

In December

by Larry Harris, CEO

*Shepherds, called by angels, called by love and angels;
No place for them but a stable. My Lord has come.*

My Lord has Come, a hymn of Christmas
Will Todd
1970-

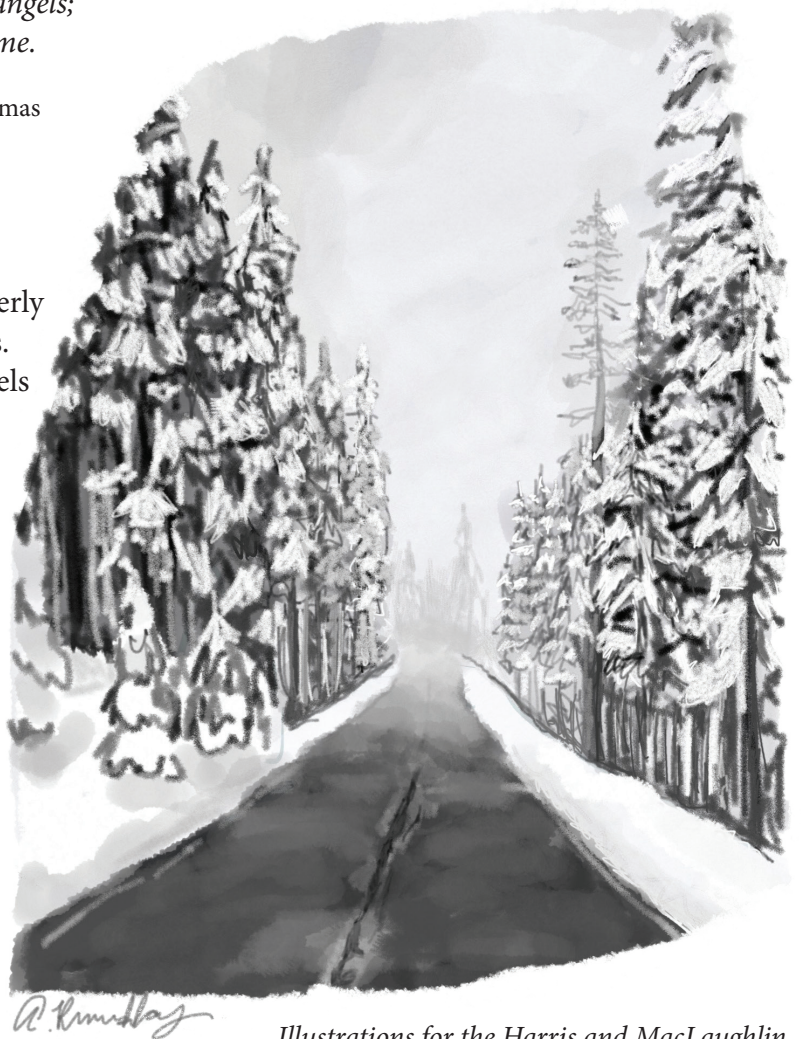
In December, the days shorten and grow bitterly cold. Darkness falls before the evening news. Soon white blankets will cover seeds and kernels nestled in last summer's thatch, buds that in

In December, furry creatures great and small retreat to lairs and burrows, and there curl into a long winter slumber.

spring will explode in a riot of color as life renews. For now, they sleep in silence, tucked like children in their beds, patiently waiting, waiting.

In December, furry creatures great and small retreat to lairs and burrows, and there curl into a long winter slumber. They take sanctuary in zoological dreams meant to see them through to warmer days. What a clever strategy they've taken up to ride out the lean season when eatables are so scarce, when arctic cold is best endured in an unconscious stupor.

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Illustrations for the Harris and MacLaughlin pieces were created by Adrienne Rumschlag, Cherith activities director at The Village.

Sleep away the hard times, dear creatures. Sleep 'til benevolent spring breezes wake you with their soft whispers.

High above, a wedge of Canada geese slices through a frozen slate sky in their patented V formation. Surely, with pumping wings extended in flight and an icy headwind buffeting the airborne squadron, cold penetrates each soaring fowl to its marrow. I wonder if they now regret their collective decision last October to stay when they passed on the chance to join compatriots heading south.

Godspeed, wintering geese. My wish for you is an early spring.

In December, school takes recess. Kids are released from daily rigors of learning and the angst of final exams and lunchroom rivalries.

The liberated youth flock to malls and movie theaters. They roll snowmen on the lawn and raise snow forts, those ice-packed ramparts designed to fend off pummels of snowballs. Youthful freedom reigns supreme in the neighborhoods.

Play hard, young students. Play 'til the morning bell calls you back to your classrooms next year.

For grownups, life is driven indoors where it adopts a slackened pace. December is the season for taking stock and reflecting on mile markers passed on life's journey. December is a time for quiet meditation on decisions made and actions taken or not. And the season presents an opportunity for course correction if that journey is deemed to have veered off heading.

Adjust your course, wayfaring pilgrim. Lift your eyes to the horizon, and hold steady to your chosen path.

In December, a child's eyes gaze in wonder as they survey the dazzling lights that adorn the curious tree. Dad and Mom installed in the front window, a conifer whose boughs shelter a collection of wrapped treasures that grows day by day. Each gift holds promise of joy on Christmas morning, and each is a clear declaration that here in this house, there is love.

Gaze in wonder, little one. Come Christmas morning it will all make sense, so gaze now in puzzled

wonder.

In December, hearts are full and love abounds. Carols flow from car stereos and robed choirs tiered in churches and shopping malls. The hymns of Christmas declare to us that "God so loved the world..." Oh yes he did, so much that he sent his only son.

Sing, oh Christmas carolers. Remind us that we are not abandoned to navigate this crazy world alone.

On these frosty December nights, glittering lights festoon eaves and front-lawn trees as sure evidence that old Christmas is upon us once again. Each display, whether intended or not, is reminiscent of the stars over Bethlehem on that night when God humbly presented his child to a fearful and broken world.

Inspire us oh lights of Christmas. Take us back, take us back.

Faithful hearts return to the fateful night so long ago when love's light came to spoil the darkness.

Faithful hearts return to that fateful night so long ago when love's light came to spoil the darkness. In a long-ago Bethlehem stable, a swaddled newborn lay sleeping on the prickly straw of a livestock feeding crib. So pure, so innocent, so blameless, as are all babies at the dawn of life. Given

time, the adult version of each faultless child invariably begins to collect deficiencies, and morphs into a stained soul.

But the Bethlehem baby carried his purity and innocence intact through his truncated 33-year life, right up to the violent end when spikes were pounded through his hands to secure his mangled body to its cross. Never before or since has a life so utterly good been crushed by such gross injustice. Yet his death two thousand years ago was a miscarriage that in the end delivered us to life.

God visited our shattered world the night Christ was born, and his Bethlehem miracle reverberates

even now across 20 millennia, into this season of Christmas. It is the supreme symbol of God's love extended to us, the unworthy and the unfit.

In December, we remember, and we give thanks.



Larry Harris, CEO
lharris@willow-brook.org



A Whole New Look at Willow Brook Christian Village

Exterior renovations of the twin singles are complete! We added a stone façade, shutters and coach lights, shaker shingles over the garage, new entry and garage doors and siding on the porch.

And as the twins are turned over, interior upgrades are made, including a bay window, sky light, arched

entryway and open floor plan kitchen.

“I want to thank our staff who have worked so hard on these renovations,” says Nicole Ketron, Village executive director. “It’s wonderful to see how delighted our residents are with these updates to their homes.”

Stop by to visit one of these stylish and cozy homes.



Script Ohio at The Village

With the help of a drone, residents and staff at The Village made a video of their formation of Script Ohio in October. Residents formed O-H-I-O, with two 96-year-old World War II veterans, Lee Siegwald and Phil Mark, dotting the ‘i.’ Watch the video on our Facebook Page.



Leaves & Lattes Fundraiser

On a crisp clear day this fall, David Lisman and Gloria An joined scores of runners and walkers at Sharon Woods Metro Park in Columbus, Ohio, to raise money for the Willow Brook Ministers Fund.

The Leaves & Lattes 5-K event, organized by Board Member Becky Hickman, netted \$8,510 in donations for the fund, which provides financial assistance to retired ministers of the Church of Christ and their spouses.

Tribute Gifts

Memorial Contributions

August 27 – November 11, 2019

Melba Advent-Davis

Grace M. Lang

Richard C. Atkinson

Carol A. Roden

Anita Bair

James & Nancy Johnston

Keith Ball

Helen J. Reppart

Jean W. Baskwill

George & Margaret Alexander

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Delaware Run Residents

Association

Betty Jean Gray

David & Sara Hoppenstand

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Judy Bear

Dan Bear

Anna Blantar

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S. Frank & Betty Chappell

Larry & Janet Harris

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Bill Clatworthy, III

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Alice Hawk

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Philip Mark

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Bradley Humes

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Manuel L. Johnson

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Lisa Mack

Lowell Zechiel

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Tribute Gifts
to honor the living

Shirley Jackson

Todd Jackson & Jyl Harrington

Lucretia Wellman

James & Pauline Kossow

Mary Zaye

Sharon Eak

*This issue is in memory
of Wayne Hasty, former
resident of Willow Brook
at Delaware Run.*



Santa is Missing

By Tom MacLaughlin

It's Christmas Eve. The elves have been working hard, building and wrapping toys, then packing them carefully in Santa's sleigh.

"Santa! It's time to leave!" Mrs. Claus shouts. But there's no answer. She calls the workshop and asks Chief Elf Bernard, "Is Santa out there with you?"

"No," he answers. "I assumed he was in the house, getting suited up. It's time he was getting ready to leave."

"Good grief!" Mrs. Claus says. "Could you please search everywhere out there? Call me if you find him. I'll call you if he shows up here." She thoroughly goes through the entire house again. No luck. She hurries out to the shop to check with Chief Bernard.

"Where the dickens could he be?" she asks.

"This is crazy," he says. "What on earth do we do now?"

Mrs. Claus ponders. "I'll go back into the house and dig out his second suit and put the doggone thing on. If Santa doesn't show up by the time I'm into that suit, I've got to take off — even though I've never been on a Christmas Eve journey!"

"I'll go with you," Bernard says. "Two of us is better than one."

Finally, they settle into the sleigh and fasten their seatbelts. The reindeer are pawing

the ground, anxious to take off. Bernard gives the signal. Rapidly they lift off, and Mrs. Claus utters a shriek. "Oh my goodness! This is exciting! Do — do you — know the way?"

"No," he says, "but the reindeer do."

She nervously glances back at the thousands of packages in the sleigh.

"How do we know who gets what?"

"I have no idea," Bernard says. "Santa must have the names and addresses around here somewhere. There must be some kind of list, like a huge address book or something." They both search the cockpit.

Suddenly Mrs. Claus shouts, "Look! On that shelf under the dashboard!" She heaves a giant book off the shelf and thumbs through the stained pages.

"Look at all this! Names and addresses of people all around the world! This is our guide."

They soon realize that the reindeer's path coincides with the order in which the addresses are listed. And the gifts in Santa's pack are in the proper order, top to bottom, to match up with the list.

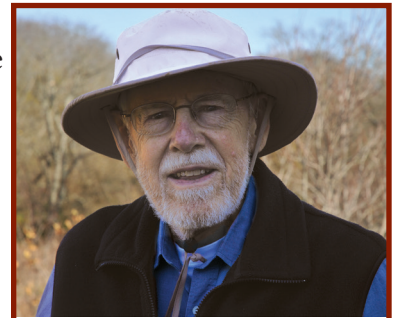
At each rooftop, Mrs. Claus supplies Bernard with gifts, and he zips down the chimney, distributing presents under the tree, then hurrying back up and onto the next house. On they go, working efficiently with great speed around the world. As they complete the last delivery, dawn is breaking. They hasten homeward.

Shortly after Bernard beds down the reindeer, Elf Alabaster discovers seven boys and girls holding Santa hostage in a remote corner of the workshop's basement.

The elves surround the frightened hoodlums, who reveal that they intended to steal the gifts from the sleigh. Santa is now freed, and the elves prepare to turn the hoodlums over to the police. Instead Mrs. Claus says, "I've got a better idea."

She chastises the youngsters and demands that they spend the coming year working every day after school in the workshop with the elves.

Thus the young boys and girls abandon wayward ways and develop useful skills, constructing gifts for Santa to distribute on Christmas Eve 2020.



Tom MacLaughlin, resident of Willow Brook at Delaware Run



Physicians Intern at The Home: *Just What the Doctor Ordered*

A medical check-up and a friendly visit with a young physician – that's something Willow Brook Christian Home residents look forward to each month, thanks to a partnership with Mount Carmel St. Ann's Family Medicine Residency program.

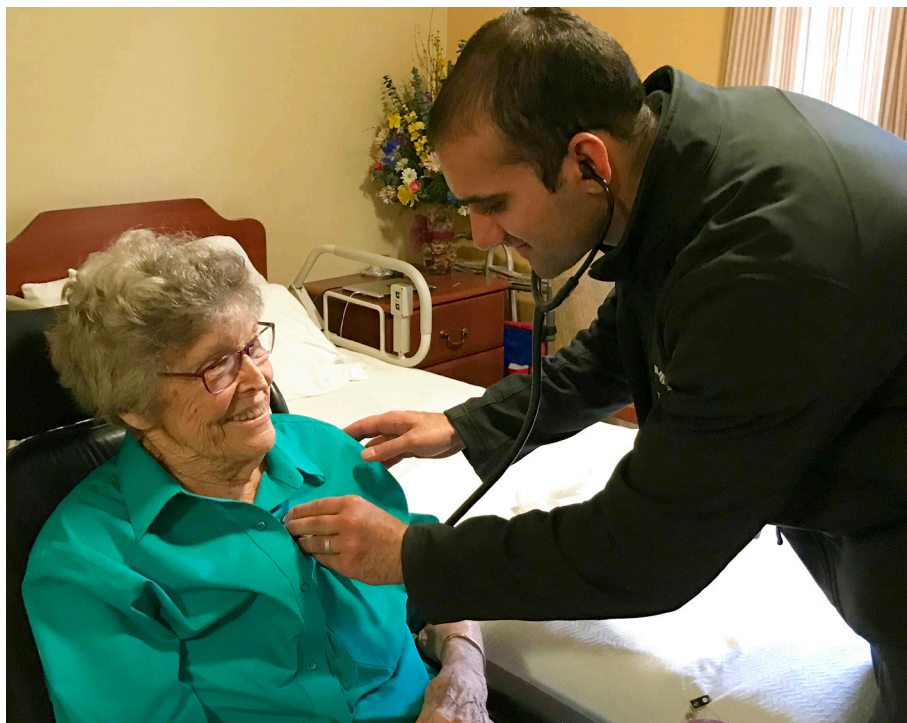
Six doctors are participating in the program to better understand how to care for seniors in a nursing home setting. At the same time, the physicians offer fresh insights on patient care, which benefits The Home's residents.

"This is a great opportunity for us to learn about the older generation, so we can better treat and tailor our services to them," says Dr. Shuowen Chen, a second-year resident in the hospital's program.

Each doctor is paired with a resident at the Home. They check the residents' charts, conduct a physical exam and answer questions. They make recommendations for changes if needed and meet with their supervisor, who also visits the patient.

"I personally see the residents as my own grandparents," says Dr. Teena Dacruz. "It's wonderful to talk with them and get to know them. Plus it's a really nice, caring facility. If I needed to send my grandmother to a nursing home, I would send her here."

David Chappell, executive director for The Home, says the partnership has many benefits. "Having Mount Carmel here not only helps Willow Brook, it also helps our whole community by preparing physicians to serve our fast-growing aging population."



Dr. Arshad Khan checks up on Home resident Yvonne Campbell during his monthly visit to the Home as part of the Mt. Carmel St. Ann's Family Medicine Residency program.

WILLOW BROOK CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Worthington, Ohio

Willow Brook Christian Home

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

- Rehabilitation
- Skilled nursing
- Long-term care
- Assisted living

Delaware, Ohio

Willow Brook Christian Village

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

- Retirement living
- Assisted living
- Rehabilitation
- Skilled nursing
- Memory care
- Long-term care
- Adult day services

Willow Brook at Delaware Run

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

- Retirement living
- Transitional living
- Assisted living
- Memory care
- Medical offices

Reflections is published quarterly by

Willow Brook Christian Communities

with offices at:

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

Erin MacLellan, Editor
Joel Hornsby, Designer

not for profit • Church of Christ
www.willow-brook.org



Every year our residents enjoy a festive Christmas reception, a time to celebrate with friends and enjoy delicious food. Willow Brook Christian Village Chef Tiffany Gilletly serves resident Jeanette Mills. Below, Scott Folchert, Village maintenance worker, plays the piano for Willow Brook's First Lady Janet Harris.



It's a fun tradition for Willow Brook staff to decorate more than 40 Christmas trees across our three campuses. Staff compete in a contest to see whose tree is the best. Pictured above is the "Rock Around the Christmas Tree" decorated by the culinary staff at The Home.



Delaware Run resident Rosie Happensack shared her wishes for Christmas with Willow Brook's own Santa (played by Wes Jordan, retired maintenance director at The Village). We hope all of Rosie's wishes come true this Christmas season!

Reflections

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

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Christmas Cardinal

Bright reminder of the sacred child,
The day of gladness for His gift.
Quiet wonder at the gentle promise.

—Marilyn Schroeder, Delaware Run resident

Photo by Delaware Run resident
Irene Blaszkowiak, taken outside her home