



Reason for the Season

By Marian Freeland, ACS Board Member

Christmas! Lights, decorations, a beautiful Christmas tree covered in both! Presents, wrapping paper, Christmas cards, shopping, caroling, a Christmas parade, gathering with friends and family to worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (if we have any energy left!).

How do we truly enjoy this glorious time of year and yet keep our focus on Christ? It isn't easy. Christmas is big business. We are bombarded with advertising targeted at us to "buy" the perfect Christmas. I fall for it, do you? Unless we intentionally focus on Christ and the true reason we do all of these fun & beautiful things we will feel trampled and exhausted when Christmas begins. Yes, when Christmas BEGINS.

My favorite Christmas movie stars Cary Grant and is called "The Bishops Wife". The lady of the house buys the family a Christmas tree and asks for it to be delivered on Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve?? Christmas is over the next day, isn't it?

Actually, the 12 Days of Christmas begin Christmas Day and continue until January 6th! Everything before that is the season of Advent when we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ's birth. Advent is the season when we ponder how incredible it is that God humbled Himself and came down to earth as a babe in a manger ...we prepare our hearts for Christmas celebrating this incredible event. Maybe that is why there seems to be such a "letdown" on Christmas Day when we find ourselves stuffing bows and wrapping paper in a trash bag, with our stomachs full and wondering, "Is that it? All of that lead up for 24 hours?"

It's difficult in such a frenetic season to stop and smell the Poinsettias. As I grow older I realize simplicity truly helps me experience everything more joyfully. Remembering that it really isn't about us but Him can help us avoid seasonal depression, disillusionment, and that feeling of a big letdown.

Make time for worship. Find a church that has a service Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day and go as a family or with friends. Work the food and presents around worship, not vice versa. If it's all about what presents we gave or received; what parties we were or were not invited to; how our house measures up to the rest on the block; how many Christmas cards we sent or received we are sure to feel hollow at the end of the season.

Keep it simple! If you are stressed out and not experiencing any joy in the season you are probably stretching yourself too thin financially and emotionally. How simply Christ came into this world! No worldly trappings or finery and yet our heavenly Father provided a glorious, heavenly announcement for the world:

"Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.' When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, 'Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'"

-Luke 2:13-15

Enjoy the hot chocolate, Christmas cookies and parade but let's remind each other to stop and savor the sights and sounds and be grateful for Jesus' gift to us of Himself! May God fill each of us with the true joy and peace that only Christ can give us this Christmastide.

Missions at ACS

By Ginger Turner, ACS Board Member



Christmas season is about Jesus Christ and a wonderful way to honor Him and what He has done for us is to help others. Mrs. Wallace's 3rd & 4th grade students created prayer blankets for the Family Crisis Center last week. Mrs. Hamby's high school class decided to give to the Bible League

International this year instead of exchanging gifts. They donated \$50.00, which was matched, that allowed for 20 Bibles to be sent to places in need around the world. For Thanksgiving, ACS donated 40 baskets to the Family Crisis Center which were distributed to families in need around the Big Bend area. Last week, many of the ACS students loaded up in the school van and visited homes around Alpine to sing Christmas carols. Recipients of caroling and homemade 'Warrior Bread' have lost someone they love or are experiencing hardship. We also donated a great amount of toys to the Brown Santa Toy Drive for the Brewster County Sheriff Department. We continue to build leaders who will change the world, show compassion for others, and honor God in all they do.

Have You Purchased Your Starry Knight Tickets?

By Debbie Skelton, ACS Board Member

Starry Knight is less than two months away and seats are going fast! Make sure to reserve your tickets by calling me at the office or going to EventBrite.com before we sell out completely! This year will be better than all Starry Knights before it! Rutherford from the Texas Hill Country will provide dance music this year and they have opened for musicians like George Strait, Tim McGraw, and Reba McEntire!! Dinner music will be provided by Sadie Dawley and Lori Overstreet. Hors d'oeuvres will be passed by Sky Island Culinary, just before a delicious catered dinner that will feature a choice of prime rib or delicious chicken. Our famous silent auction has already started to accrue items! It will be a magical evening for sure and a perfect option for Valentine's Day!! Don't delay...call me for tickets ASAP!

Can a Believer Receive Comfort from Philosophy?

By Mayson McBride, ACS Sophomore

Our high school class was recently assigned an essay question about Roman philosopher, Boethius, on whether he could receive comfort

from philosophy while he is a believer in Christ. We were to respond using the text we read, "Consolation of Philosophy".

Boethius wasn't wrong to consult philosophy at the end of his life. He wanted to grow his knowledge in God and life itself, it's not wrong or immoral to ask those questions. It is, however, wrong to replace philosophy's answers with the answers we know to be true that God had told us. Human beings as a whole are curious creatures, we crave knowledge, this is both our rise and our downfall. We often ask questions but rely on untrustworthy sources for the answer. God should be where we find our truths, not in just philosophy alone. Although God is the ultimate answer, we can still ponder things ourselves. Philosophy helps us grasp the concepts we are questioning, it's a structure for us to base our thoughts upon. We need both structures to fully understand our ideas, without philosophy our questions would be less structured, and without God we wouldn't have answers to these questions. "His knowledge, too, transcends all temporal change and abides in the immediacy of his presence." God's infinite knowledge is beyond our comprehension, we can use this knowledge to help grow our own.

Need Gift Ideas??

By Debbie Skelton, ACS Board Member



(Photo by Lily Acosta)

Are you looking for last minute gift ideas? We have several!! ACS is selling brick pavers that can honor a family member or friend this Christmas while supporting a great cause! Brick pavers can be purchased online at <https://brickmarkersusa.com/donors/alpine.html> or by visiting our ACS website under **Giving** at the top. You can also make a monetary donation to honor a loved one or someone who has passed away. Another option is to become a garden sponsor for our beautiful school garden.

We also have more ACS calendars for sale that will arrive January 1st. These calendars were created by our 4H Photography Club and feature their photos from around

Alpine. Call me at the office if you are interested in any of these gift ideas!

Executive Director's Corner

By Bobby Duncan, Executive Director

Tis the season! We honor the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is no greater gift than the Gift given to us by our Father in Heaven. Let us examine our hearts this season. Let us contemplate what truly matters in our lives. Let us get off our sad self and live the life instructed by Jesus for us to live. Let us go forth and be His disciples. Let us go forth not in word only but also by our actions. Let us serve each other. Let us help one another. Let us not complain about the shortages in our life. Let us give thanks to Almighty God for the many Blessings He has bestowed on us. Let us be obedient to His Word. Let us be more prayerful. Let us choose well. Let us use more reason than passion in our thoughts and in our actions. Let us listen more. Let us be polite and courteous. Let us say thank you more often. Let us not take anything or anyone for granted. Let us remember that everyone, in one way or another, is suffering with something. Let us get beyond appearances and false pretenses. Let us be genuine. Let us propagate our God Given talents and abilities. Let us celebrate our differences and the mosaic artfully crafted by the Divine Hand of God. Let us not challenge God with falsehoods to fit our desires and our human errors and misunderstandings. Let us not alter the perfection of what God has created, for to do so is to say God, You are wrong. Let us give more, for it is better to give than receive. Let us remember that we reap much more than we sow, either good or bad. Let us start each morning with a thankful prayer to God. Let us spend some time each day in silence, without the distractions of cell phones, television, video games or the unending draw for our attention. Let us remember to take care of our physical bodies. Let us remember to go for a walk. Let us remember to drink plenty of water. Let us remember to eat healthy foods. Let us not allow anyone to pollute our mind, body, soul, spirit and heart with dreadful talk or toxic substances. Let us surround ourselves with people who will lift us up to the Lord and help us to be good, beautiful and true. Let us remember to reject Satan and all he stands for, for if we do, he will flee us. Let us remember never to stand

idly by and allow evil to unfold. Let us remember to stop evil in its tracks. Let us remember that Jesus instructs us not to worry or be afraid. Let us remember that Jesus said blessed are those who believe yet have not seen. Let us remember that with Jesus we have Faith, Hope and Love. Let us remember that we must do our part. Let us remember that when we have given it our all, to surrender the finish to Jesus. Let us remember to trust in His Will, not ours. Let us remember not to complain. No one and I mean no one likes to listen to a complainer. Complain not. Let us remember to rise above our pitiful excuses. Let us remember that failure is our greatest instructor. Failure does not define us. Let us remember to be resilient. Let us remember to persevere. Let us remember in our times of trouble and suffering, the Passion of Christ and all He endured for our sake. Let us always remember Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous 2023!!!

Around Campus:



ACS Christmas Program



Making Ornaments After School



4H Public Speaking Club's Christmas Party