



Opinion

Holidays should be a time of joy and giving

With all the hustle and stress of what we call "the holiday season," it's easy to lose sight of why we do all this, even for those who accept and believe in the message in the coming of the Christ child.

We get busy. There's a lot to do, presents to buy, homes and trees to decorate, parties and programs to attend, events to notice, sales and shopping, the list goes on. No one even knows exactly why we celebrate His birth at this time of the year, since scholars say the Bible gives no actual date for the birth.

Many speculate that Dec. 25 was chosen by the Roman church because a Christmas celebration then would overshadow traditional pagan observances in Europe keyed to the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year.

It's easy to forget that the day originated with a church service, the Christ Mass, and while many of us will be in church either Christmas Eve or today, it seems like more and more people in what we once called Western Civilization either question these beliefs or no longer know what to believe.

Perhaps, as a noted writer once said, we live in a cynical age. The wonder and promise of the Christmas story is just too much for many to accept, the whole idea of a Savior sent to forgive us our sins and lead us to everlasting life.

It is a lot to swallow when you look at it that way.

Or maybe it's the commitment required to accept the offer and try to live as Christ teaches us to live, recognizing that we remain nothing more than, as Nelson Mandela put it, sinners who keep trying.

Perhaps the idea of a judgment day, a winnowing time when the wheat will be separated and the chaff swept into unquenchable flames, bothers a lot of people. Like death itself, no one wants to face that prospect.

They say a lot of people feel left out, stressed and depressed this time of year. That's too bad. Christmas should be a time of joy, of love and giving. It can be, if we take time to remember where all this started.

On this Christmas Day, we hope everyone does just that. Take a moment wherever you are to think about how fortunate we are to live where we live, in the era we live in, when the condition of men is probably, while not perfect, better than it's ever been. Be thankful for these gifts and recall the promise, in whatever tradition you prefer, of God's grace.

To each and every one of you out there, we wish you a joyous holiday and some relief from the demands of the season.

Merry Christmas! - Steve Haynes



Open Season

Quiet Sunday at home

By Cynthia Haynes



My credit card may be compromised now, and all because I was looking for green Christmas lights.

This saga actually started last year when, at the end of January, Steve told me I had to take the Christmas lights off the bushes and trees and put the inside tree in storage.

I was devastated. I love Christmas lights. I get up early each morning and go downstairs to a bright rainbow outside my door, on the mantle, on the tree and outside the kitchen window. It's glorious.

The end of January is still deep in winter. It's dark out there, and when I come downstairs in the morning, it's dark inside and out without those pretty little lights.

Steve finally agreed that we could put red and white lights on the bushes by the front door until the end of February in honor of St. Valentine.

I immediately found just the right ones at a local hardware store. I was delighted then, but not so happy when the end of February came, and it was still dark outside.

Steve agreed to green and white lights for St. Patrick's Day through

the rest of March.

But the hardware had no green lights. Their supplier had no green lights.

It was a dark March.

This year, I was going to get an early start on looking for those green lights. I would prefer some that matched the red-and-white ones, but I wasn't going to be too picky.

But again, the hardware store had only white, red and blue in single-color lights. The dollar store and the grocery didn't have any, either.

Even the large chain store not to be mentioned didn't have any.

Maybe in Augusta when I visited the girls, I thought. It's a mid-sized city with big box stores. Surely one of those places would have my green lights.

So I checked at Lowe's, their grocery stores and Target. I even tried that other chain.

No one had any green lights, although everywhere I went, it seemed that someone had up a display with nothing but green lights.

I was beginning to think it was a conspiracy to keep me in the dark come March.

While I was in Target looking for the lights, though, I picked up a book for my granddaughter's pre-school gift exchange. ("Please bring a book for a boy. Spend no more than \$5, please.") and three packages of some little trinkets for the party. Each package was \$4, so that was another \$12.

I checked out using my credit card.

A week later, the great Target credit card scandal comes to light. Millions of credit cards have been compromised including mine - the woman who spent less than \$20 and never shops there.

I'll have to wait for the statement to know if I have any odd charges. One man reportedly had \$12,000 charged to California casinos, and he'd never been there. California, I mean.

In the meantime, I stopped by my hardware store to leave off some items for a food drive, and there they were - three packages of green lights that just matched my white ones.

It's going to be a bright and happy March around my place - and I may have a new credit card by then.

Moments With Mila

Start 2014 Tobacco Free

By Mila Bandel



County Health Nurse

Many Kansans are making New Year's resolutions to quit using tobacco in 2014 and the Cheyenne County Healthy Communities Coalition is encouraging them to get free help and support from the Kansas Tobacco Quitline online at www.KSquit.org or by phone 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

To help area residents become tobacco free, the Cheyenne County Hospital, Clinic and Health Departments have information regarding the Quitline available. You can call the Cheyenne County Health Department for more

information and Quitline material at 785-332-2381. The Cheyenne County Clinic also screens patients for tobacco usage during medical visits. Please feel free to talk with your medical provider about the Quitline material available to become tobacco free.

When Kansans are ready to quit tobacco, the Kansas Tobacco Quitline is ready to help online or by phone. The Quitline is a service provided at no cost to Kansas residents. Enrollment is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week (except major holidays) online or by phone. A "Quit Coach" works with participants during emails, live chats, or one-on-one phone calls to prepare

for a quit date and create a plan to fight cravings and face other challenges. Studies have found that using a tobacco Quitline can more than double a person's chances of successfully quitting tobacco.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Tobacco Use Prevention Program manages the Kansas Tobacco Quitline and provides resources and technical assistance to community coalitions for development, enhancement and evaluation of state and local tobacco prevention initiatives

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Santa Claus letters

Dear Santa and Mrs. Claus,

It was so fun to see you the other night. I am still being a really good girl. I am excited for you to come on Christmas, but I'm also really excited for my sister, Lauren, to get home. We have so much fun together.

I would enjoy a new baby doll and dollhouse. And please bring Lauren a vacuum cleaner to help keep her dorm room clean?

I love you Santa and Mrs. Claus!!

Isabella Sloane Bandel

Dear Santa Claus,

Hello I want I one tablet and this year. I am pretty good. So my mom said Santa can get me I tablet. What is your last name? Do you have kids? My name is Yamilet. Remember I want I tablet!

Yamilet Derma



GOD SAYS

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:1-2

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Casey's Comments

Change and acceptance

By Casey McCormick



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Drawing from memory, I see myself with a thick, dark mass of handsome locks from the 1970s to 80s.

The reality is more shiny skin, and what new hair is growing is showing up in places I would prefer it wasn't. Oh, and more of the existing brown is being replaced by silver stuff. This isn't working out well for my head or my ego.

There are some alternatives, i.e. hair replacement options, but

that would cost money that we either do not have or could be spent much more wisely.

Basically, this is a controllable situation which also is inevitable.

With 2014 upon us, my hopes are to accept the things that are not in my power, do the best with the things I can change, and grapple with which is which.

Happy New Year!

<p>Church of Christ 332-2380, Pars. 332-3424 502 W. Spencer Norman Morrow - Minister Bible Class 9 a.m. Morning Worship 10 a.m.</p>	<p>St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church 625 S. River • 332-2680 Fr. Carlos Ruiz Santos 1st Sunday of the month Morning Mass 8:30 am Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m. Weekday Mass 8:00 a.m. Confessions Sat. 4-4:30</p>	<p>First Baptist Church 2nd & Scott • 332-3921 J.W. Glidewell, Pastor Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m., Wed. AWANA Club 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.</p>
<p>United Methodist Church Office 332-2292, Church 332-2254, 512 S. Scott Pastor Warren Cico Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m. Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Salem Lutheran Church 332-3002 Pastor Chris Farmer Morning Worship 10:30 a.m. Communion 3rd Sunday</p>	<p>St. Francis Community Church 332-3150 204 N. Quincy Street www.sfccfamily.com Pastor: David Butler Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Potluck & Communion - Every 2nd Sunday Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.</p>
<p>Seventh-Day Adventist Church 423-650-5663 • 3rd & Adams Pastor James McCurdy Sabbath School 9:30 Morning Worship 10:45</p>	<p>Solid Rock Baptist Church 412 S. Denison Welcomes You! Pastor Allen Coon Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC 202 N. College Pastor Randy Nelson Church 332-2928 Parsonage 332-2312 Worship 9:30 a.m. Communion 1st Sunday</p>
<p>First Christian Church Pastor Jeff Landers 332-2956 • 118 E. Webster Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m. Church Service 10:15 a.m.</p>		



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