

The E-FreeBBie

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The Greatest Story of All

How GREAT is the Christmas story? I don't know if I've ever heard that question asked in that manner before, but it's certainly worth thinking about. How GREAT is it? I would have to say it's the GREATEST story of all. That's what makes the Christmas season so special each year. We never get tired of reading about what happened on that first Christmas morning. And what makes it even more special is that it isn't just a story, it really happened. There is no other story, whether real or fictional, that even comes close to matching the birth of our Savior. What makes this story deserving of the title, "The Greatest"?

1. It was unexpected. Who would have dreamed that the Savior of the world would enter the world in such humble circumstances? He was not born to royalty or in a palace. Instead he was born to ordinary young parents in a stable. Jesus was born in obscurity except for some angels and shepherds. All of this was completely unexpected.

2. It was miraculous. Every part of the Christmas story is filled with miracle after miracle. First

there was the miraculous birth of John the Baptist who would eventually inaugurate the beginning of Jesus ministry and baptize him. Then there was the miraculous conception of the virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit. The inclusion of the angels at different points of the story show that this was no ordinary birth. And the story isn't finished until the Star of Bethlehem leads the wise men from so far away.

3. It was unprecedented. Jesus was Immanuel – God with us. Never before had God come to the earth in human flesh. He came to live as one of us, to experience our pain and suffering, and to endure a sinful world. Yet he was different than us because he lived a perfect life without sin.

4. It was prophecy fulfilled. The entire Old Testament was

leading up to this exact moment. It begins with the curse of the serpent in Genesis Chapter 3, and continues with the promise to Abraham, the Passover with Moses, the Law and the Feasts, the promise to David, the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and all the other prophets. When Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem, all of the OT promises were fulfilled in reference to the coming of the Savior.

5. It was undeserved. God chose to send his own Son to the earth to be the Savior of the world. He provided a way for us because there is no way that we could do it ourselves. Why did he do it? Not because we deserved it. Not because we earned it. He did it completely out of grace and love. It was a gift to mankind.

6. It didn't end at the manger. The story isn't great just because a cute little baby was born. Babies are born everyday. What makes this story the greatest is what this baby is going to do when he grows up. He's going to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.

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Where It All Began...



If you've ever had the privilege of getting someone a gift and see the excitement and thankfulness on their face; it can be heart changing. It can bring to life the words of God through Paul when he says, *"And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* Acts 20:35. On Sunday, December 16th, we have the

opportunity to create such a moment for several people at the Golden Living Center as we go there to sing carols and offer our gifts.

Angel Tree was originally started by an ex-convict, Mary Kay Beard, from Alabama. On the three Christmases that she spent at the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women in Alabama, local church groups brought the inmates gifts of toothpaste and soap. Intrigued, Mary Kay watched as her fellow prisoners wrapped up the small gifts and gave them to their children at the Christmas visit.

"Most children wouldn't think much of such small gifts, but in prison there was such joy on their faces!" says Mary Kay. "It didn't really matter to them what they

got; it was from *Mama*."

Doris Cole, the Coordinator for our church's Angel Tree, has a passion for this ministry that was inspired by a good friend Dawnetta Johnson who had observed the needs of many of the elderly. From Dawnetta's experience she shared with Doris about creating an event which would focus attention on the elderly and be an encouragement to them. Dawnetta eventually moved out of town but Doris continued to be excited because of the great outreach potential of this event.

Doris had discovered that this caroling and gift giving event had an impact on not only the residents who talked about it for days to follow, but on those who work at the facility. For some time after, the residents expressed thankfulness for the tangible outpouring of God's love. "While they may not express it in a group setting, I heard so many individuals tell me how much it meant to them. They just love it especially when the kids come caroling too!" said Doris. "The ultimate goal is to consider not just visiting one time per year but maybe go back each month to reconnect and learn from these dear people."

It's not too late to consider being part of this powerful, life-changing activity. Please join us with your entire family on December 16th. We will meet at the church at 4:00 PM to get instructions.

- Pastor Brant Taylor

Merry Christmas from the Staff at BB-EFC



AWANA Schedule

December 19th
AWANA Christmas
Program
6:30 PM

December 26th
No AWANA

January 2nd
No AWANA

January 9th
AWANA Resumes

Tools of Ministry

Most home owners have a hammer, a few screwdrivers, a tape measure, some adjustable wrenches, and maybe a pair of pliers or two. Why? Because these tools are used often. One multi-purpose tool that has been around since the late 1880s is the Swiss Army Knife. This knife was created to help the army soldiers in opening canned food and disassembling the Swiss service rifle, the Schmidt-Rubin M1889, which required a screwdriver for assembly.

When it comes to the ministry of the church you will notice that many church buildings have a place of worship (sanctuary), offices, mechanical rooms, a kitchen and maybe a bathroom or two. Why? Because these are places where people can gather often to be spiritually challenged or encouraged. One multi-purpose tool that has been prayed about, discussed and planned is the new Youth Building.

Due to the generosity and sacrifice of several people Phase 1 of this building project is complete. Now Phase 2 is about to begin in earnest with a work crew from Morton coming the week of December 12th to insulate the structure. Upon completion of this work by the Morton team and as the funding and volunteer manpower is available, the next steps include the construction of the interior walls, the insulation of these interior walls and ceilings of classrooms, and the installation of the heating ducts. Corresponding to these projects will be an effort to rough in the majority of the electrical wiring needed for outlets, light fixtures and the like.

The Broken Bow Evangelical Free Church has a great building which is already in use almost every day of the week which serves as a great tool for ministry, service, and outreach. This Youth Building will also be an incredible tool for all types of activities that align with our vision of reaching Broken Bow, Custer County, the United States and the World with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Creating an environment for the nurturing and equipping of disciples of Jesus who will in turn carry on this incredible mission as the Lord allows.

Are you involved in this story God is writing? Thank you to those who have given of time, resources and monies already. For those of you who would like to give of yourself in terms of availability and time please let Jerry Safranek know of your desire as he will be organizing teams to help in the months ahead.

Share our story of God's provision through His people. Our annual budget is \$267,000. By God's grace through the third quarter we have seen giving right on target with this budget amount and in addition we have paid for all of Phase 1 (200,510) debt free! For example, if I told you that your family's yearly income was going to be almost doubled in 2013 and nearly half of it you were going to financially invest in God's kingdom you would probably think I was crazy. But that is exactly what God has done for our body this year! We have much to be thankful for as God allows us to build this multi-purpose tool to be used for Him to reach the people He so dearly loves.

- Pastor Brant Taylor

The Greatest Story of All (Continued)

The Savior has come to redeem his people. The Messiah will defeat sin and death and Satan once and for all. He is the way the truth and the life.

7. It is still relevant for us today. I don't know of any other story that could be 2000 years old and still have just as much meaning for us today. That story becomes my story when I accept the gift of salvation that is offered to us by Christ's work on the cross.

These are just some of the reasons that this story is deserving of the title "The Greatest." I challenge you to take some time over the Christmas season and read through the Christmas Story for yourself. See what other reasons you can find that make this story so Great.

You are invited to come and celebrate Christmas with us this Christmas season. The celebration begins on

Sunday, December 23rd with a **Christmas Coffee** at 9:30 AM. Bring your family for some coffee, juice and rolls before the Worship Service.

Then you are invited to join us as we present the Christmas Cantata, "**The Greatest Story Of All.**" It will be presented during the worship service on Sunday, December 23rd, starting at 10:45 AM.

And finally, we are holding our annual **Christmas Eve Service** on Monday, December 24th, at 5:00 PM. This candlelight service will include traditional Christmas songs and Christmas stories from the Bible. The String Orchestra will be joining again as well.

May you and your family have a Merry Christmas as you experience the Greatest Story of All."

- Pastor Scott Harvey



Leading People Into A Growing Relationship With Jesus Christ

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Celebrate Christmas With Us

Christmas Coffee



**Sunday
Dec. 23rd
9:30 AM**

Christmas Cantata



**Sunday
Dec. 23rd
10:45 AM**

Christmas Eve Service



**Monday
Dec. 24th
5:00 PM**