

CELEBRATION OF LIGHTS

Many Many Thanks

I want to personally thank all of you who either physically helped or supported us in other ways through gifts and prayers. Our Celebration of Lights was a huge success. We had close to 900 cars and that’s including the rain on Friday. We probably had well over 300 - 400 children attend under the age of twelve.

Alcohol, Podunk and Winnebago: *A True Winter Storm*

by Robert Bresch

God never promised that everyday would be a sunshiny day. He does promise that should a storm arise He would walk through it with us. In my seventeen plus years working as a Youth Minister or Minister of Music and Youth, a storm came along I will never forget.

It was going to be a trip of a lifetime for some of my students at the FBC of Blakely, Georgia. We had worked so hard to raise money so we could afford to take a wonderful trip up to Sugar Mountain in Boone, N.C. for two days of skiing. This was the mecca of ski slopes in N.C. Some of these kids had never skiied before. In order to go on this trip, they had to have a good percentage in attendance of Sunday School, worship and student choir. Everything we did to prepare for this trip went flawless from fund raisers, fitting for skiing, the church purchasing a brand new 25 passenger bus and just a great bunch of kids. That should have been a red flag, a calm before the storm.

It was a nine hour trip. We loaded all the luggage in one van, loaded up a 15 passenger van and the 25 passenger bus with students. We packed the parents and chaperones in a couple of cars. We had us a caravan. Everybody was so excited. Before we left, all the parents had to sign a form stating that should any misconduct happen, it was their responsibility to come and pick their kids up and take them home. The form spelled out the big three: sex, drugs and alcohol. If caught, it was an automatic trip home. We asked the parents to drive this message home with their kids.

One of our stops was just outside of Greenville, S.C. on US 25. It was here things went south. We pulled into the driveway at McDonald’s when bus quit moving. It wouldn’t budge. Our brand new bus broke down because of a tag axle. What we thought was going to be a 30 minute stop turned into hours. But the tag axle was the least of our troubles. As the kids exited the bus, one of the students whispered in my ear, “Check the back of the bus”. So I called one of my counselors over and said “we need to check the back of the bus”. Well, at first we found nothing to be



alarmed about. Then I just happened to hit one of the backpacks with my foot that was tucked under the back seat. When I did, it clanked as if two bottles hit one another. I pulled out the back pack and let me tell you that only a ABC store would have more liquor than what was in that bag. We are talking bourbon, Jim Beam whiskey and wine etc.

We began to check all the bags and found another stash. Each backpack had a name on it. We confronted the two boys and they didn’t deny it. We asked who else was in on this? They said it was just them which I knew was a lie. So I made the two dreaded calls to parents. They needed to come and pick up their kid. Now one of the two boys was a guest. Let’s just say that phone call did not go well at all. If he left out any explicatives, I didn’t noticed. I guess when I told him he had to drive nine hours to pick up his kid was when he put together a string of words that would make a sailor blush. The only reason I said sailor was my dad was a sailor and when he was upset the words that came out of his mouth were very colorful. The other phone call went very well as they understood and were so apologetic for their son’s behavior.

While all that was going on, we found out we no longer had a bus. So we made a few calls back home and found out one of our parents had a friend who had a use car dealership in Greenville.



He made the call and told us they had several vehicles we could use. A Winnebago, two seven passenger vans and a station wagon. Now, we really did have a caravan. I believe it was about nine vehicles all together.

We called the lodge where we were staying and told them it would be a very late arrival. It took a bit of maneuvering but we managed to get everyone loaded up. One of the counselors, knew the way to like the back of his hand. He was an avid skier and skiied many times at Sugar Mountain. So I let him take the lead. Guess what vehicle I ended up with? If you said the Winnebago, you were right.

Now the hour was late. My now trusted guide and his decision making was pretty spot on most of the time. However, this particular time was not one of those. He missed the turn off. We all thought he knew a short cut. Wrong. He led us up and around Grandfather’s mountain. Not only was it foggy, not only was there a thousand hair pin turns, not only was there not a good place to turn around, my kids were now crowded up there with me taking turns throwing up out the window. It took us an hour and a half out of the way.



We finally arrived at the lodge around 3:30 AM. It was not a happy moment as I heard from all of my chaperones asking what idiot led them up and around Grandfather’s mountain. I just said, ”it was an oops”. I encouraged everyone to get some rest and reminded them to be quiet. We had to go get our skis at 8:00 AM. Thank goodness we all had fittings already.

Well, by the time we drove the kids to get their skis and got back to the ski lodge, both sets of parents were almost there to pick up their kids. Nobody hurled rocks at me and no reminder of what

a @#%\$#@ moron I was. I knew the less I said the better off everyone would be. Again, one of the parents apologized while the other didn’t make eye contact. Or maybe it was me who didn’t make eye contact. Nevertheless, that was over.

Well, the kids were about two hours into their skiing before I got my skis and headed onto the ski lift. On my way up, through the trees, I noticed two crossed skis stuck in the snow. For you non skiers, this is not a scene you want to see



on the slopes. It means someone is hurt. I could barely see through the trees, but it looked as if those around the crossed skis were a couple of my students. I yelled out, is everybody all right? One shouted out as it echoed through the trees, “not good, not good, not good”. I skied down where my student was already wrapped up in a snow gurney. As I arrived, the ski patrol told me this was a bad injury. I looked down at my student and he was doing his best to fight back the tears and kept apologizing. I told him, “we are going to get you checked out”and everything we’ll be fine. He said, “it’s not good, Mr. Robert”.

As we got to the first aid station the ambulance was already pulling in to take him to the local hospital. The doctor at the hospital said to get him there ASAP. My student said, “please Mr. Robert, go with me”. I reassured him I would not leave his side. I will tell you this, when parents fill out those medical forms it’s a life saver.

While at the hospital, after looking at the xray, a doctor came out and told me that he needed emergency surgery or the chances of his leg getting back to normal would be impossible.

If you’re squeamish, skip over this paragraph. This student was always concerned that people skiing behind him were going to run into his back. Again for those of you who haven’t never skiied, some of the crashes you see on the slopes are pretty intense. He just didn’t want to be one of those statistics. He was constantly looking back over his shoulder. On this occasion, he looked back only to have one of his legs planted in the snow while the rest of his body spun around and did one of the worse kind of fractures a person could have. He twisted and frayed the leg that was planted.

So, I called his dad. I told him what had happened and he told me under no circumstance was his son going to be operated in a podunk hospital. I told him what the doctor told me. He said, “I don’t care, I said no.” Now this dad was the president of Early County Bank. He knew how to make tough decisions. I thought to myself wow, he’s already thinking of plans to get his son to where he thinks is an adequate medical

facility. I told the doctor the dad said, “no”. He told me to tell the dad that if he didn’t get immediate care he could possibly walk with a limp for the rest of his life. So, I relayed that to the dad and he reiterated with a stronger tone than before that he did NOT want to take the advice of a doctor from a podunk hospital in Boone N.C.

So I told the doctor what he said about it being a podunk hospital. This once calm, soft spoken doctor immediately got very agitated and his face turn blood red and told me to let him talk with the boy’s father. I told the dad the doctor wanted to talk with him. I just barely got out the word “him” when the doctor snatched the phone from me.

I can’t tell you what the dad said on the other end but I can tell you what the doctor told him in response. He said, I’m the doctor looking after your son and if doesn’t get immediately care...“say what”? (there was a slight paused cause I’m sure the dad said something). The doctor replied, “Now you might think this a podunk hospital but I left John Hopkins Medical Center because I wanted to use my skills as a Orthopaedic doctor to save as many legs as possible. I have performed hundreds of injuries every year. I have seen most of the worst here. But sir, if you want to take your son to the finest hospital in the world where they may see a few hundred of these in ten years, then by all means do so. And if your son, doesn’t walk normal again, then you can thank yourself for that”. Then the doctor handed the phone back over to me. I now listened to the dad, who’s voice now is quivering (much like a player who’s been chewed out by his coach) and humbly tells me to tell the doctor to go ahead. I did what he asked. The doctor took the phone from me and whispers to me “he has to tell me himself.” (I thought to myself, “you go coach).

The doctor came out of surgery and told me it was one of the worse factures he had ever seen. He told me in essence the bone in his leg had twisted and frayed much worse than the xray showed. But he also said, “he thinks the leg will heal just fine. Hopefully his dad might be more appreciative of this podunk hospital.”

I spent the night and part of the next day with the student until his parents came. His dad must have told his mom about the ordeal cause she told me the next time any of her kids have trouble to call her and not him.

Well, I wish I could tell you that was the end of our trouble but it wasn’t. We rushed another young female student to the emergency room and thank goodness it was just dehydration. Also one my counselor backed the church van into another vehicle in the parking lot. I had to spend time with the insurance company. Well, I did manage to get a few runs in by the end of day.

As I was checking out, I told this story to the group director, when another youth minister came in and said his trip was awful. She told him, can’t be as bad as his, referring to me.

When I got back home, a parent told me he heard the trip was awesome and asked me how I enjoyed my vacation. I asked him if he would like to chaperone the next trip. (continue on back page)

I can honestly tell you that as much fun we have on these trips it's not a vacation. My vacation starts when we get these lambs home to the loving arms of their parents.

Over the years, I must admit these trips with the students were some of the best trips ever. But they are not near as much fun as hanging out with YOU on our trips.



Winter

Words associated with Winter

I H W A E F I

O L Z I D Y Q O H

X T U J I D S F R J W

W D Q C M S E V O L G

V F I I P S A T G S T

C H Y Y L G L B M N L

E N O E E L V V W O J

X D C D A P C I W

J K D H I A R M W J M Y U

R X I V S C R J A X O A L V M

R W N N M N E A F R G P N B S G V

R G K S L O S P D T C V Q S R B W

J Q Q M D R W K E N I Q E H N E U Y Q

D K B X R M S A S L N W S O W M N T V

R U I C A B T T O T L J N T X R D I L

E E R I Z W O I R P U L O C E A L S Q

F O D L Z C R N R X T R W H N W E E N

M E N I F M G E O H X A O E D U D

L E L C S F N H E A N C E N P

A B O H A R F R H G O L A

X N K L Z S E V K T E L K H O

J B E C L D T T C I X L A G B S E

Z F S W P E Z E S W N A S T V E U Q U

F Q T J Y R G K K A N G C E E L H Q O T H

E L H T E U E T N E I D Q S C O S F F B M

W S Q U C A T B J A H C A Q I T F H H L S F Z

I O Z V B R F A C L T D Y C S M H F G N X D N

A N C B C S F S O B R T I O R A H A O L W R V

Y Y J B Y D V K A D O A U F Y C Y W K N Y L X

I N O I F A L E T E N P D Q H V B A L X U X G

W N H L C Y S T S T S W B W D O J B S U N M I

U S I D G N B C A F R N Q A P C D A T O T

R S H L Z E A V E Z K E R K S A K J T F P

B C O E T L F H U O D T U W G J E Y M

X C Q T L R F O I C M A Y X P B Y

S K I I N G N X I W Q E K P G

M X A G T E G L Y Y H

WORD LIST:

- BLIZZARDS
- BUNDLEUP
- CHILI
- COATS
- COLD
- COLLEGE BASKETBALL
- FLU
- GLOVES
- HANDWARMERS
- HEATED BLANKETS
- HEATERS
- HOCKEY
- HOT CHOCOLATE
- HOT SOUPS
- ICE SKATING
- ICICLES
- KLEENEX
- MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
- MITTENS
- NEW YEAR'S DAY
- NORTHEASTER
- ROSE PARADE
- RUNNY NOSE
- SKIING
- SLEDDING
- SNOW
- SNOW ANGELS
- SNOWBOARDING
- SNOWMAN
- SNOWSTORMS



Happy New Year

It's 2021! That Means New January Days to Celebrate! From Pastor Randall

This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

Make the most of your day... There are many days we recognize in January... New Year's Day; MLK Jr. Day; But here are a few more National Days to observe:

January 4: Spaghetti Day. Grab a big bowl, fill it with spaghetti, top it with a generous helping of your favorite sauce, and dig in. And, don't forget the meatballs and parmesan cheese! Did you know that spaghetti in Italian means thin string or twine?

January 13: Rubber Duckie Day. It's a bath time favorite that puts a smile on everyone's face. Today play with rubber duckies in some water, and sing Ernie's song (from Sesame Street) while it brings back fond memories of childhood bath and pool time.

January 16 : National Nothing Day is quite simply... a day for nothing. The expectation is that we do not create or otherwise promote this day. In other words, we do nothing. And, to say anything more would contradict the purpose of this day. Celebrate this day by doing....nothing.

January 24: Compliment Day. Today is a great opportunity to say something positive about the people you come into contact with. Everyone has good attributes, so find compliments for family and loved ones. Remember: Mama said, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything."

January 31: Backward Day is a day to do everything backwards. Use your imagination, and this day can be lots of fun. Try writing backwards or reading backwards. Wear your shirt with the back in the front. Eat your meal, starting with dessert, go to bed when it's time to get up and get up when it's bedtime.

Senior Citizens: Nation's Leading Carriers of Aids!

- Hearing Aids
- Medical Aids
- Band-aids
- Walking Aids
- Rol-aids
- Government Aids

Jan's "short stories"...

I've never been one to make New Years Resolutions....since I rarely kept them! But I do like to look back at the old year and look forward to the new year. 2020 was a year that I imagine many felt like there were few positives, but I hope amongst the craziness of the year you were able to find some! The following are the positives I take away from 2020.

Looking back at 2020

discovering zoom, all my piano students continuing lessons, virtual church, worshipping in the parking lot, neighborhood walks, cooking more, cleaning my basement (sorta), returning to church, music, beach trips, calmer schedule, family, Maple View ice cream, Eno River farm, staying healthy, Celebration of Lights, God's Blessings and Faithfulness!

Looking ahead to 2021

seeing smiles not masks, piano recitals, GS Senior adult luncheons, GS Bus Trips, hugs (without feeling guilty), Thursday Bible study in person, lifegroup in person, going out to eat with friends, staying healthy, Celebration of Lights, God's Faithfulness!

I hope 2021 is a year full of hope and joy for you!

