

“THE MEADOWS MESSENGER”

Ann Dietz, Publisher

December 2016, Issue



November and December Financial Reports

We hope that you find this information helpful as you pray for this congregation and evaluate your giving and participation in the worship, work and mission of this part of the Body of Christ. Sincerely, the Session and Pastor

Tithes and Offerings needed for each week of this year = \$1,702.00. This figure is based on a total 2016 budget of \$88,504.00 which was approved by the Session on December 27, 2015.

NOVEMBER

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Total Tithes and Offerings needed (4 weeks) | \$6,808.00 |
| Actual Tithes and Offerings received (4 weeks) | \$5,307.00 |
| This results in a budget shortage for this month | (\$1,501.00) |
| Total Expenses (4 weeks) resulting in an overage for the month | \$5,084.92 \$222.08 |

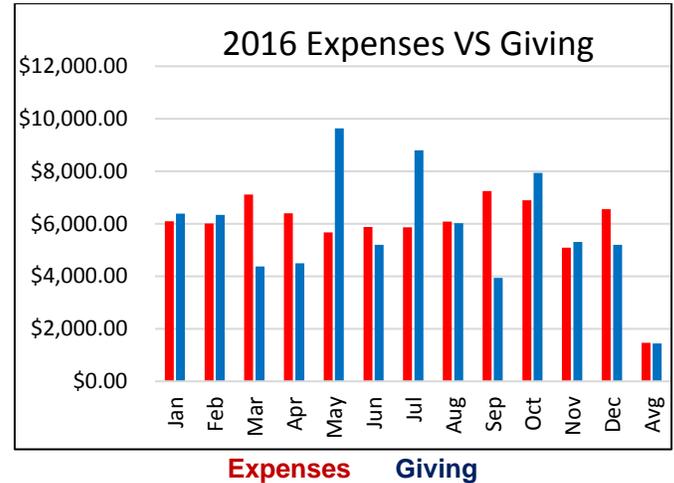
DECEMBER

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Total Tithes and Offerings needed (3 of 4 weeks) | \$5,106.00 |
| Actual Tithes and Offerings received (3 of 4 weeks) | \$5,194.00 |
| This results in a budget overage for this month | \$88.00 |
| Total Expenses (3 of 4 weeks) resulting in a shortage for the month | \$6,562.52 (\$1,368.52) |

YEAR-TO-DATE

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Total Tithes and Offerings needed (51 weeks) | \$86,802.00 |
| Actual Tithes and Offerings (51 weeks) received | \$73,643.02 |
| This results in a budget shortage to this point | (\$13158.98) |
| Total Expenses (51 weeks) This results in a shortage to expenses for the year | \$74,930.43 (\$1,287.41) |

For those of you who understand a chart better than a bunch of numbers, below is the ‘picture’ of our YTD finances for December 2016 (through week 3):



The Pastor’s Ponderings

Below is an adaptation of a sermon, “Trees Planted by the Water: How to Get Started Right in 2002” by Ray Pritchard (of Keep Believing Ministries) which might help you get off to a good start in the New Year.

In just a few days 2016 will be history and 2017 will begin. Every January most of us make of list of things we want to change. Making changes is part of living and growing – even in our faith. But the main reason we hope to make changes in our lives is so that they are better, so that they are more blessed.

God will surely bless us in the New Year – in ways we do not deserve, in ways we might not recognize, in ways which might challenge us to more changes. Nevertheless, there are some things we can do to place ourselves in a good position to recognize and receive God’s blessings. In just six short verses, Psalm 1 teaches us the secret to a life God blesses. And it is not related to New Year’s resolutions.

From God’s point of view, there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are the righteous and then there are the wicked. Everyone falls into those two categories. There is no “in-

between” category. Psalm 1 shows us how the righteous live and why they are blessed and it shows us how the wicked live and why they are not blessed.

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.” (Psalm 1:1-3).

Verse 1 begins with a Hebrew phrase which means something like: “O, the blessedness of the person who” In biblical terms to be blessed means to be in right relationship with God so that our lives are filled with his goodness and we experience his presence and blessings at a deep personal level. It is important to know that this sort of happiness or blessedness is not related to our circumstances and it does not come simply by seeking it. Psalm 1 assures us that it is possible to live a blessed and happy life, but only on God’s terms. We find godly happiness by doing certain things and not doing other certain things.

Psalm 1 surprises many people because it begins not with the positive, but with a negative. The blessing it proclaims begins with what the righteous person does **not** do. He/she does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, does not stand in the way of sinners, and does not sit in the seat of mockers.

Consider the progression here: Walk ... Stand ... Sit. -- First, the person is walking down the road where the wicked are. Then he/she stops to hang out with them. Eventually the wicked prove to be such good company that he/she sits down and has intimate fellowship with them – eating and drinking and having fun. What started as casual contact, in the end becomes a relationship where there is a personal identification and commitment.

The “counsel of the wicked” means the advice of the morally unstable. It is a general term which describes the perspective of those who do not

know the Lord. The “way of sinners” involves a series of lifestyle choices. And the “seat of mockers” means that a person has a close, intimate, long-term fellowship with those who openly reject the Lord. The tricky part here is, many of “the wicked” do not seem to be bad people at first. They are just not godly, that’s all. In other words, they simply do not share our personal faith in Jesus Christ. That is not too bad, right?

But, Psalm 1 tells us that there is a deadly progression which goes like this: Thinking ... Behaving ... Belonging. -- Worldly wisdom leads to worldly action, which then results in worldly fellowship. This does not mean that we have no contact with the unbelievers of the world at all. But it does mean that we are careful what contact we have with them. What starts out as casual contact often leads on to increasing closeness and permanence of association. At first we simply talk to the wicked, but eventually, we encounter the increasing boldness of evil, followed by a lowering of our own inhibitions. For example: we laugh at jokes that once would have seemed crude to us. We compromise our values in ways we never would have thought possible. We consent to things that would have greatly troubled us in the past. People who want to be blessed by God do not hang out just anywhere, they do not quickly buy into every kind of thinking and they are very careful not to join themselves to the company of those who do not love the Lord.

A hundred years ago our evangelical ancestors gave us this wise formula. They said we are to be “in the world but not of the world.” That means we are to live among the wicked and the lost, loving them, befriending them, caring for them, and yet, at the same time, we are to live by an entirely different value system. We do not reach people by lowering our godly standards or compromising our Christian values. Maybe this modern proverb will help emphasize the point: It is a good thing when the boat is in the water; it is a deadly thing when the water is in the boat.

Now we come to the positive side of Psalm 1. Having refused to walk in the way of evildoers, we focus instead on knowing God's Word. We do this because the true way to float garbage out is to pour water in. We cannot get rid of the garbage in our lives simply by mental effort. We must replace the negative with something positive. We must replace the destructive thoughts and beliefs with the life-giving water of God's words of truth. The psalmist tells us that the godly person "delights" in the law of the Lord. That means he/she loves the Word of God.¹ The word "delight" means to take great pleasure in. It has the idea of a consuming passion which controls a person's life. Everyone "delights" in something. Some people delight in food. Others delight in a job or a hobby or a career. Some delight in a particular friendship. Many people delight in money or the things money can buy. And many delight in evil pleasures and wrong desires. What we "delight in" determines our direction.

What do you delight in? What gets you excited in the morning and keeps you awake at night? What do you daydream about? The answers to those questions reveals something very important about who you are and what your life is all about.

Those who are blessed by God love his law and they meditate on it day and night. The word translated "meditate" has the idea of digesting something thoroughly. It means to ponder on a truth by considering a verse or a passage of the Word of God from various angles. The Hebrew word can mean to mumble under your breath. The blessing Psalm 1 affirms is promised not as a result of just any sort of mumbling or talking to yourself but to the patient, prolonged brooding over God's Word, "day and night."

The phrase "day and night", could simply mean "all the time". In other words, there is no "wrong" time to meditate on the Word of God. But perhaps we should take the words more literally. It is a very good practice to begin and end the day with the Bible. That way we get each day started right

and we end each day right. In that way we discipline our minds to think the thoughts of God "all the time".

If we are serious about this, we will find the time to meditate. And we will have some sort of regular reading program. Perhaps, we will read through the Bible in a year. Or perhaps we will use one of the many Bible study guides that are available. When we hide the Word of God in our hearts, we are protected from careless sin and given strength to obey God, every day.

The idea of a "tree planted by streams of water", in verse 3, speaks of a mighty tree with large branches and deep roots that go far down into the soil. Scientists tell us that when we see a large tree that has been growing for many years, we can be certain that it has a vast root system underground. Many times the root system will equal or exceed the part of the tree we can see above the ground. This is how the mighty sequoias last for centuries. Their unseen root systems give them stability against the changing forces of nature. In times of winter storms or summer drought, the roots hold the trees in place and ensure that they have enough moisture and nutrients to stay alive.

And that is what a good root system will do for us. How do we know when a tree has good roots? The answer: when the storms come. All trees look pretty much alike when the sun is shining or a gentle rain is falling, but let a mighty storm with fierce rain and howling winds pass through, then the true difference is revealed. The trees with few roots or weak roots are blown over, but the trees with deep and strong roots are still standing when the storm has passed. So it is for the child of God. We will not know how good our root system is until the storms of life crash against us. Only then will we discover the strength of our spiritual foundation. The only way to be ready for the storm is to spend time now delighting in God's Word day by day, meditating on its truth, and building a foundation which is deep and strong for whatever may come our way in the future.

¹ The Word of God is both the written word – the Bible – and the Incarnated Word – Jesus Christ.

The phrase, “fruit in its season”, means that the tree produces fruit which expresses its true inner character. How do you spot an orange tree? By the oranges it produces. And how do you spot an apple tree? Look for the apples. Whatever is on the inside must eventually be seen on the outside. Applying this truth to our spiritual lives, means that when our roots are deep in the Word, we will be given whatever we need, whenever we need it. If we need love, from the Word of God will come the strength to produce the fruit of love. If we need a forgiving spirit, from the Word of God will come the strength to forgive. If we need courage, we will produce the fruit of courage. If we need patience and perseverance, the Word of God will produce it in us. This sort of supernatural life is available to every believer, but it will only be fully realized over time as we continue to walk with the Lord and to delight in his Word.

The last two phrases of verse 3 offer wonderful promises to those who delight in God’s Word. First, his/her “leaf does not wither.” This phrase pictures a leafy tree which is like an evergreen because its leaves are in season all year round. People like this are constantly refreshed by the Word of God, constantly renewed, constantly drawing on new strength for new situations. They are never living off of yesterday’s blessings, but are living each day in the strength of the Lord, whose mercies are new every morning.

Second, those who delight in God’s Word prosper in all that they do. Please do not jump to the conclusion that this prosperity refers mainly to material success (though that is not excluded). God’s prosperity means that no matter what happens, those who delight in him find strength for the day and hope for the future in the midst of the hardest difficulties. The righteous bring forth godly fruit in good times and bad times. Why? Because they are planted deep in the good soil and their roots reach out to the living water of the Word of God. Finding constant nourishment in God’s Word, the righteous can face whatever life throws at them. The thought here is similar to what Paul writes in Romans 8:37 where in the midst of struggles, sorrow, persecution, famine,

distress, nakedness and the sword, those who know Jesus are “more than conquerors” through his divine power. And that triumphant deliverance comes to us, in large part, through the Word of God – the Bible and Jesus Christ.

In this world we may face disappointment, sorrow, abandonment, sickness, failure, rejection, and discouragement. Illness, physical weakness, and death itself may visit our door time and time again. Even then, we prosper, we thrive, we survive, and we are not destroyed – because of God’s Word. Sometimes when I ask friends going through hard times how they are doing, the answer comes back: “I’m surviving.” Years ago I foolishly thought that was a wimpy response. Now I see that it can be a powerful statement of faith. Sometimes surviving is the gateway to thriving. And some days to survive is to be on the road to prosperity. If we believe in God and his power to bring blessings into our lives, no matter what is happening in us or around us, then survival can be more than just breathing; it can be a testimony to our commitment to living in the presence of God, no matter what.

“Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.” (Psalm 1:4-5).

The whole truth about the human race is found in just two words: “Not so.” The wicked are not like the righteous and therefore have no part in the promised blessings. Because they do not follow God’s Word, but have chosen a different path, God’s view of them is entirely different.

Chaff refers to the husk or hull that surrounds a nut or a kernel. It seems quite strong at first, but once the nut has been removed, it is light and useless. Take a peanut in the shell and crack it open. After you eat the peanut, what do you do with the shell? If you are outside, you toss the shells on the ground where they are pulverized into dust. That is what the wicked are like in the eyes of the Lord. They look so powerful on earth, but to God they are like dust that is quickly blown

away. And their “wisdom” is like chaff, changing every day with every new idea or new fad. There is nothing solid or definite about them. And because the wicked live for themselves, they do not know right from wrong or good from bad.

“For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” (Psalm 1:6).

Here is the sobering reality for the wicked. In the end, their “way” will perish. All that they have lived for will disappear like mist in the morning sun. And they themselves will perish along with the works of their hands. Their “way” comes to a “dead end,” their life ends in destruction as they rush over the edge of a cliff only to find themselves separated from God, forever.

One of my favorite illustrations of this truth comes from the time when the Apostle Paul, in chains as a prisoner in Rome, came face to face with Nero, one of the most sadistic, brutal, evil, and perverted men ever to serve as a Roman emperor. (At one point, Nero ordered that Christians should be arrested, dipped in some sort of flammable substance, lit on fire and then used as torches in his gardens at night.) One day the Apostle Paul was brought to him for examination. Nero probably wondered why he, Emperor of the mighty Roman Empire, should pay any attention to an unimpressive, bow-legged, bald Jew whose claim to fame was that he was a follower of Jesus. Eventually, Nero did not pay much attention to Paul and had him put to death, most likely by beheading. When Nero died, he was far more famous than Paul. However, 2,000 years later, we name our sons Paul but not Nero. Truly, the Lord watches over the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish forever.

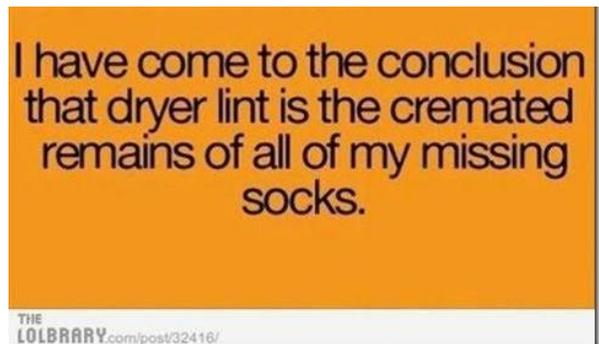
In light of this psalm, what does the church need today and in the New Year? The answer is clear: the church needs life-changing and life-giving relationships with God’s living Word, Jesus Christ, and with his written Word, the Bible. Apart from God’s Word – Incarnate and written – we have nothing to sustain us when life gets hard and we have nothing to offer a hurting and dying

world. Psalm 1 tells us that there is a life of blessing waiting for those who delight in the Lord and his words. May that blessing be ours today so that we, having been blessed by God, may be a blessing to others in the year to come. Amen.

Pastor Yvonne

Rev. Ray Pritchard’s entire sermon can be found at: <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/trees-planted-by-the-water-how-to-get-started-right-in-2002>

Some Humor Shared by My Brother:





This One Is Too Funny

With New Year's close upon us. I would like to share a personal experience about drinking and driving. As you know, some of us have been known to have brushes with the authorities from time to time, often on the way home after a "social session" with family or friends.

Well, two days ago, this happened to me. I was out for an evening with friends and had more than several scotches followed by a couple of bottles of rather nice red wine and vodka shots. Although relaxed, I still had the common sense to know I was way over the limit.

That's when I did something I've never done before, I took a taxi home!! Sure enough, on the way, there was a police roadblock, but since it was a taxi they waved it past and I arrived home safely without incident.

This was a real surprise to me, because I had never driven a taxi before. I don't know where I got it, and now that it's in my garage I don't know what to do with it.

So, anyway, if you want to borrow it give me a call.

Happy New Year!!!!



Aging Gracefully

Here are a few bits of wisdom (?)

1. I changed my car horn to gunshot sounds. People move out of the way much faster now!
2. I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes 5 years in a row.

3. I decided to change calling the bathroom the John and renamed it the Jim. I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning.
4. Last year, I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet...
5. I don't need anger management. I need people to stop irritating me!
6. When I was a child I thought nap time was a punishment ... now, as a grown up, it just feels like a small vacation.
7. My people skills are just fine. It's my tolerance of idiots that needs working on.
8. If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would've put them on my knees.
9. The kids text me "plz" which is shorter than please. I text back "no" which is shorter than "yes".
10. I'm going to retire and live off of my savings. Not sure what I'll do the second week.
11. Even duct tape can't fix stupid, but it can muffle the sound!
12. Why do I have to press one for English when you're just gonna transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?
13. Of course I talk to myself, sometimes I need expert advice.



A plumber had just finished cleaning out a home's septic tank and was still wiping off his hands when the owner said, "You always do such good work for us. Is this the field you always wanted to go into?"

"As a matter of fact," the plumber said, "while I was apprenticing, I briefly considered medical school. I wanted to be a neurosurgeon."

The Plumber (continued)

“What made you give it up?” the owner asked.

Handing her the bill, the plumber answered, “I couldn’t afford the cut in pay.”

The Lab

This is quite a story!

They told me the big black Lab’s name was Reggie, as I looked at him lying in his pen. The shelter was clean and no-kill, and the people were really friendly. I’d only been in the area for six months, but everywhere I went in the small college town, people were welcoming and open. Everyone waved when you pass them on the street.

But something was still missing as I attempted to settle into my new life here, and I thought a dog wouldn’t hurt. It would give me someone to talk to. I had just seen Reggie’s advertisement on the local news. The shelter said they had received numerous calls right after, but they said the people who had come down to see him just didn’t look like “Lab people”, whatever that meant. They must’ve thought I did.

At first, I thought the shelter had misjudged me in giving me Reggie and his things, which consisted of a dog pad, bag of toys (almost all of which were brand new tennis balls), his dishes and a sealed letter from his previous owner.

Reggie and I didn’t really hit it off when we got home. We struggled for two weeks (which is how long the shelter told me to give him to adjust to his new home). Maybe it was the fact that I was trying to adjust, too. Maybe we were just too much alike.

After the two weeks, I found the sealed envelope. I had completely forgotten about that. “Okay,

Reggie,” I said out loud, “let’s see if your previous owner has any advice.”

To whomever gets my dog: Well, I can’t say that I’m happy you’re reading this, a letter which (I

was told by the shelter) could only be opened by Reggie’s new owner. I’m not even happy writing it.

So let me tell you about my Lab in he hopes that it will help you bond with him and he with you. First, he loves tennis balls. The more the merrier. Sometimes I think he’s part squirrel, the way he hoards them. He usually always has two in his mouth, and he tries to get a third in there. Hasn’t done it yet. And it doesn’t matter where you throw them, so be careful. And don’t do it by any roads.

Next, commands. Reggie knows the obvious ones: “Sit”, “Stay”, “Come” and “Heel”. He knows hand signals too. He knows “ball” and “food” and “bone” and “treat” like nobody’s business. Feeding schedule: twice a day, regular store-bought stuff; the shelter has the brand.

He’s up on his shots. But be forewarned, Reggie hates the vet. Good luck getting him in the car. I don’t know how he knows when it’s time to go to the vet, but he knows.

Finally, give him some time. It’s only been Reggie and me for his whole life. He’s gone everywhere with me, so please include him on your daily car rides, if you can. He sits well in the backseat, and he doesn’t bark or complain. He just loves to be around people, and me most especially.

And that’s why I need to share one more bit of info with you ... his name’s not Reggie. He’s a smart dog, he’ll get used to it and will respond to it, of that I have no doubt. But I just couldn’t bear to give the shelter his real name. If someone is reading this ... well it means that his new owner should know his real name. His real name is “Tank”. I named him that, because, that is what I drive.

I told the shelter that they couldn’t make “Reggie” available for adoption until they received word from my company commander. You see, my parents are gone, I have no siblings, no one I could’ve left Tank with. It was my only real request of the Army upon my deployment to Iraq,

The Lab (continued)

that they make one phone call to the shelter ... in the event ... to tell them that Tank could be put up for adoption. Luckily, my commanding officer is a dog-guy too, and he knew where my platoon was headed. He said he'd do it personally.

So since you're reading this, he made good on his word. Tank has been my family for the last six years, almost as long as the Army has been my family. And now I hope and pray that you make him part of your family too, and that he will adjust and come to love you the same way he loved me. If I have to give up Tank to keep those terrible people from coming to the U.S. I am glad to have done so. He is my example of service and of love. I hope I honored him by my service to my country and my comrades.

All right, that's enough. I deploy this evening and have to drop this letter off at the shelter. Maybe I'll peek in on him and see if he finally got that third tennis ball in his mouth. Good luck with Tank. Give him a good home, and give him an extra kiss goodnight, every night, from me.

Thank you,
Paul Mallory.

I folded the letter and slipped it back in the envelope. Sure, I had heard of Paul Mallory, everyone in town knew him, even new people like me. He was a local kid, killed in Iraq a few months previously. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for giving his life to save three buddies. Flags had been flown at half-mast all summer.

I leaned forward in my chair and rested my elbows on my knees, staring at the dog. "Hey Tank," I said quietly. The dog's head whipped up, his ears cocked and his eyes brightened.

"C'mere boy."

He was instantly on his feet, his nails clicking on the hardwood floor. He sat in front of me, his head tilted, searching for the name he hadn't heard in months. "Tank," I whispered. His tail swished.

I kept whispering his name, over and over, and each time his ears lowered, his eyes softened, and his posture relaxed as a wave of contentment just seemed to flood him. I stroked his ears, rubbed his shoulders, buried my face into his scruff and hugged him.

"It's me now, Tank, just you and me. Your old pal gave you to me." Tank reached up and licked my cheek.

"So, what-do-ya-say we play some ball". His ears perked again.

"Yeah? Ball? You like that? Ball?"

Tank tore from my hands and disappeared into the next room. And when he came back, he had three tennis balls in his mouth.

If you can read this without getting a lump in your throat or a tear in your eye, you just ain't right!!



Graduation in Detroit

Darqueeze played high school football in Detroit. He was a great running back, but a really poor student. At graduation, he didn't have enough credits. But he was a great football star and the students held a rally and demanded that the principal give him a diploma anyway. They were

Graduation in Detroit (continued)

so insistent that the principal agreed that if Darqueeze could answer one question correctly, he would give him a diploma.

The one question test was held in the auditorium and all the students packed the place. It was standing room only.

The principal was on the stage and told him to come up. Diploma in hand, the principal said: "Darqueeze, if you can answer this one question correctly, I'll give you your diploma."

Darqueeze, how much is three times seven? Darqueeze looked up at the ceiling and then down at his shoes, pondering the question. The other students began chanting, "Graduate him anyway! Graduate him anyway!"

Then Darqueeze held up his hand and the auditorium became silent. He said, "I think I know the answer: "Three times seven is twenty-one."

A hush fell over the auditorium and then all the other students began to chant: "Give him another chance! Give him another chance!"

Maybe everyone else had not earned a diploma!

Party Recipes for Your New Year's Eve Bash

Orange Balls

- 16 oz. frozen concentrated orange juice
- 1 stick margarine
- 1 box powdered sugar
- 1 box vanilla wafers, crushed
- 1 bag coconut

Defrost orange juice. Mix all ingredients together. Roll into balls, then roll in coconut



Party Recipes (continued)

Salsa Dip

- 1 Pkg Jimmy Dean sausage (hot or mild)
- 16 oz. sour cream
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- med. jar salsa (hot or mild)

Brown sausage, drain grease, and place sausage in crock pot. Pour in remaining ingredients and cook for about 2 hrs. or until melted.

Punch

- 2 cups boiling water
- 1, 3 oz. pkg cherry Jell-O (or any flavor)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/3 real lemon juice
- 1 large can pineapple juice
- 2 qts. water

Bring 2 cups water to boil. Add Jell-O and sugar, stirring until dissolved. Pour into 1gal container. Add lemon juice, pineapple juice and water (2 qts.) until container is full. Stir. Freeze. Remove from freezer several hours before serving. Pour into punch bowl and mash into slush. Makes 16 cups.

Who Was Haym Solomon?

This is an interesting bit of history! Do your children know this? Do their teachers? Do you?

Read this fascinating history of the \$1.00 bill, all the way to the end about Haym Solomon. You may be in for quite a surprise! (I sure was)

On the rear of the One Dollar bill, you will see two circles. Together, they comprise the Great Seal of the U.S. The First Continental Congress requested that Benjamin Franklin and a group of men come up with a seal. It took them four years to accomplish this task and another two years to get it approved.

If you look at the left-hand circle, you will see a pyramid. Notice the face is lighted, and the western side is dark. At the time the seal was

Who Was Haym Solomon? (continued)

designed, this country was just beginning. We had not yet begun to explore the west or to decide what we could do for Western Civilization. So, the pyramid is uncapped, signifying that we were not even close to being finished.

Inside the capstone you have the all-seeing eye, an ancient symbol for divinity. It was Franklin's belief that one man couldn't develop this country alone, but a group of men, with the help of God, could do anything. Therefore, "In God We Trust" is on the currency.

The Latin above the pyramid, *Annuity Coeptis*, means "God has favored our undertaking."

The Latin below the pyramid, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, means "a new order has begun."

At the base of the pyramid are the Roman numerals for 1776. (MDCCLXXVI).

If you look at the right hand circle, and check it carefully, you will see what is on every National Cemetery in the United States. That symbol is also on the Parade of Flags Walkway at the Bushnell, Florida National Cemetery, and is the centerpiece of most heroes' monuments. Slightly modified, it is the seal of the President of the United States, and it is always visible whenever he speaks, yet very few people know what the symbols mean.

The Bald Eagle was selected as a symbol for victory for two reasons: (1) an eagle not afraid of a storm; he is strong, and he is smart enough to soar above it. (2) The eagle wears no material crown.

We had just broken from the King of England, therefore the shield is unsupported. This country could now stand on its own. At the top of that shield there is a white bar signifying congress, symbolizing that representatives for all the states were coming together as one nation.

In the Eagle's beak you will read, *E Pluribus Unum*, meaning from many, one. Above the

Eagle, we have the thirteen stars, representing the thirteen original colonies, and any clouds of misunderstanding rolling away. Again, we were coming together as one.

Notice what the Eagle holds in his talons. He holds an olive branch and arrows. This country wants peace, but we will never be afraid to fight to preserve peace. The Eagle always wants to face the olive branch, but in time of war, his gaze turns toward the arrows.

An (untrue) old-fashioned belief says that the number 13 is an unlucky number. This is such a deeply seated belief worldwide that you will almost never see a room numbered 13, or any hotels or motels with a 13th floor. But think about this: America, which relies on God (not a number) to direct and lead, boldly chose:

- 13 colonies,
- 13 signers of the Declaration of Independence,
- 13 stripes on our flag;
- 13 steps on the pyramid,
- 13 letters in *Annuity Coeptis*,
- 13 letters in *E Pluribus Unum*,
- 13 stars above the eagle,
- 13 bars on that shield,
- 13 leaves on the olive branch,
- 13 fruits, and if you look closely,
- 13 arrows.

And finally, notice the arrangement of the 13 stars in the right-hand circle. You will see that they are arranged as a Star of David. This was ordered by George Washington. When General Washington asked Haym Solomon, a wealthy Philadelphia Jew, what he would like as a personal reward for his services to the Continental Army, Solomon said he wanted nothing for himself, but he would like something for his people. The Star of David was the result. Few people know it was Solomon who saved the Continental Army through his financial contributions of \$25 million. Haym Solomon gave that money, money he desperately needed because he wanted to help this country realize its freedom and independence from England.

Who Was Haym Solomon? (continued)

And so, now you know one story from America’s Judeo-Christian beginning. Most American children do not know any of this. Our children are not taught this because history teachers do not know this. (They were also not taught the story.)

Too many veterans gave up too much to let the history fade. They served, they died for you and for me.

I hope you will share this with many, so they can learn about the symbols on the United States dollar bill. America is at a critical point in history. Let’s do whatever we can to save her by never, ever forgetting.



A taxpayer received a strongly worded “second notice” that his taxes were overdue. Rushing to the collector’s office, he paid his bill and apologized that he had overlooked the first notice. “Oh, confided the collector with a smile, “we don’t send out first notices. We’ve found that the second notices are more effective.”

Whatever you do, always give 100%. Unless you’re donating blood.

What’s Happening at Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church in January 2017

Elders on Call

- Jan 01-07 – Ann Dietz
- Jan 08-14 – Judy Gale
- Jan 15-21 – James Sanford
- Jan 11-18 – Riddle Smith

Up Coming Events for January

- Jan 05th – prophets Bible study, manse @ 12:30 pm
- Jan 08th – ordination & installation of the new elders during worship
- Jan 09th – Circle #I meets, Ruth Preston’s home @ 10:00 am
- Jan 12th – prophets Bible study, manse @ 12:30 pm
- Jan 15th – annual congregational/corporation meeting following worship
- Jan 19th – prophets Bible study, manse @ 12:30 pm
- Jan 22nd – Session meeting following worship
- Jan 26th – prophets Bible study, manse @ 12:30 pm