

## Information Please

When I was quite young, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighborhood. I remember well the polished old case fastened to the wall. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I was too little to reach the telephone, but I used to listen with fascination when my mother used to talk to it.

Then I discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device lived an amazing person - her name was "Information Please" and there was nothing she did not know. "Information Please" could supply anybody's number and the correct time.

My first personal experience with this genie-in-the-bottle came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer. The pain was terrible, but there didn't seem to be any reason in crying because there was no one home to give sympathy. I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the parlor and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver in the hall and held it to my ear.

"Information Please," I said into the mouthpiece just above my head. A click or two and a small clear voice spoke into my ear.

"Information."

"I hurt my finger. . ." I wailed into the phone. The tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.

"Isn't your mother home?" came the question.

"Nobody's home but me." I blubbered.

"Are you bleeding?"

"No," I replied. "I hit my finger with the hammer and it hurts."

"Can you open your icebox?" she asked. I said I could. "Then chip off a little piece of ice and hold it to your finger," said the voice.

After that, I called "Information Please" for everything. I asked her for help with my geography and she told me where Philadelphia was. She helped me with my math. She told me my pet chipmunk that I had caught in the park just the day before would eat fruits and nuts.

Then, there was the time Petey, our pet canary died. I called "Information Please" and told her the sad story. She listened, then said the usual things grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was unconsolated. I asked her, "Why is it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to all families, only to end up as a heap of feathers on the bottom of a cage?"

She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, "Paul, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in." Somehow I felt better.

Another day I was on the telephone. "Information Please."

"Information," said the now familiar voice. "How do you spell fix?" I asked.

All this took place in a small town in the Pacific northwest. When I was 9 years old, we moved across the country to Boston. I missed my friend very much. "Information Please" belonged in that old wooden box back home, and I somehow never thought of trying the tall, shiny new phone that sat on the table in the hall.

As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me. Often, in moments of doubt and perplexity I would recall the serene sense of security I had then I appreciated now how patient, understanding, and kind she was to have spent her time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down in Seattle. I had about half an hour or so between planes. I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now.

Then without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, "Information please." Miraculously, I heard the small, clear voice I knew so well, "Information."

I hadn't planned this but I heard myself saying, "Could you please tell me how to spell fix?" There was a long pause. Then came the soft spoken answer, "I guess your finger must have healed by now." I laughed. "So it's really still you," I said. "I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time."

"I wonder," she said, "if you know how much your calls meant to me." I never had any children, and I used to look forward to your calls."

I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister.

"Please do!" she said. "Just ask for Sally."

Three months later I was back in Seattle. A different voice answered "Information." I asked for Sally.

"Are you a friend?" she asked.

"Yes, a very old friend," I answered.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you this," she said. "Sally had been working part-time the last few years because she was sick.

She died five weeks ago."

Before I could hang up she said, "Wait a minute. Did you say your name was Paul?"

"Yes,"

"Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down in case you called. Let me read it to you."

The note said, "Tell him I still say there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean."

I thanked her and hung up. I knew what Sally meant.

**Never underestimate the impression you may make on others.**

## The Rose

**A new minister was walking with an older, more seasoned minister in the garden one day.**

**Feeling a bit insecure about what God had for him to do, he was asking the older preacher for some advice.**

**The older preacher walked up to a rosebush and handed the young preacher a rosebud and told him to open it without tearing off any of the petals.**

**The young preacher looked in disbelief at the older preacher and was trying to figure out what a rosebud could possibly have to do with his wanting to know the will of God for his life and ministry.**

**But, because of his great respect for the older preacher, he proceeded to try to unfold the rose, while keeping every petal intact. It wasn't long before he realized how impossible this was to do.**

**Noticing the younger preacher's inability to unfold the rosebud, without tearing it, the older preacher began to recite the following poem...**

**It is only a tiny rosebud,  
A flower of God's design;  
But I cannot unfold the petals  
With these clumsy hands of mine.**

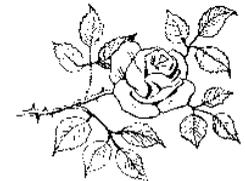
**The secret of unfolding flowers  
Is not known to such as I.  
GOD opens this flower so easily,  
But in my hands they die.**

**If I cannot unfold a rosebud,  
This flower of God's design,  
Then how can I have the wisdom  
To unfold this life of mine?**

**So, I'll trust in God for leading  
Each moment of my day.  
I will look to God for guidance  
In each step along the way.**

**The path that lies before me,  
Only my Lord and Savior knows.  
I'll trust God to unfold the moments,  
Just as He unfolds the rose.**

Author Unknown



## Prayer Requests

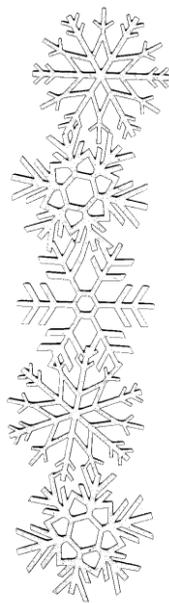


### LORD HEAR OUR PRAYERS

Tom's parents, Jean & Dick Forbes  
 Alison's mother, Isabel Fain  
 Ginny Flick  
 Lawrence Cook  
 Floretta Kelly

Gloria Harrell-Cook  
 George Tasker  
 Virginia Metcalf  
 Our country and our troops  
 People who are caregivers to family members  
 Orphans of Belize  
 Glynna & Shawn Harbaugh  
 Valerie Grogan  
 Steve & Jeanne Thrasher  
 Peggy Peer

Theresa Wolford  
 Nina McCarty  
 Paula Swayne  
 LauraNell Hill  
 Lauren Cook  
 PPC ministry  
 Toni McCarty  
 John Michael Hartman  
 Missionaries in Belize  
 Jeanne Freeman Murray  
 Artie Hartman  
 Jim Wilson  
 Jack Tasker



## thank you

for your service to your church in January

### Ushers & Greeter

January 4	Kathy & Mike Boyce
January 11	Buck Knott & Lawrence Cook
January 18	Jack Brandlen & Andi Grady
January 25	Debbie & Mike Hartman

### Money Counters

January 4	Erma Landis & Andi Grady
January 11	Denise & Darlene Spitzer
January 18	Debbie & Mike Hartman
January 25	Kathy & Mike Boyce

### Liturgist

January	Steve Scheermesser
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## Light of the Epiphany

Phyllis A. Tickle, "What the Heart Already Knows"  
*A Book of Christmas*, Nashville: Upper Rooms, 1988, p. 13

"The twelve days of Christmas come to an end on January 6, and the season of the Epiphany begins. But Epiphany not only ends Christmas, it also fulfills it by celebrating the revelation of the Christ to the whole world. The coming of Incarnate God to all people, especially to those of us who are Gentiles, is the bridge from birth into life, the event that makes Easter possible for most of us. The light of the Epiphany illuminates the church's year as it illuminates the human race from whom the kings came."



## BLESSINGS ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

January 18	Buck Knott
January 19	Rick Neder



### Youth Sunday School

Teachers are Glynna Harbaugh, Cindy Scheermesser and Jeanne Thrasher and Frances Becker leading music

### Adult Sunday School

The Adult Class uses the *We Believe* series.  
 Sandra Chilcote is our Adult Teacher.

Winter Quarter 2014-2015  
 "Acts of Worship"  
 Unit 1 -In Awe of God

- Worship Christ's Majesty (Hebrews 1:1-9)
- Make a Joyful Noise (Psalm 95:1-7)
- Glory to God in the Highest (Luke 2:8-20)
- In Awe of Christ's Power (Matthew 14:22-36)

## A Gift that Keeps On Giving: The Gold Wrapping Paper

The story goes that some time ago, a man punished his 5-year-old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and he became even more upset when the child pasted the gold paper so as to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree.

Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift box to her Father the next morning and said, "This is for you, Daddy."

The father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, but his anger flared again when he found the box was empty. He spoke to her in a harsh manner: "Don't you know, young Lady, when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package?"

The little girl looked up at him with tears in her eyes and said: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was full." The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his little girl, and he begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later and it is told that the father kept that gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. And whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems he would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us as human beings have been given a golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is not a more precious possession anyone could hold.

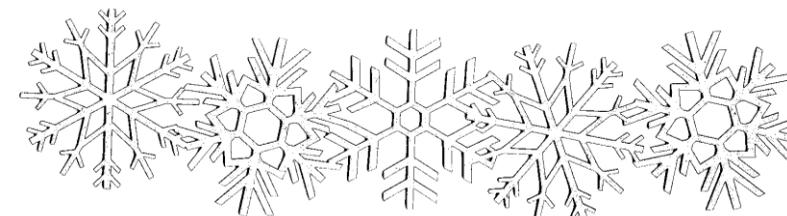
*Wise men still seek him!*

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away.

"Johnny! Please wait until we say our prayer" said his mother.  
 "I don't need to," the boy replied.

"Of course, you do," his mother insisted. "We always say a prayer before eating at our house".

"That's at our house" Johnny explained.  
 "But this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook".



WISHING YOU A  
**HAPPY *new* YEAR**  
FILLED WITH LOVE & HAPPINESS

*“The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you; the LORD  
turn his face toward you and give you peace.”*  
*Numbers 6:24-26*

**THE GLEANER**

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## Tom Forbes

The Lord be with you!

This is the time for New Year's resolutions. If you're like me these are usually short lived and soon forgotten as "real life" returns to reclaim us from vacations, visions of sugar plums, and the optimism of a "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year."

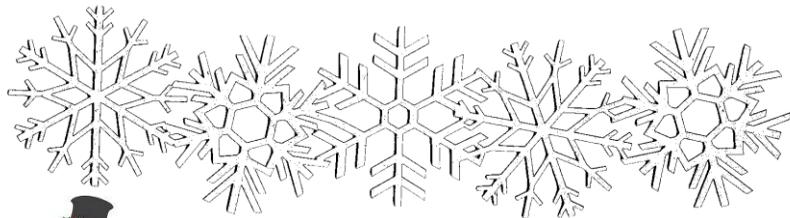
This year I challenge you to a different kind of resolution, one that may have far reaching implications for your life, the lives around you, and perhaps many, many more people you may never know or be aware of. Let me explain. Just pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV news and we all see daily the many and deep troubles in our communities, our country, and our world. These are often momentous problems that lead us to feelings of despair and helplessness that there is anything we can personally do to make the world a kinder, gentler place. What we need to do instead is realize that God is already at work doing what we cannot on our own. We need only be aware of the opportunities God puts in our paths to join in this work.

So, my challenge for you is this: During this Christmas and New Year season take time to consider and complete this statement in less than 50 words, "The Gospel is \_\_\_\_\_." Once you've done that, complete this statement, "The differences this gospel has made in my life are \_\_\_\_\_." Finally, remembering that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not self-centered, complete this statement, "The differences I hope this gospel will make in my daily life in the future are \_\_\_\_\_."

As we enjoy the holidays and time together with friends and family, let us remember that this is "real life:" that we are God's people and called by God to be a blessing to others.

May God bless our endeavors!

*Tom*



January Worship

## Services & Lectionary Readings—2015—Year B

<b>Sunday, January 4</b>	<b>Food Pantry Collection Sunday Second Sunday after Christmas Epiphany Sunday</b>
Jeremiah 31: 7—14 Ephesians 1: 3—14	Psalm 147: 12—20 John 1: 1—18
<b>Tuesday, January 6</b>	<b>Epiphany of the Lord</b>
Isaiah 60: 1—6 Ephesians 3: 1—12	Psalm 72: 1—7, 10—14 Matthew 2: 1—12
<b>Sunday, January 11</b>	<b>Baptism of the Lord</b>
Genesis 1: 1—5 Acts 19: 1—7	Psalm 29 Mark 1: 4—11
<b>Sunday, January 18</b>	<b>Second Sunday after the Epiphany</b>
1 Samuel 3: 1—20 1 Corinthians 6: 12—20	Psalm 139: 1—6, 13—18 John 1: 43—51
<b>Sunday, January 25</b>	<b>Third Sunday after the Epiphany</b>
Jonah 3: 1—5, 10 1 Corinthians 7: 29—31	Psalm 62: 5—12 Mark 1: 14—20
<b>Sunday, February 1</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany</b>
Deuteronomy 18: 15—20 1 Corinthians 8: 1—13	Psalm 111 Mark 1: 21—28

### Life and work of your church

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>9:45 a.m. 11:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Sunday School Worship service</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month</b>	<b>10:00 meet in the fellowship hall</b>	<b>Presbyterian Women</b>
<b>Wednesday evenings 5:30 p.m.</b>		<b>Bible study</b>
<b>Wednesday evenings 6:30 p.m.</b>		<b>Choir practice</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month</b>	<b>12:00 noon</b>	<b>Church Women of of the Tri-Towns</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month</b>		<b>Food Pantry collection Sunday</b>



\$790.00 was collected at the annual Christmas concert held on Sunday evening, November 30<sup>th</sup>. \$1,630.00 was collected this year for the Lights of Love campaign. A total of \$2,420.00 was split equally between Warm the Children and Toys for Joy. What a Christmas blessing! Thank you to all who so generously gave money and time to these events.

The next scheduled Session meeting will be held Sunday, February 1 following worship in the fellowship hall.

Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> was an eventful day for our congregation: during worship, Mike and Becky Niland were received into membership through Certificate of Transfer; Cindy Scheermesser and Frances Becker were installed as new Ruling Elders for the next three-year term; and the annual church-family Christmas luncheon was held following worship. As always the food and fellowship was awesome and Santa made a visit.

At the Session meeting held on December 7<sup>th</sup>, the yearly contract between our church and Pastor Forbes was discussed and approval was given for this contract to continue with no changes.

New blinds have been purchased and will be installed very soon in the windows downstairs.

31 members received Holy Communion on Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Worship committee is looking for people to serve each Sunday for the next few months as liturgist during worship. If you are available for this service, please see Frances Becker.

Pastor Forbes will be away at Dubuque the month of January. If you have an emergency situation, please contact Cindy Scheermesser at 301-359-0493 or any member of the Session.

Attached is a copy of the upcoming 2015 church budget. If you have questions, please contact Kermit Becker or any Session member.

# What your friends with cancer want you to know (but are afraid to say)

People with cancer are supposed to be *heroic*.

We *fight* a disease that terrifies everyone.

We are *strong* because we endure treatments that can feel worse than the actual malignancies.

We are *brave* because our lab tests come back with news we don't want to hear.

**The reality of life with cancer** is very different from the image we try to portray.

Our fight is simply a willingness to go through treatment. Strength? We endure pain and sickness for the chance to feel normal down the road. Brave? We build up an emotional tolerance and acceptance of things we can't change. Faith kicks in to take care of the rest.

The truth is that if someone you love has cancer, they probably won't be completely open about what they're going through because they're trying so hard to be strong. For you.

However, **if they could be truly honest and vulnerable, they would tell you:**

1. **Don't wait on me to call you if I need anything.** Please call me every once in a while and set up a date and time to come over. I know you told me to call if I ever needed anything, but it's weird asking others to spend time with me or help me with stuff I used to be able to do on my own. It makes me feel weak and needy, and I'm also afraid you'll say "no."

2. **Let me experience real emotions.** Even though cancer and its treatments can sometimes influence my outlook, I still have normal moods and feelings in response to life events. If I'm angry or upset, accept that something made me mad and don't write it off as the disease. I need to experience and

express real emotions and not have them minimized or brushed off.

3. **Ask me "what's up" rather than "how do you feel."** Let's talk about life and what's been happening rather than focusing on my illness.

4. **Forgive me.** There will be times when the illness and its treatment make me "not myself." I may be forgetful, abrupt or hurtful. None of this is deliberate. Please don't take it personally, and please forgive me.

5. **Just listen.** I'm doing my very best to be brave and strong, but I have moments when I need to fall apart. Just listen and don't offer solutions. A good cry releases a lot of stress and pressure for me.

6. **Take pictures of us.** I may fuss about a photo, but a snapshot of us can help get me through tough times. A photo is a reminder that someone thinks I'm important and worth remembering. Don't let me say "I don't want you to remember me like this" when treatment leaves me bald or scarred. This is me, who I am RIGHT NOW. Embrace the now with me.

7. **I need a little time alone.** A few points ago I was talking about how much I need to spend time with you, and now I'm telling you to go away. I love you, but sometimes I need a little solitude. It gives me the chance to take off the brave face I've been wearing too long, and the silence can be soothing.

8. **My family needs friends.** Parenting is hard enough when your body is healthy; it becomes even more challenging when you're managing a cancer diagnosis with the day-to-day needs of your family. My children, who aren't mature enough to understand what I'm going through, still need to go to school, do homework, play sports, and hang out with friends. Car-pooling and play dates are sanity-savers for me. Take my kids. Please.

My spouse could also benefit from a little time with friends. Grab lunch or play a round of golf together. I take comfort in knowing you care about the people I love.

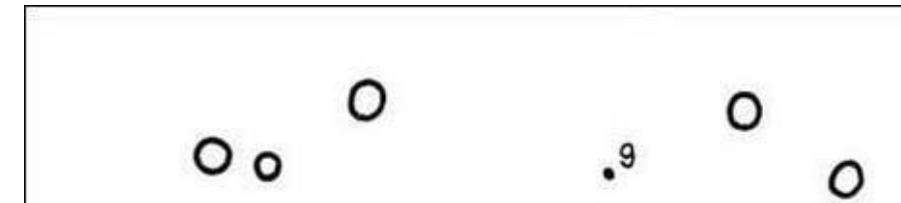
9. **I want you to reduce your cancer risk.** I don't want you to go through this. While some cancers strike out of the blue, many can be prevented with just a few lifestyle changes – stop

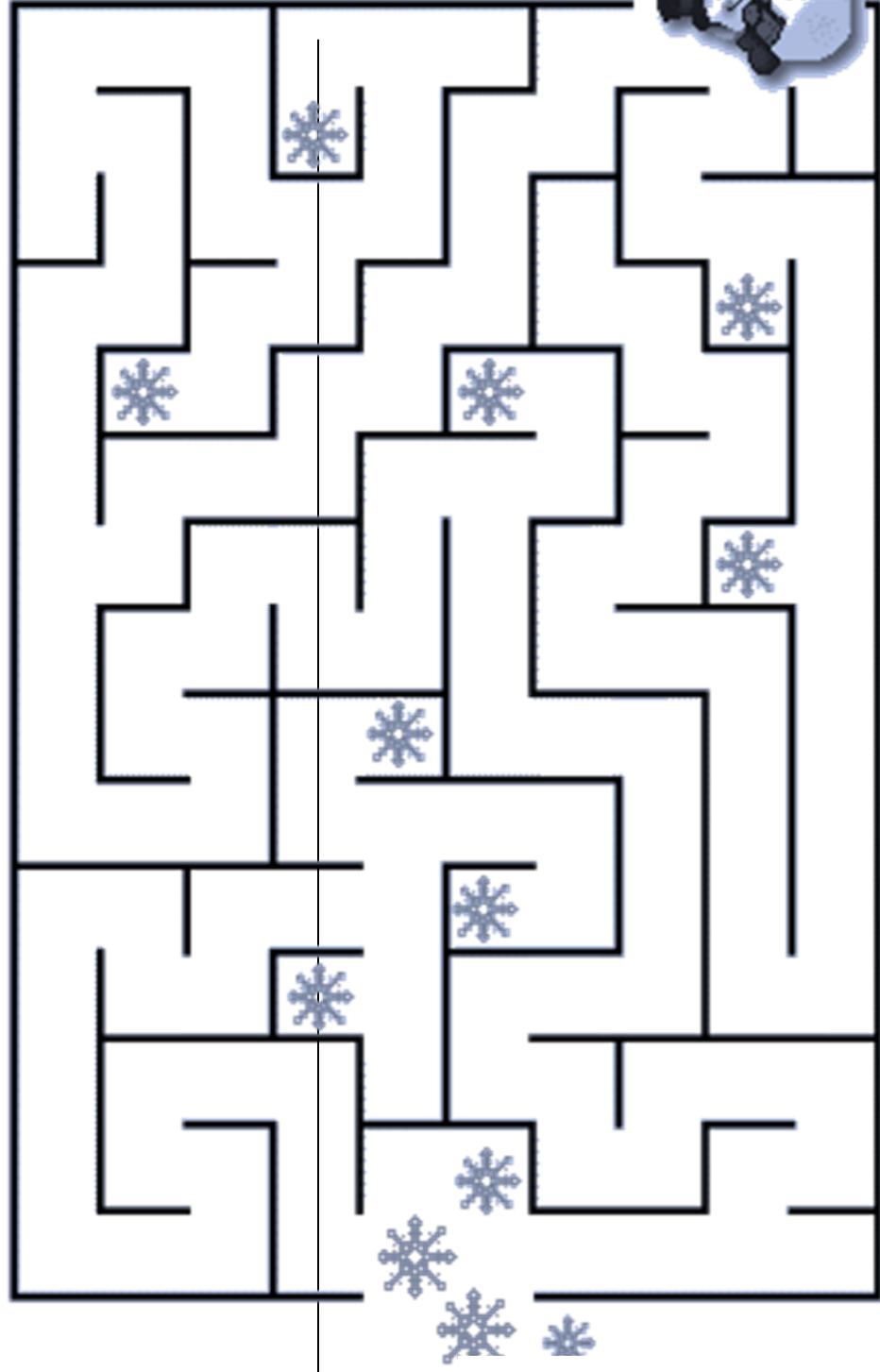
smoking, lose extra weight, protect your skin from sun damage, and watch what you eat. Please go see a doctor for regular check-ups and demand follow-up whenever pain, bleeding or unusual lumps show up. Many people can live long and fulfilling lives if this disease is discovered in its early stages. I want you to have a long and fulfilling life.

10. **Take nothing for granted.** Enjoy the life you have right now. Take time to jump in puddles, hug the kids, and feel the wind on your face. Marvel at this amazing world God created, and thank Him for bringing us together.

While we may not be thankful for my cancer, we need to be grateful for the physicians and treatments that give me the chance to fight this thing. And if there ever comes a time when the treatments no longer work, please know that I will always be grateful for having lived my life with you in it. I hope you feel the same about me.

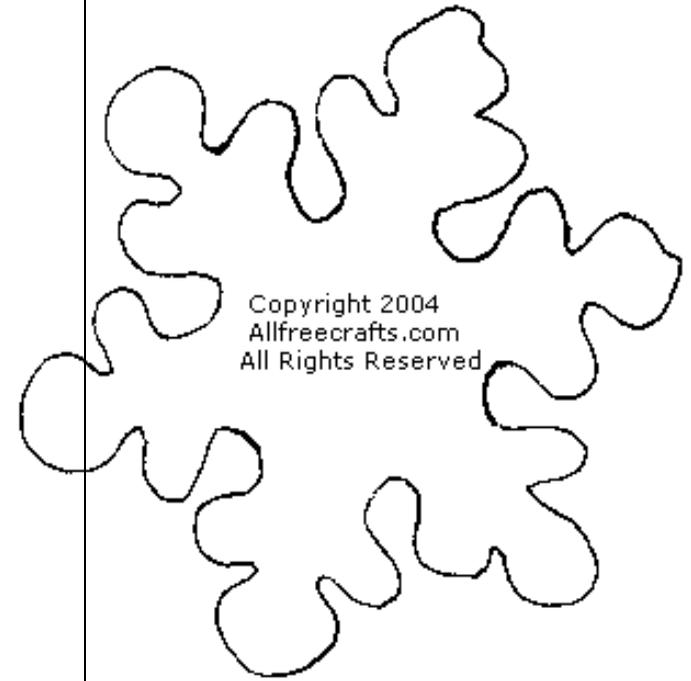
*Kim Helminski Keller is a Dallas-based mom, wife, teacher and journalist. She is currently receiving treatment for thyroid cancer.*





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Can you decorate the snowflakes?



Here are a few things to consider for the New Year:

- Love God more than you fear hell.
- Once a week, let a child take you on a walk.
- Make major decisions in a cemetery.
- When no one is watching, live as if someone is.
- Succeed at home first.
- Don't spend tomorrow's money today.
- Pray twice as much as you fret.
- Listen twice as much as you speak.
- Only harbor a grudge when God does.
- Never outgrow your love of sunsets.
- Treat people like angels; you will meet some and help make some.
- 'Tis wiser to err on the side of generosity than on the side of scrutiny.
- God has forgiven you; you'd be wise to do the same.
- When you can't trace God's hand, trust his heart.
- Toot your own horn and the notes will be flat.
- Don't feel guilty for God's goodness.
- The book of life is lived in chapters, so know your page number.
- Never let the important be the victim of the trivial.
- Live your liturgy.

Max Lucado