

-To Our Friends-

Well, another year has passed, and we here at the Olmstead Homestead can hardly believe we're another year older, and another year wiser (...well... SOME of us LOL) Sandy and Jeanie are working hard on their Christmas pageant. Sandy sings every day to get ready to be Gabriel the messenger angel, and Jeanie is just about the cutest pig you've ever seen in a manger scene! Jeanie doesn't love playing the pig, but I keep trying to remind her there are no small parts, only small actors.

We decided we'd get the Christmas shopping done early this year, which meant braving the Black Friday crowds if I wanted everything wrapped by December 5th. There were some very good deals going on at Hobby Lobby, though, and you should have seen these supply lists for the Christmas pageant costumes! Sandy and Jeanie's new choir director, Ms. Narthex, enlisted some of the ladies of the church to help with making costumes. Fourteen angel robes, six shepherds' outfits, five animal onesies, Mary and Joseph's special clothes, not to mention headdresses for all the people characters, angel wings, haloes, and other accessories. The supply list includes more glitter and sequins than I can imagine would fit on sixty angels' outfits! I think Ms. Narthex expects us to turn out a tacky Las Vegas showgirls revue instead of a tasteful Christmas pageant.

I've been enjoying some new recipes this Christmas season. I had been planning on my standard snowflake cookies this year, but the Kroger's near us has expanded their baking section with a number of frosting colors and sprinkles I hadn't bought before, so I made the decision to expand my repertoire to include snowmen. I would prefer to keep Christ in Christmas, but I suppose there's nothing wrong with a little Frosty now and then. Keep your eyes open for a package in the mail from me very soon. I hear mail is getting stolen in your neighborhood more frequently.

Truthfully, I don't think much of Ms. Narthex. She put Andrea Blotchnik in the role of Mary this year, and Andrea's only in third grade. Children look forward to certain things, and even though every girl won't be cast as the mother of Jesus before moving up to the fifth-grade youth group, it's wrong to pull the rug out from under them like that. Ms. Narthex doesn't understand tradition. I asked in passing why she didn't think Jeanie would make a good Mary, and she only replied that she wished she could cast every child in a lead role.

Are you still caroling this year? We look forward to your lovely tunes every year! You put such spirit into your renditions. "The Coventry Carol" in the style of a barbershop quartet? I never would have thought!

She's not going to last. Ms. Narthex I mean. I've already been hearing complaints about how she runs her choir rehearsals. Jeanie and Sandy claim nothing is amiss, but did you know Brianna Turnbull cried because she was too nervous to sing for the Thanksgiving Eve service? The children were instructed to have "Come Ye Thankful People" memorized, and Ms. Narthex said she would not be writing the words on poster board for the children as has been done in the past. And rather than talking to the choir parents about this decision, she simply sent home the words with each child with the assignment to learn them at home! Children are busy these days. They have school and extra-curriculars and chores. Ms. Narthex is not a mother, and she doesn't understand that. She thinks they should bend to her will at the drop of a hat. She thinks that her four years of college in Springfield have elevated her to the level of some kind of superwoman—early childhood education? Give me a break! Organize schedules for busy twin girls, keep a house clean, make meals for your family, find time to get your hair done, stay beautiful and attractive for your busy husband—THAT'S an education! But young women don't value things like they used to. They don't value families. You can thank Kim Kardashian for that.

Anyway, here's wishing you a Merry Christmas! May you be happy and healthy throughout winter and all year long!

With Love,
The Olmsteads