

**Friday, December 2, 2022**

**The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide.” Luke 2:10 (The Message)**

Is it just me? Or are others slightly predisposed to bracing yourselves for bad news? Why do the words, “I have news” or “there’s something I need to share” sometimes strike fear in our hearts?

It’s the 2013/2014 school year. The phone rang and the caller ID alerted me that it’s the kids’ school. There had always been a specific reason why that name popped up on my phone: a child was sick; the permission slip was not signed; the goggles for the swim meet were missing; a conference was needed. No news is good news, as they say.

“Hi, Mrs. Gaines,” the cheerful voice on the phone said. “I’m Eric’s science teacher. Don’t worry, nothing’s wrong. He’s doing great in my class.” (See??? I’m not the only paranoid parent.) She called to share the sad news that a fellow science teacher’s mother had died, and that a sympathy card was passed around for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students to sign. Kids quickly scribbled their signature and passed it along. But she noticed that Eric had the card for a while and went to check on its progress. “Eric wrote the kindest message,” the science teacher shared. “He said that he recently lost his grandmother; he knew how sad losing someone special was and he was very sorry. The reason I called you is that if my child had done that, I would want to know.” My anxiety evaporated. My heart swelled. An empathetic teacher witnessed a 10<sup>th</sup> grade boy’s act of kindness and generously shared that news with his mother. That good news was a priceless gift to me.

Lesson learned. Fear, and the expectation of bad news, only steals our joy. That Jesus was born for everybody, worldwide is the best news we could receive and share.

**Gracious God, thank you for the gentle souls who delight in sharing kindness and good news. As we wait in hope for the celebration of the Messiah’s birth, may we be bearers of the Good News that Jesus came to live among us to show us how to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you. Amen**

**Terry Gaines**