring at the end of January. I have to confess, this is turning out to be harder than I imagined. Willow Brook is fused into my DNA by now, and it isn't so easy to walk away from it all. Truth is, Janet and I will still maintain many connections. We will continue our tradition of intimate dinners with small groups of residents each week. We plan to continue coming to some social events as well, and I may be offering a Reflections essay once in a while.*

*I have been moved by the number of congratulatory messages I have received – cards, letters, emails, texts*

*and conversations in the hallways. I wish I could respond to each one, but I would be doing little else. So please accept this as my heartfelt thank you for all your warm greetings and expressions of love.*

*Janet and I will soon be off on a new adventure. We are looking forward to more time together. We really do delight in each other's company, but I will dearly miss my daily interactions with all the people of Willow Brook.*

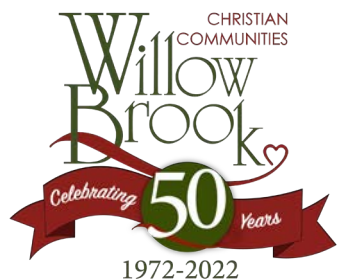
*Be good.*

# Reflections

Willow Brook Christian Communities  
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Delaware, Ohio 43015

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have an address update.*



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*Merry Christmas  
& Happy New Year!*

*The Red Tree by the water at Willow Brook at Delaware Run.  
Photo by Joel Hornsby*