

Dunklin Campfire

December 2011



**“... And the government shall be
upon His shoulders.”**

“THE PEOPLE WHO
HAVE WALKED IN
DARKNESS SHALL SEE A
GREAT LIGHT— A
LIGHT SHALL SHINE ON
ALL THOSE WHO LIVE
IN THE LAND OF THE
SHADOW OF



DEATH...FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN; UNTO US
A SON IS GIVEN; AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE
UPON HIS SHOULDER. THESE WILL BE HIS ROYAL
TITLES: WONDERFUL, COUNSELOR, THE MIGHTY
GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF
PEACE. HE WILL RULE WITH PERFECT FAIRNESS AND
JUSTICE FROM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID.
HE WILL BRING TRUE JUSTICE TO THE NATIONS OF
THE WORLD. THIS IS GOING TO HAPPEN BECAUSE
THE LORD OF HEAVEN’S ARMIES HAS DEDICATED
HIMSELF TO DO IT.”

(ISAIAH 9:2-6-7 L.B.)

This beautiful Christmas greeting was mailed by the prophet Isaiah 740 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but his message still gives us hope that there can be peace in a world at war. **“Peace on earth,”** is certainly the desire of everyone on both personal and global levels but our newscasters remind us everyday that our best human efforts have not achieved “good will toward man.”

Thousands of our finest young men and women have been deployed around the world by our military as armies of peace keepers who make valiant attempts to win the peace by waging war. We try to replace dictators with democratic forms of government that we enforce with bombs and bullets and try to negotiate peace treaties between armed troops who hate each other. **“The people who live where the death cast its shadow”** is the whole global community. The war on terrorism has not ended with the conquest of Afghanistan and Iraq; it seemingly is endless!



But America faces another war in our homeland that is killing more people than we have lost in the Middle East. For lack of a better name we call it the “war on drugs”. We have spent billions trying to stop the flow of drugs coming into our country from South America but substance abuse, like a subtle serpent, strikes more terror in millions of homes and leaves far more death and destruction than the Muslim terrorist attacks on 9/11. The crime and violence created by the drug trade has turned areas in nearly every city into war zones, and has filled our jails and prisons with two million casualties. That is the bad news!

But Jesus came into a world just as corrupt and violent with a message of “Good News” that we could be reconciled to God through His sacrifice on the Cross. Even though corrupt governments and religious leaders rejected His gospel invitation there were many who gladly received the gift of grace that He offered. Isaiah’s ancient prophecy has never been more needed or relevant than it is today.

We celebrate two holidays that are extremely significant to our Dunklin community. Thanksgiving marks the beginning of our annual Homecoming Celebration. We enjoy, as the early pilgrims did, a banquet of baked turkeys, dressing and pumpkin pies and look forward to the outdoor barbecue and Cowboy Breakfast around the campfire. We express our thanksgiving to God in the sharing of our personal testimonies about the change that Christ has brought into our lives. The Dunklin family, past and present, come to fellowship and renew our covenants with God and each other. We tell our



stories so that our children can know how God has blessed us in our pilgrimage from death to life. We’ve passed down our legacy to the next generation that will multiply the ministries that have been planted at Dunklin.



We have a *Jesus Birthday Party* before the men go home to spend Christmas with their families. Their parents, wives and children are invited to a banquet and gifts are given to all the men in the program. It is a beautiful expression of Christian community where families celebrate the true meaning of Christmas.

The question is asked “*Why is this Christmas different than last year?*” The testimonies that respond always fill my cup to overflowing. I always

wish I could record them for the whole world to hear.

They begin; **Christmas past**...I was in jail, separated from my family, drunk, alone and lonely.. always the same stories, sad but true!

But **this Christmas**...

Christ has made a difference in my life. He has helped me rebuild broken bridges back to my family. My parents trust me again. My wife and children have been reconciled and we are together today. Every testimony is a Gospel sermon.



But the centerpiece of the celebration is the Communion table where we remember the gift of Christmas was our Savior’s sacrifice on the Cross. God’s Christmas gift to the world was not given under a Christmas tree but on a cruel Roman Cross.

“FOR YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, AS SILVER AND GOLD, FROM YOUR VAIN CONVERSATION RECEIVED BY TRADITION FROM YOUR FATHERS. BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS A LAMB WITHOUT SPOT OR BLEMISH.”

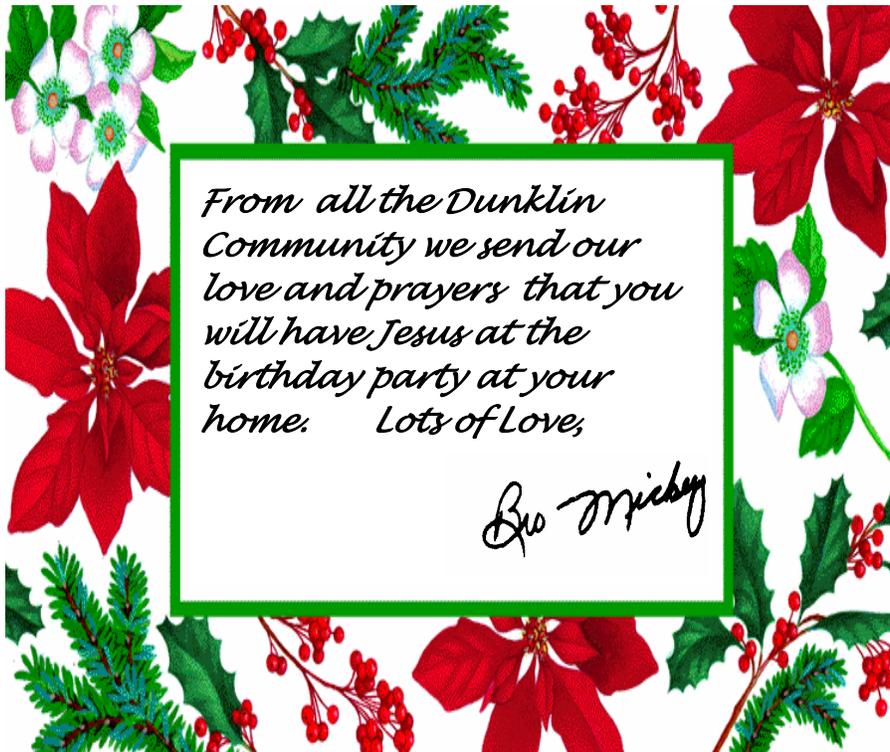
I PETER 1: 18-19

At the end of the service every man takes his place behind the Communion table, as priest of his home, to serve the Eucharist to his own family. It is a very sacred moment of silent celebration that words cannot describe. But for every person that serves the Lord's Supper it is a living reminder that...



“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.”

JOHN 3:16



These precious gifts of the Magi were acts of devotion to God for His gift to the world. They were expensive gifts from the givers in appreciation for the gift of the incarnation of the Messiah of all mankind.

The gifts were used, no doubt, to provide money for Mary and Joseph to protect Jesus from King Herod's mandate to slay all the male children in Israel. Their love offerings had a double significance often overlooked in our superficial celebration of Christmas.



Mary and Joseph were stewards of these gifts and they used them wisely to take their precious child to Egypt for His safety. When you understand how the wise men's gifts were used they give a far deeper meaning to the tradition of Christmas gifts.

In our history, Dunklin Camp has been the recipient of many love offerings given by our larger community of alumni, churches, and friends who have generously shared their love offerings with the camp to help us. God answered prayer through His people. Their sacrificial gifts made it possible to keep the programs in operation.

Churches of Christian people brought gifts to all the men in the program and also gifts for the men to give their children. Words written on paper are inadequate to express the gratitude that we have for the many expressions of love that we have felt from the larger Body of Christ.

We face the new year with faith tested through the fires of adversity and better prepared for whatever the future holds for us. The world systems around us are getting darker every year but thank God, we are in the light business!! New Cities of Refuge will be built next year by people trained and sent out from Dunklin that will spread God's light and love to the world.

Thank you again for the oil you pour into our lamps.

The Dunklin Community

***“ENTERING THE HOUSE WHERE THE BABY
AND MARY HIS MOTHER WERE, THEY THREW
THEMSELVES DOWN BEFORE HIM, WORSHIPING.
THEN THEY OPENED THEIR PRESENTS AND GAVE
HIM GOLD, FRANKENCENSE AND MYRRH.”***

(Matt. 2:11)



God's Gift

Don't leave the Christ in a manger
Receive him into your heart
Don't treat God's Son like a stranger
From your bad ways you must part

“For me to live is Christ”
Paul wrote long ago
The world looks for examples
It's up to me to show

We celebrate the Holiday
No thought of Jesus' love
We fail to thank God for His Gift
He sent from heaven above

Ray Zander
Life of Faith Volume VII

“Merry Christmas”



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