

"The Heart of the Matter"

A Monthly Source of Information for the Church Family

Cherish His Wonderful Name!

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

To most of us, our name is one of our most precious possessions. Our name seems to define us and our reputation. We are hurt when folks make fun of it or use it in a derogatory way, which is something many experience, especially as children. And so it hurts when our Savior's name is used in a swearing or mocking way.

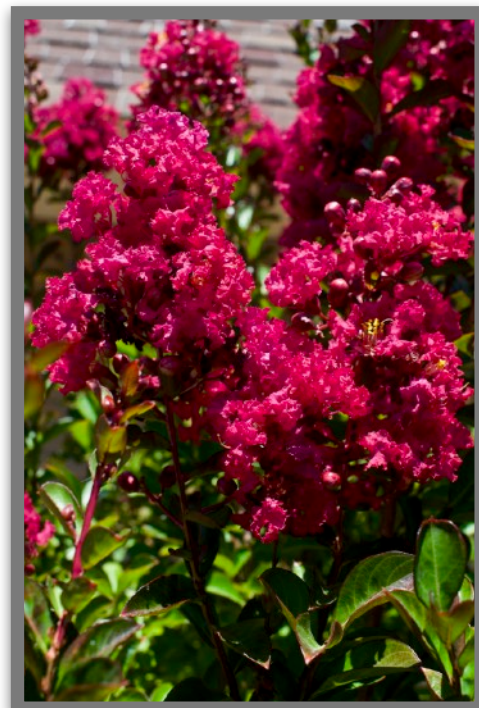
The name of Jesus represents everything that He is - all His righteousness, perfection, grace and love! He gave up His divine privileges when He was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on an old rugged cross at Calvary to save His people from their sins. Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Philippians 2:9-11**

Over and over again in Scripture we read, "in His name." Demons were cast out in His name (**Mark 16:17, 18**). Healing occurred in His name (**Acts 3:6 and 16, and 4:10**). Salvation comes in His name (**Romans 10:13**). We are to baptize in His name (**Matthew 28:18**). We are justified in His name (**1 Corinthians 6:11**). Everything we do and say is done in His name (**Colossians 3:17**). At the forefront, praying in His name (**John 14:13, 14**) brings incredible results.

Ellen G. White speaks about submitting ourselves to Jesus in **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 312**. She says, "When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness."

Jesus, we love You! We cherish Your name and all that it means to us! Just to think that our names are embedded forever in the palms of Your hands brings us to our knees in adoration and worship! It is our desire to always dwell in Your love and, by Your grace, may we reflect Your matchless love to those around us!

By Donna Faye



Trouble At The Inn by Dina Donohue

Whenever Christmas pageants are talked about in a certain little town in the Midwest, someone is sure to mention the name of Wallace Purling. Wally's performance in one production of the Nativity play has slipped into the realm of legend. But the old-timers who were in the audience that night never tire of recalling exactly what happened.

Wally was nine that year and in the second grade, although he should have been in the fourth. Most people in town knew that he had difficulty in keeping up. He was big and clumsy, slow in movement and mind. Still, Wally was well liked by the other children in his class, all of whom were smaller than he. He was always a helpful boy, willing and smiling, and the natural protector, paradoxically, of the underdog. Sometimes, if the other boys chased the younger ones away, it would always be Wally who'd say, "Can't they stay? They're no bother."

Wally fancied the idea of being a shepherd with a flute at the Christmas pageant that year, but the play's director, Miss Lumbard, assigned him to a more important role. "After all," she reasoned, "the innkeeper did not have many lines, and Wally's size would make his refusal of lodging to Joseph more forceful."

And so it happened that the usual large, partisan audience gathered for the town's yearly extravaganza of crooks and creches, beards, crowns, halos and a whole stageful of squeaky voices. No one on stage or off was more caught up in the magic of the evening than Wallace Purling. It was said later that he stood in the wings and watched the performance with such fascination that from time to time Miss Lumbard had to make sure he didn't wander onstage before his cue.

Then the time came when Joseph appeared, slowly, tenderly guiding Mary to the door of the inn. Joseph knocked hard on the wooden door set into the painted backdrop. Wally, the innkeeper, was there waiting.

"What do you want?" Wally said, swinging the door open with a brusque gesture.

"We seek lodging."

"Seek it elsewhere." Wally looked straight ahead, but spoke vigorously. "The inn is filled."

"Sir, we have asked everywhere in vain. We have traveled far and are very weary."

"There is no room in this inn for you." Wally looked properly stern.

"Please, good innkeeper, this is my wife, Mary. She is heavy with child and needs a place to rest. Surely you must have some small corner for her. She is so tired."

Now, for the first time, the innkeeper relaxed his stiff stance and looked down at Mary. With that, there was a long pause, long enough to make the audience a bit tense.

"No! Begone!" the prompter whispered from the wings.

"No!" Wally repeated automatically. "Begone!"

Joseph placed his arm around Mary and Mary laid her head upon her husband's shoulder and the two of them started to move away. The innkeeper did not return inside his inn, however. Wally stood there in the doorway, watching the forlorn couple. His mouth was open, his brow creased with concern, his eyes filling unmistakably with tears.

And suddenly, this Christmas pageant became different from all the others.

"Don't go, Joseph." Wally called out. "Bring Mary back." And Wallace Purling's face grew into a bright smile. "You can have my room."

Some people in town thought that the pageant had been ruined. Yet there were others, many, many others, who considered it the most Christmas of all the Christmas pageants they had ever seen.

A Christmas story from Guideposts, December 1966

UJA NEWS

Give Back to Schools Week

The Ukiah Natural Foods Co-op donates money to local participating schools through its annual Give Back to Schools program. This year Ukiah Junior Academy received a check for \$212.00 from the Co-op. A big thanks to all of you who supported UJA by shopping at the Co-op during this special week.

A Special Day for Grades 7-10

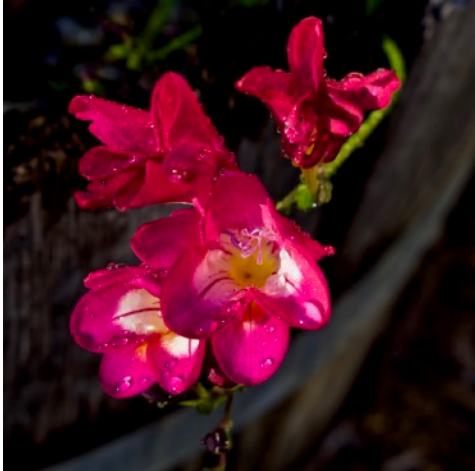
Monday, November 16, was an exciting day for Grades 7-10. In accordance with county and state regulations, they were able to return to their classrooms for instruction rather than accepting it virtually. Please pray that this mode for learning remains uninterrupted for these young people.

Christmas Break

UJA will be observing a Christmas break from December 19 - January 4.

The School Roster Continues to Grow

In the month of November, six more students registered to attend UJA, bringing the total roster to 77 students. Praise God for each student, each parent, each teacher and staff member! We know He is guiding and blessing the school amid these troublous times.



Religious Liberty and Christian Education

By Margie Salcedo Rice, JD

In the last six months, we have seen vast changes and shifts in our society due to the COVID-19 pandemic that have impacted not only our private lives, but our way to worship and provide religious education for our children. The Supreme Court, in their last term, dealt with teachers at religious schools, religious exemptions from federal mandates and state constitutional provisions blocking religious schools from receiving school scholarships. All of the court's religious-based decisions harmonized around the principles

that, despite our honest and deep-seated disagreements about important questions, robust protection for religious liberty is essential to living together in a pluralistic society.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Schools v. Morrissey-Berru, 591 U.S. ___ (2020), was a court case involving the ministerial exception of federal employment discrimination laws. The case extends from the Supreme Court's prior decision in Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church & School v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 565 U.S. 171 (2012) which created a ministerial exception based on the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the United States Constitution, asserting that federal discrimination laws cannot be applied to leaders of religious organizations. The case, along with the consolidated St. James School v. Biel, 911 F.3d 603, (9th Cir. 2018), both arose from rulings in the United States Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit that found that federal discrimination laws do apply to others within a religious organization that serve an important religious function but lack the title or training to be considered a religious leader under Hosanna-Tabor. The Supreme Court ruled in a 7-2 decision on July 8, 2020 that reversed the 9th Circuit's ruling, affirming that the principles of Hosanna-Tabor, that a person can be serving an important religious function even if not holding the title or training of a religious leader, satisfied the ministerial exception in employment discrimination.

In the case background of Our Lady of Guadalupe Schools, Agnes Morrissey-Berru was a teacher at Our Lady of Guadalupe Schools in Hermosa Beach, California, a Catholic school. Due to dwindling enrollment and funds, more pressure had been put on the teaching staff starting in the 2012 school year, expecting them to become certified in catecheist teaching and adapting certain programs in classes to maintain their Catholic teaching approach, which Morrissey-Berru failed to do as she was not a practicing Catholic. After transitioning her to a part-time position in the 2014 school year to try to amend the situation, the school opted to not renew her contract in 2015 on the basis of her teaching performance. Morrissey-Berru engaged with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to file a complaint against the school, asserting that she had been terminated unfairly on the basis of her age, under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA). The Central District of California Court issued a summary judgment in favor of the school, asserting that Morrissey-Berru's position was that of a minister and thus falling within the bounds of Hosanna-Tabor and preventing the school from being liable for discrimination. The EEOC appealed the decision to the 9th Circuit, which reversed the District Court's decision based on the prior decision in Biel following the same reasoning, that Morrissey-Berru's position had similar duties but was not fully ministerial based on Roberts' four considerations, particularly as a non-Catholic. Thus, she was covered by discrimination laws. The Supreme Court then certified both cases in December 2019, consolidating them under Our Lady of Guadalupe.

It is interesting to note that the Supreme Court invited various religious groups to submit briefs on this matter. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church submitted a brief as Amici Curiae 9 from which Chief Justice Roberts quoted in his opinion in Our Lady of Guadalupe Schools. Chief Justice Roberts, wrote:

“Protestant churches, from the earliest settlements in this country, viewed education as a religious obligation...Seventh-day Adventists “trace the importance of education back to the Garden of Eden.” Seventh-day Adventist formation “restores human beings into the image of God as revealed by the life of Jesus Christ” and focuses on the development of “knowledge, skills, and understandings to serve God and humanity.”

The Supreme Court held in *Our Lady of Guadalupe Schools* that elementary school teachers are qualified for the ministerial exemption that the court recognized in *Hosanna-Tabor*.

It is interesting to note that the *Amici Curiae* brief submitted by the General Conference to the Supreme Court went on to state so eloquently the importance of religious education for the formation of a child’s character:

“A faith-based education is in fact so important to Seventh-day Adventists that they start at an early age through a program called Early Childhood Education and Care, which offers the “education of God’s precious little ones” in “safe, nurturing environments that are aligned with the beliefs and values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

To fulfill this mission, the Seventh-day Adventist Church strives to run its schools in ways that honor God, by uniting doctrinal, moral, and secular teaching within a comprehensive Christian worldview. See *Clapper v. Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists*, 166 F.3d 1208, at *1 (4th Cir. 1998) (per curiam) (Adventists operate their schools “for the purpose of transmitting to their children their own ideals, beliefs, attitudes, values, habits and customs” and because they “want their children to be loyal, conscientious Christians”). This approach has proven invaluable to strengthening the students’ relationship with Christ and passing the faith to the next generation. In fact, the Church commissioned three studies of every student in its U.S. schools (called the Valuegenesis studies), which illuminate the role and effectiveness of Seventh-day Adventist schools in fostering faith. See V. Bailey Gillespie et al., *Valuegenesis Ten Years Later: A Study of Two Generations* (2004). Nearly three-fourths of students responded that attending a Seventh-day Adventist school helped develop their faith either “very much” (36%) or “somewhat” (38%). *Id.* at 302. Significantly, 53% of students attributed positive development of their faith to their teacher’s faith; 70% stated that prayer at school positively impacted their faith’s development; and 63% recognized that Bible classes developed their faith. *Id.* These data confirm the critical role that religious education—and religious teachers—play in transmitting the faith.”

In conclusion, I’m so grateful we have a religious school, Ukiah Junior Academy, that offers Christian education. Religious teachers play a vital role in educating and forming students in the Seventh-day Adventist faith and lays at the core, the importance of biblical teachings that guide students through their instruction toward the goals of living their lives in accordance with their faith, praying and playing a vital role in their religious education. As the Supreme Court stated, a religious teacher need not have a clinical title of “minister” to play an important role in the spiritual development of a child. After all, Jesus was called “rabbi”. Rabbi means teacher.

Family News

A message from our poet, Bob Merritt;

Happy Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving 2020...

Oh my, it's been a year!

Began with possibilities and hope...

Gave way to angst and to fear.

A pandemic, recession, election...

Events to try our souls...

Are thermometers of national character...

More accurate than any polls.

The divisions in separating peoples...

Regarding Masks? Politics? Belief?

Has revealed how fragile our society...

Revealing a longing for acceptance and

relief.

Now we arrive at the holidays...

A day of Thanksgiving first...

Let's pray it brings out the best in us...

And pray that we've all seen our worst.

So let's recognize we all have blessings...

Yet we still have wants and needs...

We've not all been blessed the same...

So let's "The Golden Rule" all heed.

Sharing with those facing hard times...

Our bounty, our selves, our wealth...

For those with few friends and family...

No homes, employment or ill health.

So thanks to my family and friends...

Whose love and support you keep giving...

May we never forget God has blessed us...

And made all of our lives worth living.



Give a warm welcome to the newest little member of our family - Mattias Mark Eghave Stillinge, son of Harald and Sameena Stillinge. He was born on Oct. 26, 2020 at Loma Linda University Medical Center. His first statistics were 6 lbs. 13.7 oz. and 19.5 in. long. Harald and Sameena are in awe as they get acquainted with their precious baby boy.

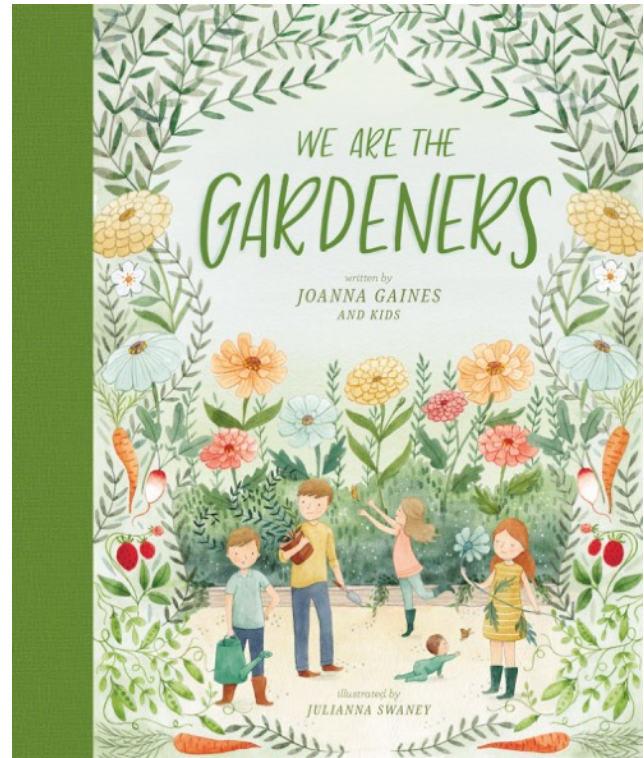


A Book Review and an Interesting FACT by Diana Howe

We are the Gardeners by Joanna Gaines is my first choice for a children's book review, although I had quite a few others wrestling for the top. When a book's story and its illustration are both beautiful, that in itself is a special thing to me and that is exactly why I want to share it with you.

The story is told by the Gaines children which chronicle their experience, shown with beautiful watercolor illustrations, in growing their own family garden: how it all began, the failed endeavors, the surprise attack of raiding critters. Most importantly, the moral of the story, is that the family share the knowledge they gain along the way and how they learned to grow a successful garden because of these failures. By not giving up when disaster strikes, the fruits of their labor are rewarded.

A closing quote from the book, "...every hard thing we choose to do makes us braver for the next time." Isn't that what God wants us to learn? Every trial we encounter He expects us to call upon His omnipotence and have victory so that we can be stronger for the next one. I hope you check this book out and enjoy it as much as my family and I have.



I have a soft spot for children's books, especially ones that can teach in beautiful simple truths. Children books are a powerful tool because just like any book one reads, it becomes a part of you and your identity. I enjoy scouring a bookstore for these and curating them at home which enable me to share with others.

I have often dreamed of writing and illustrating my own children's book and maybe one day having a child specific book shop with a blend of religious and contemporary books that all work together in a beautiful way.

Church News

Plowshares

Wendi Olivera reports: Plowshares continues to be a wonderful way for God to use our church. Each Sabbath, one of our groups takes care of feeding those in need of a meal. We serve sack lunches that consist of two sandwiches, bottled water, and a few other items, such as chips, fruit and a dessert treat.

Plowshares provides some ingredients for us to use, but each group is in charge of making sure that they have what they need to prep the lunches. Food purchases can be made, but all the prep must be done at the Plowshares facility. Typically, we make about 30-50 sack lunches every week.

With our current COVID-19 situation, we are careful to follow the regulations set for us. We give out the lunches outside the facility. Before COVID-19 came along, we made sandwiches in an assembly line where each person was able to choose what they wanted on their sandwiches. Unfortunately, now we have to make all the sandwiches the same.

We are looking forward to the restrictions being lifted, so we can go back to serving inside again. It is tough to realize people walk or ride a bike all the way to the facility, stand outside in the cold or rain, wait for their bag of food and then have to go somewhere to eat it.

Please keep these folks in your prayers, as the cold is coming upon us and the weather will worsen. Thank you, church family, for your continued support in this worthy ministry.

Friday Night Zoom Vespers

Zoom Vespers on Friday evening is a delightful way to connect with each other and at the same time welcome the Sabbath with music, a devotional, testimonies of thankfulness for God's faithfulness, requests for intercessory prayer and a time for sweet fellowship.

With the sun setting earlier this time of year, it was decided to change the start time to 7:00 pm. The schedule for December will be on the 4th, the 11th, and the 18th. We will not meet on the last two Friday evenings of the month because of Christmas and New Year's Day.

There is no limit to how many people may attend, so we hope to see many more join. If you need the Zoom logon and password, please call Allison Kurtz or the Andersons.



The Christmas Cantata

The 25th annual Christmas Cantata, "The Glory of Christmas", under the direction of Margie Salcedo Rice, will be aired on YouTube during the month of December. It will feature the Ukiah Seventh-day Adventist Sanctuary Choir and Symphony, along with the Ukiah Junior Academy Chorale and Children's Choir.

Please invite your friends and family to watch this glorious and worshipful celebration of Christ's birth.

Financial Report

By December 31, 2020, we need to raise \$72,595.00 to meet our budget. There are several ways to give your tithes and offerings.

1. Online. Go to the church website: ukiahsda.com. Click on online giving, and go from there. There are no fees charged for using this site. Your whole gift is deposited into our church bank account. During this pandemic time, this is the easiest way to return your tithes and give your offerings to the church.

2. Mail your check to the church. If you have a tithe envelope, put your check into it and be sure to fill out the front. If you don't have a tithe envelope, just write your information on a piece of paper and mail it with your check to the church. If you need some tithe envelopes, let me know and I will get some for you.

3. Bring your check to the church. Either Donna or Becky is in the office from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm Monday to Thursday.

Thank you to each one for your faithfulness in returning your tithes and supporting the church budget. May God bless each of you for the rest of this year and beyond as we wait for His blessed return.

David Anderson, Treasurer

December Church Services

During the month of December, the church services will only be live-streamed, because the county has slipped back into the purple tier of the COVID pandemic.

Vegan Special K Loaf

1 medium onion, finely diced

1/8 c olive oil

2 c chopped walnuts

2 pkg tofu with water, finely mashed

1 T chicken seasoning (I look for an organic one with no msg, maltodextrin, etc.)

1 t salt or vege salt

1/4 c brewer's yeast

1 T sage or poultry seasoning

7 c special K (you can use an organic flake cereal and break it into smaller flakes)

Saute onion with olive oil, then add all ingredients and mix well.

Bake in a 9x13 inch pan for 45-60 min at 350 degrees.

Submitted by Debbie Merritt

Move for Life

There are so many ways we can get movement, exercise, and calorie burning into each and every day. One important way is to take a 10 minute walk (brisk, if possible) after each meal. These 10 minute mini exercise sessions following each meal will help to regulate blood sugar, aid digestion, and increase oxygen to the brain.

Here are some ways to incorporate more "natural" activity in your daily routine...

Sit instead of lying down.

Stand instead of sitting.

Pick up your walking pace (even around the house).

Stoop, bend, reach - use your muscles ("Use it or lose it").

Park your car away so you can walk to your destination.

Visit with a friend or family member on a walk.

Clean a closet, vacuum, mop.

If you watch TV or movies, exercise during the program or commercials...Walk around the house, climb the stairs, stand up then sit down in your chair 10 times.

Compiled from the former Take Ten Program.

Submitted by Debbie Merritt

Celestial Calendar for December

DECEMBER 13,14 - Geminids Meteor Shower: The Geminids is the king of meteor showers. It is considered by many to be the best shower in the heavens, producing up to 120 multicolored meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by debris left behind by an asteroid known as 3200 Phaethon, which was discovered in 1982. The shower runs annually from December 7-17. It peaks this year on the night of the 13th and morning of the 14th. The nearly new moon will ensure dark skies and best viewing will be after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Gemini, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

DECEMBER 14 - New Moon: The Moon will be located on the same side of the Earth as the Sun and will not be visible in the night sky. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects, such as galaxies and star clusters, because there is no moonlight to interfere.

DECEMBER 14 - Total Solar Eclipse: A total solar eclipse occurs when the Moon completely blocks the Sun, revealing the Sun's beautiful outer atmosphere known as its corona. The path of totality will only be visible in parts of southern Chile and southern Argentina. A partial eclipse will be visible in most parts of southern South America, the southeastern Pacific Ocean and the southern Atlantic Ocean.

DECEMBER 21 - December Solstice: The South Pole of the Earth will be tilted toward the Sun, which will have reached its southernmost position in the sky and will be directly over the Tropic of Capricorn at 23:44 degrees south latitude. This is the first day of winter (winter solstice) in the Northern Hemisphere and the first day of summer (summer solstice) in the Southern Hemisphere.

DECEMBER 21 - Rare Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn: Look to the west just after sunset for this impressive and rare planetary pair. The last great conjunction occurred in the year 2000. The two bright planets will appear only 7 arc minutes of each other in the night sky. They will be so close that they will appear to make a bright double planet.

DECEMBER 21, 22 - Ursids Meteor Shower: The Ursids is a minor meteor shower, producing about 5-10 meteors per hour. The shower runs annually from December 17-25. It peaks this year on the night of the 21st and the morning of the 22nd. Best viewing will be just after midnight. The meteors will radiate from the constellation Ursa Minor, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

DECEMBER 30 - Full Moon: The Moon will be located the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Cold Moon because this is the time of year when the cold winter air settles and the nights become long and dark.

Dave and I enjoyed observing the night sky during October. Once we stretched out on our backs on our deck so we could see the panorama of the heavens. We marveled at the Harvest Moon, the planets, the meteors, satellites, Orion, and the Blue Moon. Did anyone see the Galactic Center of the Milky Way?

One night, Orion was exceptionally bright. After exclaiming that the entire constellation was in full view, we came inside and read in "Early Writings" about a vision the Lord gave to Mrs. White on December 16, 1848, about the shaking of the powers of the heavens. "Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space." Can you picture what a sight that will be?