

NORTONVILLE NEWS

"Have Yourself A *Mature* Little Christmas"

By Pastor Joe O'Neill

One secular Christmas song is entitled, "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." The song was written in 1943 by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane, and was sung by Judy Garland in the musical "Meet Me in St. Louis." The song was later recorded by Frank Sinatra and has become a secular Christmas favorite. We hear the song on the radio and at the stores.

Interestingly, songwriter Hugh Martin later worked with John Fricke and changed the title to, "Have Yourself a Blessed Little Christmas," and gave the song Christian lyrics! Martin played the piano and sang it at some churches. A few lines from the revised song tell us:

"Have yourself a blessed little Christmas, serenade the earth.
Tell the world we celebrate the Savior's birth.
Sing hosannas, hymn and hallelujahs, as to Him we bow.
Make the music mighty as the heav'ns allow.
And have yourself a blessed little Christmas now."

Now we can sing that revised song with joy! The birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be greatly celebrated with music "mighty as the heav'ns allow." That is why we sing Christmas carols and have special services reminding us of the greatness of what God has done for us by sending His Son Jesus Christ. We have Someone to sing about!

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Stay Connected

Sunday

9:30 am **Sunday** School

10:45 am **Sunday** morning

6:00 pm **Sunday** night

6:00 pm **Sunday** Youth Group

Wednesday

Prayer Meeting at 6:30 pm

Olympians at 6:30 pm



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What I'd also like us to think about is having a *mature* little Christmas. Christians are to be strong and *mature* in the Lord, and just 40 days after the birth of Christ, the prophet Simeon shows us in Luke 2:25-35 how a *mature* person celebrates the birth of Christ.

I. The *mature* Christian lives by the Holy Spirit.

Simeon is described in Luke 2:25-27 as a person who has the Holy Spirit upon him. The Holy Spirit had told Simeon that he would live to see the birth of Christ. The same Holy Spirit lead Simeon into the temple at the very time that Joseph and Mary had brought baby Jesus in for His presentation to the LORD as the firstborn. Simeon was a Spirit-lead man, and that is exactly what a mature Christian is. We are told to walk in the Spirit and not to fulfill the lust of our flesh (Galatians 5:16). Remember that all Christians have the Holy Spirit living within them, but the *mature* Christian walks in the Spirit!

II. The *mature* Christian rejoices in Christ.

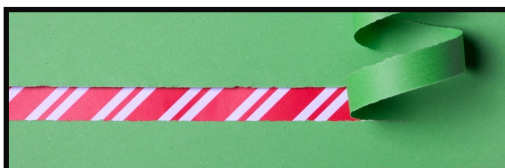
Simeon blessed God when he held the Lord Jesus (Luke 2:28-32). He thanked God that he lived to see God's salvation for both Gentiles and Jews. He was so happy to see the Lord that his life was complete, and he was ready to go home to be with the Lord. Mature Christians rejoice that they know the Lord and they are ready to go home to be with the Lord. Remember that every Christian has some joy in the Lord, but mature Christians are known by their joy in the Lord!

III. The *mature* Christian prepares others for the future.

Simeon told Mary that her firstborn Jesus would be the fall and rising of many in Israel. Some would stumble and reject the Lord, but some would believe in Him and be saved. Mary was told she would experience personal suffering because of the rejection of the Lord (Luke 2:33-35).

Just as Simeon helped prepare others for the future, *mature* Christians help others to get ready for what is ahead. We live in a day of a great falling away from the Lord and His Word, and *mature* believers are actively trying to help others be saved through faith in Christ, follow the Bible, and live as a light in a dark world. Remember that every Christian is a light in the world, but a *mature* Christian shines a bright spotlight that helps others see the Light of the world and avoid the darkness of sin and death.

Brother Simeon showed us how to have a mature little Christmas. Let us also walk in the Holy Spirit, rejoice in the Lord, and prepare others to live for Him. What a present we then would be.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
Sunday December 17, 10:45 am



OLYMPIANS CAROLING
DECEMBER 20,
6:30 PM



Christmas Eve Service
Sunday December 24th,
6:00 pm

Spotlight: When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder

In 1881, James Milton Black moved to the city of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. James was a talented musician, and found full time work as a music teacher. He joined the Methodist Episcopal Church of Williamsport, and served as a Sunday School teacher, Youth Pastor, and Song Leader.

One day, as James was on his way to the post office, he decided to take a shortcut through an alley. He passed by a home in great disrepair. It was the home of a local drunkard, and the family lived in poverty. James saw a girl sweeping the steps of the home. He began speaking with the girl, and invited her to Sunday School. "Sir, I have no proper clothes" was her tearful reply. James asked for her name. "Bessie," she said. James left, and later sent his wife with several dresses for the girl.

Bessie began faithfully attending Sunday Morning, Youth Group, and Sunday Evening services. But one day, as Bessie's name was called during the Youth Group roll call, no response was given. James decided to use her absence for a lesson, he spoke to the youths about what a sad thing it would be, if when the roll was called in heaven, they be absent. As the meeting drew to a close, James searched his hymnal for a song that would tie into the lesson, but could find no such song.

After the close of the evening service, James decided to visit Bessie, to see why she had been absent. When he came to the home, he found that she was gravely ill. Bessie's father had no money for a doctor, so James called his own doctor to come at once.



When the doctor arrived, he diagnosed Bessie with pneumonia, a deadly diagnosis in that day. James left the home saddened, knowing that she was not likely to survive her illness.

As James reached the gate of his home, he reflected on the events of the day. The youth meeting, the absence from the roll call, Bessie's sudden sickness, and the lack of a good hymn to close the meeting. In retelling these events in later years, Black said this: "This lack of a fitting song caused me both sorrow and disappointment. An inner voice seemed to say, 'Why don't you write one?' I put away the thought. As I opened the gate on my way home, the same thought came again so strongly that tears filled my eyes. I entered the house and sat down at the piano. The words came to me effortlessly. The tune came the same way—I dared not change a note or word."

Ten days later, Bessie passed away. After her passing, James wrote the final verse to the hymn. At Bessie's funeral, James shared the story of this hymn, how she had been its inspiration, and his confidence that "When the roll is called up yonder," Bessie will be there.

(Cont. on next page)

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more,
 And the morning breaks, eternal bright and fair;
 When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore,
 And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise,
 And the glory of His resurrection share;
 When His chosen one shall gather to their home beyond the skies,
 And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun,
 Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care;
 Then when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done,
 And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

December Birthdays



December 2
Reg Stroebe



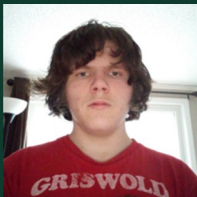
December 2
Becky Campbell



December 4
Annabelle Furbush



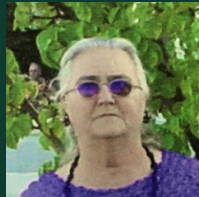
December 9
Nancy Czinder



December 16
Nathan Vink



December 16
Elaine O'Neill



December 17
Charlene Easey



December 25
Joshua Puett

December Anniversaries



December 31
Pat and Vince Blake

Calendar

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|-------|---|-------|--|
| 12/10 | Missionary Ruhstorfer speaking, 6:00 pm. | 12/17 | Kids Christmas program 10:45 am. |
| 12/11 | 24/7 Prayer opportunity.
Board Meeting 5:30 pm. | 12/18 | Spring Lake small group 6:30 am. |
| 12/12 | Small Groups at NGC 10:30 am. | 12/19 | Small Groups at NGC 10:30 am. |
| 12/13 | Ladies Mission Circle Luncheon 11:00 am.
Robbinswood church service, 1:30 pm.
Olympians and Prayer Meeting 6:30 pm. | 12/20 | Heartwood lodge services 10:00 am.
Olympians caroling 6:30 pm.
Prayer meeting 6:30 pm. |
| 12/16 | Kids Christmas program rehearsal 10:00 am. | 12/24 | Christmas Eve service 6:00 pm. |
| | | 12/27 | Robbinswood church service, 1:30 pm.
Prayer Meeting 6:30 pm |