



The Little School at
Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church
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DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Hi parents!

We are officially entering the Christmas season and we are sharing our Christmas spirit with the children!

Please enjoy this very special time of year with your family and know that

your family here wishes you a very merry Christmas!

I wanted to share a special story with all of you ("The Simple White Envelope") as it emphasizes the importance of giving and having family traditions. Enjoy!

The next few weeks will be filled with parties and celebrations and the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Have a very merry Christmas !

Love, Candice

Upcoming Events and Special Days

Baby Drive

Thank you so much for your generous donations to the Baby Drive! The Spring Branch ISD School Age Parent Program was delighted to receive all of the donations and appreciates your generosity! Our Outreach volunteer, Megan Albrecht (with help from her husband), carefully delivered all of the donations to them!

Christmas Readings

Beginning Monday, December 4th and continuing through Friday, December 8th, volunteers will read Nativity and Christmas stories to the children. For those of you who had expressed interest on the volunteer form, Sayler Robbins will be contacting you to sign up. If you would like to volunteer, let me know and I will forward the form to you! Remember you do not read to your child's room but rather to one of our other wonderful classrooms! Books will be available in our office or you may bring your own!



Looking Ahead

- Christmas readings - December 4th - 8th
- Teacher Appreciation Breakfast - December 6th - **no Early Bird**
- Last day before the Christmas holidays - Friday, December 15th - 1/2 day (Close at 12:00)
- The Little School closed December 16th - January 2nd for Christmas
- January 3rd - First day back

CHAPEL CHAT

The word *advent* means coming or arrival and that is exactly what we are celebrating at Christmas time – the coming of Jesus Christ! We will have fun at Chapel recounting the birth of Christ from the books of Matthew and Luke. Our Bible verse for December is *God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son John 3:16*. This scripture is a great reminder of what advent is really all about – God's immense love for us. We invite you to share His love at our Family Christmas

Eve Service, Dec 24 at 4:00. Merry Christmas!

Shopping Day

On Saturday, December 9th, from 9:15 AM to 3:00 PM, Child Care Plus will offer a Shopping Day to allow parents some valuable shopping time. Register at ccp.mdpc.org by December 6th.



Meet other MDPC women and celebrate the season with coffee, tea, wassail, and treats at the annual Christmas Coffee, an MDPC tradition. All women are welcome! Bring your mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends.

This year's celebration is on a **Thursday** (December 7th) so that our friends from MOPs can join us. We're excited to welcome the MOPs gang to the festivities!



SIMPLE WHITE ENVELOPE

It's just a small white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past 10 years or so.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas -- oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it -- the overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma -- the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties, and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way. Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school

he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes. As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. And as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat.

Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids -- all kids -- and he knew them, having coached little league football, baseball, and lacrosse.

That's when the idea for his present came. That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years.

For each Christmas, I followed the tradition -- one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on.

The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents.

As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure. The story doesn't end there.

You see, we lost Mike last year due to cancer.

When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad.

The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope.

Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

May we all remember Christ, who is the reason for the season, and the true Christmas spirit this year and always. God Bless! -- pass this along to those friends and loved ones who you know are the givers who understand the true meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas.