

The Russell Report

Russell Memorial United Methodist Church

A Family Rooted in Christ and Reaching Out in Love



Vol. 17, No. 12

December 1, 2021

Not Just the Tune

Having just returned from vacation with family in Virginia, my mind returned to something that happened on a visit there five years ago. We had taken the opportunity on Black Friday to enjoy some pottery painting. We were working near the counter where the manager had his computer, on which he was playing Christmas music. Though I was not immediately aware of this, I eventually realized that all of the music being played was just instrumental. At one point, a Christmas song with singing began to play. The manager promptly came to the computer and skipped to the next song, making his verbal apology to the song's artist: "Sorry, no words allowed." I mentally shrugged it off, but before long the same thing happened again. Without delay, the manager skipped the song with lyrics, commenting to a nearby customer about how he doesn't like Christmas music with the words.

It makes me wonder why the words to Christmas songs were troublesome for this man. I certainly don't want to jump to conclusions; there may be a variety of reasons for his actions. Maybe he doesn't like words to *any* songs. Perhaps he didn't want them in his place of business. While I do not presume to know the underlying reason, his behavior was quite clear. He clearly enjoyed the tunes to Christmas music (he was whistling along with the music all the while). Nevertheless, he did not want the lyrics to accompany the tunes, at least not in that place and time.

What meaning is in a tune without lyrics? Obviously that depends on the tune and the person. A tune by itself can certainly elicit in our minds the lyrics that are commonly associated with it, but that is only true if the lyrics have first become ingrained in our minds. If this is not the case, a tune can be nothing more than a pleasant sound in the listener's ear. It is just beautiful music with no particular meaning attached. Tunes do not necessarily carry an inherent message. Many of our familiar hymns of the church are written to tunes that were not Christian in origin. (For a good seasonal example, look up the lyrics to Greensleeves.) My point is this: the intended message of a song can be missed if the tune is unaccompanied by words. As it is with a song, so it is with our witness.

As witnesses for Christ we are to be explicit in our message. That doesn't mean harsh or graphic, just clear. It is much easier to only be suggestive, dropping hints and hoping that people get the point.

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Angel Tree

The 2021 Wills Point Community Angel Tree is in full swing and almost 300 Angels are now available for sponsoring. We have several opportunities for you to help:

- Buy canned soup of all kinds and sizes (mostly things kids will eat, like chicken noodle, chicken and stars, etc.) and drop in our collection boxes
- Adopt an Angel (or two) by selecting a tag from the tree in the Narthex (**DUE BACK DEC. 6th**)
- Drop off or mail monetary donations to the church office

- Help set up for sorting and bring everything down from the loft after church on December 5th
- Help sort Angel gifts December 6-9. Space is limited so please sign up electronically (see below)
- Help hand out Angel gifts and load into families' cars on December 10 (any time 8 am – 2 pm, 6 pm – 8 pm)

If you'd like to participate electronically, obtain details on the Angel Tree website at <https://tinyurl.com/wpcat> to:

- adopt an Angel through the website
- electronically make monetary donations
- buy items from the Angel Tree Wish List through Smile.Amazon
- sign up to help sort Angel gifts (contact Sherri Rowe for password)
- contact the WPCAT Coordinator, Sherri Rowe

The logo for Right Now Media, featuring the words "rightnow" in a bold, orange, lowercase font and "MEDIA" in a smaller, orange, uppercase font, all on a black rectangular background.

rightnow MEDIA

Right Now Media

Don't forget about the amazing offer of rightnow media offered through the church. Text RMUMC to 49775 for an invitation to set up your account, or contact the church office to request help.



Crestwood Assisted Living Angels

Looking for yet another way to give this holiday season? Stop by the church office and pick up a "Golden Angel". We have 14 residents of Crestwood Assisted Living. We would love to make their holiday just a little bit brighter. Gifts will need to be returned to the church by December 17th to be distributed in a timely manner. Please contact the church with any questions (903-873-2569).

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The vast majority of people in our society are celebrating at this time of year; *what* they are celebrating could be a variety of things. If we are celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, we need to make sure we are not just “humming the tune.” Our witness needs to be explicit. We bear a message of someone who is truly worth celebrating, and we don’t want the message to be missed. The message of Jesus is the best news! “Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let every heart prepare him room.” That, my friends, is a message worth singing!

Pastor Dave

Church Vision Retreat

In his book *Visioneering*, pastor and author Andy Stanley makes an important observation that is summed up in a simple, two-word statement: vision leaks. When it comes to vision, the compelling picture of why an organization exists, there is a tendency for it to leak. It is like going to sleep on a fully inflated air mattress, then waking up in the morning feeling the hard floor under you. For whatever reason, the air that supported you leaked away. In the same way, we can find that our vision—our understanding of purpose that guides and compels us—gets lost. When that happens, recapturing vision is a vital necessity for any organization, including a church.

On Saturday, January 22, we will be holding a vision retreat for the members of our church. Leaders are especially encouraged to attend; all are invited. Those who are interested are expected to:

Desire only the mission of Christ through His church

Come with a willingness to be honest, humble and vulnerable

Bring your Bible, an open heart and open mind

Attend the ENTIRE event

Register in advance your intention to participate

Attendees are also strongly encouraged to prepare for the event by reading either *Who Stole My Church* by Gordon McDonald or *You Only Have to Die* by James Harnish. The retreat will be held locally (think in or near Van Zandt County) at a location to be named in the coming weeks. It will be an all-day event, likely 8:30 until 5:00. Lunch and snacks will be provided. To secure your place, please call or email the church office. Questions may be directed to Pastor Dave at rmumcpastor@gmail.com. Stay tuned for more details.

Just Be One T-Shirts



Did you order a Just Be One T-shirt from the youth? If you did, please see Jerry Don Huff, he has them! If you didn't, why not?! You can still pick one up for the low, low price of \$15. They still have several available and would love to set you up with some. Contact Jerry Huff, 214-458-2004.

Calendar of Events for December

Dates to Remember for December



- Sunday, December 5, 11:00 a.m. Unload Angel Tree Loft
- Sunday, December 5, 2:00 p.m. Youth in Deen Building with Kristy
- Monday, December 6, ANGELS DUE BACK
- Wednesday, December 8, 7:00 p.m. White Gift Service @ WPHS
- Friday, December 10, 8am-2pm/6pm-8pm, Angel Tree Pick Up
- Friday, December 17, Play Practice
- Sunday, December 19, 10:00 a.m. "An Unexpected Christmas"
- Friday, December 24, 6:00 p.m. Candle Light Service
- Saturday, December 25, Christmas Day

Happy Birthday!

Jack Golden	12-1	Gaybrie Malone	12-24
Kelles Miller	12-6	Jim Lamb	12-25
Nelda Currie	12-6	Jennifer Ross	12-27
Judy Dodd	12-10	Jared McDonald	12-28
Kay Crosby	12-11	Jerry Don Huff	12-28
Claira Huff	12-19	Nancy McDonald	12-28
Brett Marley	12-20	Margie Aston	12-30
LaNell White	12-23	David Berry	12-30
		Patt AuBuchon	12-31



Moving Forward, Grief Group

Please join us every other Tuesday, at 5:30 p.m. in the Deen Building for a grief group, Moving Forward. This is for anyone that has or is in the middle of experiencing a loss. For more information, contact Jerry Huff (903)458-2004.

Our Presence and Our Gifts

	<u>Oct. 31</u>	<u>Nov. 7</u>	<u>Nov. 14</u>	<u>Nov. 21</u>	<u>Nov. 28</u>
Worship	70	76	81	93	79
Giving	\$6,657.00	\$7,737.25	\$5848.00	\$7,922.00	\$5,002.00

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:00pm Ladies Hand Bells 7:15pm Choir Practice	2	3	4
5 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service 11:00am Empty Angel Tree Loft 2:00pm Youth Meeting in Deen Building	6 ANGELS DUE BACK	7 5:30pm Moving Forward—Grief Meeting	8 7:00pm White Gift Service 7:15pm Choir Practice	9	10 8am-2pm, 6pm-8pm Angel Tree Pick Up	11 10:00 am Safety Team
Angel Tree in Deen Building						
12 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service 5:00pm Youth Group	13	14	15 6:00pm Ladies Hand Bells 7:15pm Choir Practice	16	17 Play Practice	18 9:00 am Crafting with Christ (in George Hall)
19 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service “Unexpected Christmas” 5:00pm Youth Group	20	21	22	23	24 6:00pm Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day
26 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service	27	28	29	30	31	



Food Giveaway in Wills Point

Looking for the perfect opportunity to volunteer?! Well, look no further. Bread for the Hungry is working with the East Texas Food Bank in our area. They are handing out food on Fridays from 4:00-7:00 p.m. If that time doesn't work for you, they load the food bags on Fridays from 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (You aren't required to stay the entire time, work what's best for you). They also need help on Saturday mornings loading a truck to deliver to Myrtle Springs and Rolling Oaks (just loading trucks, not delivering). Contact

Nancy Roberts, 214-354-6780, for details and to sign up.

Memorials

In memory of
Liz Ellis
Given by
Glenna Joiner & Sandi Shepherd,
And Vera Lofland.

In memory of
Sara Bullard
Given by
Lisa Wilson, Vera Lofland,
Markie & Jerry Lawrence, Ron Turner,
And Darlene Kelley.

In memory of
Dan Todd
Given by
Fritz Gilbreth and Dorothy Bruster.

In memory of
Dan Todd
A gold leaf has been given by
Seekers Sunday School Class.

In memory of
Betsy Markam

Given by
Dorothy Bruster.

In memory of
Bonnie George
Given by
Vera Lofland.

In memory of
Phyllis Mayo
Given by
Vera Lofland.

In memory of
Thomas Butts
Given by
Vera Lofland.

In memory of
Beverly Roddy
Given by
Ron Turner.

In memory of
Jimmy Martinez
Given by
Ron Turner.

Remember in Prayer:

Family of Gibb Matlock
Family of Cotton Miles
Family of Brad Hargrave
Family of Dan Todd
Hooten, Sabella, Randall
Families
Family of Darren Attaway
Family of Sara Bullard
Family of Liz Ellis
Family of Russell Truett
Family of Audrey Stinson
Family of Dolores Phillips
Family of Bennie McBride
Alana Simpson
Aneya Williams
Andy Anderson
Arthur Galope, Jr.
Becca Rowe
Betty Manning
Billie Cade

Bobby Petillo
Bruce Lacy
Carl Fulton
Caroline Edwards
Chad Ash
Cheryl Bradley
Christy (Culpepper's
granddaughter)
Crestwood Nursing &
Assisted Living
Dana Hullum
Darin Richardson
Dave Edwards
Denny McCormick
Dianne Deen James
Dianna Perry
Emily Cockerham
Eric Johns
Evan Mayone
Eyal Family
Harrison Mayone

Hunter Haney
Isaac Bullard
Jared McDonald
Kay & Benny Mitchell
Keeta Lybrand
Laura Bates
Linda & Will Dennis
Linda Greenwald
Marigrace & Mike Lang
Mark Brown
Matlock Family
Matt James
Maxine Page
Paul Cain
Roger & Jan Moore
Students, Teachers &
Administration
Sunday School & Church
Terry McDermott
Virginia Cockerham
Wayne Rhodes

“An Unexpected Christmas”

Imagine you are out of town on Christmas Eve. You are looking forward to a Christmas Eve Service at your church or you are looking forward to just getting home to having Christmas with your family and loved ones, filled with cozy fireplaces and holiday meals. The only problem is now you are stuck in a train station during one of the worst snow-storms in recent memories with no way to get back home.

Imagine how an Unexpected storm can become an Unexpected opportunity to share with others



what the Christmas season is really about. An Unexpected chance to realize what God has done in your life, and maybe to realize what is missing in your life as well.

The choir is preparing a musical about just such a situation; A great story filled with wonderful, heartfelt music. It's “An Unexpected Christmas.” We can't wait to share this wonderful event with you all. Join us, Sunday, December 19 at 10:00 worship, you may just find your heart “unexpectedly” warmed!

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Rev. David Cartwright, Pastor
John Ross, Minister of Music
Theresa Turner, Ladies Hand Bells Director
Jackie Cockerham, Financial Administrator

Nancy McDonald, Office Administrator
Fritz Gilbreth, Organist
Kelli Huff, K6 Kids Coordinator
Jerry Don Huff, Youth Director

Join us Sunday Morning!

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED