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December 2023



The Ten Commandments
Exodus 20:3-17

- I Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- II Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
- III Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
- IV Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- V Honor thy father and thy mother.
- VI Thou shalt not murder.
- VII Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- VIII Thou shalt not steal.
- IX Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- X Thou shalt not covet.



John 3:16

A Father's Letter

"The time for her delivery had come" (Luke 2:6)
Suddenly, in the night sky a vast number of glorious angels appeared, the very armies of heaven were declaring the most joyous news the world had ever heard, Peace on Earth Good Will Toward Everyone! This peace did not mean just the absence of conflict. It meant the restoration of harmony, safety, prosperity, the way that leads to salvation. I wanted only My goodness displayed to everyone. The joy of all of heaven was being displayed in that moment... for the time of Mary's delivery had come.

Continued on Page 8

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Being there is why I'm here.

See article on Page 7

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Holiday Tips for Dementia

By the time we hit 65, 1 out of 6 of us will be suffering from some form of dementia (severe memory impairment). By the time we reach 85, the odds are almost 50%. The most prevalent form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. For those families dealing with this, the holidays can be a particularly stressful time of the year.

Please see our Facebook page between now and December 15th for a number of posts related to seniors, dementia, and the holidays. <https://www.facebook.com/GriswoldTampa>

Here's a brief sampling from one of the posts related to dementia:

- Don't feel compelled to hang onto established family traditions if they're are no longer practical. Be willing to substitute or start a new activity that may become a tradition.
- Familiarize friends and family with changes in behavior and appearance that they may notice in your loved one. Give them tips for communicating and how to watch for increased anxiety or situations that might cause frustration and methods for helping calm your loved one down.
- Invite children to visit only briefly or hold events that are adults only.
- Consider multiple small holiday meals with fewer people.
- Make name tags for everyone attending.
- Celebrate early in the day to reduce the likelihood of "Sundowners Syndrome" (evening confusion).
- Keep the lights on to keep the room bright and the television off.

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— Matthew 1:21**

A Time Of Refreshing For American Missionaries



Time of Refreshing (TOR) is a unique, and amazing ministry that was founded by Dr. Bill and Emogene Kaiser in 1987. As they traveled through Europe, they saw the many needs of American missionaries who had left their family and friends to minister in many different nations. To go into a foreign country, learn a new language and culture, and live without family and friends close by can be challenging. Time of Refreshing was established to help serve the needs of these missionaries. A team of about 20 people from all over the United States come together to lavish gifts, prayer, time, love, and friendship to these missionaries. The goal is to give them a place to get alone with God, to relax and have fun without having to be concerned with ministry details.

The conference usually takes place somewhere in Europe. This year's conference was held in Leysin, Switzerland. The TOR conference starts with a beautiful banquet with a traditional American dinner. The following three days are filled times of praise and worship, teaching, and prayer, having meals together, and just relaxing in the beautiful Swiss Alps. These missionaries who give so much are lavished with gifts at every meeting and at end the conference a boutique is set up as a store where the missionaries can get whatever they want without any cost to them. Gifts brought by the team members supply the boutique with gifts of clothes, jewelry, cosmetics, tools, suitcases, American foods (peanut butter), and whatever the churches at home donate to bless these servants of God.

What amazing people these missionaries are with such humble hearts who have left comfort and convenience to fulfill the calling of God on their lives. At the end of the conference many testify that they were ready to quit because of the pressures of ministry but having been refreshed and encouraged are willing to continue their work. Some are pastors and church planters while

others are at work running safe houses for those escaping human trafficking. Others run schools and orphanages or work with people society has rejected and despised. They enter war zones taking food and medical supplies to those in crisis and help reestablish refugees fleeing unlivable circumstances.

River of Life Church in Lutz, FL helps to support this ministry by collecting items all year to bless the missionaries and by sending a team to help with worship and to work the event wherever the need may be. This year, Pastors Dan and Dianne Coflin, Pete and Carla Colangelo, and Pastors Justin and Amy Peterson had the privilege of serving these amazing missionaries.



List of Christmas Events and Movies

Samantha Taylor, Health & Fitness Expert



One thing I do to get myself in the Christmas spirit is enjoy some traditional experiences. I will share what some of those are, starting with some Christmas attractions around the area and then share some great movies.

I always enjoy going to Christmas Town at Busch Gardens. They have lots of great Christmas lights and my favorite show there is the Three Wise Men. It's spectacular and shows a part of the story of why many people celebrate Christmas, about Christ's birth. Busch Gardens also has an awesome ice skating show.

My other favorite place to go is Seaworld, for they also have amazing Christmas lights and they have an awesome nativity play including camels and other many live animals. It's actually pretty funny too. Make sure to check out the "snow flurries" (bubbles, well you know Florida's version of snow). Just don't open your mouth when they're flying in the air! And seeing the lighted trees show on the lake is a must see too.

I also really enjoy going to the zoo, they've got great Christmas lights and it's fun to walk around although you can't see any animals, but it's neat to see the place in the dark with sparkling lights everywhere.

And lastly for events, if you would like to see a Christmas play with a huge choir and beautiful songs, Idlewild Baptist has one Dec 8-10th.

As far as my favorite Christmas time movies the first one is an animated movie called "The Star". It's an adorable movie telling the nativity story from a donkey's perspective but it's a really cute movie and very well made.

My second favorite movie is "The Nativity Story" that was made in 2006 (so you know which one to look for). Telling the powerful story of Joseph and Mary going on that 90-mile trek to Bethlehem with a nine-month pregnant woman riding on a donkey, is quite a miraculous story that impacted this world.

None of these movies are 100% accurate but they follow mostly along the true story of the Bible and I always find it really gets you in the Christmas spirit watching these movies. I always also like to read the true story right from the source when I see a movie about the Bible and that story is in the book of Matthew and Luke.

And my third favorite Christmas movie, even though it has nothing to do with the original celebration of Christmas but "Elf" is a classic. I often find myself wanting to hit all the buttons on an elevator just to see it light up like a Christmas tree just like he does in that movie!

I hope you can get out and enjoy some of these beautiful experiences outside enjoying sparkling lights or enjoying a nice warm blanket and curling up to a movie. I truly do love December because I love all the Christmas lights but mostly, I love the feeling of the spirit in the air. People are nicer, they're more willing to talk about God and it is one of the number one holidays they are the most willing to go to church.

So, I encourage you to invite someone to go to church with you and maybe if you haven't gone in a while, you go back as well. Sometimes that's all you need to get started again. Life has certainly been challenging for all of us but I can tell you that without my relationship with God, I can't even imagine how much more difficult it would have been not having His wisdom to guide me and His

relationship to comfort me.

I hope you have a wonderful time celebrating Christ being born on this earth and how one person had so much impact on this world, it's quite astounding! And if you don't have a relationship with Him, maybe it's time to start exploring what that experience is like.

For Christmas, I must give you some delicious healthy cookie recipes (and some fudge too) that have no sugar but taste amazing. It's nice to have a backup with all those tempting foods around because you want to be careful about eating too much sugar, it can highly suppress the immune system. Get the sugar free recipes here: <http://www.samanthataylor.com/cookieirecipes>

Have a wonderful Christmas!

Sugar-Free Cookie Recipes



One thing that comes with holidays is lots of tempting food around that's full of sugar. The challenge is, if you eat too much sugar it can suppress your immune system (so you get sick easier), makes you hungrier and crave it even more, so you eat more. And that all contributes to weight gain. Since I kicked my sugar habit over 9 years ago, I don't play around with those issues anymore, but I enjoy having some sweet tasting foods sometimes, especially during the holidays. Here is a recipe for chocolate chip cookies that you will be amazed they don't have sugar. And get four more recipes here, including fudge. Merry Christmas! <http://www.samanthataylor.com/cookieirecipes>

Delicious Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients: 2/3 cup almond flour, 1 cup sugar-free sweetener (I like Pyure or Swerve, the best), 3 eggs (I prefer cage-free eggs), 8oz cream cheese (softened) & 2 tbs butter (softened), 1/4 t salt, 1/4 t vanilla, 1/2 t xanthan gum, 1/2 t baking powder, 1 tablespoon coconut flour (if you can't get this, its optional to leave out – it will NOT make it taste like coconut), 1 tablespoon almond butter (optional, any nut butter will do but not required), 1 1/2 cups sugar-free chocolate chips of choice (Lily's Chocolate Chips are the best option and Publix sells this. If you can't find them get them on Amazon. Last choice would be Hershey's has a sugar free one sweetened with maltitol, however this sweetener is not my favorite option – found this at Wal-Mart and Publix.

Directions:

- Cream together butter, cream cheese, cashew butter and sweetener. Add in eggs one at a time, mixing well in between each.
- Add remaining dry ingredients (except chocolate chips) and mix well
- Add in chocolate chips
- Put the mix in the freezer to harden up a bit (10 minutes or so, roughly as long as it takes to heat the oven)
- Preheat oven to 350
- Spoon cookies onto lined baking sheet (about 1 tablespoon sized cookies) and bake for 20 minutes or until the top of the cookie is no longer moist and begins to brown on the raised parts.

When I made these, they still looked moist after 20 minutes, so I even cooked them 6 minutes longer and they still looked moist so I took them out anyway. They were done, they just don't "brown" on the top like other cookies. So do the test at 20 minutes of sticking a knife in it and if no dough sticks to it, it's done.

Flu Season Is Right Around the Corner! Protect Your Child's Health

By Karen McBride

Dr. Michele Johnson-Towson, Pediatric Place of Tampa, is a board-certified pediatrician with 30 years of experience in caring for children ages newborn to 21 years old.

Students headed back to school last month which means, the cold and flu season is not far behind. Kids share germs right along with academics and sports. The doctor is encouraging patients to schedule flu shots starting in September. The flu shot which contains coverage against the influenza A&B strains is available in proper doses for ages 6 months and up. Same-week appointments are available for school physicals at Pediatric Place of Tampa, and the practice accepts all insurances as well as self-pay patients. New patients are always welcome!

Dr. Johnson-Towson and her staff are dedicated to keeping patients both healthy and educated on changes in children's health care. Pediatric Place of Tampa offers Urgent Care hours to accommodate sick children after work, school, and/or daycare. Urgent Care hours are available Monday – Friday until 7pm and Saturday 8am until noon. Pediatric Place of Tampa is conveniently located at 1338 W. Fletcher Avenue in Tampa. Call today at 813-264-2288 to schedule an appointment for school physicals, checkups, and flu shots.

I heard about this man, he was on an overnight train. He said to the conductor, "I'm a very sound sleeper. Please wake me up when we get to Philadelphia and make sure I get off. I may be groggy and may tell you no, but I have to get off." The conductor said, "You have my word, I'll make it happen." When the man woke up the next morning in New York City and had missed his stop, he was so upset he let the conductor have it. The lady watching said, "Wow! That man was so angry at you!" The conductor said, "If you think he was angry, you should have seen the man we put off in Philadelphia!"

"Say it like you mean it." Joel Osteen

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Make a Difference in Our Community: Volunteer!

We are so blessed to have readers that want to give back to our community, so we would like to help you find local organizations that need your help by providing their contact information. For a complete list, see our Volunteering page.

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American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, on Florida's Space Coast (Daytona Beach), Greater Orlando, Mid-Florida (Winter Haven), Southwest Florida (Sarasota) and Tampa Bay area services, visit <https://www.redcross.org/local/florida/central-florida.html>.

For questions regarding volunteering, please email the Red Cross at BeAHero.CFLRecruit@redcross.org or call the regional headquarters at 813.348.4820, then choose option 4 to access the Volunteer Services mailbox. A member of the team will respond as quickly as possible.

Trinity Café – Feeding Tampa Bay

Feeding Tampa Bay is considered an essential facility during this critical time, and they are working hard to ensure hundreds of thousands of people have the food they need during this pandemic. Volunteers are crucial in these efforts! For more information, contact Volunteer Services via email — volunteer@feedingtampabay.org or call 813.254.1190 ext. 270

<https://feedingtampabay.org/trinitycafe/>

Humane Society

The Humane Society provides medical services, shelter assistance, humane education and more for our community. Volunteers are critical to their success. Choose from a variety of opportunities – long term care, foster care, community service and group volunteers to name a few.

For more information, call Chris Madalena at 813.291.7357; email volunteer@humanesocietytampa.org or visit <https://humanesocietytampa.org/how-to-help/volunteer/>

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army helps members of our community with programs that serve the body, mind, and soul to alleviate the symptoms of poverty. The ministry provides shelter, adult rehabilitation, disaster relief and more. To see a list of volunteer opportunities and for information on how to volunteer, visit <https://southernusa.salvationarmy.org/uss/volunteer>. There are many locations in our area offering a variety of services.

For the Nebraska Avenue location, call 813.972.4777. For the Tampa Adult Rehab Center, call 813.972.0471.



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Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go;
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As Christmas draws close those of you that are parents are likely counting how many we have left with our children at home as OUR children. Laura and I have begun counting down the remaining summers, birthdays and even Christmases we will have left with our kids at home. Each year we look back on the slideshow that plays on our smart TV during the holidays of the year gone past. Each year we wonder where all the years went. Ultimately, we look back and realize that we aren't our kids favorite person anymore.

Now that's not to say that they don't like us anymore, but our kids are now teenagers, so we are no longer the two people who's praise is coveted. They no longer see us as the infallible couple that had all the answers to life's questions. Every year that hurts a little bit. We miss that little girl that was amazed at how we could tell her the answer to a simple multiplication problem off the top of our head. We were magicians.

The truth is that we just have to realize that we are the reason that they need us less now. We raised two independent little people that are finding their way and becoming their own people. They are finding the answers to their questions because WE taught them to do so. They are feeding themselves, deciding what new foods they like and what they want to spend money on (seems like

everything lately). We need to be thankful that we raised them up in the church and built a solid foundation from which they can now continue to build. The truth is, if we had what we thought we wanted and they still relied on us for validation and the answers to the test, it would only be a testament to how poor of a job we had done. We aren't their favorite people anymore, but we still made the team. That will have to be enough for the next few years.

Blessings to you and yours and Merry Christmas

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I heard about this pastor who had been out bear hunting all day long searching through the woods looking for any sign of a bear. Finally in frustration, he threw his gun on the ground and went to the stream and sat down. At that time, he saw this huge grizzly bear about 100 yards away running toward him full speed ahead. The pastor fell on his knees and said, "Oh, God, please convert this bear into a Christian!" Miraculously, the bear froze in his tracks and put both paws up in the air and said, "Lord, thank you for this food I'm about to eat."

"Say it like you mean it." Joel Osteen

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Kidz Korner: Girls Weekend



Hi! This is Harley, writer of the monthly Kidz Korner column in this newspaper. I just entered middle school, which is an entirely different world than elementary. However, my church's youth group makes the change super exciting! One thing I love about the student ministry is all the special events they offer, like pool parties and summer camps. In fact, a fall retreat for both middle and high school girls occurred recently—simply called Girls Weekend, or GRLS WKND, for those with a sense of humor. At first, it seemed a little intimidating—host homes and high schoolers? But once I arrived at church after a carpool, any apprehension disappeared!

Friday, November 3, was the day that Girls Weekend began. All the attendees (dressed in costumes in accordance to the Space Gala theme) were swept through photo booths, luggage rooms, halls filled with balloons suspended from the ceiling, and a stunningly decorated Gateria with streamers and tables! There we ate a delicious dinner and then trotted to Hall One for dancing, worship, and the first session. Everyone learned about the glory of God by watching a video that started with a small section of Earth and started zooming out to display the whole universe. After the sermon, the sixth grade carpooled to their host home, had a devotional, shoveled food into our mouths, and viewed the fantastic Mario Kart movie until midnight.

A fire alarm woke us up on Saturday.

Long story short, the caring and kindly parent who was cooking breakfast accidentally burnt the bacon, which set off an obnoxious beep, which lasted for ten minutes, as did the smoky smell.

Anyway, everyone was awake and fed plentiful popcorn and pancakes as well as salvaged bacon,

which facilitated the process of getting dressed and ready to return to church. (Side note: I couldn't find my sneakers OR sandals in the pile of twenty or so shoes downstairs, and thus had to wear my glossy white high heels. Reason: My feet are Size 3, so I couldn't borrow footwear.) After session two, which featured a guest speaker, lunch was served, and then there was a surprise!

WE WERE GOING TO THE TRAMPOLINE PARK!

A random, made-up podcast about popularity and buckets, thirty minutes, and a few protests later, everyone from Girls Weekend had arrived at Altitude Trampoline Park. There was so much to do, from trapezes and rock walls to foam pits and, of course, trampolines! Mrs. Kim Bain, Girls Weekend's director, insisted that the experience aligned with "Space Gala," as a "moonwalk."

Next, free time! The sixth grade returned to their host home to roast marshmallows, apples, and even pineapples! But, after free time came Saturday night dinner, which was labeled "Casual Dress." However, I had packed the fanciest dress I owned, along with my favorite jewelry and a pearl hair clip. Free time passed in a blur, and following a brief crisis concerning a curling iron (did I forget to mention the mattress surfing down the steep staircase?), everyone was ready to leave. My hair successfully curled with Level 25 hairspray and high-heels properly adorned, we scattered to our transport vehicles and departed for church.

The dinner was amazing, but even better (in my personal opinion) than the meal was the activity afterward! All the middle and high school girls watched a movie on the lawn, the new remake of Cinderella, while munching on desserts. It was a fitting end to an exhilarating day.

Sunday morning was, unfortunately, the final day of Girls Weekend, according to most. Everyone received a blue GRLS WKND T-shirt that read "If the stars were made to worship, so will I," lyrics from a favorite song that weekend. The final session pretty much recapped what we'd learned, such as how God is so glorious and powerful and yet loves us, and that we shouldn't place our identity in anything other than Him. It was an amazing message.

Even if Girls Weekend is officially over, it's not over in our hearts. All the middle and high school girls are so grateful for everything, and can't wait for next year!

Bye, everyone! Stay tuned for next month's Kidz Korner article!

Harley Isabel Smith is a homeschooled 6th grader who has been featured on TV as a philanthropist, has a heart for evangelism, and writes monthly for the Gazette's Kidz Korner. Visit online at <https://harleyisabelsmith.com> where she is constantly adding written and video content to entertain and educate children.

Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these!"

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Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

This holiday season, we all gather with our friends and family to celebrate the spirit of goodwill, compassion, and appreciation for one another, we reflect on the past in anticipation of the future. Many remember good times and prosperity, however, those that are not so fortunate wonder how their lives fell apart and how they became a homeless statistic. As we enjoy our holiday celebration, we ask you to remember those Veterans that are isolated without a place to share with others, or place to call "home." Veterans are usually "overlooked" during the holidays simply because we don't "think" of Veterans who might be needy, homeless, and quite possibly forgotten during the holidays.

But a glimpse into the lives of these brave, often unsung heroes offer all of us perspective, as these former servicemen are warriors, heroes in their own right; they serve as a reminder of how good life is in America and how fortunate we are to be Americans. This initiative offers us a great opportunity to pay homage in a significant way to those who have unselfishly answered the call to duty by serving in our United States military. Liberty Manor for Veterans has been recognized locally and nationally for successfully transitioning over 1,000 veterans into self-sufficiency since our origination in 2006. The homeless rate for Veterans was 26% in 2006 when we originated, today, I am delighted to report that it is only 11%!

I am making a personal appeal on behalf of our veterans in hope that you might consider including Liberty Manor for Veterans on your gift list offering us the opportunity to ensure a happy holiday for our Veterans during the holiday and throughout the year. All contributions made to Liberty Manor for Veterans, Inc, are tax deductible as a 501c3 non-profit organization and you will be helping those who have already made many sacrifices for the freedom we enjoy in America today. You can send your contribution to P.O. Box 274081 Tampa, FL 33688-4081, or by Zelle using phone number (813)477-0203 or on our website <http://www.libertymanor.org>.

Let us remember that only two defining forces that have ever offered to die for you; Jesus Christ and the American soldier, one died for your soul; the other died for your freedom. We wish you and your family a safe, happy, peaceful, and prosperous holiday and New Year.

For God, Veterans, and Country,
Connie G. Lindsay



Will You Pray For Our Nation?

In the face of widespread insecurity, fear, and hopelessness, our nation desperately needs your prayers.

Today we are surrounded by the effects of forgetting—even forsaking—God, both as a nation and as individuals. The problem is too big for human effort. Our nation has a heart problem, and only God can fix it. Will you join us in prayer as we ask God to heal our land?

We have a promise from the Lord: **"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."** (2 Chronicles 7:14, NIV)

Tax Collector Mike Fasano Announces Holiday Season Giving Opportunities



Pasco County Tax Collector Mike Fasano announces that his office is sponsoring the following events to help the community during the 2023 holiday season:

- **Be a Santa to a Senior** – collection boxes are in each of the five tax collector offices. Please stop by and donate a personal care item for a local senior citizen (i.e., toiletries, bath sets, greeting cards, stationery, stamps, etc.). Gifts will be collected until December 15.
- **Toys 4 Tots** – the five tax collector's office locations in Pasco County are all drop-off sites for the Marine Corps League's annual toy drive. Toys for children of military personnel will be collected up to December 15.
- **Salvation Army's Red Kettle Drive** – The Gulf Harbors and Wesley Chapel offices will be Red Kettle donation sites on December 9 and December 16. Please stop by between 8:30 AM and NOON to contribute to the important programs the Salvation Army provides throughout the year.
- **29th Annual Holiday Food Giveaway** – on December 15 food for those in need will be distributed by Tax Collector Mike Fasano and other officials. Additional details of this event will soon be sent in a separate release. To support this event collection jars will be on display in December in each of the five tax collector offices in Pasco County. Donations made will help purchase fresh food and other items for needy families this holiday season and into 2024. Donations may also be made at <https://www.govhub.com/fl-pasco/tc-gives/donate>

The locations of the five tax collector offices are: the West Pasco Government Center, 8731 Citizens Drive – Room 120, New Port Richey; Gulf Harbors – 4720 U.S. Highway 19, New Port Richey; Land O' Lakes, 4135 Land O' Lakes Blvd. (US 41), Land O' Lakes; Wesley Chapel – 4610 Pet Lane – Room C 101, Lutz/ Wesley Chapel, and the East Pasco Government Center, 14236 – 6th Street – Room 100, Dade City.

"Please join the staff of the Pasco County Tax Collector's Office as we celebrate the holidays by reaching out to those most in need," states Tax Collector Mike Fasano. "Your support of these wonderful local programs will help countless people enjoy the holidays this year. Your gift of any amount will go a long way towards helping our community have a joyous holiday season."

For details about each program, information regarding hours and locations, or general questions about the services provided by the Pasco County Tax Collector's Office, please contact Greg Giordano, Assistant Tax Collector at (727) 847-8179.



"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit." — Matthew 1:18

REVIVAL AT PIONEER FL. MUSEUM VILLAGE



Alan Metzger Shares His God–Given Talent To Support the Community

By Karen McBride



Alan Metzger devotes his time to serving the Lord and painting amazing artwork. He believes his talent is God-given and seeks to honor Him in all his paintings. The award-winning artist shares his portfolio with the community in many ways. Recently he donated art pieces to auction at a fundraiser for RTS Missions. He has made several mission trips to Haiti and Jamaica with other organizations and wanted to support this ministry as well.

“I have a passion to help the poor who are destitute and have no way of breaking the cycle,” said Alan.

In addition, he has paintings on loan to the East Lake Community Library in Palm Harbor for an art exhibit from November through December 2023. On December 2-3, 2023, interested buyers can view and purchase his art at the GFWC Lutz Arts and Crafts Festival. The festival is held at Keystone Prep High School, 18105 Gunn Highway in Odessa.

Alan received his education in graphic design at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and established his career at several advertising agencies. He won awards during his time as a graphic artist, but never dreamed of becoming a full-time artist. And then God started opening the doors.

After encouragement from a friend, he entered a contest for the International Polo Club in Palm Beach, FL. They were looking for an artist to create the first annual commemorative poster. His submission, titled “Polo Rumble” won. This led to autographing posters at a media luncheon on opening day, and the original being auctioned to the highest bidder at a major charity event at the end of polo season.

“The polo club award came as I was starting to question and getting discouraged about my decision to quit my job and paint full time. I felt it was God saying keep going, use the talent I gave you.”

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, don’t lean on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path.”

His skillful technique involves painting with oil paint, layering colors, and using a tile trowel to scrape the canvas, revealing the colors underneath, while giving movement to his art pieces. As an impressionist, his portfolio includes animals, landscapes, and abstracts in bright colors. If you have limited wall space in your home, Alan’s website offers his colorful artwork in smaller prints, coffee mugs, t-shirts, phone cases, yoga mats, and more. Perfect gifts for your family and friends this Christmas.

On January 20, 2024, the Clearwater Free Clinic has a fundraiser called Martinis + Matisse, which is a gala night held at the Frank Crum center. This is Alan’s 6th time donating an original painting.

To see more of his artwork and find out about upcoming exhibits, go to www.alanmetzgerart.com.



God Told Debbie Carson to Share Her Testimony

By Karen McBride



A parent with post traumatic stress disorder, a sister that passed away at a young age, and going through a divorce are just a few of the traumatic events that Debbie Carson has endured through her life. She learned to trust God during these difficult times, and He has always been there to carry her through.

Her deeper relationship with God has placed in her heart to help others. A few years ago, God encouraged her to share her testimony of surviving physical and emotional abuse in order to help others through their healing journey.

She wrote her first book, “Thankful for the Scars” in 2022. Whatever produced scars on your body, the ugliest scars many times are the ones hidden deep inside where no one can see. This book will help readers to identify those scars and begin the process of healing.

“I wrote this book so the hurts and mistakes in my life would not be wasted. God can use anything you have experienced... if you will let Him!” said Debbie.

She received so many messages of gratitude for the help her readers received from her first book. But there was more to her story, so she embarked on her second book, “The Power of Choice”, which has just been published.

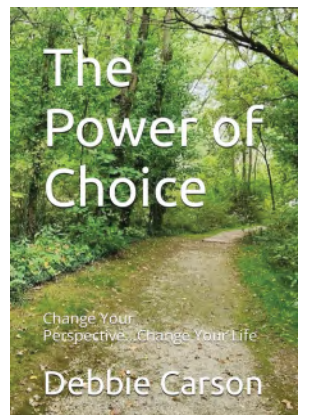
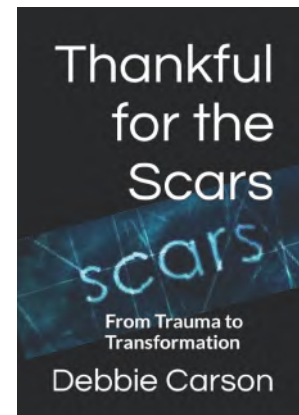
Even when you know clearly what happened in any given situation, you will always see it through your own personal perspective of past experiences and imprinted information from those experiences in your subconscious mind. This perspective drives your choices. In order to change your life, you must first change your choices. In order to change your choices, you must first change your perspective. “The Power of Choice” will walk you through a reflection of your life, the path you are on, and how the choices you make along the way can alter your future, starting with forgiving yourself. Healing from past mistakes is critical if you want to keep moving forward.

With God’s guidance, healing is possible. God’s wisdom is available to anybody that will ask for it.

Her books are available on Amazon for Kindle and paperback editions.

https://www.amazon.com/stores/Debbie-Carson/author/B09YYLFW5?ref=ap_rdr

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Mt. Moriah Ranch is Helping Clients Heal Through Equine–Assisted Coaching

By Karen McBride



Even as a young child, Lindsay Anderson dreamed of owning a ranch. She would tell her family and friends that one day she would have land with lots of horses. When she was 16, she was given the book “Hope Rising” by Kim Meeder. The story takes place on a ranch owned by a Christian family in Oregon, and it inspired her to start her own equine-assisted coaching ministry.

In 2013, Lindsay and her husband, KJ, were living in a small apartment above her in-laws’ garage and God spoke to her and said, “You have to start something” even though they didn’t have the land or horses. He placed in her heart the scripture in Genesis 22. She admits she struggled with this chapter in the Bible. Abraham takes his son, Isaac, to Mt. Moriah to sacrifice him because God told him to do so. His son had to be willing to do it as well because he was old enough that he could have run away from his father. But the two of them had so much trust in

God that they were willing to make whatever sacrifice was necessary to please the Lord. And then God provided the ram and spared Isaac.

“So, Abraham called that place the Lord will provide. And to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.’” Genesis 22:14 NIV

So, their journey to establish Mt. Moriah Ranch began with the use of other people’s horses. Later a horse named Dee-Dee was donated to them, and they embarked on the search to find a place to board her. God blessed them even more in that the owners would allow Lindsay and her team to continue their work as Mt. Moriah Ranch and even use their horses for the equine-assisted coaching.

Equine-assisted coaching has proven to be a valuable tool in the healing process. Horses have double or more mirror neurons. A mirror neuron is when someone yawns and you yawn too. Your friend’s eyes tear up and so do yours. Horses will mimic you. A horse can hear a heartbeat 4 feet away and will synch their heartbeat to yours to connect the two of you.

One of the methods that has been very effective is when a child is scared about something, he/she may say the horse is scared. The coach can then work with the child through a series of questions. Why is the horse afraid? What can we do to help the horse not to be so afraid? The child can then use these tools when he/she is feeling afraid.

“It takes a very courageous person to walk the road of healing through trauma. You have to change your coping mechanisms. You have to train your brain, because trauma affects it so much,” said Lindsay.

Two coaching programs offered at Mt. Moriah Ranch are Equine-Assisted Coaching and Relational Horsemanship.

Equine-Assisted Coaching:

The team of specialists at the ranch include an equine specialist, a coach, and a member of the horse team that teach a client through a series of techniques, including guiding a horse through an obstacle course. These interactive sessions build confidence in the client while focusing on build-

ing healthy relationships and communication.

People who can benefit from this program are dealing with depression, anxiety, grief, eating disorders, addictions, ADD/ADHD, PTSD, and may be recovering from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. The client is required to meet with a counselor apart from the help he/she receives at Mt. Moriah Ranch to further promote healing.

Relational Horsemanship

This program is geared towards children. Some children in this program may be non-verbal and have physical challenges. Others may have experienced trauma and find it difficult to relate to and trust people.

The curriculum involves hands on interaction with a horse while learning about horse behavior. This helps clients in learning about themselves, building communication skills, and trust.

Having experienced childhood trauma in her younger years, she knew that she needed a place like Mt. Moriah Ranch. Now she uses the horses on the farm to share the love of Jesus Christ.

“True ultimate healing is really about our walk with Jesus and unhealed trauma can keep us from fulfilling the life God has planned for us,” said Lindsay.

If you want to help Mt. Moriah Ranch to continue to serve our community, please consider becoming a monthly partner. Their immediate needs are for sustainability so that when they transition to their own property, they can hire more coaches and/or equine specialists. They are sustainable for their current size, but they have a waiting list now of clients needing help and need to grow before they can accept any more clients.

For more information on this amazing organization, visit <https://www.mtmoriahranch.org>



A Father's Letter

Continued from Page 1

My heart's desire was being released upon the earth, My words being sung from the heavenlies My baby Son had come. He will grow and through his life he will reveal My heart in all that he says and does. He will show the way back to me and I once again can fellowship with all the men and women and children that I have so missed. My family.

I was broken-hearted that Adam and Eve gave up all the authority I had given them. They had been given the right to rule in this earth, keeping this enemy against their soul out. I had turned that right over to them, I could not override this action. I enjoyed the sweet fellowship we had every day then suddenly it was broken. They turned all that authority over to the enemy and being deceived they sinned. If you've ever been hurt by the loss of a relationship, then you know that's how I felt. I was deeply broken-hearted.

Adam and Eve, my first two children had no idea what was lost in that moment. Their actions would infiltrate all mankind for generations to come. The enemy had succeeded in bringing to my beautiful family a place of burden in their hearts. Experiencing shame, guilt, torment, fear, anxiety, and all that would be ushered into the lives of all mankind through the ages. Maybe you can understand why I was so broken-hearted. I never wanted them to experience the pain of hate, hurt from rejection, or fear, that was never My heart. I wanted them to enjoy life, build many generations of families that I would enjoy getting to know and have a relationship with. I wanted a big family that I could be a father to.

The only way back, to be restored to My family was to come and defeat this enemy for eternity. It would be many years before I would see that fulfilled. I had to make a way back to My family or we would never again be together. I could only do that through a sinless man who would offer his life, shed his blood for all creation that had become separated from Me, to restore us. The plan we developed was to send my only begotten Son to come, it was the only way.

I loved him and he was willing to undergo a time of separation until he could return to Me. He would be born of a virgin, he would grow and teach all mankind, My heart in all that he said and did. He would reveal My word My love, he would show the right way to live and how to have a victorious life and defeat this enemy of their souls. A new kingdom he would establish in their hearts and above all we would be restored to each other. I could be their father again my children would be restored, no longer to be lost.

Maybe you can understand when I said, "I so loved the world I gave my only begotten Son for whosoever would believe (receive) him would have eternal life." You see his life, his death and burial at the time may not have made sense, but his resurrection defeated this enemy completely stripping him of his authority to rule over and defeat My family. Jesus became the new Adam. The old Adam had given up the life I had for them and turned it over to the enemy. Jesus' victory brought back into the world man's right to rule and to enjoy My kingdom of peace and joy with Me.

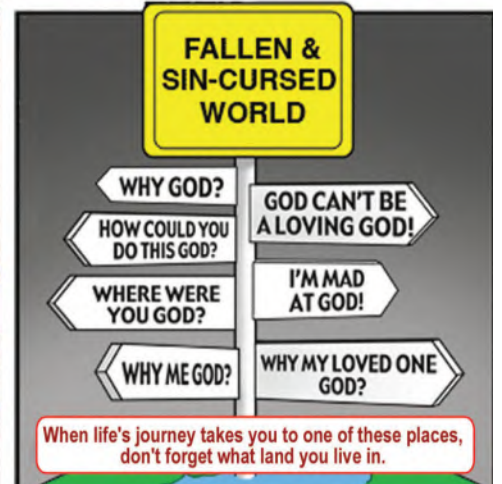
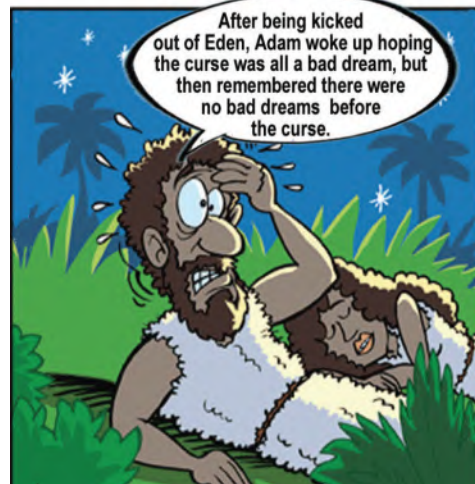
I hope you understand why this was such an exciting time for all of us. My heavenly host knew the impact this would have on the world. It would be the beginning of an incredible change. Yes, there would be a lot to learn and understand, yes, there would be much to contend for, though the enemy's authority was broken to rule I would have to teach my people to enforce that defeat.

My Son would pay the ransom for all mankind. If the enemy had known, he would never have crucified him. Oh, the joy of knowing what was to come, the future of being reunited with my family with all those who believe! It was the beginning, "The time of her delivery had come!"

Merry Christmas from your Heavenly Father!

Dr. Dianne Coflin, co-pastor River of Life Church 410 E Chapman Rd. Lutz, Florida. Services Sunday 10:30am and Wednesdays at 7:00pm. Childcare provided. We would love to have you come and worship with us.

Adam & Eve After Celebrating in the Garden of Eden...



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Merry Christmas! Enter to Win!
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Complete The Verses!

- 1. This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: _____
- 2. She will give birth to a son _____

Winners of the Nov. contest for a food certificate from Costanera Peruvian Cuisine are:
Rachel H., Barbara H., Amy B., Joan A., Susan M., & Barbara H.

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I	B	H	N	R	H	E	E	Y	Y	T	E	I	GOLD
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GFWC Honors Its Outgoing President



Elayne Bassinger cutting her cake

GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club members outdid themselves in hosting a lovely and elegant luncheon to honor their outgoing President Elayne Bassinger, for her outstanding leadership over the past 2 years of her term. The Ballroom of The Groves Golf & Country Club, Land O'Lakes, was beautifully decorated around a "Tiffany" color theme, apropos to their very elegant honoree.

Ms. Bassinger was surrounded by family, club members and special guests and was gifted with lovely remembrances in appreciation of her service. A special video retrospective of club events and projects during her 2 year term was viewed and now serves as a lovely memento for Ms. Bassinger.

GFWC Quantum Leap Family Picnic Day

GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club member Jan King, her Club Booster husband, John King and Booster friend Carole Moore and husband Bob Moore, again volunteered to man the grills and serve picnic barbeque fare at the recent Quantum Leap Family Picnic Day lunch. This Odessa facility provides equine assisted therapies, serving veterans, children with Pediatric Cancer, PTSD victims and people on the spectrum. The benefits of equine therapies are improving coping strategies and communication skills facilitated by a team of certified and licensed equine and medical professionals.



(L-R) Bob Moore, Member Jan King, husband John King (booster) & Carole Moore prepping cookout fare

The Woman's Club has supported this local service organization for a number of years. For more information on this volunteer club or membership opportunities, please visit gfwclutz-landolakeswomansclub.org or its Facebook page.

GFWC Donates to Solutions Thrift Store



(L-R) members Nancy Allen and Gail Howard filled a pickup truck with clothing donations

GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club members Gail Howard and Nancy Allen, delivered a pickup truck filled with over 20 bags of donated clothing, shoes, pocketbooks and jewelry to Solutions Thrift Store, a part of Sunrise of Pasco Domestic Abuse Shelter in Dade City. All these items were unsold at the club's recent flea market and were very gently used and fashionable, so as to benefit the shelter. The clubwomen are very active in fundraising and supporting this Domestic Violence Shelter in Pasco County. For more information on this community service organization, please visit gfwclutzlandolakeswomansclub.org or its Facebook page.

Stay Safe While Away From Home During The Holiday Season

The holiday season is often a time for shopping, merriment and for many, travel away from home. Potential criminals may take advantage of your extended time away, but there are simple ways to keep your home safe. Pasco Sheriff's Office is helping you prepare your home for your time away by sharing important safety information. Implementing some of these tips can go a long way in providing you with peace of mind while away.

Complete a home safety evaluation before leaving for a trip. Lock all exterior doors and windows and ensure each lock works properly. Check that fences and gate latches function well and are closed. If your home has a security system, confirm all devices work properly and are set while you're gone. Make sure security cameras are properly positioned and their lenses are clean. Ensure you also know how to access your security camera footage. Never leave a spare key near exterior doors, as criminals know common hiding places. Instead, ask a trusted neighbor or friend if you're able to store a spare key with them.

Making your home look "lived-in" while you're away can prevent you from becoming a victim of a crime of convenience. Use timers or smart devices to turn lights off and on at times you're typically at home. This can help deter criminals by creating the appearance you're home. Ask a trusted neighbor to retrieve mail and put out trash cans while you're away. Keep your yard tidy, ensuring plants near windows are well trimmed, which helps eliminate potential hiding places for criminals. Secure outdoor items in a shed or garage to reduce the opportunity for theft.

Don't forget packages or deliveries while you're gone. If possible, have deliveries scheduled for when someone is home to accept packages. Install a visible security camera to monitor where your deliveries are dropped off. If you cannot schedule a delivery, have shipments sent to a trusted neighbor, friend, office or a package room. Place a temporary hold through the post office to stop delivering mail until your return. If you have automatic deliveries, be sure to pause those while you're gone too.

Though you may be excited to share your travel plans with your friends and family on social media, keep in mind that potential criminals can use that information against you. Safeguard who sees what you share online by managing social media account privacy settings and restricting sharing abilities. Remove location tags and avoid "checking in" to locations on social media. Additionally, don't share travel activities, itineraries or locations on social media platforms before or during travel. Post your vacation photos after you return!

Taking extra precautions during the holiday season can go a long way in ensuring that your property stays safe while you're away. Knowing that you've taken time to properly prepare your home can help you enjoy your holidays even more. For more crime prevention tips, follow Pasco Sheriff's Office on social media, or visit our news site at News.PascoSheriff.com. Safe travels, Pasco!

The Great Florida Outdoors: Bird Migration, Part 2

Dr. Robert Norman, Clinical Professor, Dermatology, Nova Southeastern University



One of the great long distance migrating birds is the red knot. It is a medium size shorebird that sports rusty, red breeding plumage, and a winter plumage of gray and white. After it breeds in a large area of the high Arctic, it migrates all the way down to the southern tip of South America for the winter.

The red knots make stops at Delaware Bay along the New Jersey coast to feed and rest. And many of these birds continue to the western side of Florida, where they spend the winter around the Gulf of

Mexico. I have seen these wonderful birds at Fort De Soto Park.

Others leave Delaware Bay to take a long flight over the Atlantic Ocean to reach the eastern coast of South America in Brazil. Here they feed and rest and continue on to South America's southern tip of Tierra del Fuego to spend the winter. They travel more than 9000 miles one way during migration.

On the return trip, red knots leave from their winter home all the way from Tierra del Fuego and thousands arrive in Delaware Bay during May. Many are starving and often half the weight they were when they departed. The arrival in Delaware Bay coincides with the annual horseshoe crabs spawning in the Bay. Red knots are dependent on horseshoe crab eggs.

The red knot — horseshoe crab interaction highlights the interdependence in nature. Red knot populations are decreasing, perhaps due to the decline of horseshoe crabs. Over the last 40 years red knots have gone from 82,000 birds to fewer than 30,000.

As the year reaches its end, bird migration reaches its peak. Some places see more birds than they did in spring. Florida may be the ideal place for birdwatching during the fall since it welcomes a large variety of migratory birds. (Bird Sphere)

Fall migration begins in late July and continues through winter as many birds either return to Florida or come to seek refuge from the harsh weather. Migratory birds in Florida include the Sandhill Crane, Cedar Waxwing, Anhinga, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Gull-Billed Tern, American Redstart, Swallow-Tailed Kite and Red-Eyed Vireo.

The Sandhill Crane is famous for its long neck and red beak. The species can be seen in Florida all year round. However, during the fall season, Florida hosts the Greater Sandhill Crane in huge numbers. The Greater Sandhill Crane is a larger subspecies of the Sandhill Crane. Up to 25,000 of them fly towards Florida to seek refuge in the winters. When you see them in flight, it is truly a mesmerizing sight. They fly in large flocks, and their distinct calling voices can be heard from over a mile.

Where can see these wonderful birds?

Get out into The Great Florida Outdoors!

Dr. Robert Norman, Clinical Professor of Dermatology
Director, Center for Geriatric Dermatology, Integrative Dermatology
and Neuro-Dermatology

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Happy Holidays From Social Security

By Javier Morales, Social Security Public Affairs in South Florida



The holiday season often brings us feelings of warmth and joy. At Social Security, we want you to know we share the same joy when it comes to serving you, whether it be online, by telephone, or in person. Our online services are available to help you do business with us in an easy, convenient, and secure way. It all starts with a personal my Social Security account. More than 71 million people have signed up for their personal account!

You can create a personal *my Social Security* account to:

- Apply for retirement, spouse, or disability benefits.
- Apply for Medicare.
- Check your application or appeal status.

If you receive benefits, you can use your personal my Social Security account to:

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- Change your direct deposit information. (Social Security benefits only)
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- Print your SSA-1099.

If you do not receive Social Security benefits, you can use a personal *my Social Security* account to:

- Get personalized retirement, spouse, or disability benefit estimates.
- Get your Social Security Statement.
- Get instant proof that you do not receive benefits.

You can use our services on-the-go or from the comfort of your home. Please visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount to view the services available to you. We want you to have a safe, happy holiday season and know that we are here for you.

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Malibu Upholstery Will Make Your Upholstery Beautiful

By Karen McBride

Alejandro Paulino may be approaching his retirement years, but there is no slowing him down. For over 40 years he has been using his expertise to repair or replace upholstery in automobiles, boats, motorcycles, and home furnishings such as couches and recliners.

He began his career when he was a young man in Venezuela, later moving to Puerto Rico, and then, along with his wife Raquel, to Florida in 2017. The following year they put his talent to good use and opened Malibu Upholstery.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters," Colossians 3:23 (NIV)

Alejandro takes this scripture to heart and is very meticulous in his work. The perfectionist has been known to completely start over if a project does not look exactly as he planned.

This exceptional attitude and precise attention to detail is what keeps his customers coming back when they need his upholstery services on other automobiles, boats, and more.

If you need upholstery repaired or replaced, call Alejandro at 813-240-3761 or 787-614-1588 to schedule an appointment.

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History of Christmas Trees

By Karen McBride

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, we enjoy the excitement of seeing family and friends, exchanging gifts, and of course decorating our homes with colorful lights, nativity scenes, and beautiful Christmas Trees.

The fragrant smell of evergreens brings back happy childhood memories of early Christmas mornings drinking hot cocoa and unwrapping gifts.

Have you ever wondered where the tradition of the Christmas Tree first began? It was established across the globe before coming to America. Germany had a tradition of bringing trees into their homes on December 24, the religious feast day of Adam and Eve. They hung wafers on it symbolizing the Eucharistic host (the body of Christ) and candles representing Jesus Christ as the light of the World.

But it wasn't until the 1800s that Americans began the tradition. German settlers in Pennsylvania brought the tradition to America. Many Americans were hesitant to follow suit, thinking it a Pagan ritual.

William Bradford, the pilgrim's second governor, and Oliver Cromwell preached against decorated trees, singing Christmas carols, and any other form of celebration during this holy time. In 1659, the General Court of Massachusetts even went so far as making a law against decorating your home, which continued until the 19th century.

However, it was a different story in Europe. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were illustrated in the London News standing around a Christmas tree with their children. It immediately became fashionable and people across Europe began to follow the tradition.

As Americans warmed to the idea, they began by decorating their trees with homemade ornaments. Brightly colored popcorn was strung with berries and nuts to adorn the trees. People of German descent would also use apples, nuts, and marzipan cookies.

With the invention of electricity, Christmas lights replaced the dangerous practice of lit candles on a Christmas tree, and it also allowed trees to be set up in town squares. The most well-known of these is in Rockefeller Center. The first tree adorning the New York City center was placed in 1931. It was not the spectacular tree of today, but just a small undecorated tree placed there by construction workers. A few years later another tree was placed there and this time with lights. Now the 100-foot tree in Rockefeller Center is decorated with over 25,000 Christmas lights!

There is nothing like the fragrance from a real evergreen tree in your home. But the mess and difficulty of disposal are the reason many prefer an artificial Christmas tree. Artificial trees are not really a new invention. As early as the 19th century, Germans had "trees" made of dyed goose feathers in an effort to preserve their forests.

In the 1930s, some Americans had trees made from brush bristles, but it wasn't until the 50s and 60s that the white and gold aluminum and plastic trees gained in popularity. Artificial trees made nowadays are more natural looking, with soft green bristles, and integrated lights to ease

the assembly and set up. Simply decorate with your favorite ornaments and you have a beautiful tree to place your presents under.

So, as you decorate your tree this year, whether it is artificial or a fragrant evergreen, remember the real reason for celebrating the season – Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the light of our world.

To read more about the Christmas tree, go to <https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas-trees> and <https://www.britannica.com/question/Where-did-the-modern-Christmas-tree-originate>

GFWC Very Busy Serving The Community

GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club has entered the busiest time of its calendar year: the holidays! Members delivered over 200 handcrafted Thanksgiving favors for Meals on Wheels meal trays, another member group dropped off a vehicle filled with food donations destined for Father & Son Food Pantry and a large team of club ladies wrapped huge donation boxes in holiday paper for donated Christmas gifts for Meals on Wheels clients.



(L-R) Club members Darryln Caudhill and Marsha Gibson delivering favors



(L-R) Members Dee Knerr, Pastor C. J. Jones (center) & Nancy Taylor delivering food donations



Team of members who wrapped collection boxes for Meals on Wheels

GFWC Donates Observed Veteran's Day



Member Dee Knerr and (in background) Club Booster Ben Nevel placing flags.

GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club members acknowledged and observed Veteran's Day by placing many flags around the veterans' monument, lining the walkways and flagpole at the Veteran's Memorial Park in Lutz. For more information on this community service organization or membership opportunities, please visit gfwcclutzlandolakeswomensclub.org or its Facebook page.

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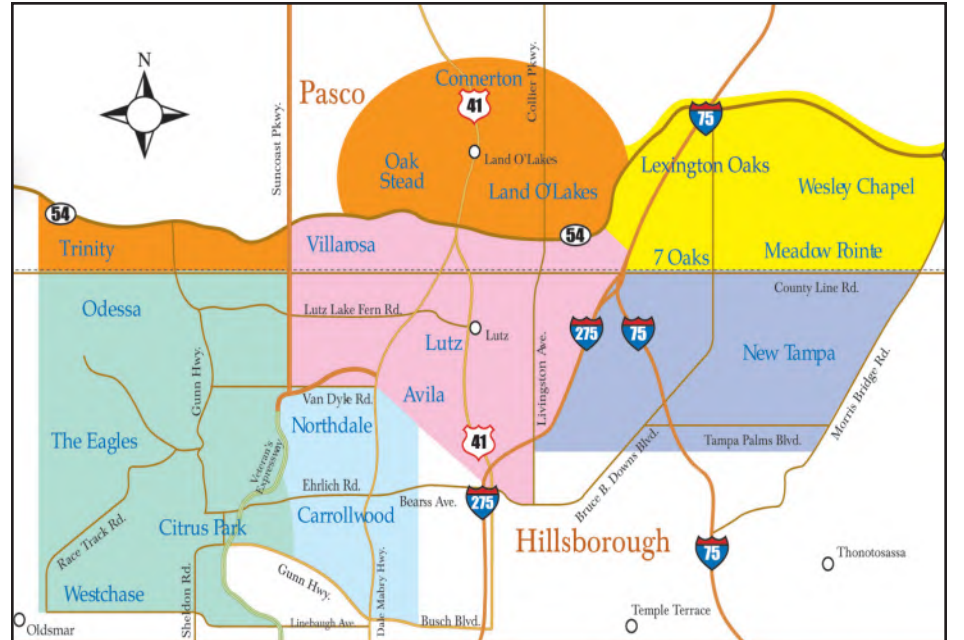
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