

SIoux RAPIDS BULLETIN PRESS

SOUTH ON 71

Counting the days



GINNY SMITH
BULLETIN PRESS EDITOR

Believe it or not, we are as bad as kids at Christmas, as they count the days until it's here, and we adults count the days until it's over.

That's kind of a nasty thing to say, because so much of Christmas is commercial and doesn't grasp the true meaning of the holiday. But, for modern-day America, the rush is on, and it's almost done!

As we get older, the time goes faster — "time flies when you're having fun," right? Tick tock tick tock, turn around twice and you're as old as a rock! Hey, that rhymes. Should have sought out a profession in poetry.

Still, such great words to live by.

Back to Christmas! The gift procurer (me) is close to the finish line. There's only a few more gifts to get, the men in the family are always tough! Although our son-in-law wanted "Kevin," which is a unit that looks like a minion and is actually a Wi-Fi extender. (I think I said that correctly.) Our son, though, is a little tougher to buy for, his wants are few and if he does "want," those items are expensive.

Since I like letting my fingers do the shopping, I happened to check my Amazon account on Monday; I wanted to see delivery date updates. I also wanted to check to see how the said items would be arriving — via UPS, via USPS, via Amazon delivery guy. (He hasn't been here much, so I can't ask him to move in yet.) We even got a package thrown in our mailbox from DHL.

I obviously ordered a couple of things that had to come from China. Of course, I didn't know this fact when I ordered. When I saw that our Christmas rug was shipped via Yun Express, I

laughed and then told Rusty that it would be arriving via the "slow boat from China." I seem to recall having the same thing happen last year, as we had ordered some weird thing that our grandson wanted, and it didn't arrive until Dec. 24.

There was another item coming from China as well, since the arrival date is not assured for Christmas, it may not.

Accomplishments for the week (Even though our phone calendar shows us busy every day in the community):

(1) Decorating done, thank goodness, we could hardly walk through the living room without running into one of the 12 totes of Christmas. The totes were put back into the closet Monday.

(2) Christmas tree up, watered and decorated. This was the fastest Christmas tree putter-upper that we've ever done.

(3) After the totes disappeared, the two of us got busy wrapping presents. So glad we did that, the bedroom stack was getting a little high, sitting right next to the wall but creeping out into the walkway. We may have less than a dozen left to do. The stack of wrapped gifts still have to be bowed.

Future commitments:

I volunteered Rusty to bake cookies for the Model Railroaders Cookie Walk on the 20th. Two or three or four dozen, his choice. I actually forgot to tell him of this event until Monday. Oops.

We will be making popcorn for 70 at the theater on the 16th. Popcorn for 200, please, three days after the 70.

Sunday, Dec. 21, is the first day of winter. Eight days to go. Then the days start getting longer again, minute by minute. I love, love, love this day.

Then the big event: Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25. Only 13 days! Get your shopping done!

WRITER'S CORNER: 'A DEVIOUS DEATH' — BY ALYSSA MAXWELL

Phoebe and her sister, Julia, are eager for a summer getaway at High Head Lodge, the newly purchased estate of their cousin, Regina. But they are not the only house guests. Regina's odd friend, Olive, is far from friendly, and Regina's mother and brother — bitter over the unequal distribution of her father's inheritance — have descended on the house to confront Regina. In addition to the family tension, Eva is increasingly suspicious of Lady Julia's new maid. She questions Miss Stanley's loyalty and integrity, wondering why she left her former employer so suddenly. And why does Regina seem ill at ease around the maid, as if they were previously acquainted? Everyone, it appears, is on edge. But things go from tense to tragic when their hostess meets an untimely end — mysteriously murdered in her bed with no signs of struggle. Now, with suspects in every room, Lady Phoebe and Eva must uncover secrets hidden behind closed doors, before a killer ensures they never leave High Head Lodge ... alive.

FISHING REPORT

STORM LAKE — The lake is ice covered. On Dec. 4, there were unsafe conditions in some areas and up to 6 inches in others. Use caution.
SPIRIT LAKE — The lake is completely frozen over the first of December, ice fishing on foot is not recommended in most areas, but cold temperatures have been building ice quickly. Porta potty units are available at Marble Beach and Mini-Wakan boat ramps. Crappie — Excellent: Crappie fishing was reported as excellent near Templar Park. Fish were holding in 12-13 feet of water. Black Crappie — Fair. Yellow Perch — Fair.
WEST OKOBOJI LAKE — Water temp is 34 degrees. Black Crappie — Fair.
EAST OKOBOJI — Water temp is 32 degrees. The lake is completely frozen over. Most areas close to shore have poor ice due to accumulated snow.

CLIMATOLOGY BY KEITH STOEBER

Date	High	Low	Precip.	Snow
Nov. 28	24	11	0	0
Nov. 29	26	10	0.47	5 inches
Nov. 30	24	12	0.38	3.6 inches
Dec. 1	19	-2	0	0
Dec. 2	19	0	0	0
Dec. 3	32	0	0	0
Dec. 4	21	-11	0	0
Dec. 5	35	22	0	0
Dec. 6	25	11	0	0
Dec. 7	11	4	0.41	2.7 inches

THE GRAEBER-ROWE AMERICAN LEGION

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the use of their business for the

Festival of Trees

Also a big thank you to those that donated pies;
Sioux Food Center for their generous donation, & to all
that braved the weather to join us for our annual event!

HOPE TO SEE YOU NEXT YEAR
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTER!

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Time for millstones?



GRANT MANGOLD
GOD'S WORD MINISTRIES

Jesus has hard words in Luke 17: "Temptations (stumbling) are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come. It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin." Parallel texts in Matthew 9 and 18 make it

clear that those who repented and became like humble children were those who received the kingdom of heaven in response to Jesus.

CHILDREN

"He set a child in their midst and told the people to repent and become like humble children in order to receive the kingdom of heaven" and "that anyone who causes such a one who believes to sin, it would be better to be drowned with a millstone around his neck."

Many tend to think that such problems as causing children to sin is something far away in time or distance. But the reality is, it all goes on under our noses. With added impetus from technology and media, it is appalling what children are subjected to today. Even by parents!

ADULTS

It's incredible that "drag queens" perform at local libraries, but it's parents who drag kids to such debauchery. Even worse is the tragedy of child sex trafficking, as children are bought and sold and rented for sex, pornography and worse. The church must wake up!

Family Research Council and other organizations present appalling statistics of some 20,000 children trafficked per year (that's more than two children abused per hour). More than one-third occurs within families (a reality of open border policies, now dramatically curtailed).

MEDIA

What do parents expect when children are given smartphones and other devices that connect to the internet? Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Google, etc. are all guilty. Child trafficking business amounts to some \$250 billion per year. Who lets it happen? You?

People don't want to know about it, even though it plagues our world and is driven by the lustful elites of the world. Jesus says, "Woe to the one who causes these little ones to sin!"

STONE

This is the picture in Revelation 18 when God pronounces judgment: "Then a mighty an-

PASTOR'S COLUMN

The blank pages



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Malachi 4:5-6 NKJV (Last Scripture in the Old Testament), "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, less I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Blank pages follow this final verse of Malachi, representing a 400-year period called "The Silent Years." Malachi was the last prophet of the many prophets through whom God spoke to the Israelites over 1,000 years. Then God said, "Enough! Now I'll be silent." Why? At the end of the Old Testament, although priests are still performing temple duties, God was disrespected and disregarded as they continued in sin and rebellion against Him. Read how they responded to God throughout Malachi: Chapter 1, verse 2, "How have You loved us?" Chapter 1, Verse 6, "How have we shown contempt?" Next verse, "How have we defiled You?" Chapter 2 verse 14, "Why don't You accept our offerings?" Chapter 2, Verse 17, "How have we wearied You?" Chapter 3, Verse 8, "How do we rob You?" And

gel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, 'so will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence'" and putting an end to the debauchery on earth.

We pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," but when believers do not live their lives according to God's word by His Spirit, how can they be the light and salt of the earth? The inescapable reality is, we allow evil to rampage when we do not act against it.

STUMBLING

"An inconsistent believer, whether he knows it or not, is daily doing harm to souls," notes Ryle. "Such a life is a positive injury to the gospel of Christ." Jesus says, "Temptations (stumbling) are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come!"

Jesus' words in Luke 17 point to His teaching in Luke 16: the reality of hell, eternal agonizing punishment for sins, warned in Moses and the Prophets. But the religious leaders ignore their own doom as they continue to oppose the kingdom message of repentance and faith.

BELIEVE

Isaiah 18 says, "The Lord of Hosts, Him you shall honor as holy. Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken, they shall be snared and taken."

Jesus, "the stumbling block," will talk more of this in Luke 20.17-18, when the stone the builders rejected becomes the cornerstone. This is echoed in Romans 9.30-33, which presents Jesus as the stone of stumbling, but "whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame."

JESUS

The ultimate offense, Jesus warns disciples and eavesdroppers, is refusing to repent and receive Him. These will face terrible judgment. "Jesus is the stumbling block. Would His disciples stand up against derisive and pervasive forces?" McDurmon asked. "Stumbling blocks to sin are inevitable, but by Jesus' teaching and the Holy Spirit, they will endure."

Ephesians 4.17-31 says those "in Christ" put off the old self and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. We cry with the disciples, "Increase our faith!" That's how: trusting and obeying, in the power of the Holy Spirit within. More trials bring more opportunities to trust and obey, and experience His grace and power!

finally, Chapter 3, Verse 13, "What have we said against You?"

They were so far off-base, they couldn't even see their sins anymore. God just wanted them to repent and return to Him, but they weren't interested, so He says, "I've said all I am going to say to you. I'm going to treat you like you've been treating me." The silence begins. And during these years, Israel went continually downhill under the rule of several nations and dictators. They became more corrupt, immoral, and pagan as they adopted ungodly customs and religions. Things got so out of control that they turned to the Roman army to restore order. With Roman occupation came the defilement of the Holy of Holies — the temple was partially destroyed and rebuilt six times. All this while waiting for the coming of the Messiah to rescue them! At the beginning of the New Testament, the temple in Jerusalem had been rebuilt and a second temple had been built in Samaria. The Jewish religious leadership were splintered into factions, including Pharisees and Sadducees. Religion was man-centered.

Then in the midst of this chaotic and godless society, God suddenly breaks His silence! Luke 1:5 ... the angel said, "Do not be afraid Zacharias, for your prayers is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John."

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