



SCAN TO WATCH VIDEO EDITION

In This Issue



Find that perfect gift without leaving town
Front page feature



Help provide 5000 meals to our neighbors
Support your community on Giving Tuesday, December 3 (see p. 2)



Celebrate the Reason for the Season
Find a complete list of Christmas church services on page 7.

Our readers share memories of 'Best Christmas Ever'

SEE PAGE 4



Bandy Drugs owner Gary Bandy displays one of the many locally made "Southern Rage Designs" woodcrafts available at the store. (Tim Hastings Photo)

Local bakery offers Christmas sweets and more

BY MARGIE SANDERS

If you find yourself with "visions of sugar plums [or some other sweet treat] dancing in your head," you don't have to go far this Christmas season to have all your sweet dreams fulfilled. Blondie's Bakery, 140 W. Broadway in Johnston City, can both satisfy your sweet tooth and provide possibly healthier and less fattening choices like soups and salads.

Blondie's Bakery, owned and operated by JC's Keri Davis, Blondie herself, opened in April 2023 and became a local favorite almost immediately. In the first few weeks of operation, Davis sometimes had to close on weekends to restock display cases with fresh food items. Now the business is open Tuesday through Friday, 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Saturdays from 8:00 am to noon, and closed on Sunday and Monday.

Davis describes herself as "a small-town girl who loves to create in the kitchen." According to the bakery's Facebook page, "Blondie" offers everything "from sweet creations to savory dishes, wedding cakes to smoked meats—you never know what she's up to."

Blondie's features daily a special soup, sandwich and salad especially prepared for lunch. An outside sign announces these and other menu offerings. Facebook tells more. Blondie's most popular items at this time are large, iced cinnamon rolls and brownies.

The bakery recently expanded its facility, developing adjacent storefront space into an event center. Blondie's Side Room is available for parties, reunions, or any kind of special gathering. Please call 618-952-0038 to schedule.



Kaydence Cook, clerk and baker at Blondie's Bakery, welcomes visitors to Blondie's Side Room. The event center offers gourmet appetizers and desserts prepared on site. (Photo by Tim Hastings)

Christmas gift options

Stores stock local books, paintings, woodcraft

BY TIM HASTINGS

Christmas shoppers wishing to buy local can do so in spades at Bandy Drugs and Down Home Comforts. Both offer locally produced gifts.

Bandy Drugs, 905 Grand Avenue in Johnston City, carries Kirk Smith's "Southern Rage Designs" decorative jigsaw woodcraft. "The designs depict Southern Illinois scenes and local hobbies such as hunting and fishing," says pharmacist Gary Bandy. "Kirk is an engineer who once worked at the drug

store. He lives just east of Johnston City."

Bandy notes that the wood pieces depict three area lakes—Crab Orchard, Little Grassy, and Devil's Kitchen. Other pieces depict waterfowl, local fish breeds, and outdoor scenes.

Bandy Drugs also offers a limited number of decorative candles.

Down Home Comforts, 411 E. Broadway, features "Reflections of an Imperfect Woman" by Johnston City author Barbara Kee Vatovec. "Vatovec has writ-

ten her own book of poems based on her lifelong memories," says Down Home Comforts co-owner Margaret Morris. "We are proud to carry her book."

Down Home Comforts also carries oil paintings, pastels, and historical novels of Southern Illinois—Rusty Watson. "Rusty and her husband Ron are both artists," Morris shares. "We carry their original oil paintings and pastels." Watson's novels include "The Misery Trail" and "Far from Windmills of Home."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

JCity Rotary, newest, youngest club in area, promotes community projects, addresses issues

Only six months after its launch, the Rotary Club of Johnston City has been recognized in the southern Illinois district as having the largest percentage of members under 40. Alysa Bunting, president-elect of the local club, recently attended the district conference in Mt. Vernon, bringing back certificates recognizing both the clubs' organization and its youthfulness. District 6510 also named current Johnston City club president, Shane Hermetz, as Rotarian of the Year.

Rotary District 6510 consists of 48 clubs from the Mississippi River to the Indiana border and Carlyle to Cairo. The Johnston City chapter lists approximately 25 members and meets twice monthly—on the first Wednesday at 12:00 for lunch at Andresen's, and on the third Wednesday, 4:00



Local Rotary club officers: Alysa Bunting (president-elect) and Shane Hermetz (president) display a gavel and bell used by Johnston City's original Rotary Club. That group disbanded in the 1970s.

pm at the office of Indigo Realty.

December 14, the JC Rotary will assist the Honor Wreaths for Veterans project. Rotarians plan to gather near the entrance of Lakeview cemetery at 11:00 am. Club members and oth-

er interested citizens may join City officials in placing approximately 100 wreaths on the graves of veterans. This is the first year for the project in a local cemetery. Both the Rotary Club and mayor Doug Dobbins hope

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

Hometown Christmas gift ideas

(CONTINUED FROM P. 1)

Candies, fresh flowers, women's tops, men's accessories, and Christmas decor round out the gift shop's offerings.

Dollar General, 612 W. Broadway, is local headquarters for name brand children's toys. "The top selling toy would always be Pokemon," confirms Dollar General Manager J.D. Donohew. "We have them in tins, booklets, apps, and little card sets.

"We have a whole aisle dedicated to Christmas toys. These include cars,

puzzles, games, high-tech figurines, Player-Doh, and Slime," Donohew adds.

Dollar General's assortment of gift cards includes ones for three local fast-food establishments: McDonald's, Subway, and Dairy Queen. The store is also well stocked with indoor and outdoor Christmas decorations, wreaths, garlands, candles, candy, clothes, and gift wrap.

Southern Illinois Bank Branch Manager Alicia Mormino encourages planning now for Christmas 2025, by opening a Christmas Club savings account. "It's a good idea to open it now, and that way, you'll be ready for next year," Mormino contends. "It's \$10 to open the account, and you can put in as much as you want. In October, we write you a



check and you can shop for Christmas.

Wanting to gift others this year with a little green? Mormino shares, "We have free little money envelopes that we give out at Christmas, if you want to give cash as a gift. We always have newer money here that we can offer for a gift. We often have gold or silver dollar coins and two-dollar bills if you're looking for something different."

Mormino says that U.S. Saving Bonds are available exclusively online. "We can guide you through the instructions on how to set it up," she adds.

Legence Bank assistant branch manager Debbie Paris says their bank will typically have crisp, new paper bills in various denominations, plus gold one-dollar coins and



Down Home Comforts co-owner Margaret Morris displays one of the locally written books she stocks. (Tim Hastings Photo)

two-dollar bills for gifting. "Cash is always a good Christmas gift," Paris relates. "My teenage granddaughters would love that."

Banterra Bank offers similar gift options and displays Manna Mission's "Angel Tree" with gift ideas for needy children and senior adults.


Other locally available gift include fresh fruit, grocery items, or gift certificates from the Food Shop, restaurant meals at T-Moe's, Andresen's, or El Jalisco, and bakery items from Blondie's.



Legence Bank assistant branch manager Debbie Paris says cash is always a great Christmas gift. (Tim Hastings Photo)



One of the delicious desserts available at Blondie's Bakery. (Tim Hastings Photo)




ENTER HERE

FREE DRIVE-THRU MEAL

FOR THE COMMUNITY

TONIGHT 5:30-6:00



Ready to eat meals every Saturday

It's a little-known fact in Johnston City that a small band of volunteers prepares meals every week for our community, creatively utilizing donations along with surplus items from area food pantries. These meals are distributed free of charge to those who drive through the parking lot of JCity Church almost any given Saturday night between 5:30 and 6:00. Regular recipients often take meals to local shut-ins. Families pick up multiple meals, and on a typical Saturday night, the church hands out about 100 plates.

Meals for walk-ins daily

Unused meals are taken next door for use at JCity Center for Hope and Renewal. Many who stop by the Center for a meal are homeless, handicapped, or just simply hungry. Local volunteers also bring in hot food to plate up and serve those in need during the week.

Adult meals in summer

During the summer, JCity Church turns its attention to JC Kids' Lunch Bunch, serving up to 100 meals each weekday in June and July. Although children's meals are subsidized by the USDA's summer food program, the cost of adult meals (approximately 900 per season) depends solely on local donations.

Serving 5,000 meals

Counting the Saturday night meals at JCity Church, weekday meals at the Center, and adult meals at Lunch Bunch, these groups hand out approximately 5,000 meals per year and feed the community at minimal cost. Except for small donations from a few recipients, JCity Church and the Center absorb all expenses including the operation and maintenance of 16 refrigerators/freezers.

Don't we have enough free food?

Though we have multiple food pantries and monthly grocery giveaways in our area, not everyone facing hunger has the home, health, or ability to use the groceries our area food banks offer. With restaurant prices rising faster than groceries, working families, those on fixed incomes, and the elderly often find eating out a luxury they cannot afford.


Multiply donations on 'Giving Tuesday'

Your gifts to JCity Center for Hope and Renewal during GiveSI will help us continue providing ready-to-eat meals for our community. Donations made through the GiveSI link on Giving Tuesday (December 3) will go even farther as they will be matched up to certain percentage through the campaign's giving pool. These funds will pay for to-go containers, paper products, equipment, and additional food items to help local volunteers prepare meals throughout the year.

How to donate without going online


If you prefer not to give online, here are instructions for writing checks that will qualify for matching funds:

- Checks must be made payable to SICF
- Memo line: "GiveSI—JCity Center for Hope and Renewal"
- Must be dated December 2nd or 3rd
- The Center must receive your check by Tue., Dec. 3, 5:00 pm.



GIVE TO FEED 5000


on Giving Tuesday



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During GiveSI

30 hours from 5:30 pm, Dec. 2 to 10:30 pm, Dec. 3 at this link



Down Home Comforts

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 Dec 24th - OPEN 9am - 12pm
 Dec 25th - CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS
 Jan 1st - CLOSED FOR NEW YEARS DAY

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Rotary Club

(CONTINUED FROM P. 1)

the project will expand locally in the future so that several hundred veteran graves at Lakeview can be decorated.

Wendel Arms, Substance Abuse Counselor with the Egyptian Health Department, was guest speaker at the November 20th local Rotary meeting. Born and raised in Johnston City, Mr. Arms now resides in Marion and is a member of the Marion Rotary Club. He

shared valuable information regarding substance abuse and specifically the opioid crisis. He distributed NARCAN (Emergency Treatment for Opioid Overdose) to all Rotarians in attendance and instructed them on its usage.

For more information, please contact Alysa Bunting at 618-952-5200.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



December Events

- DEC. 2-3 GiveSI - Day of Community Giving for So. IL
- DEC. 2-6 Signups for Christmas Food Boxes, First United Methodist Church, 10-11 am
- DEC. 3 Business Leaders Meet-N-Greet, Andresen's, 9 am
- DEC. 4 Rotary Meeting, Andresen's Cafe, Noon
- DEC. 5 Build for a Cause: Gingerbread Social, Celebrations Event Center (sponsored by Indigo Realty), 5:30 pm
- DEC. 9-13 Signups for Christmas Food Boxes, FUMC, 10-11 am
- DEC. 10 City Council, Scout Cabin, 5:00 pm
- DEC. 11 Prime-Timers, JCity Church, 1:00 pm
- DEC. 13 Half day of school
- DEC. 16 JC Planning Commission Meeting, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

- DEC. 18 Rotary Meeting, Indigo Realty Office, 4 pm
 - DEC. 19 Early school dismissal
 - Santa's Workshop, Library School Board Mtg. 6:00 pm
 - DEC. 20 - JAN. 3 No School
 - DEC. 21 Ministerial Alliance Christmas Food Box Distribution, (Registration required) FUMC, 9:00-10:30 am
 - DEC. 24 Christmas Eve church services, (see p. 7 for details.)
 - DEC. 25 - CHRISTMAS
 - DEC. 31 - New Year's Eve
- ### January Events
- JAN. 7 Business Leaders Meet-N-Greet, Andresen's, 9 am
 - JAN. 8 Rotary Meeting, Andresen's Cafe, Noon
 - JAN. 14 City Council, Scout Cabin, 5:00 pm
 - JAN. 16 School Board Mtg., Unit Office, 6:00 pm

- JAN. 20 NO SCHOOL - MLK Day
- JC Planning Commission Meeting, Scout Cabin, 5 pm
- JAN. 22 Prime-Timers, JCity Church, 9:30 am
- Rotary Meeting, Indigo Realty Office, 4 pm
- JAN. 24 Half day of school
- JAN. 28 City Council, Scout Cabin, 5:00 pm

Weekly Events

- MONDAYS**
SIMI (Southern Illinois Men of Integrity), 7 pm. Call 618-952-1272 for details.
- THURSDAYS**
Food pantry/clothes closet open, First Christian, 505 E. Broadway, 3:30-5:30 pm
- SATURDAYS**
Free Community Meal (drive-thru), JCity Church, 5:30-6:00 pm (No community meal Dec. 28)



Education

PARAPROFESSIONAL (Lincoln School) Please send a Letter of Application, resume, proof of paraprofessional certification, and two professional references to Mrs. Kathy Clark, Superintendent, Johnston City CUSD #1, P.O. Box 147, 1113 Grand Ave., Johnston City, IL 62951.

School Transportation

The Johnston City CUSD #1 is accepting applications for the following positions: Bus monitor, substitute bus drivers, and substitute bus monitors. Contact Becky Vancil, JC Transportation Director, at 618-952-2604.

Food Service

OPAA! is now hiring Kitchen Staff, Kitchen Staff Substitutes Please see jcindians.org/page/departments for links.

SANDWICH ARTIST Subway (24544-0 Johnston City) Part-time, Full-time

Retail

Sales Associate, Johnston City ZX. Full-time

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To submit news items, story ideas, events, employment/volunteer opportunities, donations, please call 618-952-1272 or email jcitycenter@gmail.com. All items for publication must pertain to events, individuals, or jobs located within Johnston City, Illinois.

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OPINION

Don't call me . . .

BY JIMMY DEAN
Maybe it's once a day, or maybe once a week. But you can bet, sooner or later, one will come to a telephone near you.

Everyone seems annoyed by them, and there's not much we can do to stop them.

What am I referring to? Those irritating phone calls that come when you sit down to eat, try and take a nap, or are in the middle of watching your favorite television show.

Phone numbers can be found by just about anybody in a lot of ways. Pretty much anything you buy online, sign up for, or join requires a phone number, and many times those numbers are then sold.

These calls typically show up on the caller ID as a number from an area code that is not recognized, anonymous, or a number that is local but not known to you.

If you pick it up, you might get a recording telling you to stay on the line, take a survey or listen to a political advertisement. Or you might hear a live person telling you to send money or go to jail.

At home we do not answer the phone if we don't

recognize the number. Leave me a message; and if I know you, I will call you back. No message and you get blocked.

I have the no-call number (888-382-1222) on every family-owned phone, but even these can be and are sometimes circumvented.

Friends ask me why I sometimes don't answer the phone when they know I am home.

When I walk in the door of an evening, my cell phone goes off. Close friends know the number to call if they need me, or if it's an emergency.

Leave me a message and I will get back to you as soon as I can, but I don't want to listen to someone from a call center located overseas.

When I was growing up, party lines were the big phone nuisances. A person had to wait for the other party to finish their conversation and hang up before another could use the line.



Nowadays, it seems like every day we are warned of a new scam. Within minutes, someone has a person on the telephone calling people trying to take advantage of the elderly or vulnerable persons.

Call the National Do Not Call Registry number (listed above) and see if this helps. This free service may help reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive. Registering your number is easy and available for either cell or landline phones.

Got to go, my phone is ringing.

Jimmy Dean is a freelance writer and former mayor of Johnston City. Reach him at jrdean@mchsi.com.



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randy@jcitychurch.com

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"AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO THEM, 'FEAR NOT: FOR, BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE.'" — LUKE 2:10 KJV

ARROW NEWS—DECEMBER 2024 • 3



The Best Christmas Ever

stories from our readers & staff

Our best Christmas memories are likely the most cherished. In the November issue of *Arrow News*, both print and online, we asked readers to share stories about their “best Christmas ever.” Even though our posts got “likes” on social media, no one responded to our request for stories. Rather than consider this a silent, community “Bah, humbug,” we did what any respectable news source should do. We sent our reporters out to dig up memories of the season from some of our more “seasoned” residents.

We spent time with the “Prime-Timers” at JCity Church at its monthly fellowship meeting, and the stories began to flow.

Bird dog pays for family’s Christmas

Rhonda Carney, wife of JCity Church’s pastor Randy Carney, tells of a year when many southern Illinois farmers were struggling because of crop failures. Her father, a farm implement salesman, was nearing the end of a very lean year. The Carneys, ministering in Georgia at the time, brought their family home for Christmas. It was not until everyone had opened the presents from under the tree that she learned her father had sold his favorite bird dog so the family could have a good Christmas.

Zoom keeps the family close

One of six children, Coleen Fogarty-Metzke, says her family “never had a bad Christmas—just being together was a blessing.” Growing up in Chicago, the family upheld a tradition that her father would grill steaks outside on Christmas Eve, no matter the weather. Over the years, her large family has remained very close, and modern technology has helped. Family members still gather via Zoom for an hour every Monday night just to keep in touch.

Last Christmas at Mom’s house

Barb Buckner says her “best Christmas ever” was about 15 years ago. It was the last year her mother was able to host the family gathering. Barb’s brothers, sisters, cousins, and nephews were all together for one last time at Mom’s house. The next year, the family began celebrating Christmas every year at Barb’s house.

Barb also remembers a special Christmas from her childhood. She was in fifth grade and her father was the manager of Johnston City’s Kroger store on East Broadway [yes, we had a Kroger!]. Her dad was so excited to be able to have more under the tree that year; he woke the kids at 2:00 in the morning to open presents.

Finally home from hospital

Dean Clark, 27 years old and newly married, had spent a year in the hospital due to being severely burned. He was finally able to visit home Christmas Day. He says the best gift was when he was able to come home for good. He says, “I have appreciated every day since.”

Through ice, snow in family station wagon

Kimbra Solomon, who grew up in central Illinois, remembers traveling 15 hours to spend Christmas with her grandparents. Kim, her parents, and sister piled into their big, green Impala station wagon early in the morning to drive to her grandparent’s farm on Michigan’s upper peninsula. She says her grandma’s house seemed so “warm and cozy” after that long winter trip.

From hot dogs to ‘stogies’

Shirley Manier has more than one special Christmas memory. When her daughter Brenda was in college, the young man who eventually became Shirley’s son-in-law joined the family’s celebration. No one knew he didn’t like beans (their holiday tradition) until he and Brenda snuck out for hot dogs.

Shirley’s favorite holiday meal was the 25-pound turkey and large pan of dressing prepared by her mother. It was enough to feed 20 family members crammed into their small house. Her mother continued fixing Christmas dinners for the family until she was in her 90s.

In Shirley’s childhood, as was true many families in southern Illinois, there was no Christmas tree. She remembers the kids hanging their army-green stockings on Christmas Eve and awakening the next morning to find them filled with an apple,



an orange, and some hard candy. Sometimes she received a pair of thick-soled, high-buckle shoes they called “stogies,” a practical gift she would wear to school every day.

Christmas in Shirley’s family has always been merry without expensive gifts. Later, her family members enjoyed each receiving a gift from the dollar store.

Axe-swinging Grandma

No family can celebrate every Christmas stress-free. Bonnie Conley remembers her 95-year-old grandmother working out frustration with a family member by chopping wood on Christmas Day. Bonnie says she refused help from other family members, but kept swinging that axe until her anger subsided.

Tree in town center

As long as anyone can remember, Johnston City has erected a community Christmas tree downtown on Broadway. Members of JCity Church’s Prime-Timers group can remember when the tree was literally ON Broadway—actually in the center of the street just east of the railroad. City workers would “plant” the tree in a manhole and put barricades up to divert traffic. Lights on the tree were powered by overhead lines, as were the elaborate Christmas decorations hanging from each utility pole. It was in this era, that Barb Buckner’s grandfather often donned a Santa suit and strolled Broadway to hand out candy to children whose families were shopping downtown

Our on the street reporter, Tim Hastings, approached lunchtime diners at Andresen’s and found someone willing to share the most important Christmas story.

Christmas is because of a baby

John Howat, of Corinth, believes the greatest message he has to share at Christmas is Jesus Christ. “Christmas is because of a baby born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago,” Howat said. “He came to walk among us and he left us a message.

“We should never forget why He came,” Howat encourages. “He came to save us and to keep us. He taught us to be a friend and a neighbor to all we can.”

Howat added that Jesus is his personal savior. He thanks all service men and women who gave their lives so we could be free to wish each other a merry Christmas.

Howat is retired from 40 years of service in the stock room at General Telephone in Marion. He’s also served as a Baptist pastor.

From Our Staff

The *Arrow News* staff also had some Christmas memories to share.

Christmas better with presence

BY TIM HASTINGS

I had everything a child could want on Christmas morning 1964. I was 10 years old and I’d just received a new pair of ice skates. The ice was fresh and smooth at a small pond near our home in St. Matthews, Kentucky. Dad drove my sister and me to the pond where we skated in the crisp air under a dazzling blue sky. Dad snapped photos as Nancy and I skated in our matching bright red hoodies.

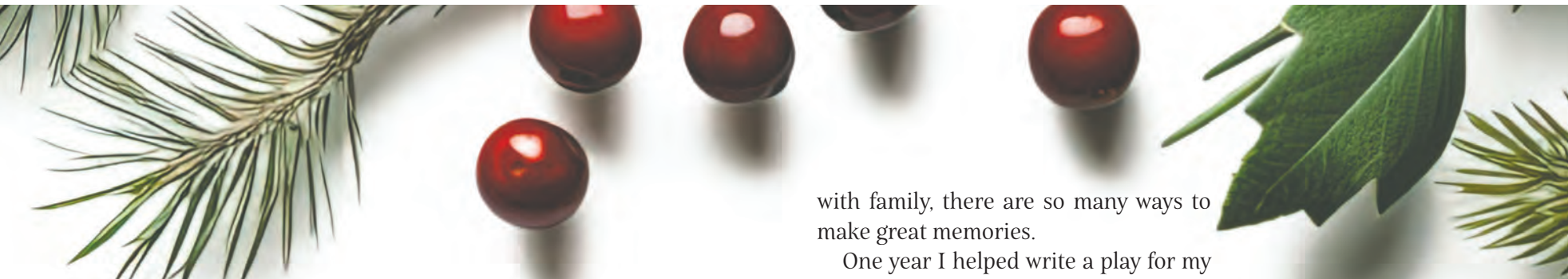
Sixty years later, my greatest memory of that idyllic Christmas morning was that my dad was there watching and recording our fun. This year, I hope to give each of my family the gift of my presence for Christmas.

Tim Hastings, of West Frankfort, is a reporter for the *Arrow*.

Birthday candles

BY SARAH FLETCHER

Christmas tree lights blinked as carols blared from the stereo in the living room. Two small children, my brother and I, hopped happily from present to present, fingering each gift-wrapped parcel and dreaming of what the next morning held for us. Our mom busied herself in the kitchen, finishing Christmas baking. This would be a Christmas Eve our family would never forget.



Moments later, we joined her in the kitchen. "Do you know what will happen tonight?" our mother asked. "Santa Claus will come," I answered. "What else will happen?" Ever the teacher, my mom determined to instill within us the true meaning of Christmas. "What? Mommy, tell us," my brother and I begged. She began, "When Daddy comes home and we finish supper, we'll all go into the living room and Daddy will read the Christmas story—" "And we'll light the candles," I excitedly interrupted. "Yes," she continued. "We will light the candles and sing 'Happy Birthday' to Jesus. "Ooh!" my brother's eyes gleamed. "And Jesus will come down and blow out the candles." The two of us skipped through the house, chanting over and over, "Jesus will come and blow out the candles. Jesus will come and blow out the candles for his birthday." Unbeknownst to us, our mother began praying and searching her heart. *Would Jesus return tonight? Am I ready for his coming? How powerful is the faith of a child?* Evening came. Dad arrived home from work, and after supper, as planned, we gathered in the living room to read the Christmas story. "Now it's time to sing 'Happy Birthday' to Jesus," my brother announced. Once again, he reminded, "And Jesus is going to come and blow out his candles." Candles lit, we began singing with all eyes on the flame. Halfway through the song, the flame flickered. The candle sputtered. After a few seconds, a moment frozen in time for us, the flame reappeared. Was it wind coming through cracks in the window or truly an act of God? We'll never know this side of eternity. Yet, each year, we continue the tradition—reading the Christmas story, lighting the candles, and singing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus. I remember, and breathe the prayer, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come."

Making Christmas Memories

BY BEN JOHNSON

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year. It's a time filled with joy and happiness. Whether it's a Christmas program or spending the holidays

with family, there are so many ways to make great memories.

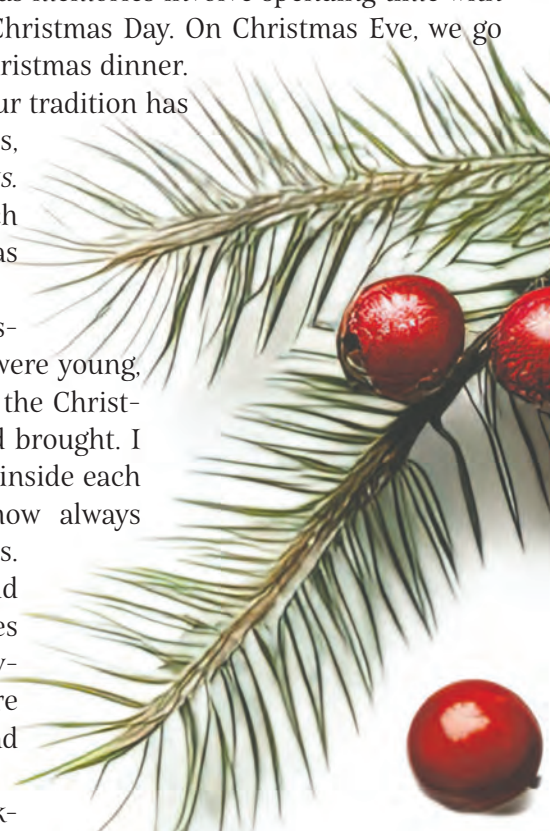
One year I helped write a play for my church's Christmas program. My friends and I acted it out. I played a disgruntled, old man who had forgotten the joy of Christmas, but finally rediscovered it through a church Christmas program. We all had fun putting on the play, and those who attended seemed to enjoy watching it.

Some of my favorite Christmas memories involve spending time with family on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve, we go to Grandma's house and eat Christmas dinner. Ever since I was a young kid, our tradition has been to watch Boriss Karloff's, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. We often play party games such as Name that Tune or Christmas Trivia.

Christmas Day brings presents. When my siblings and I were young, we would excitedly look under the Christmas tree to see what Santa had brought. I loved trying to guess what was inside each wrapped package and somehow always knew which boxes were Legos. Of course, it felt like Mom and Dad took forever to take pictures and make it to the tree. And every year, before any gifts were opened, my family would read Luke chapter 2.

After opening gifts and breakfast, we'd head to our other Grandma's house to enjoy more time with family. We'd share with cousins about our favorite gifts. We've spent countless hours playing board games over the years, starting with classics like Monopoly and Scotland Yard and moving to more modern games like Seven Wonders.

Christmas brings many happy memories to so many people. Whatever the plan for Christmas this year, whether a Christmas vacation, enjoying the quiet at home alone, or visiting family and friends, make it the best. Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.



A Christmas Carol



Good King Wenceslas

Good King Wenceslas looked out On the Feast of Stephen When the snow lay round about Deep and crisp and even Brightly shone the moon that night Though the frost was cruel When a poor man came in sight Gathering winter fuel	Bring me flesh and bring me wine Bring me pine Jogs hither Thou and I shall see him dine When we bear them thither. Page and monarch, forth they went Forth they went together Through the rude winds wild lament And the bitter weather
In his master's step he trod Where the snow lay dinted Heat was in the very sod Which the Saint had printed Therefore, Christian men, be sure Wealth or rank possessing Ye, who now will bless the poor Shall yourselves find blessing.	Sire, the night is darker now And the wind blows stronger Fails my heart, I know not how I can go no longer. Mark my footsteps, good my page Tread thou in them boldly Thou shall find the winters rage Freeze thy blood less coldly.
Hither, page, and stand by me, If thou knowst it, telling Yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling? Sire, he lives a good league hence, Underneath the mountain Right against the forest fence By Saint Agnes fountain.	In his masters step he trod Where the snow lay dinted Heat was in the very sod Which the Saint had printed Therefore, Christian men, be sure Wealth or rank possessing Ye, who now will bless the poor Shall yourselves find blessing.

The Story Behind a Classic Christmas Carol

BY HANNAH COLSON
MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Eighth graders in Washington Middle School were recently asked to listen to and analyze the Christmas carol, "Good King Wenceslas" as it is one of the oldest Christmas carols still sung today. The students reiterated the story and identified the meaning of the carol. To give context, some historical facts of the carol were presented to the students, such as its publication, historical figures featured, and events mentioned in the carol.

"Good King Wenceslas" was first published in 1853, but its namesake goes even further back. The man for whom this carol is named was actually a Duke of Bohemia in the early 900's AD. Duke Wenceslas encouraged the spread of Christianity in his domain by appointing missionary priests and encouraging charitable works of many kinds. It was this last effort that endeared him to many and earned him the honorary title of "Good King" Wenceslas. Although this good man was eventually killed by those who sought to have his power, his memory was immortalized in song.

Although "Good King Wenceslas" is in fact a Christmas carol, and definitely holds a Christmas message, the story in the carol itself takes place on a different holiday, the Feast of Stephen. More commonly known as Boxing Day in modern times, this December 26th holiday originally honored the death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen (c. AD 35). The day would be celebrated with a feast for those who could afford to have it. Although not Christmas Day itself, this day was celebrated with the spirit of Christmas in mind.

This Christmas spirit is especially seen in the last stanza of "Good King Wenceslas." As part of their assignment, students were asked to focus on the last stanza and its possible message. Eighth grader Charlie Lindsey was able to identify in detail the storyline, its excellent message, and ways it relates to the Christmas season.

Sources

"Who was Good King Wenceslas, and was he actually good?" by Jonny Wilkes
"Wenceslas: A Goodhearted King And His Popular Carol" by NPR's All Things Considered

Good King Wenceslas

BY CHARLIE LINDSEY
(Mrs. Colson 7th Period)

In the song "Good King Wenceslas" the tale of a page and a monarch is told. The monarch, King Wenceslas, looks out at the peasants and sees a man collecting fuel for a fire. King Wenceslas orders the page to gather food, wine, and pine logs to give to the man. During the journey, the page gets too cold to go on. King Wenceslas tells him to follow in his footsteps, and somehow the page stops freezing to death.

The lesson of the song is to be kind and selfless. By giving food and wine to the peasant, King Wenceslas showed compassion and other positive qualities. By giving the page guidance, he showed that he is kind and empathetic. We should be all these things because most people usually appreciate it. The reason it is a Christmas carol is because it has a lesson of selflessness and kindness, which is a common theme of Christmas carols, and also takes place on the Feast of Stephen, the day after Christmas.



Christmas Quiz

Been watching Christmas movies for the past few months? Now's the time to put all that viewing to use by taking our trivia quiz. Thank goodness for the Internet—you may have to look up a few of these answers:



1. What opera was highlighted in the movie, *Going My Way*? *Carmen* or *The Barber of Seville*?
2. Speaking of *Going My Way*, what *Our Gang* star played Herman?
3. Michael Caine played whom in *A Muppet Christmas Carol*?
4. What Christmas bribe does Ralphie give his teacher in *A Christmas Story*?
5. Name the two male co-stars in *Holiday Inn*.
6. In *The Polar Express*, believers in whom can hear the sleigh bells?
7. Who portrayed a spinster writer in *Christmas In Connecticut*?
8. What child actress was Susan in the 1947 version of *Miracle on 34th Street*?
9. Name the comedian that first sang "Silver Bells" in *The Lemon Drop Kid*.
10. In *White Christmas*, what was everybody hoping for?
11. What color was Ralphie's bunny suit in *A Christmas Story*?
12. Who starred as George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*?
13. What injured part of his body was Danny Kaye always pointing to in *White Christmas*?
14. What holiday movie shares a name with a hotel chain?
15. Can you name the four stars of *White Christmas*?

ANSWERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Carmen | 9. Bob Hope |
| 2. Alfalfa | 10. Snow |
| 3. Ebenezer Scrooge | 11. Pink |
| 4. Fruit basket | 12. Jimmy Stewart |
| 5. Bing Crosby & Fred Astaire | 13. His arm |
| 6. Santa Claus | 14. Holiday Inn |
| 7. Barbara Stanwyck | 15. Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney & Vera Ellen |
| 8. Natalie Wood | |

What's not to love about Christmas?

BY BARRY ROBERTSON

There are so many things that make Christmas a great holiday. Who doesn't like giving and receiving gifts, decorating trees and houses, singing carols, getting together with family and friends, and eating good food? Not to mention, getting out of school or work and celebrating a federal holiday?

While there's nothing wrong with celebrating the holiday in these ways, what is the real meaning of Christmas? The word comes from Christ's Mass. Originally, this was a service remembering the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Over time, Christmas became a federal holiday in the U.S., commemorating the birth of Christ, even though no one knows the exact day when Jesus was born—and it's very likely He was born in the springtime.

Our Declaration of Independence proclaims the belief that all people "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." Without a doubt, there is a Creator. Creation is proof of a Creator just like a building is proof of a builder. Things created don't create themselves. And creation can't come from nothing; nothing can't create anything—it's nothing. So God created us in His image, to be His image-bearers to the world. We can know the Creator from our conscience (the



Barry Robertson is pastor of Washington Avenue Baptist Church, where he has served since 2010.

part of us that recognizes right from wrong, which can only come from God) and also from creation. Romans 1:20 says, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." Romans 1 continues this thought and tells us that even though we know the truth, we deny it and live lives that deny God's existence.

This is the reason for Jesus' birth. A payment needed to be made for the fines that people incurred against God. This needed to be a perfect, sinless person—one who could make a sacrifice to cover people's sins. The only one who could make such a sacrifice was God Himself. So, He "became flesh and dwelt among us," (John 1:14). He was born of a virgin mother. We celebrate this birth on December 25. He lived a sinless life, so He could become the sacrifice for our sins. His victory for us is that He rose from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the reason for the season.

Arrow Distribution Points

Each month, volunteers distribute 1,500 copies of *Arrow News* to more than 30 local establishments. Here is a partial listing of places to pick up your copy:

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|------------------|-------------------|
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| Blondie's Bakery | JCity Church |
| Blush Salon | JCUSD Office |
| Casey's | Legence Bank |
| City Hall | Manna Mission |
| Dollar General | McDonald's |
| Down Home | ROC |
| Comforts | SI Bank |
| DQ | St. Paul's |
| Easy Coin | State Farm |
| Laundry | Steal the Show |
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Washington Avenue Baptist Church



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Barry Robertson, pastor
618-694-2995



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Celebrate Christmas IN A LOCAL CHURCH



Congregations plan Christmas Eve services, other holiday events

United Methodist Churches

First United Methodist Church, 400 W. Broadway, and the Stiritz United Methodist Church are planning several holiday-related services and activities:

- Congregation members (and anyone else who would like to) are invited to go Christmas caroling in the community, Sunday, December 15, 5:00-7:00 pm.
- Blue Christmas, a special service for those in a season of grief, will be held at the Stiritz Church (10699 Barger Lane), Thursday, December 19, 6:00 pm.
- The congregations will gather for a Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service at the Johnston City church, beginning at 7:00 pm. The public is welcome.
- December 31, a New Year's Eve Celebration will be

held at FUMC from 8:00 to 10:00 pm, with potluck and karaoke. Organizers are asking participants to bring snacks to share and have announced that Robin Johnson will be a special guest.

St. Paul's Catholic Church

St. Paul's annual Children's Candle Lighting Ceremony will be held on Christmas Eve at 6:45 pm, followed by Christmas Mass at 7:00 pm.

United Pentecostal Church

The Johnston City United Pentecostal Church will host a special Christmas Concert, Sunday, December 22 at 6:30 pm. Everyone in the community is welcome.

First Christian Church

The First Christian Church, 505 E. Broadway, will conduct a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, December 24, 6:00 pm.



Last year's Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at JCity Church. The service begins at 5:00 pm again this year. Pastor Randy Carney will speak.

JCity Church

JCity Church, at the corner of Broadway and Monroe in Johnston City, will hold a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 5:00 pm. This family-friendly (brief) service will include carols, Scripture reading, and communion.

Family Worship Center

Family Worship Center, located at 13th and Pine in Johnston City, is planning a special Christmas service, Thursday, December 19, at 6:00 pm. Desserts and fellowship will follow. The Beauty for Ashes Ladies Ministry will hold a Christ-

mas Candlelight Communion Service at the church, December 14, 10:00 am. All women are welcome to attend.

For more information about these services, please contact the host church (see list of churches below).

CHRISTMAS FOOD BOXES

Sharing our blessings

Johnston City Ministerial Alliance

3 Ways To Help Your Neighbors In Need

1. Financial contribution to JCMA
2. Donate food at a local church
3. Collect or purchase canned goods or other non-perishable food items

Food box signups continue thru Dec. 13

As previously reported, the Johnston City Ministerial Alliance is now organizing its annual Christmas food box giveaway. This endeavor provides needy local residents with the ingredients for a holiday meal.

The project requires recipients to sign up in advance. No proof of income is required, but all recipients must reside within the Johnston City School District. Signups are held daily 10:00-11:00 am, December 2-6, 9-13 at the First United Methodist Church, 400 W. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City. JCity Center for Hope and Renewal is available as an alternate registration site during regular business hours, December 2-12. The registration deadline is December 13.

Registered households or individuals may pick up food boxes Saturday, December 21, 9:00-10:30 am at the Methodist Church. Those who live within the city limits and are homebound (or without transportation) may request

delivery. Unclaimed boxes will be donated to others in need.

Using money donated by businesses and individuals, JCMA will purchase perishable food items for each box. These include a small ham or turkey, milk, margarine, eggs, and other items. Churches will provide canned and dry goods including vegetables, cake mixes, and frosting.

The Ministerial Alliance welcomes both food and monetary donations. Financial gifts received will pay for fresh food items. Participating churches are collecting specific non-perishable items for each box. Volunteers are also needed to assist with

distribution and delivery. Any funds given in excess of actual expenses will go to local ministries providing meals or food during the rest of the year.

Donors may make checks payable to JC Ministerial Alliance. Mail or deliver donations to JCMA, c/o JCity Center, 504 E. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City, IL 62951. Donations of non-perishable food items may be dropped off at the Center or any participating church.

The JCMA is made up of a majority of the churches and faith-based nonprofits in our community.

The churches of
Johnston City
working together
as the "hands
and feet of Jesus"

Helping residents of the Johnston City School District
Call 618-952-1272 for information

CHURCHES
of Johnston City

<p>Family Worship Center 400 W. 13th St. Johnston City, IL, (618) 952-1280 Pastors Brad & Kelly Dexter</p> <p>First Baptist Church 401 E. 7th St. Johnston City, IL 62951 (618) 983-6455 Larry Stevens, pastor</p> <p>*First Christian Church 505 E. Broadway Blvd. Johnston City, IL 62951 618-983-6474 Adam King, pastor</p> <p>*First United Methodist Church 400 W. Broadway Johnston City, IL 62951 618-983-5150 Sherry Cisneros, pastor</p> <p>*Heritage Fellowship (Church of God of Prophecy) 308 W. 12th St. Johnston City, IL 62951 Pastors Gaylon & Dawn Stewart</p> <p>*JCity Church (Free Will Baptist) 609 Monroe Johnston City, IL 62951 618-983-5254 Dr. Randy Carney, pastor</p>	<p>Johnston City United Pentecostal Church 1101 W. 10th Johnston City, IL 62951 618-983-5938 Brandon Abernathy, pastor</p> <p>*St. Paul's Catholic Church 1103 Washington Ave. Johnston City, IL 62951 618-983-5073 Father Brian Barker</p> <p>*Stiritz United Methodist Church Sherry Cisneros, pastor</p> <p>*Washington Ave. Baptist Church 9th and Washington Johnston City, IL 62951 Barry Robertson, pastor 618-694-2995</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">Other Ministries</p> <p>*JC Kids' Lunch Bunch c/o JCity Church (see above)</p> <p>*JCity Center for Hope and Renewal 504 E. Broadway Blvd. Johnston City, IL 62951 618-952-1272</p> <p>*Manna Mission 306 E. Broadway Blvd. Johnston City, IL 62951 618-983-6262</p> <p><i>*Active members of Johnston City Ministerial Alliance</i></p>
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Football Indians (11-2) finish season in Final 4



PHOTO CAPTIONS TOP LEFT: Fan support never wavers as the Indians' record and #1 seed position allows four playoff games at home (Shawna Hill photo). TOP RIGHT (L-R): Seniors—Cannon Ashmore (2), Roper Sanders (76), Carlos Giron (57), Blake Peters (9), Marcus Smith (63), Isaac Maxwell (71), Nick Cullum (58), Evan Sanders (0), Brennan Cargal (5), Nolan Causey (3), Alec Wingo-not pictured (photo by Tee Pee Talk). CENTER RIGHT: Bonfire at Nov. 22 Pow Wow/Pep Rally draws fans downtown (Arrow photo) FAR RIGHT: JCHS student, Braden Taylor, displays Indian spirit at Pow Wow. (Arrow photo).



Washington Middle School Basketball Scorecard



WMS Boys Varsity
 Central City L 32-59
 Tamaroa/St. Bruno W 43-32
 Ewing-Northern L 36-42
 Unity Point L 31-34

WMS JV Indians Boys
 Unity Point L 32-35

WMS Boys Basketball team
 (photo by Tee Pee Talk)

WMS Lady Indians Varsity
 Bluford L 12-24
 Desoto L 20-23
 Vienna L 14-46
 Sesser L 8-39
 Christopher L 21-26

WMS Lady Indians JV
 Bluford W 15-14
 Desoto W 13-4
 Vienna W 17-16
 Sesser W 32-12
 Christopher W 33-6

ALL SCHOOL SPORTS CALENDAR - DECEMBER

- MON. 12/2/2024**
 - Girls Vars. Basketball (H) 6PM Vienna
 - Girls MS Basketball (H) 6PM Christopher
 - Boys MS Basketball (A) 6PM Sesser-Valier
- WED. 12/4/2024**
 - Coed Vars. Wrestling JV ONLY (A) 6PM Carbondale
 - Girls MS Basketball (A) 6PM Goreville
 - Boys MS Basketball (H) 6PM Goreville
- THU. 12/5/2024**
 - Girls Vars. Basketball (A) 6PM Gallatin Co.
 - Girls MS Basketball (H) 6PM WF Central Jr. High
 - Boys MS Basketball (A) 6PM WF Central Jr. High
- SAT. 12/7/2024**
 - Coed Vars. Wrestling Lawrenceville Tourn. (A) TBA Multiple Opp.
 - Boys Vars. Basketball Galatia Shoot Out (A) TBA
 - Girls Basketball JV/Vars. (H) 1PM Meridian
- MON. 12/9/2024**
 - Coed Vars. Bowling B/G (A) 3:30PM Harrisburg
 - Girls Vars. Basketball (A) 6PM Sesser-Valier
 - Girls MS Basketball (A) 6PM Zeigler-Royalton
 - Boys MS Basketball (H) 6PM Ewing-Northern
- TUE. 12/10/2024**
 - Coed Vars. Bowling B/G (H) 4PM Massac Co.
 - Girls MS Basketball (H) 6PM Unity Point
- WED. 12/11/2024**
 - Boys MS Basketball (H) 5:30PM Desoto
- Thu. 12/12/2024**
 - Coed Vars. Bowling (A) 3:30PM Herrin
 - Girls MS Basketball (H) 5:30PM Eldorado
 - Girls Vars. Basketball (A) 6PM Trico (League)
 - Boys MS Basketball (A) 6PM Hamilton Co. (League)
 - Coed Vars. Wrestling (A) WF Triangular 6:30PM Mult. Opp.
- FRI. 12/13/2024**
 - Boys Basketball JV/Vars. (A) 6PM Trico
- SAT. 12/14/2024**
 - Coed Vars. Wrestling Marion Wildcat Duels (A) TBA Mult. Opp.
 - Girls MS Basketball (A) TBA OPEN
 - Boys MS Basketball WF Tourn. (A) TBA Mult. Opp.
 - Girls Basketball JV/Vars. (A) 11AM WF
 - Boys Basketball JV/Vars. (H) 6PM Sparta
- MON. 12/16/2024**
 - Girls MS Basketball (A) TBA OPEN
 - Boys MS Basketball WF Tourn. (A) TBA Mult. Opp.
 - Girls Vars. Basketball (H) 6PM Hardin Co.
- TUE. 12/17/2024**
 - Girls MS Basketball (A) TBA OPEN
 - Boys MS Basketball WF Tourn. (A) TBA Mult. Opp.
 - Coed Vars. Bowling B/G (H) 3:30PM Harrisburg
 - Boys Basketball Fresh./JV/Vars. (H) 5PM Sesser-Valier
- WED. 12/18/2024**
 - Coed Vars. Wrestling JC Triangular- (H) 5PM Mult. Opp.
 - Girls MS Basketball (A) 5PM Herrin
- THU. 12/19/2024**
 - Girls MS Basketball (H) 5:30PM Du Quoin
 - Girls Vars. Basketball (A) 6PM Goreville
- FRI. 12/20/2024**
 - Boys Basketball JV/Vars. (A) 6PM Zeigler-Royalton
- SAT. 12/21/2024**
 - Coed Vars. Wrestling Cumberland Tourn. (A) TBA Cumberland
 - Girls MS Basketball (A) TBA Vienna
 - Boys Basketball Fresh./JV/Vars. (A) 5PM Vienna
- THU. 12/26/2024**
 - Boys Vars. Basketball Cobden Holiday Tourn. (A) TBA Mult. Opp.
 - Girls Vars. Basketball CORLHS Girls Tourn. (A) TBA Mult. Opp.

WE WISH YOU A

MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

900 W. Broadway Blvd
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Smells like another Christmas!

Christmas Word Search

T	V	G	L	B	O	C	J	I	I	W	A
C	R	B	D	R	V	Z	A	L	S	N	E
V	U	R	A	U	A	U	X	X	A	E	S
J	Q	T	S	N	O	W	C	F	R	A	A
H	S	F	H	X	O	B	J	T	A	J	N
S	J	S	Z	E	F	N	E	O	T	O	T
W	I	O	H	G	Y	E	F	L	A	T	A
D	Y	L	Y	D	L	L	A	S	L	Q	S
R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R	Q	L	S	T
Q	L	A	Q	W	U	W	O	R	Q	V	H
Z	C	O	N	G	G	I	F	T	T	Z	O
L	P	R	K	T	V	Z	T	N	F	E	U

SANTA ELF SNOW GIFT BELLS
TREE CANDY REINDEER STAR JOY