



SIMPLE GIFTS AND OTHER ACTS OF GRACE

BY JANIS SWANSON, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS



'Tis the gift to be simple,
'tis the gift to be free
'tis the gift to come down
where you ought to be
And when we find ourselves
in the place just right
'Twill be in the valley
of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend
we shan't be ashamed
To turn, turn will
be our delight
'Till by turning, turning
we come round right.
'Tis the gift to be simple,
'tis the gift to be free
'tis the gift to come down
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And when we find ourselves
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'Twill be in the valley
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The year 2020 will certainly go down in history as one to remember. It has been a year full immense challenges that have served as a test to every single one of us. And now the holidays are upon us and they too will be different. During this season of anticipation, light, hope, and peace — which has been preceded by months of fear, anxiety, isolation and illness — a line from the song, **“Simple Gifts”** composed in 1848 by Shaker Elder Joseph Brackett keeps running through my busy mind — *“’Tis the gift to be simple, ’tis the gift to be free...”*

Musicologist Roger Hall, who has written about the history of **“Simple Gifts,”** said, *“The Shakers called it a quick dance. There are words in the song about bowing and bending and turning, and the Shakers actually did that as they sang those words. The song was both an instruction for dancing as well as an instruction for life.”*

“Simple Gifts” has been sung in churches and schools, at funerals and weddings, and even performed at presidential inaugurations. It is a universal favorite because of its effortless tune and uncomplicated message. Its simplicity is its spirit — its soul.

This year the complexities of an unforeseen virus forced us to live more simply, for our own sake as well as for the sake of others. Planned trips, gatherings, events, classes, activities, meals, weddings, funerals and celebrations have all taken a back seat as we focused on keeping our community safe. Each of us has made sacrifices for the good of the whole. Whether it’s Brewster staff members working long hours and extra shifts to care for residents and keep our community functioning **or** residents who have hunkered down when asked to help stop the spread of the virus **or** family and friends who have stayed away in the most trying of times, **everyone** has done something to help our community. These are ALL gifts. Simple yet powerful and lasting gifts. Gifts of compassion, patience, kindness, forgiveness, support and grace. Gifts that

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MISSION

Brewster Place is a retirement community providing all of its residents opportunities for an optimal quality of life.



The Brewster Health Center is accredited by The Joint Commission.

**EVERYONE
HAS A
STORY TO TELL
KATHY HOWARD**
BY DIANA REED, RESIDENT



Kathy Kysar Howard's life has been filled with activity. She enjoyed a loving 65 year marriage with her husband, Chuck, three children, and four grandchildren. She has filled her life with travels around the world, many lovely experiences in many countries, and friends she has met along the way. Kathy is a published author who has researched her ancestry into a sought-after book. The volume was requested by, and placed in the Library of Congress. Kathy is renowned for her stunning way with planted flowers and for fashioning beautiful flower beds.

The Kysar family came from Germany in the 1700s to claim some free land offered in new territories across the sea. The clan first settled in Pennsylvania and Indiana. Part of the group advanced across into British Columbia, settling in Victoria, British Columbia. A great-great-grandfather became a teacher and leader of the Episcopal church there. Another branch of the family rode horse and wagon to western Kansas and settled in Trego County, also hoping to find free land and a new life. They lived in a soddie. They were Kathy's people.

Kathy's mother, Edith Kysar, was a remarkable woman. She was a kind and natural helper and support for people in need. She was described as "wonderful." Edith made clothes for needy children, helped

solve problems and gave her daughter an enthusiasm for working with the soil and taught her how to plant an attractive flower bed. Kathy still carries the love of planting flowers today. Kathy's father was mayor of Quinter for 20 years.

When Kathy grew up, she met Chuck Howard who came to Quinter to work for Kathy's dad. He became a professional scouter, and they lived in Hays, Norton, Des Moines, Iowa, and Columbia, Missouri before moving to Topeka. In Topeka, Chuck and Kathy bought an old fraternity house on College Avenue and 17th Street, close to the Washburn University campus. The 5,000 square foot house needed a complete renovation. "It had three stories, three apartments, four baths...oh, I don't know," Kathy said, "It was enormous." She shook her head. "We gutted it and did it all over again." After months of work, they stood before a new, beautiful home, ready for gracious living. And now that they had such a house, the couple could rent it out to legislators while they traveled!

Kathy's sister and husband bought an apartment in Paris next to the Invalides. "It was a wreck," Kathy said. We spent a month there renovating it with them. They rewired, repainted, repaired plaster and re-finished floors to their original glory. The dreary old apartment now looked like a

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at the **KITCHEN TABLE**

PONDER & STIR WITH SHARON ADERMAN

It was the small things that made family Christmases memorable when I was growing up. Baking Christmas cookies with my two little sisters, listening to Christmas carols playing in the background. There were luminous, crystal snowflakes that softly blurred in the view from our kitchen window.

Family meals always began with grace at the kitchen table where we would hold hands as we sang grace. Now I am living alone at Brewster Place as the pandemic is raging through the hallways. Heads are turning grey and we should be touching hands with those who stay. Strong hands to weak. Touching hands. But we can't.

I ponder these memories as I stir up my favorite traditional Christmas Jam.

MOM'S CHRISTMAS JAM — 1972

- One pound fresh cranberries-grind with water in blender and then drain them
- Thaw three 10 oz. bags of frozen strawberries or raspberries
- Combine with one box Sure-Jell in a large pan
- Stir in pectin and let set for a few minutes
- Then stir in one Tablespoon butter to reduce foaming. Bring to a rolling boil
- Stir in 3-4 cups sugar (have ready). Return to full boil for one minute. Skim foam. Ladle into jars. Keep jam in fridge

HINT: Start saving jars before Christmas. Any kind of small jar. To make them festive, tape Christmas bows to the lids. Then tie a little note, "Keep in fridge," where jam will keep for a few months.

My favorite Christmas thought comes from a little wooden sign my daughter gave to me...."Dear Santa, I can explain!"

Wishing we could all gather together "At the Kitchen Table..." ■



COMMENTS WITH KATHIE TAYLOR

Thoughts of Christmas bring wonderful memories from my past. Holiday dinners at my grandparents in Exira, Iowa would include one of my favorites. Iowa ham balls! The meat is a combination of ground pork and smoked ham, which you can get from the butcher or do it yourself in a food processor. These freeze well too!

IOWA HAM BALLS

- 2 lbs ground pork
- 2 lbs ground ham
- 2 c. ground graham cracker crumbs
- 3 eggs beaten
- 1 1/2 c. milk

SAUCE

- 1 can tomato soup
- 1/2 c water
- 1/2 c vinegar
- 1 1/2 c brown sugar
- 1 tsp ground mustard

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease a 9X13 pan with cooking spray.
- In a bowl combine the ground pork, ground ham, graham cracker crumbs, beaten eggs, and milk. Use your hands, mix to combine. Form into 2 inch balls.
- Place in greased dish.
- In another bowl combine the tomato soup, brown sugar, vinegar, and mustard. Pour this over the ham balls.
- Bake for 1 hour... baste halfway through to coat with glaze.

Enjoy.... Merry Christmas and blessings in the New Year! ■



FROM the CHAPLAIN REV. ROGER JACKSON, M.DIV

LOVE WAS BORN

The Christmas season is upon us. Yes, this year will be different as we are in the midst of a pandemic. If there has ever been a year, it is this year that we need some joy. We need Christmas trees, lights, decorations, Christmas cards, nativities, Christmas villages, poinsettias, and some mistletoe.

Have you noticed that radio stations were playing Christmas music before Thanksgiving, Christmas movies started running in mid-November, and people decorated for the holidays much earlier than usually this season? It is because in 2020 – we need a little joy in our life.

But let us not forget the real meaning of Christmas. The events that took place over 2000 years ago in a faraway town called Bethlehem are why we celebrate Christmas. On that one starry night is when **LOVE WAS BORN**. But the story begins in the small town of Nazareth. *“God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary”* (Luke 1:26-27).

The angel had told Mary she was going to miraculously bear a Son. In one way, this was unbelievable news to Mary. She was a virgin engaged to be married. Becoming pregnant would shame her before her parents, her husband-to-be and her entire village. Perhaps that explains why Mary hurried off to live with her cousin Elizabeth for the first few months of her pregnancy.

Now Joseph was a righteous man, so he had decided to divorce Mary privately rather than exposing her to public disgrace. Breaking an engagement in those days required a divorce. But the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and explained that the child Mary was carrying was the creation of the Holy Spirit. He told Joseph not to be afraid and to name the child, Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins.

Joseph decided to go through with the marriage, but before the wedding ceremony, he was sent out of town to register in his ancestral hometown of Bethlehem, many days’ journey to the south. Even though she was in the advanced stages of her pregnancy, Mary traveled with Joseph. After they reached Bethlehem, Mary *“...gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn”* (Luke 2:7). And **LOVE WAS BORN!**

Yes, the way we celebrate Christmas this year will be different. Your traditions may change; you may not be able to put up a Christmas tree or listen to Christmas concerts, you may not be able to go to church for a candlelight service with family or be served communion, you may not be able to sit with others around the dinner table or see your family. That’s okay, because Christmas is about Christ. Christmas is about when **LOVE WAS BORN!** Merry Christmas! ■



Advent Devotional Booklets

are available in Redwood, The Evergreens and Brewster Health Center. They are available for both residents and staff. ■



Simple Gifts

Brewster Food Drive for Harvesters

CLEAN OUT YOUR CUPBOARDS FOR THOSE IN NEED

WHY YOUR FOOD DRIVE MATTERS:

Food drives are Harvesters' best source of high-quality nonperishable foods and household or personal care items. All products collected during food drives are distributed in our region through Harvesters' network of more than 760 nonprofit agencies. Every \$1 helps Harvesters provide **three** meals. Food and fund drives also raise awareness about the issue of hunger in the community. It takes all of us working together to solve hunger!

There will be two barrels on campus for your donations. One will be located in The Evergreens and the other will be in Redwood. **Let's see how many barrels we can fill for Harvester's for the Holiday's!** Our food drive will end January 4, 2021.

If you have any questions please call Chelsy Wessel at 274-3394

NONPERISHABLE FOOD

- **Canned vegetables** (low sodium)
- **Canned fruit in 100% juice**
- **Canned chicken, tuna, salmon** (packed in water)
- **Peanut, almond or sun butter**
- **Canned soup** (chicken, tomato or vegetable)
- **Cereal — hot and cold** (whole grain, low sugar preferred)
- **Dried fruit** (no added sugar preferred)
- **Brown rice**
- **Whole grain pasta**

HOUSEHOLD AND PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

- **Soap**
- **Deodorant**
- **Shampoo**
- **Toilet paper**

Donations of perishable foods, glass containers or homemade or home-canned food is discouraged. ■



Gifting Made Easy with a Salon Account

Brewster's community salon partner, **PS Salon & Spa**, makes it easy to send a holiday, birthday or anytime gift to a loved one. You can manage payments and earn 4-5% Spending Rewards for residents with a PS Celebration Account. To learn more and to sign up, please visit www.salonps.com/gift. ■

BIBLE STUDY
REDISCOVER THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF CHRISTMAS

This four-week video study will be broadcast on BPTV 1960 on Wednesdays at 11:00 am.

Week 1 — December 2

Presidents and Kings

Week 2 — December 9

The Savior and Our Need for Saving

Week 3 — December 16

Emmanuel in the Midst of a Pandemic

Week 4 — December 23

The Light of the World ■



SPECIAL ON
BPTV 1960 IN
DECEMBER

Topeka Symphony Orchestra

Tuesday, December 2

7:30 pm | BPTV 1960

Christmas at Resurrection Holiday Show

Thursday, December 10

7:30 pm | BPTV 1960

Topeka Festival Singers Holiday Concert

Monday, December 21

7:30 pm | BPTV 1960 ■

VETERANS 15% DISCOUNT
AT REDWOOD

Are you a veteran? Do you know a veteran that might be thinking of a move to Brewster Place? This is the perfect time to take a tour!

Through the end of this year, Brewster Place is offering a 15% discount for veterans and their spouses on the entrance fee for apartments at Redwood.

If you have a friend or family member who served our country and they move to Brewster Place because of your referral, you will receive one month's free rent once the friend moves in! ■

Safety Committee

The **Resident Council Safety Committee** is in need of representatives from several areas of campus. If you live at Maple, Oak or Brewster Health Center and would like to volunteer to be a member of this committee, please contact Eddie Fowler, Committee Chair, at 633-1226 or email him at e.r.fowler@cox.net. The committee meets once a month on the second Friday at 10:00 am. ■

PLEASE NOTE ON THE DECEMBER CALENDAR

Please note on the December activities calendar the EXTRA movies, concerts and shows that are listed for your convenience. Each day through Christmas, we have listed one extra program along with the time and Cox cable channel. In this time of uncertainty with regard to programming, we wanted to provide you with special Christmas programs available on Cox cable. Something to look forward to each day! ■

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movie set.

“I loved traveling with Chuck,” Kathy said. For many years the income provided by renting our home on College Avenue allowed us to spend one to two months traveling independently in Europe and Turkey. “We once spent three and a half months traveling around the world. We saw the most amazing things — my favorite place was when we were in India.” The smile never left Kathy’s face. She almost glowed. “Of course we went to the Taj Mahal,” she said. “It was amazing. We arranged to see it by moonlight. There was a wedding party,” she said, “and there were only men, going to a carnival.” She smiled as if she was in another world. Time stopped. But the Taj Mahal was not the end of the India trip.

“We wanted to see the Ganges River in the early morning, as the sun was just coming up. We hired a boat. People were on the edges of the water doing their laundry. People were floating candles on leaves in the water. There were many candles in the water. Then the funeral pyres started to burn, which gave another type of light. The bridegroom, riding a caparisoned white horse, was led by a band, the members of which wore devices on their shoulders from which spouted flames. There was a beautiful rosy glow all around, the early morning sun. It was such a sight, this rosy glow of sun on the water on the Ganges River.

Here at Brewster Place, we know Kathy Howard for her gifts of her loving gardens and the very hard work she puts into making forgotten places bloom with colors and beauty. This kind lady sees clods of dirt and turns them into amazing flower beds; places to stop and see and to look a while and enjoy. Just as her mother taught her decades ago.

When Kathy lived near the corner of 17th Street and College years ago, there was a forgotten place that needed to be turned from plain dirt into a flower garden. Kathy said, “It just seemed like it was the right thing to do.” She planted perennials, peonies, daisies and other bright and pretty flowers. She kept the place nice for neighbors to enjoy. There was an autistic boy in the neighborhood who was known not to speak. Kathy saw him walking past the little bed.

She heard him say to himself, “This is the most beautiful thing.”

Especially at this season of joy, we appreciate Kathy Howard who shares her love of beautiful flowers here. Happy Holidays! ■

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aren’t encased in a beautifully wrapped box and opened on Christmas morning, but gifts that are seen and felt and inspired. Gifts of love — each and every day. We are thankful for the gifts you have shared.

As we celebrate our own faith traditions during this holy season, may we look with hope to a new year and the simple gifts that await. We **will** gather again, “to bow and to bend...to turn, turn will be our delight, ‘til by turning, turning we come round right.” Blessings to you all! ■



Enjoy all of the amenities of the new Brewster Events Center with living in this cozy one-bedroom apartment at The Evergreens. It's the perfect location for an individual or couple who wants to enjoy everything under one roof.



At The Evergreens there are only 12 one-bedroom apartments. They are a rare find, and this one has a gazebo view! The Evergreens 118 is 790 square feet with a unique layout that includes great wall space for loads of artwork — portrait lighting is already installed!

The kitchen flows in to the living room for a wonderful open floor plan; perfect for hosting small gatherings with friends and family. Both the living room and the bedroom have sliding glass doors that offer a lovely view off the deck overlooking the gazebo.

The south facing sliding glass doors gives the bedroom a bright and airy feel, and get ready to enjoy the extra-large walk-in closet, great storage for clothes of every season. The Evergreens apartments also have convenient storage on the ground floor of the building. The storage units are 5 ½ by 12 feet with an electric outlet in each unit.

For a tour of this one bedroom in the Evergreens contact Chris Gallagher at 274-3351 or Kathy Clark at 274-3314 in Lifestyle Services.

Remember, you can help choose your future neighbors, and receive a bonus! Residents who make a referral to Brewster will receive one month's free rent once the friend moves in! ■

SIMPLE GIFTS OF TIME AND GRATITUDE



CFO Melissa Reynolds passed out little gift bags to staff who worked on Thanksgiving. **Tina White**, a long-time employee, was happy to receive her gift. All of our staff have worked very hard since March to keep our residents safe, engaged and informed. Thank you Team Brewster!



Wanda Meyer and Kris Saia at the mini Bazaar that was held in November. Due to COVID the Bazaar was only open to residents and staff but they still raised almost \$3,500 that will go to charities in Topeka. We thank all the volunteers who made this event happen in a very difficult year.



Missy is the three-year-old companion of new resident Susan Harper. Missy is outside to greet passers by and is always ready to have you throw her toy. Yes, we accept pets and we know how valuable our furry friends are each and every day. Simple gifts, indeed.