



**"WALKING A LIFE OF PASSION AND PURPOSE FOR JESUS CHRIST"**

**PASTOR KIRK WERNER**

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### Friends and Family of CrossWalk,

Jordan Zaslow posted an article a couple of years ago entitled, *"We Asked People to Tell Us Their Biggest Regrets — But What They All Had in Common Was Heartbreaking."* In it he asked random New Yorkers, *"What's your biggest regret in life?"* They set up a chalkboard on the sidewalk near Lieutenant Petrosino Square in New York City for one day. At the top of the board was written, *"Write your biggest regret."* They provided a supply of colored chalk and set up a video camera to record people writing on the board.

The chalkboard attracted many people walking by and was soon filled to overflowing with written regrets that were poignant and thought-provoking:

- Burning bridges
- Never speaking up
- Not being a good husband
- Should have spent more time with family
- Staying in my comfort zone
- Not saying, "I love you"
- Never applying to med school
- Not making the most of every day
- Not being a better friend

As the board filled up with so many different stories, they noticed that almost all of these regrets had one thing in common. Nearly all of them involved the word *"not."* They were about chances not taken. They were about words not spoken. They were about dreams never pursued.

But then they gave these same people an eraser and

wrote *"Clean Slate"* at the top of the chalkboard. As she erased her regret, one young woman had tears in her eyes as she said, *"I feel hopeful. It means that there are possibilities."*

The good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that in Him, we are forgiven! We encounter people every day who are carrying about the weight of regret. We all need to know that we can have a clean slate with Jesus. He took all sin for all time upon Himself so that we could live in a right relationship with Him.

Don't live in the regrets of the past. Christianity is risky business and we need to be willing to step out in faith and trust God as we live for His glory! Let us encourage one another. One very simple way of doing that is to take advantage of the opportunity to share your thoughts from God's Word. Approximately every other week, on Sunday mornings, an opportunity is offered to read Scripture and share how that Scripture is being manifested in your life. A simple thing that can encourage others.

As I look over the sign-up sheet for those who are willing to step up and do this, I see a lot of repetition. We need to have greater participation from the congregation. Will you be one who is willing to step out of your comfort zone in 2019 in order to encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ?

*Your servant and brother in Christ,*

*Kirk*

## Messages for the Month

January **06**, 2019 – **Ephesians 4:17 - 24**  
“From Darkness to Dawning” – The Epiphany of our Lord – **Communion**

January **13**, 2019 – **Isaiah 43:1 - 7** – “A Word from Home” - Baptism of the Lord

January **20**, 2019 – **John 2:1 - 11** – “Miracle of Miracles” – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany

January **27**, 2019 – **Philemon 8 - 22** – “New and Improved” – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany

### Our Staff

**P**astor: **Kirk Werner**

**M**usic Director: **Trey Lister**

#### **C**lass of 2019:

John Carson, Courtney Scollard &  
Mike Walkup

#### **C**lass of 2020:

Carol Jordan, Jim Slyman &  
Maurice Briere

#### **C**lass of 2021:

John Morton, Matt Peterson &  
Greg Waldrop



## BIRTHDAYS



**Ricardo Gracia - 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**Elliott Cecil - 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**Bobbie Bales – 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Judy Campbell – 30<sup>th</sup>**



**Ricardo & Jane Gracia – 1<sup>st</sup>**



# NURSERY SCHEDULE



## JANUARY NURSERY WORKERS

Jan. 6 - Carol Jordan & Gwen Davis

Jan. 13 - Dawn Briere & Susan Fletcher

Jan. 20 - Laine Donnell & Chelsea Peterson

Jan. 27 - Carol Jordan & Sue Werner



## PLEASE REMEMBER SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR NEW HOPEWELL SCHOOL!

**Its flu and virus season.**

Please help New Hopewell fight these germs with disinfectant sprays, wipes and tissues. Previously indicated clothing and food snacks are always needed!

Please leave these supplies in the **BLUE TUB** in the back of the church



## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:



### *CrossWalk Café*

Our next Cafe' will be **January 6, 2019**. Tired of turkey? Perhaps something on the lighter side might be a good alternative. How about a *bowl of hot soup and a fresh salad*? Plan on starting this new year with some delicious food, warm fellowship and good conversation around the table! Please come join us as we nourish our bodies and enjoy the encouragement of good friends.

## THANK YOU...KUDOS...APPLAUSE!!!

The session would like to say THANK YOU to all families for your service on the *Refreshment Ministry Team*. When you join the church, you are assigned to this team, as we feel it is a ministry that all can participate in. You are paired with another family and given one month (every 1 1/2 – 2 years) to provide Sunday morning refreshments. Most teams take two weeks each; others share in the entire month. *It is up to you*. **Please remember that you are NOT responsible for providing breakfast for everyone.** This is just a light refreshment to have with coffee or juice. (Coffee is provided by the church.) *What the teams provide is their gift to the church in service to our Lord*. Be sure, and show your gratitude... We are certainly grateful to each of you!!!

*\*The teams are posted on the bulletin board for the year and printed 3 months ahead in the newsletter, so that you can plan ahead.*

# Sunday Morning Refreshment Schedule

## January 2019

Sue & Kirk Werner 567-0767  
Debbie & Don Banta 699-7560



## February 2019

Susan & Stan Fletcher 577-6099  
Chelsea & Matt Peterson 356-2113

## March 2019

Diana & Bill Hawk 577-5392  
Laura & Rusty Spargo 850-2827



**Josh Tolbert's** address has changed! Please use the following address when writing Josh:

E-3 Tolbert, Joshua C.  
1320 Ynez Pl  
POB 180701  
San Diego, CA  
92118-9998

The cell phone number is: (865)232-4379



# Congratulations!

WE'RE HAVING  
A BABY!



Congratulations to *Courtney and Matt Scollard* as well as big sister *Clara*, as they are expecting a *new addition to their family in late June* of this year!



Also, Congratulations to *Karin and John Morton* who are expecting their first *children* (yes, that's children as in *twins*) in *early July*! What a blessing to share in this joyful time for these families!



## Church Cleaning Committee

Jan 02 – Jan 05 – Stan & Susan Fletcher  
Jan 09 – Jan 12 – Beth Ferguson w Cathy Tolbert  
Jan 16 – Jan 19 – Beth Ferguson w Cathy Tolbert  
Jan 23 – Jan 26 – Brad & Lisa Brummett  
Jan 30 – Feb 02 – Brad & Lisa Brummett

PLEASE!



If you use the church during the week, please, be sure to take your trash with you when you leave – especially food waste.



## The Silent Epiphany

by Emily Marcason-Tolmie

The days after Peter's death filled Louise's home with a constant chatter of family and friends. She endured countless hugs and kisses. Her refrigerator was packed with casseroles. The envelopes stacked on the small table near the front door were filled with condolences of a life snuffed out far too soon. Young men aren't supposed to die from heart attacks, she'd hear them whisper. Louise watched all of this in a blur. She participated. She hugged and comforted people that also loved Peter. She thanked neighbors for casseroles and cards. And then one day, Louise couldn't even remember which day exactly everyone left. She was left in a panicked silence.

Louise walked barefoot from room to room. Peter was everywhere but nowhere. His dirty laundry was still in the hamper. She couldn't wash away his scent. His shaving cream and razor were still perched on the sink in the master bathroom. Their adventures over the last 12 years were peppered around the house in frames. The soles of their shoes had walked the soil of many countries together. Louise, still wearing her pajamas in the setting sun, glanced at Peter's running shoes next to the front door. She tied her robe tightly, covering her shorts and tank top. She unlocked the front door, picked up Peter's running shoes and threw them out the door. Slamming the door and locking it, Louise went to bed with tears streaming down her cheeks. She was done with this day. She was done with all of this.

Louise's cell phone ringing woke her up. The clock read 8:30. How long had she been asleep? She knew it wouldn't stop until she answered it. Her

**CrossWalk family**, if you see a need to replenish coffee supplies such as coffee, hot/cold cups, paper towels, kitchen dish soap or men's/women's room supplies, **please let us know** by; (1) **noting what is needed on the bulletin board in the kitchen for refreshment supplies** and (2) **noting on the rest room listing in the rest rooms** so that supplies can be replenished **before they are completely out**. If you have questions, please contact *Judy Campbell* or *Sue Werner*. Thank you!

### Check out our website!

Have you checked out our website lately? It's a great way to introduce people to our church. Navigate through the site and see pictures of various activities, church events, a calendar of events, and the weekly messages that are catalogued in the media section. This is a helpful tool in keeping informed and a good resource to refer to your friends. The web address is [www.crosswalkepc.org](http://www.crosswalkepc.org).

older sister, Meredith, was persistent. "What took you so long to answer the phone?" she asked. "I was sleeping." "It's 8:30 on a Saturday night." "Is it Saturday?" "Lou, I'm coming over." "No. I'm sleeping." "I'm worried about you. Peter wouldn't want you to be like this."

Louise stiffened at the sound of his name. "Don't," she whispered. "It's been months, Lou," Meredith said quietly. "It feels like it happened this morning," Louise said. "I know it's hard..." "You have no idea what I am going through," Louise snapped. "I'm trying, Lou." "Well, don't." "What can I do? What do you need?" "I need him."

The silence again. "I'm coming over." "No." "I will be over in the morning. The girls want to see you." Louise ended the call. She pulled the white duvet cover over her shoulders and dragged the pillow that Peter used nightly under her chin. The silence of the house engulfed her and soon she was gone.

Meredith arrived at 9 a.m. with bagels, cream cheese, orange juice and her two daughters, Ella and Grace. Meredith scrunched her nose when Louise answered the front door. "How long have you been wearing that robe? And when was the last time you washed your hair?" "Hi to you, too, Meredith." "We found these on the lawn," Meredith said as she plopped Peter's sneakers next to the front door. Before Louise could protest the sneakers, her young nieces passed their mother. "Hi Auntie Lou," the little girls sang.

Louise pulled them both into a hug. "My girls," she said. "How are you both?" "Santa is coming, Auntie Lou," Grace said as her blue eyes grew wide in excitement. "Is he?" Louise asked. She glanced at Meredith. "Where are your plates?" her sister asked.

After the girls finished their bagels Meredith turned on cartoons for them to watch on the television. Louise sat at the kitchen table nibbling her bagel. "Juice?" Meredith asked. Louise nodded and pushed her empty glass towards her sister. "Did you seriously not realize Christmas is in a couple of days?" her sister asked as she poured the juice into the glass. Louise shrugged. "I guess I lost track of the days."

Meredith sat down across from her sister. "Mom, Dad, me. We are all worried about you." "So, Mom

sent you over?" Louise broke off a piece of bagel but didn't eat it. "No. The girls wanted to see you." "Sure," Louise mumbled.

Meredith sighed. "Have you been to see Dr. West?" Louise shook her head. "Why not?" "He doesn't understand." "He is one of the best grief therapists in the city." "He doesn't understand what it is like to be a widow at 34."

Meredith rubbed her forehead with her fingertips. "I don't know what it feels like to lose a husband, but I have experienced loss, Lou." "You are so lucky to have Jason and the girls." "I had a miscarriage." "When?" "Three months ago." "I'm so sorry. I didn't know." "That's because I didn't tell you. I want my sister back. Let me try and help you." Louise felt tired. "It's not the same." "Where are you going?" Meredith asked. "To bed. Lock the door on your way out."

Louise woke up hours later to the deafening silence. She walked barefoot from room to room. "Peter?" she whispered. She closed her eyes but there was no response. Just silence. She sat against the front door holding his sneakers to her chest. "Peter, tell me what I'm supposed to do."

The snow twirled outside her office window. Louise sat at her desk with her chin propped in her hands. The streetlights were starting to come on in the late afternoon. Her only feeling of normalcy came while she was at work. For eight hours a day Monday through Friday she was just Louise Miller. She wasn't poor Louise. She wasn't Peter's widow. She wasn't suffocating in silence. She did her work. She illustrated books for children. She transported herself to faraway lands. It gave her a legitimate excuse to check out of the reality of her life.

"Hey, a few of us are heading out for drinks after work," Marisa said. "Want to come?" Louise sat back in her chair and smiled. She shook her head. "No, thanks. I need to finish this assignment. I'm on a deadline," Louise lied. "Are you sure? It's Christmas Eve." "Yes."

The office was silent not long after Marisa and a few chatty co-workers left for the bar around the corner. It was nearing 6. Her mother had already called confirming dinner at her house. Louise needed to go. She slipped off her heels and slid into her boots. She buttoned up her wool coat and

covered her wavy dark hair with a knitted beanie. The cold air felt refreshing on her face as she walked towards the bus stop. The snow crackled under her feet on the covered sidewalks. The city bus slushed past her as she neared the corner. The doors swung open and Louise spotted an empty seat next to a woman a few years older than her.

“Hello,” the woman said with a smile. “Hi,” Louise muttered. “Isn’t the snow beautiful?” “Yes, it really is,” Louise admitted. The bus bumped along the street. “Have any Christmas plans?” “Um, going to my mother’s house for dinner.” “How lovely.”

Louise rubbed the fogged window with her fingertips. “Well, since you didn’t ask, I will just tell you I am heading over to the SPCA on 18<sup>th</sup> Street tonight for an adoption clinic. Have you been there?” Louise shook her head. “No.” “Well, my son, Clayton, has been asking for a dog and I’ve kept having to tell him no. I needed a steady job. Things are good now.”

Louise forced a smile. “How nice for your son.” The woman tilted her head. “Are you against Christmas or just good stuff?” Louise felt her cheeks flush. “No, I like good stuff.” “I hope so. There’s enough negativity in this world that if you aren’t careful it can swallow you up.” The women sat in silence. At the 18<sup>th</sup> Street stop the woman smiled. “Merry Christmas.”

Louise watched her from the bus window as she walked up the block towards the SPCA. The bus had gone a few blocks when Louise noticed a brown leather purse under the seat next to her. She glanced around. A woman was talking on her cell phone about candied yams. A man listened to an iPod. A woman flipped through a magazine. No one claimed the purse. Louise’s heart sank. She unzipped the main pouch of the purse and pulled out a wallet to confirm from the license photograph what she already knew. She sighed. At the next stop Louise got off the bus and started walking in the opposite direction of her mother’s Christmas Eve dinner.

The SPCA was housed in an unassuming brick building. Someone feeling festive had strung a strand of multi-colored blinking lights around the entryway. When Louise opened the door, she was greeted by the deafening sound of barking dogs as the adoption clinic was in full-swing. Play pens

with various types and sizes of dogs were placed all around the large room. They barked and wagged their tails. They played with toys. People in the market for a dog milled around the play pens seemingly taking inventory. In the corner of the large room was a reception desk. A woman sat behind it filling out paperwork.

“Excuse me, I’m looking for a…” “Let me guess, you are looking for a dog?” the woman said nonchalantly. “What? No.” “Then you are in the wrong place, lady.” “I’m looking for a woman. She left her purse on the bus. She said she was coming here tonight.”

The woman behind the desk raised her eyebrows. “I don’t know anything about that.” “Can I leave her purse with you in case she does come here tonight?” “Let me check with my supervisor.” The woman got up and went through a back door. Leaving it ajar, Louise could see piles of empty cages. A shadow moved in a far cage that caught Louise’s attention. She inched closer to the door to get a better look. In the last cage was a straggly dog. He looked defeated and tired. He rose his head off his paws at the sight of Louise. His tale slightly wagged. The woman walked back towards the door and Louise quickly backed up. “So, we can’t keep that purse. It’s a liability.” “Um, why isn’t that little dog out here with all the others?”

The woman looked over her shoulder. “He just came in a few days ago. He’s a runner. Fast little dog. They had a hard time catching him.” “Could I see him?” Louise heard herself saying. The woman shrugged. “Sure.”

Louise followed the woman past the rows of empty cages. When they stopped in front of the dog’s cage Louise kneeled. She put her fingertips through the cage and the dog sniffed and then licked her fingers. “Hi,” Louise whispered. The woman didn’t look up from the clipboard in her hands. “Pete.” Louise stiffened. “We’ve named the dog Pete.” A smile crossed over Louise’s pursed lips. The dog nuzzled Louise’s hand with his head. “Time to go home, Pete.”





## A Christmas Miracle

*Author Linda M. Crate*

Roberta sighed softly while running a hand through her thick brown hair which was slowly graying despite the fact, she had just turned seventy the day after Thanksgiving.

She didn't have enough money to get her grandchildren what they wanted for Christmas, but she wanted to make it special for them. So, in addition to the hat and mittens she had already knitted them she decided to go to the store and see exactly what she could afford with the little money she had left over from social security and retirement after paying her bills and buying groceries.

She sighed looking at the pretty gowns, fleece jackets, shoes, and the spectacular displays of toys. She wished she had more money because all of these pretty things would be sure to delight her small grandchildren.

Alas, she didn't have the money. She knew that even before checking the price tags because they were all so finely made. It was such a shame that Christmas was so commercialized, she thought, but she also didn't want to be the grandmother who gave bad gifts.

Every gift should be received with gratitude, but she knew that wasn't always the case. She remembered as a child she was always disappointed when she received socks, but now she realized the price of them and told herself that had been a very kind gift. Useful and practical, but she thought everyone should have a bit of magic and whimsy in their lives. Life was entirely too short not to laugh every now and then. Life was too short to always be serious, never enjoying anything, rushing through in pursuit of riches without taking time for people who were more important and beautiful than things you could buy. One good friend was a much

better gift than a thousand people who would simply forget you whilst you were still living.

Roberta was distracted by her thoughts when she saw two children who looked to be freezing wandering alone in the cold snow. She wondered what these little ones were doing by themselves in such horrible conditions? Then she saw a haggard woman walking slowly behind them, and she smiled in what she hoped was an encouraging way. She always hated to see people struggling.

Roberta wished she could help every suffering soul somehow. Shivering she pulled her coat tighter around her. She saw that the mother was struggling with groceries, and thought she was given two arms for a reason. What better reason than to help someone else. "Excuse me, miss?" "Yes?" "You seem to be struggling, can I help you?" "What a sweet old lady," the young woman smiled. Her eyes had circles around them. It seemed that exhaustion hung heavy on her bones. "If you could manage it, I would appreciate it."

Roberta took one of the woman's large bags. "This seems quite heavy. Where are you taking all of this?" "Home." "Where do you live?" "A few more blocks over on 28th Street." "Seems quite a distance to walk for some groceries," Roberta frowned. "I cannot help it. The store on 13th Street has the best sales," the woman smiled.

"Peggy! Art! Don't get so far ahead of me. I cannot protect you if you're that far ahead!" "Momma, we'll be fine. We're always fine." "You don't know that, sweetheart," the mother called after her son. Obediently, the daughter and son waited for their mother. The woman seemed relieved. She turned to Roberta, "They don't always listen."

"Well, it's nearly Christmas. All the little boys and girls want to make sure Santa comes." "Yes, yes, I know that's true," the mother laughed, though, her eyes seemed to hold some pain at the very thought of Christmas.

Roberta smiled softly. "Chin up, dear, it'll get better. It has to, right?" "I hope so," the woman murmured. "Ever since my husband got laid off work, things have been difficult." She sighed softly. "But you don't want to hear about my struggles." "Don't worry about it. We all have

struggles. Sometimes all we need is someone to listen and see us where we are. I have struggled during my life, too, and that hasn't stopped people from listening to me. Just have to find the right person." **"You are kind to take time with me; bless you."** "Momma, we're almost home!" "Yes, we are."

The woman seemed relieved when they returned home. It was then that Roberta noticed the state of the woman's shoes. The children had good boots to cover their feet, but the mother's shoes were worn in several places and ragged. **"Have to provide for the kids, no?"** she smiled. **"A mother sometimes has to put herself last."**

Roberta knew she didn't have much, but she pulled out a twenty and the last few remaining dollars she had out of her purse. **"Go get yourself a nice pair of shoes or get the children something for Christmas. You need this more than I do."** **"Bless you."**

Roberta smiled, turning on her heel. She knew that she couldn't change the entire world by herself, but she may have helped that family, and that warmed her heart. She had learned from a young age that it was always better to give than to receive. She always loved to see people happy and well taken care of.

She sighed, thinking of her grandchildren. Well, she hoped they would understand that grandma just didn't have the money to buy them all the fancy things they wished for. She thought she might make some chocolates and cookies for them as she was still able to do that, and she did love baking. It would make the house smell good, she thought. Roberta nodded. Few things couldn't be cured by chocolate. Christmas came but once a year and she wanted to make it special for them.

Her parents had always made it special for her and she had always tried to make it a good day for her children, as well. After her husband Howard had died things had gotten harder and she wasn't able to give the extravagant gifts she once had, but she wanted those in her life to know that she loved them very much.

She set about cooking and baking the chocolates and cookies. After she had finished, she washed the dishes. Then she found a few fancy clear bags that she had from Christmas' previous and stuffed the

chocolates and cookies in them. She smiled.

Then she set upon the task of doing the dishes which was never something she particularly liked. Roberta wished that she could do more for those that she loved but she was doing her best. Life was too expensive, sometimes, she thought. How was a person supposed to live on what they thought to give them?

Sighing softly, she reminded herself to be grateful that she had a roof over her head, good water to drink, and food to eat. She laid down in her bed, feeling tired and exhausted from the day. When she woke the next morning, she woke to find that the gifts she had wanted for her grandchildren were in her house. The doll house for Addie, the toy soldier for William, the toy nutcracker Gracie had wanted, the doll for Joyce, and the toy bird that sang and danced for Lisa.

Roberta rubbed her eyes, making sure that this wasn't a dream. She then realized that there was someone standing behind the gifts. It was the woman from the day previous. However, she was wreathed and ornamented with light that was blinding.

**"I don't understand,"** Roberta insisted. **"For your kindness, Roberta Francis Lovett, this angel was moved,"** the woman remarked. **"You would give the last of your money to a woman you didn't know to help her, and that makes you one of the richest people that I could ever hope to know. Enjoy your Christmas, Roberta, and remember your goodness matters to all those to whom you've given it. Bless your kind heart always. Enjoy your family."** **"I will, thank you, I will."**

Tears spilled down Roberta's cheeks. **"Wait,"** Roberta whispered. **"What do I call you?"** **"My name is not important."** **"Thank you."** **"You're very welcome."** The beautiful young woman vanished in a flash of light. Roberta knew miracles happened, but she didn't expect anything like this would ever happen to her. She looked towards the heavens. **"Thank you!"**

She wrapped the gifts for her grandchildren, feeling very content. She hoped that this would make Christmas lovely for them. Bundling up when it was time to head over to her daughter's for Christmas dinner, she found that the grandchildren

were all ready to meet her.

**“Hey, don’t crowd grandma. You can see she has all those heavy bags, William, help her,”** her daughter remarked. **“Mother, you shouldn’t have carried so much over. You’re not so young as you used to be,”** her son-in-law scolded.

“Oh, be quiet. You do offend my delicate ego,” Roberta chuckled. “You know I have to make Christmas wonderful for you all.” **“Mother, we should be the ones making Christmas wonderful for you,”** her daughter protested. “Well, I don’t see why we shouldn’t all be happy,” Roberta shrugged. She smiled at her son Roger. “It’s good to see you all again.”

**“Grandma, can we open our presents.”** “Not yet, sweetheart, you know those come after dinner.” **“Poop, that’s what momma said, too.”** **“Lisa, we don’t say poop. It’s not nice.”** **“Well, what do we say instead? Crap?”** **“William!”**

Roberta couldn’t help but laugh. “Sherry,” she remarked, placing a hand on her daughter’s arm. “Let them be. It’s not a curse word, after all, and they’re only little for a little while.” **“Still, it’s not very nice to be discussing on Christmas. Patience is a virtue.”**

“Well, Sherry, I remember one little girl so impatient for her gifts that she began to open them without waiting for her mother or her little brother.” Roger chuckled. **“That’s right, and I got mad because she unwrapped one of mine by mistake!”** Sherry blushed. **“Mother!”** Roberta grinned as her grandchildren laughed. “Well, it’s true. I cannot help it if the truth hurts.” **“Gilbert!”** **“Sorry,”** Gilbert shrugged. **“I cannot help it if your mother’s right,”** he added, winking at his mother-in-law.

The children gathered around the Christmas tree. **“Grandma, can you read us a story before dinner?”** Joyce asked. “Sure,” Roberta smiled. “What story shall I read you?” **“This one about Rudolph!”** “That was your mother’s favorite, too, William,” Roberta smiled. She slowly lowered

herself to sit on the ground with the children. She opened the first page of the book and began reading the story to her grandchildren.

**“Why were they so mean to Rudolph, grandma?”** “Because he was different and that scared them. Whenever someone is angry or afraid, sometimes they exclude someone who is different, but that is one of the gravest mistakes anyone could make. Because sometimes those who are different are the brightest jewels of our lives. They just want a chance to shine like anyone else.” **“Shine like Rudolph’s nose?”** “Yes, like that,” Roberta nodded. **“Does that mean that I have to be nice to weird George? He picks his nose,”** Lisa remarked, pulling a face. **“He smells funny, too.”**

“You should be nice to weird George even if you aren’t best friends. Maybe one day he’ll be very handsome and smell nice. You never know what the future will hold. It’s why we must enjoy moments as they come.” **“I think he’ll always be weird and gross.”** “Maybe that’s true, too, but you still should be nice.”

Roberta watched as the children all yelled ‘yay’ after Sherry announced dinner was ready. She slowly stood to her feet with some difficulty. **“Come on, grandma, you’re going to be left behind if you walk like a dinosaur. Why are you walking like that, anyway?”** “It’s harder for me to walk than it once was. Being old isn’t always easy.”

After dinner, Roberta was so happy to see everyone open their gifts. All her grandchildren shouted and squealed in delight at their gifts, and she thought that her family was the best gift she could’ve ever received. She knew that one day these little ones would understand that. For now, she would let them enjoy the gifts and the magic of the world and all the lessons it had to teach them.





Happy New Year

