

The Mission of the Columbus first Seventh-day Adventist Church is to make known God's beautiful Character of self-giving love as revealed in Jesus Christ.

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VINDICATING THE INNOCENT

You've seen it numerous times. The uproar. The protests. The crowds up in arms, fueled by a sense of justice deep from within, over some injustice towards an innocent victim. Especially young people feel deeply this desire for justice.

Could this God-planted desire be the key we're searching for, to reach and captivate the hearts of our youth? Let us appeal to this desire by sharing with them that the most beautiful image ever known to intelligent beings has been maliciously marred and misrepresented by a vicious Diablos, the great slanderer of the universe! A directly criminal activity by God has been suggested. The very justice of the Creator has been called into question. Serious doubts have arisen in the universe regarding the blamelessness of God.

If we know God's name to have been wickedly slandered, pulled down into the mud of defamation, and trampled upon with the hard heels of merciless cruelty, we should immediately know our simple duty. To stand wholeheartedly on the side of that innocently slandered One. Our sense of justice should cause us to rise up in His defense and do the little we can in order to wash His name clean! Did I say little? In the drama of God's vindication, man has actually been favored with a role of tremendous significance. In fact, he has been made a "spectacle" for the universe, to angels as well as his fellowmen (1 Cor. 4:9) He is a tiny actor on an enormously large stage.

With the zeal of the youth for noble ideals and brave exploits swelling in their hearts, they will gladly enlist and become actively engaged in the great vindication of the downtrodden One. Nothing could ever have a greater appeal to the youthful heart than the gallant warfare in favor of the innocently maligned and patiently suffering Lamb of God.

In order to captivate their hearts we must remember, young idealists cannot, for the life of them stand anything that is phony.

They will have no interest in standing up for a god who has been distorted not only by the back-biter, but by religionists. The god they are rejecting is a false god, not the beautiful God that He is.

We must present Him as attractive as He is, and the gospel as the truly good news that it is.

We must be consistently God-

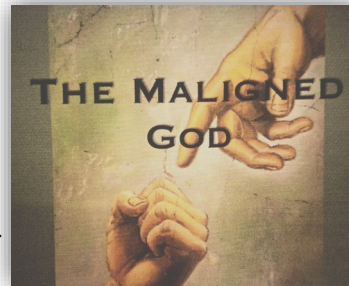
centered in our approach and discontinue our foolish man-centered perspective.

As a result we might see an unknown zeal for good against evil, something we hardly imagined possible in this highly online generation. Youthful hearts will again be on fire for the vindication of God. There is no cause coming more effectively home to young people's hearts than that of vindicating the innocence of the truly Innocent One, the Man of matchless charms.

Just our willingness to stand wholeheartedly on the side of the innocently slandered One can gladden the Savior's heart.

Is that not the most worthwhile and meaningful thing in the whole wide universe?

Thoughts gleaned from the introduction to *The Maligned God*, by Carsten Johnsen

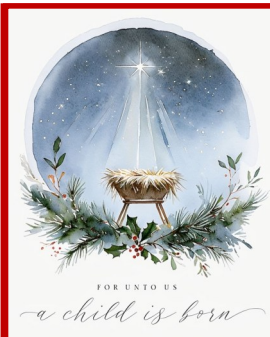


CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Christmas is the most joyful time of year as we celebrate the Gift of God in giving His Son to a world of lost sinners. The month of December was full of special occasions to spread this joy.



The children's church and school choirs were the highlight as they sang the joyful songs of Christmas!

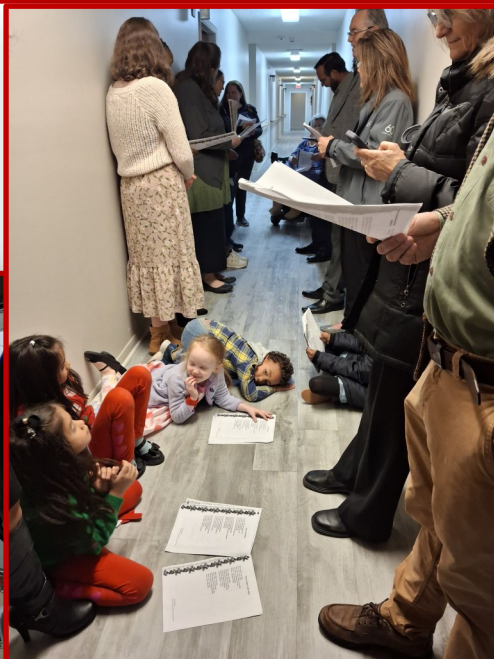


Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

2 Corinthians 9:15



Caroling with Ann Harrison and Mary Jane Lewis was lots of fun!





The church choir under the direction of Carmen Piroski was amazing! We were tremendously blessed by their beautiful voices and the Christmas story!



The church enjoyed a Christmas social with food, games, exchanging of gifts, and decorating the tree. All had a wonderful time.



Plant Powered Plates



No Cheese Alfredo Sauce from Cauliflower

- 3 cups cauliflower
- 1/4 cup raw cashews
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast
- 2 tsps. Garlic powder or 6 cloves (I use less)
- 1 1/2 tsp salt

Directions

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the cauliflower and cook covered, for 8-10 minutes, or until the cauliflower is fork tender. Reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat, sauté the minced garlic in a small amount of water until soft but not browned. About 1-2 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the cooked cauliflower to a blender. Add garlic, reserved 1 cup of cooking liquid, salt, yeast, and washed cashews. Puree until the sauce is smooth and creamy. Cook stirring to prevent sticking.

Serve as an Alfredo sauce over pasta, rice, or steamed veggies.

Very easy and good!

Everything was in perfect harmony, and then the whole mess started with one man's sin. Father Adam, the head and representative of the human family, started it all when distrust lead to disobedience by believing the lie of the crafty serpent. Every child of Adam inherited the mess in our sinful natures, out of no choice of our own. But the ripple effect from Adam's sin went beyond the human family. God's "very good" creation also was corrupted. Paul traces the consequences of Adam's disobedience to the futility of which creation has been unwillingly subjected. Out of no choice of nature, plants and animals, have been subjected to the curse, corruption, sickness, bondage and death. Creation is groaning under the weight of man's sin, waiting for the day of liberation. There's a direct connection between man's sin and the suffering of all creation. And there's a direct connection between the liberation of creation and the liberation of the sons of God. They are waiting on us.

But it's not all bad news. The wonderful good news is that there's another Adam who came and reversed the curse, redeemed and reconciled not only fallen humanity but a fallen creation. Eden lost will be restored! Everything that suffered under the reign of sin will be included in the new creation bought back by the last Adam. Read *Romans 8:18-23*.

As we look with hope towards that day, the last Adam is restoring a people for Eden restored. He needs our cooperation. Listen to this inspired statement: "Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to His original design—that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth. Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their

diet. We should ever keep this end in view, and endeavor to work steadily toward it."¹

We have a goal to work towards. Jesus is gently leading us in this direction. Not dragging or pushing. As we follow and learn how to eat the Designer diet, created for our health, we are making steps towards our goal. We are going home! Remember, Jesus has bought us. We belong to Him. Our bodies are to be His dwelling place. We must learn how to be faithful stewards of these temples of God.



As we consider the ripple effect of sin on this world, this inspired counsel given in 1902 speaks to our day. "Tell them the time will soon come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream, or butter, because disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men. The time is near when because of the iniquity of the fallen race the whole animal creation will groan under the diseases that curse the earth."²

That was 124 years ago. Are we there yet? Has iniquity increased? Is all creation groaning? Is Jesus ready to return? Soon we will be in

Here's a fun activity for kids or older kids. Cut out the picture and color or paint. You can laminate it and put a magnet on the back for your fridge.

our Eden home, where there will be no more death, even in the animal creation. "Concerning flesh meat, we should educate the people to let it alone. Its use is contrary to the best development of the physical, mental, and moral powers...Make it plain that the food which God gave Adam in his sinless state is the best for man's use as we seek to regain that sinless state."³

In this new year, let us make progress, always advancing toward our goal. Here are a few practical steps that will help towards that end.

Step 1. Health classes will be presented during the year. Attend and learn how to cook healthier food.

Step 2. Educate yourself on how to take care of your temple. Put on your reading list the books *The Ministry of Healing*, and *Counsels on Health*.

Step 3. Be willing to put into practice the things you learn. "Discard unwholesome recipes." Replace old habits with better healthier habits.

Step 4. Let the love of God be your focus and motivation. Depend on the power of God to enable you to make changes. Keep your goal in view as we excitedly prepare for the Lord's return to bring everything back to its original state of perfection and harmony.

1. *Counsels on Health*, pg. 450, Ellen G. White

2. *ibid.*, pg. 478

3. *ibid.*, pg. 480

