

Dear friends and members of the Anderson Adventist Church,

It is hard to believe that 2014 is almost gone as I write this letter. Yet, I am looking forward to what God has in store for us individually and corporately in the coming year. Our church has begun a renewed focus on what Christ would have us to do in our area (our mission statement below summarizes this), but we are also in need of a reminder of the benefit of staying connected to Christ – *Abiding with Him*. A few years ago I wrote in my journal the following story and called it “Abide With Me”. I hope it brings you a blessing this time of year and encourages you to look forward to the coming year with Christ,

I was hurrying to wrap as many presents as possible. The conveyor belt behind me kept piling up and it seemed that we would never keep up. Such was the experience I had this past Sunday (12/12/10) at the Gift Wrap Department at Amazon.com. Our goal was to wrap as many gifts as possible to raise funds - it seemed like I would never get the hang of the rolls of paper in front of me or figure out which box the item was supposed to go in. Well, eventually I did get into a "groove" and together with my co-wrappers (members of the Thayer Seventh-day Adventist Church) the conveyor belt behind us began to empty. It was during one of those "slow" moments that I was able to read one of the gift tags that I was putting on the present in front of me. It simply said: "**Merry Christmas Daddy, I wish sooo much that I could be home for Christmas. I know how much you like these, so please remember me when you get them**".

I continued wrapping, but that gift tag stuck in my mind. After all, the holidays seem to point out the need to be together with family. However, there are always those "seasons" when we, for whatever reason, are not able to be with family. Maybe it is because of distance, or because of our health, or because of grievances, or because they have passed away. Regardless of the reason, our hearts have a certain "ache". It is hard to describe, but this feeling comes from deep down inside and produces a longing. We want to hug, hold or just talk face to face with those we love.

As I ponder this longing, and experience it too (for my family was almost 2,000 miles away when this occurred), I cannot help but realize that this is part of an even greater reality: our relationship with God. Have you ever just wished that this old world was made brand new? That the heartache, pain, death and suffering were done away with? That there were no more sicknesses or chronic health issues that we or someone we love have had to face? If so, then you, in a sense, are saying what the gift tag said: "**I wish sooo much that I could be home**" and could add "**remember me** in my situation and help my heart's desire become reality". What happens until our hearts desire becomes a reality? Well, to use the words of a beloved hymn:

Abide with me- fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens- Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

In short, God abides with us during these times - in fact Jesus says He is with us ALWAYS (Matt. 28:20)! He is there during times of certainty and uncertainty. He is there during the "holidays" and every day of the year. He is there when you have that longing and ache. We experience this nearness when we decide to trust Him during these times. I hope that we each can learn to trust Him - even though our feelings at times say otherwise. Overall, may this time of year and the New Year find us saying, "I wish sooo much to be home with You Jesus, but until then please help, comfort and abide with me!"

May you have His abiding love encircle you as 2014 ends and a New Year begins! Below are some upcoming opportunities to stay connected to Christ and each other during the year.

- December 20 @ 11am – Christmas program during the worship service
- January 4 @ 10am – New Beginning breakfast
- January 7-17 – 10 Days of Prayer (pick up your copy in the foyer; for non-attending members they will be dropped off January 3 at your homes)
- January 17 @ 11am – Prayer Service during the sermon time
- January 24 @ 11am – Pathfinder's Sabbath
- February 15 @ 4pm – Valentines Social at Peter Chu's Restaurant
- March 7 @ 7pm – Folk Mountain Gospel in concert
- March 15 @ 5pm – You Got Talent? Talent show with all invited to participate.
- March 28 @ 6pm – Agape Feast (meal with footwashing beforehand)
- April 5 @ 9am – Resurrection Morning social
- April 11 @ 11am – Elder Del Dunavant guest speaks (NCC Evangelism)
- April – Community Garden Begins
- May 1-3 – Area Campout at Hat Creek
- May 10 @ 11am – Mother's Day Tea
- May 16 @ 11am – Elder Jim Pedersen speaks (NCC President)
- May 31 @ 11am – Picnic in the Park
- June 21 @ 10am – Father's Day Breakfast
- July 10-12 – Campout at Burney Falls
- July 21-August 2 – Redwood Area Campmeeting
- August 23 @ 11am – Day at the Lake
- August 30 @ 10am – Prayer Breakfast
- September 11 – October 11: Revelation's HOPE by Pastor Miller
- October 18 @ 3pm – Fall Festival with Chili Cook-off
- November 22 @ 11am – Giving Thanks Brunch
- December 5 @ 6pm – Agape Feast
- December 19 @ 11am – Christmas Program during the worship service

Please plan to prayerfully support, attend these dates if you can and invite others to attend with you. Inviting others to unite with Christ and His church is part of what it takes to accomplish our mission: Declaring to each individual their eternal value in Jesus and preparing them for His soon-return!

May we abide with Christ by staying connected with Him, each other and our world!

God bless,

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