

Bible Baptist Church of Sodus Newsletter

Fall 2007

The BBCS Community Fair: Ministry and Fun!

On Saturday, August 25, from 10 AM to 1 PM, Bible Baptist Church of Sodus members and friends held our first-ever Community Fair on the premises. One of the main themes: fun! We held it on the BBCS premises, just outside our main entranceway, on the grounds and part of the main parking lot. Making sure that we provided ample parking for the public, we managed to place around the parameters some neat, fun-inviting games and activities.

We did this to glorify the Lord by placing free stuff (school supplies!) into the hands of the community, while showing that Christians can have fun, too! And placing BBCS into the minds of people in the community who may not have ever checked us out otherwise. To show the community who we are, and invite them to check us out on Sunday. But mainly, to sow seeds that will lead people to Christ! We did this by simply setting up anything imaginable that you can find at a fair: games, contests, inexpensive eats and soft drinks, and having people sign up to ownership of their piece of the action.

We gave away 50 backpacks and about 170 school supply packs. Several families that attended visited us on Sunday mornings that followed and currently five children regularly participate in AWANA Club as a result of this ministry!

The *BBCS Newsletter* asked several participants in this event to tell us their personal experiences. We hope you find the following feedback amusing:

We begin with Sam Miller's experience in his own words: "I ran the fish in a bucket game. My amusing incident that the LORD gave me was a small girl who was absolutely



determined to catch every fish in the pond and remained at booth until she did. It was a blessing to be reminded to have the endurance and patience to remain until the task is complete. I think of our life with Jesus (learning, teaching, attending church, sharing); we need to be like this little one eager to catch every fish in the pond. As far as next year I think I would like to set up a pellet gun shoot for the children to try out their marksmanship."

Larry Mortimer had signed up to run the cotton candy machine. His wife Kathy helped him. We asked him if he had any amusing stories to relate and special blessings the Lord had given him. He tells us, "I had a challenging time learning how to make cotton candy and by the end of the 3 hours I was ready for 3 more! It was a blessing to see all the smiling faces as they patiently waited for their cotton candy. It was also fun to interact with people from the community and with the church kids. It was also a blessing to have our neighbor and her son attend and she was excited that as soon as she signed in, they won a prize!" We asked Larry if he had any suggestions for next year. He gave us these:

1. Give out tickets for game participation and use them to earn food prizes. (We felt uncomfortable directing people to the cashier.)
2. Have teens do a short gospel based puppet show.
3. Have a booth with wordless book gadgets to give away, for example, pompoms on a pencil and someone explaining what the colors mean.

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4. Have people in the church sponsor a booth, for example, a cotton candy machine, popcorn machine etc.
5. Have freeze pops or something icy in case of extreme heat again.
6. Utilize more of the grass instead of all the black top.

We asked Larry and Kathy if they would serve again if we were to hold a community fair next year. They said, "We would like to participate again if the church held another community fair next summer."

Our third testimony comes from the Pritchards, Alan and Joan. Alan wrote a nice essay on his and Joan's experience. We're sure you'll enjoy...

Carnival Quips

It was hard to "compete" with Erik The Magnificent and his slight-of-hand tricks next to my booth. Youth and old alike were mesmerized by, "where's the coin?", "how did you do that?", "Where's my wallet!!!!", and other such trickery.

What did I have to offer? "Let me guess how much overweight you are!" "I see by your wrinkles that you must be about the age of Noah". "You had Coco Puffs for breakfast" and other such slight-of-mind guesses. And yet they came, probably the candy. Or maybe it was the long line waiting for face painting that never ended and since they were in front of me and hungry, why not.

Three days after the carnival, while walking our dog on Mill street, I spotted an unusually tall 12 year old lad on his way to school. I shocked him out of his pre-school early morning daze with, "Good morning! You are 5 foot 11 inches tall, weigh 197 pounds and are heading for the 7th grade!" It took a while for the light to go on but when it did - big smile came across his face and I received the ultimate compliment, "Cool!", as he flashed back to the Carnival.

Joan had the popular "ring toss" booth. (She kept coming over to my "guess your insult" booth for more candy to give away) One of Joan's students, ("I have never seen him smile") finally had something to really smile about. As he brought his young friends back to her booth she heard him say, "Come on over! I'm telling the truth, it's free, it's really free!" So is salvation, and a seed was planted.

The carnival was a blessing to me personally in the very visible way that it illustrated the "body" of our church working with many diverse talents to come together to serve our community and each other.

Don't wait for the next Carnival to reach out. Be like the man I saw on the first day of school in the student parking lot. He had set up his table and camping stove and was serving sausage and eggs to any and all the students who wanted their first or second breakfast. "What organization are you with?", I inquired. "None," he said. "I just wanted to get them off to a good start." "God Bless You", I replied, and dragged my dog away from that tantalizing smell of sausage cooking.

Alan Pritchard

This is just a small glimpse of all the fun we had at our first-ever Community Fair!

Three Years of Free Car Washes and Fun at the Faire!

On Saturday, July 21, members of Bible Baptist Church of Sodus participated in our third (annual?) Free Car Wash outreach! It was another sunny day and just perfect for glorifying our Lord in such a manner. This year's car wash took place at the driveway of the Sodus Point Fire Department. Past years were held in two different parking lots (one east, one west) of the Dynalec Corporation in Sodus.

We do this by washing cars for absolutely free and giving out free literature that includes the message of salvation and information about our church.

The purpose of the car wash is to glorify the Lord by showing that He is a God Who gives free gifts. The free gift of a car wash without taking anything for it (absolutely no money!) gives the public an example of the free gift of salvation. Where can someone find that free gift? The secondary message of our service: "Come to our church and learn more!" By doing this we are trying to be a "light upon a candlestick" or "upon a hill" that Jesus teaches us about in the Sermon on the Mount (ref. Matthew chapters 5, 6 & 7).

One of the veterans of past car washes, Shelly McDonald, gave this writer this testimonial: "What struck me the most was the reaction to the free. Many people still tried to give us a donation, one actually rolled the window down a crack, threw a \$5.00 bill out the window and drove away. It was such a simple thing, like accepting Jesus' free gift of salvation, that it just seems too easy. Everyone expects a catch. I loved to see their reaction. The look of disbelief turning to surprise turning to smiles of gratitude and thanks. It really is an awesome opportunity to make an impact on the community. And it was another opportunity to work and enjoy a laugh alongside our church family and get to know them instead of just a few minutes on Sunday morning."

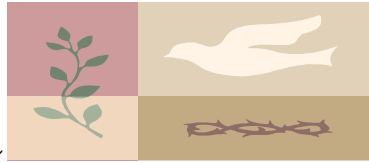
Apparently this year's surprise was a couple (or was it a group?) on motorcycles who decided it was a good idea to have their street machines washed! But they also couldn't accept the concept of "FREE!" Money was pulled out of a purse and dropped onto the driveway of the Fire Station before they revved up their bikes and sped off! (Oh, well! More money for the benevolence fund!)

BBBC also was in the process of making our presence known another way that Saturday and just down the street. We held a booth (well, really a tent) at The Olde Tyme Sodus Country Faire. We had two games for anyone who

wanted to play (Ring Toss and the Fishing Game; mostly kids played!), passed out free bottles of water that contained information about our church attached to them, and passed out free literature. We were also able to advertise about upcoming events that were taking place at BBCS. (One of them was the first-ever Community Fair. See the article about it elsewhere in this issue!)

Anyone who participated in either of these would be sure to agree: "The blessing is in the Serving!"

Ask Pastor Jay



Question:

Do you think people in heaven can see what is happening on earth or are they resting?

Answer:

This is a great question! Many of the specific details of what is taking place in heaven right now (including the activities of Christians who have died), are not spelled out clearly in Scripture.

However; there are a few verses that do shed light on the question posed above. The first reference I will address is Hebrews 12:1.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (NKJV)

In order to fully understand this verse, we must go back further into Hebrews 11 and get the context. The writer of Hebrews lays out in chapter 11 what is commonly called the "Hall of Faith". Listed in this chapter are examples of Old Testament Saints who exemplified great lives of faith and commitment to God. They include Moses, Abraham, Enoch, Noah, etc... These are the **witnesses** spoken of in Hebrews 12:1.

These examples are meant to inspire, challenge and motivate us in our journey of faith. However; they function as role models for us and not spectators who are somehow looking down on us. This passage would seem to indicate that believers who have passed before us should also be examples for us, but they are not watching what is taking place on earth.

The second Scripture is II Corinthians 5:8.

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (NKJV)

At the moment of death a believer's soul immediately goes into the presence of God. Until we are reunited with our earthly bodies and gloriously transformed, we will spend our time in heaven worshipping God and interacting with other saints, but it is highly unlikely that we will be preoccupied with the affairs of the world.

Where to Get News at B.B.C.S.

I was pondering the question as to where news for BBCS accumulates. With a seasonal newsletter, a lot of the news isn't timely, just facts of what happened at a past function, what may be happening around the release date of the newsletter, or information of what may be coming up soon.

The best place for news of what's currently happening and what is in the immediate future is the weekly church bulletin. Hang on to that informational piece. Also, we know that the "last-minute stuff" is shared from the pulpit on Sunday morning!

The bulletin is important for a number of reasons. It tells of upcoming events that are just around the corner. Things that we shouldn't miss so that we can get edified and grow in the Lord, as well as look for opportunity to share our own spiritual gifts. Also, the important ministry of our individual prayer closets is encouraged by the weekly prayer list for the needs of our church family, friends, relatives and concerns.

Then there is the good news shared by God's Word from the pulpit. The weekly "sermon notes outline" that Pastor Jay puts together every week. The news may become obsolete over time, as well as the prayers answered, but the knowledge we glean on Sunday morning is timeless. I'm in the habit of cutting mine out and placing them in a drawer. (Or just placing them in the drawer when there's no time to cut them out, or have found that one of the kids has taken my favorite pair of scissors!) Someday the Holy Spirit may remind me that we recently had covered a particular topic or book of the Bible on Sunday morning. I can then go to that drawer and review the topic!

There are other places to find news in the church. The missionary letters that are regularly filed in the foyer. The blessing that we have in the church's shutter-bugs (photograph-takers) that line the hallway and bulletin boards outside the office. You'll see some fun that you missed, or maybe even be surprised to see that you didn't, in fact, miss the fun, but are in one or more of the pictures! ("Do I really look that old?" "Is that how I *really* look to other people?")

So the news just doesn't happen in your seasonal newsletter. This is mainly a publication for your entertainment, edification, and something to place in the hands of visitors to let them know that we have a fun, friendly, caring church.

- Editor

Editorial: "The Weightier Matters of the Law"

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the **weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith.** These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"*

Matthew 23:23 (emphasis added)

Occasionally we may find that we are presented with a unique opportunity to witness to someone. Recently a coworker had wandered into my office during the last few minutes of my lunch hour. She was there to pick up a document she had printed on our shared printer.

"I don't believe all of this stuff about a God who is going to send down severe judgment and send a lot of people to a place called hell," a coworker tersely stated. Without opportunity to pray I listened to her argument. She was coming from her standpoint that God was a woman and was wondering why there weren't more female references toward God in society as a whole. She concluded the above thought with, "If anything, God is a God of love!"

I immediately affirmed that all biblical references refer to God as a male, mentioning the trinity. "He is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," I concluded.

She didn't like this. She mentioned something about "if a person takes stock in the Bible" and that the Bible should have more references to the "female attributes of God."



I wanted to bring some scripture into the conversation, and somehow (the Holy Spirit?) Matthew 23:23 popped into my head. I went back to her original statement about a God of judgment.

"Judgment is a very important part of God's nature!" I said, "In fact, Jesus admonished the religious people of his day when he said that the 'weightier matters of the law were *judgment, mercy and faith.*' *Judgment*, because God's judgment upon the world is coming, and it also includes God's expectation for His people: he expects us to judge rightly, or make good judgments. *Mercy*, in that God was merciful to us and He expects us to be merciful to the world around us, and *Faith*: without faith, it is impossible to please God." (This was a well-rehearsed mini-sermon that I had taught often in my days teaching in nursing homes and the Monroe County Jail. I was pleased that I could still go down the list, speaking as I pointed out the three *weightier matters*, one, two, three, on my fingers.)

The lady, still talking with me, had gotten up from my visitor's chair and was heading out of the office. I may have struck a nerve; perhaps I had gotten too preachy. My insistence that God was a male had already upset her and quoting scripture was now going too far. I could sense our conversation (be it ever so brief) was quickly drawing to a close. I believe my coworker is under conviction over some truths that a friend (outside of work) had sown to her heart. After she left I prayed that my further sowing of God's Word would lead her to salvation in Jesus Christ. I also prayed for another opportunity to witness to her under the right circumstances. I need to exercise righteous judgment here. The "right circumstances" would include "not on company time." Hopefully we'll have another end-of-lunch-hour chat sometime.

As what usually happens after scripture is shared with someone in my present circle of life, the Lord begins to impress on me the meaning of that very same scripture. I began to question what the Lord means by these three

subjects being the *weightier matters of the law*.

As I went to look these up in scripture, my habit has been of late to choose the New King James Version for the text that I would use if I should use this topic in an editorial. I was amazed to find that the NKJV changes the word "judgment" to "justice." For years I had meditated on that "weightier matter" in the following fashion: 1) we should be aware of **God's judgment**, that He is going to be the final judge of every matter, whether right and wrong, upon the earth. He will, of course, judge rightly. 2) God expects His blood-bought children to exercise **good judgment** in each of our own lives. Where He says "No," we listen to "No." Where He says "Yes," we listen to "Yes." We don't sugar-coat God's Word. We exercise good judgment by abiding by His precepts and Holy Spirit-written law.

So I saw the word as "judgment", not "justice." But, after meditating a bit, I concluded that *you can't have justice without good judgment*. So, no problem, NKJV!

Now we look at another *weightier matter*: **mercy**. This also is not hard to understand when you think about what Jesus said about the two most important commandments. The scripture reads,

"But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?'

'Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:34-40

The first commandment is easy to understand. Loving God, going to church, serving Him, worshipping Him (all which comes with our new nature once we realize His love for us on the cross and his passion for loving us in everyday life, and we receive Him as our Lord and Savior). But Jesus says here that "the second (commandment) is like it." Loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. Being **merciful**, in other words. Neighbors can be hard to love. In the "where we have our home" sense as well as in the temporary sense (who works in the next cubicle, at the next workstation, who cusses and swears at his wife and kids on the campsite next to us, etc.). Be merciful. Isn't the whole of the Bible based on the seemingly unbelievable paradox that God loved us and died for us? Will we die to our fallen-nature-feelings and exercise compassion for those who would call us evil because we don't agree with their adultery, their fornication, or their homosexuality? How many neighbors, how many evil-doers in our lives would be shocked if they learned that you pray for them? That, when they gossip behind your back, you return the favor by being kind and friendly to them every chance you get? This is *heavy!* (Sorry. That's a term from the 60's. I'm dating myself! Let's go back even further: it's *weighty!*)

Now **faith**. Let's let the Bible describe it for us:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Hebrews 11:1

Thus kicks off the chapter in Hebrews known as the "Hall of Faith," in which the writer of Hebrews names the many heroes of faith in the Bible. And certainly there are example after example in the scriptures of godly men who exercised great faith in God, and some who stumbled at the first and later came to know great faith.

When witnessing in contemporary times we often run into this statement among our friends and family: "I'm sorry. I refuse to believe anything unless it can be scientifically proven."

Well, then, the person is leaving out the *faith ingredient* when it comes to knowing God. And what is faith other than simply *believing what God says*? Many of us have direct deposit for our paychecks. Whether we get paid weekly, biweekly or by another time schedule, we write out that mortgage check and expect that by the time it reaches the mortgage provider, the new paycheck deposit will be there in our accounts. Many of us have had the experience of having this "trust in mankind" only to have things go wrong and have things go negative. How many will trust in what a man tells them, yet refuse to trust in what *God* tells them? (Yes, here is the issue: many have no idea nor belief that the Bible is God's Word. We need to take that truth to them!)

So if this is what Jesus calls a *weightier matter*, than we can trust that *faith*, and particularly *faith in God* is a highly regarded doctrinal issue with God. God wants us to, **by faith**, believe in Him. He wants us to, **by faith**, trust that what He has proclaimed as a "truth" is, in fact, something we can more than bank on.

Jesus adds a severe admonishment to this topic. He tells his audience that they are "*blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!*" I used to imagine a Pharisee being bothered by a gnat buzzing around his head, swatting at it with his hand, while a camel approaches from behind and makes off with his lunch! The correlation is that the religious leaders of Christ's day (and maybe suggestive of many these days) spent too much time worrying about the small issues and completely missed the big issues that God was most concerned about. The New Living Translation states this verse in the following manner: "*Blind guides! You strain your water so you won't accidentally swallow a gnat; then you swallow a camel!*"

Can we liken this to our own individual lives? Getting caught up in the many, many things that God could care less about. I don't need to list any. I know what mine are. I'll be honest and say that I'd be ashamed to have anyone look at a list of some of my choices. Where I could have served and didn't. Times I could have sown good seed, but the "cares of the world" got in the way. Opportunities to edify someone just by showing up that came and went.

Many days recently I have prayed, "Lord, thank-you for another day. Another day to do things right, the way You would do them. May I have a heart that will do so." Perhaps we should begin to include what Jesus regards as the

weightier matters. "May I exercise **good judgment**, distribute **mercy** to all I come in contact with, and have **faith** that whatever You bring my way You will give me the grace to deal with as Jesus would."

Please pray that my coworker will come into saving knowledge of our Lord and will give her heart to Christ. And that each of us will have many more unique opportunities to witness for Jesus.

-K.D.

"Sharing the Bread of Life with the World"



On October 5-7, the Bible Baptist Church of Sodus hosted its yearly Missions Conference. Every year the Mission Committee ministers to the body by planning, inviting and making arrangements for this important event. They do this by inviting missionaries to speak, give us updates on their ministries, provide encouragement for the BBCS body and share with us how we can best provide support for their ministries through prayer or other means.

This year's Conference theme was "Sharing the bread of Life with the World." Our church was blessed with missionaries from four countries that we minister to through our Faith Promise giving. Overall, our church supports 18 missionaries; 15 in 14 foreign countries, 1 in Utah, one nationally (which includes a local ministry) and one local to Sodus. Our guests this year were Dr. Harry and Muriel Fletcher (Good News Prison & Jail Ministry), Larry and Sharon Lilly (Mexico), Thomas Obunde (Uganda) and Bill and Jan Wemett (representing David and Sally Seefried, our missionaries to South Africa. Mr. Seefried has been quite ill, now on dialysis, and was not able to make the trip).

The Conference kicked off on Friday night with a catered banquet dinner in the Fellowship Hall, where the BBCS church body and the missionaries became acquainted. On Saturday morning in the Fellowship Hall, Mr. Lilly, Mr. Wemett, Mr. Obunde and Mr. Fletcher shared ministry updates and anecdotes with the men and boys. At noon, there was a Women and Girls' luncheon at the Steger Haus Restaurant.

Sunday morning kicked off with church-wide missionary updates and challenges to our church body. In what is usually the Sunday morning Sunday School hour, Larry Lilly shared about the ministries of he and Sharon in youth camps, conferences, VBS, missions trips and the promotion of their Bible College in Ciudad Mante (Mexico). They were able to see how the fruit of the college has produced graduates that they have been able to see in action this past summer. They have been encouraged by the decisions made at youth camp: 28 campers surrendered to full time service, 11 of them planning to enter the Bible College. 10 people were saved and 134 dedications were made.

Thomas Obunde was next on the podium and shared about he and his wife, Faith's, work with their staff to reach people university age on down to elementary student ages. They do this through sports, music, and drama as well as sharing the gospel. Mr. Obunde shared an amazing blessing that the Lord brought in providing a large sum of money for the purchase of a much-needed building.

Bill and Jan Wemett shared their experiences serving under the ministries of David and Sally Seefried in South Africa. Bill shared how, even though David has been quite ill, he still maintains a powerful hand in sharing the gospel message both in "The Pines," a Christian community for orphans with HIV/AIDS, and as President of Ambassadors International Ministries. Bill and Jan shared how they helped out with the renovation of "The Pines" building (another acquisition whereby the Lord accomplished the seemingly impossible!) and seeing the children go from lives of hopelessness to lives of hope in Jesus Christ.

Our Keynote Speaker was Dr. Harry Fletcher of Good News Prison & Jail Ministry (GNPJM). He now serves as Vice President of Pastoral Care for GNPJM with international headquarters in Richmond, Virginia. He also has local ties to our area: he served as a Senior Pastor for 25 years, 11 of which were at Webster Bible Church in Webster, N.Y.! Mr. Fletcher provided challenging messages from God's Word

on Sunday morning and showed an encouraging video during the Sunday evening wrap-up. Hardened criminals changed by the gospel and their testimonies, now serving the Lord in some capacity. One testimony is of a young woman who will never get out of prison in this lifetime, but now considers herself a missionary for Christ ministering to the incarcerated. We also had the added blessing of our local GNPJM chaplains, Lou Lander and Paul Burress, present with us for the evening wrap-up service!

We are a church who has a desire to participate in supporting the efforts of sharing Jesus Christ in the modern world. Not only is our focus on our surrounding local communities, but we believe in and are encouraged by the spreading of God's Word to the ends of the earth. This fulfills the great commission, in which Christ taught, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature* (see Mark 16:15)."

The BBCS body would like to thank the Missions Committee for yet another soul-stirring, inspirational Missions Conference!

(NOTE: The Missions Committee is Joan & Leon Hakes, Kathy Jopson, Pam & Claudia Arend and Sandy & Jon Stone.)

AWANA Clubbers Share "Faith" Thoughts



AWANA Clubbers were given a special opportunity in Club on the night of October 17. They were handed "AWANA Faith Finders" sheets prior to entering their Council Time sessions (and, for the Sparkies, "Green Meadow Time"). This is the session where they usually have a guest speaker or an AWANA leader bring them a special message about Jesus and the Bible.

For answering seven questions on the sheet, they could be awarded an extra 25 "AWANA Shares." (Now you may ask, "What are AWANA Shares?" Well, the kids know! Come visit us some Wednesday night and find out! No, it has nothing to do with the Stock Market!)

Here are the questions the kids needed to answer:

1. What color are the hymnals in the sanctuary? (Ans: blue)
2. What page number is John 3:16 on in the pew Bibles? (Ans: 561)
3. True or False: Is being good and going to AWANA is enough to get you to heaven? (Ans: False)
4. Who is God's only begotten Son? (Ans: Jesus)
5. What does faith mean to you? (Clubbers got to answer this "free hand.")
Some of their answers were:

"believing in God," "to believe God," "to believe in God," "that I believe in Him," "I can Have faith to do Stuff," "believe in Jesus w/out seeing him," "that you believe Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior," "Heart," "to trust in God," "believing in something you can't see," and "that you should be good for your leaders."

6. What song did you sing tonight in council time/green meadow time? (Ans: some of the songs, "All in All," "Blessed be your Name," "Awesome God")
7. (For Truth & Training Clubbers only:) Who was your guest speaker tonight? (Ans: Mr. (Alan) Bartlow)

This exercise was fun and also provided a tool for leaders to be able to see where Clubbers are spiritually. Some of the answers were left blank; others kids wrote "don't know" on some of the questions dealing with doctrine. For the kids, it was a fun exercise.

It just goes to show: you never know what cool thing may happen in AWANA Club!

*The young man remarked in astonishment
"What gives with this?
This newsletter is photograph-less!"
The old man grabbed the copy to look,
Then stared the young man down.
"I don't know why you fret," he said,
"I don't know why you frown.
'Though the paper be photograph-less
In these pages is the NEWS, and
Well-presented, none-the-less!
Rather than weep and cry and wail,
Be thankful you hold this good news read;
Rejoice! And without fail!"*

(...with apologies from the Editor.)

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