

## Bermudian Church of the Brethren

**WEDNESDAY'S WORD** – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler  
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week  
December 13 in the year of our Lord 2017 - #720 second week of Advent

### When Christmas Plans Don't Go As Expected

Twenty-five year old Pastor Joseph had a problem. As Assistant Pastor of St. Nicholas Church he often was assigned only the “left-over” pastoral duties that the Senior Pastor didn't want. But he had been given the privilege to plan & lead the Christmas Eve service and he was so excited! He had worked for weeks planning. Picking just the right music ... carols & choir anthems ... for a beautiful Christmas Eve worship. Now it was Christmas Eve and he arrived at the Church early to prepare. He sat down at the Church's grand organ to play a little bit and prepare. But nothing! The organ, even though quite new, was dead. Nothing! He fiddled and tweaked and did everything he could to no avail. Here it was ... one of the most important pastoral assignments he had ever been given and it was going to be a failure!

Where do you turn in a crisis but to friends? So Pastor Joseph rushed to the drafty apartment downtown of his friend, 31 year old schoolteacher Franz. Franz didn't have much to offer to his dear friend except that he would be willing to play his guitar for the service. When they went over the carols and choir anthems selected for the service none of them felt “right” with guitar. Pastor Joseph was again ... out of luck.

He returned to his own apartment ... forlorn. He prayed for God's help. The Lord brought to mind a poem that Pastor Joseph had written years earlier. He had written the poem during a quiet walk on a snowy winter night. He had to root through several drawers to find the old poem. He looked at the words. Maybe? He rushed back to Franz's apartment and the two worked at composing a simple tune appropriate for guitar.

The choir and the congregation thought the little song was lovely! Sung for the first time on that Christmas Eve 1818 in St. Nicholas Church in Obendorf, Austria ... **“Silent Night”** saved the day. Not what pastor Joseph had envisioned ... but something very special!

The new carol might never have been heard outside of the village of Obendorf but for the organ repairman Karl who came some time later to repair the organ. (*One legend says a mouse had chewed something in the organ's workings.*) Repairman Karl heard about the new song and took a copy and began to spread it from village to village as he worked on organs. By the turn of the century the “new” carol had spread all over the globe, been recorded by choirs and orchestras, by country & western and pop singers, and become the favorite Christmas Carol of many, and sung at millions of Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship services every Christmas! Both Pastor Joseph Mohr & Schoolteacher Franz Gruber died without knowing that their little song ... that saved Christmas that night at St. Nicholas Church in 1818 ... would become a worldwide beloved favorite.

How's your Christmas going? Maybe there's some part of this Christmas that isn't going just right. The finances are tight. You are desperately missing someone who has passed. There's

a strained relationship. A health problem takes a lot of energy. Things you wanted to accomplish aren't getting done. Stress. Frustration. Loneliness.

The truth is that the Lord God who sent His Son Jesus at the first Christmas ... because He loves you so ... still loves you so! And if some Christmas detail doesn't get finished. Or some cherished tradition must be changed this year. Or something is new or different from the way Christmas has been in the past. It's OK! Really, dear sister or brother, it's OK! I don't know ... but maybe that problem, change, heartbreak, concern ... is just part of God's handiwork to bless you in a special way?

***“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done...”*** Genesis 50:20 NIV

***“And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into His plans.”*** Romans 8:28 LB

***“ ‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’”*** Isaiah 55:8, 9 NIV

Perhaps you & God are just preparing to make some beautiful new music together!

Blessings of the Season, Pastor Larry <><