

New Easter Traditions

Over the past year I've learned a lot. Many people can say the same, for life itself is one big learning experience. So while I've learned a lot about many things, I have also grown spiritually by leaps and bounds ever since we joined a wonderful church family in March of 2009.

As my entire family grows spiritually, we've come to realize how much more there is to Easter than eggs and bunnies. The coloring, decorating, hiding, seeking, and eating of Easter eggs is always so much fun on Easter, and this year was no exception. As parents, my husband and I treasure all of the milestones, big and small – we even treasure the little sleep we get when we stay up late to prepare the Easter Bunny's baskets for our children and wake up early to frantically hide the perishable eggs before the excited little ones wake up.



The girls and their colored Easter eggs

But last year, we added a new tradition to our Easter weekend – attending a beautiful church service where we were taught (in my case) and reminded (in my husband's case) of the real meaning of Easter Sunday – the sacrifice of God's only Son and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We attended church again this Easter Sunday, and we were pleased to see that our worship center at church was

overflowing – standing room only; filled with people who were excited to share His Glory with their family, friends and loved ones.



4 cuties ready for church
on Easter Sunday

This year, we also added a new tradition to our family's Easter celebrations. My thoughtful sister had sent the kids [Resurrection Eggs](#) in the mail the week before, so after we colored our edible eggs, we sat down together and listened as my husband read the story of Easter Sunday aloud. Along with the book came a set of a dozen plastic eggs, each containing a little token illustrating the story of Easter Sunday – there was a little donkey, a cross, a whip, a cloth, a crown of thorns and more. The kids took turns opening the eggs, and it really got them thinking about the meaning of this special holiday. I think the Resurrection Eggs really helped them to understand the meaning of God's sacrifice. After the story was read, they continued to play with the eggs for over an hour, and then they brought down the entire set for me to put away until next year – that says a lot right there because putting away toys after they're done playing with them is not exactly one of our kids' strong points!



My girls exploring
Resurrection Eggs with
their Daddy

So it was a wonderful Easter, filled with family, laughter and love, and I am grateful for every minute. As we add these new traditions, Easter is becoming a favorite holiday of mine, and I am very excited to continue all of these Easter traditions next year!!

However you celebrated, whatever your faith, I hope your Easter was happy, safe, and fun!!

Another Two Feet Of Snow?!?

Did you know that residents of the Midwest and the Great Lakes region are to expect one last hurrah from Old Man Winter with two feet of snow expected?



APRIL FOOL'S!!! Have a good one – And BE NICE!!!

GOODBYE To 2009!

As if the month of December 2009 wasn't negative enough for our family, we spent the last days of the year with the stomach flu – all 6 of us. It's just an interesting end to an interesting month, and I have to admit I am glad to see 2009 go. Hopefully, a year like that only comes along once in a blue moon... Actually, after reading about [blue moons](#), I'm hoping our family's bad luck years occur much less frequently than even a New Year's blue moon, which we will enjoy this evening.

But my point is, have a happy and safe New Year's celebration! If you drink, don't drive, and if you drink and drive, you're not invited to read my blog anymore.

Happy New Year to you and yours!!!



A Not-So-Cynical Look At The 2009 Holiday Season

I was thinking about our family's 2009 holiday season, now come and almost gone already, and I was envisioning words to describe this wonderful season, despite the fact that this year ours was peppered with unpleasant familial dramatics. But about a week ago, I made what was a conscious decision to pull myself up from the depths of despair I had fallen into after losing a beloved family member just one week before Christmas. So, in my good humor, I chose 24 of the best words to describe my holiday season, each beginning with a different letter of the alphabet. Here goes...

Avatar – Saw it and actually liked it, despite my typical sci-fi reluctance. But I liked Avatar so much that I'm really hoping the timing and budget work out so that I can see it again in 3D at a more technologically savvy theater.

Big Family Christmas – We traveled to Illinois on Christmas Day and got to take part in a huge gathering of my husband's large extended family. His 92-year-old grandmother, who speaks with a thick east-coast Connecticut accent (and who smoked 3 packs of cigarettes a day from age 16 until age 70!) told many of her infamous stories that had everyone in stitches! After hearing one of Monie's stories, I could have used the words Blue Boob for B, but I will spare you those

details... ☐

Christ Was Born – We went to a beautiful church service on Christmas Eve to celebrate and reflect upon the entire purpose of the Christmas holiday.

De... There are two words that come to mind for this letter based upon certain recent events in my life, but I'm not going to go there; this is to be "A Not-So-Cynical Look..." blog post. So here, D will stand for Dumbledore, since I'm almost halfway through my first Harry Potter book and lovin' it!

Elf – My favorite holiday movie, and we actually had time to watch it this year! It, unlike a few other favorite Christmas experiences, did not lose any magic this year. I still felt that warm and fuzzy "Christmas Magic" feeling after I watched this movie – I'd pull it out more often, but it's not the same unless it's Christmas!

"I love smiling; smiling's my favorite!!" – Buddy The Elf

Friends – We are so blessed to have such wonderful friends, and I can't thank them enough for the things they did and just for being there during this bittersweet time.

Grandparents – We were able to visit 3 of our grandparents this holiday season! Even being in our 30's, we have 3 surviving grandparents among my husband and I – we were blessed to be able to spend time with all of them this year!

Homemade spaghetti – Best. Christmas. Gift. EVER!! My mother-in-law sent us home 4 huge frozen batches of her out-of-this-world spaghetti sauce! AND a large bag of grated Asiago cheese. AND... something I'll save for another letter...

Ice – Drove through plenty of it to reach IL and get back to Ohio on Christmas day. Luckily, traffic was light and travel for us was smooth and safe. The kids were good as gold and slept for the majority of both drives.

Jill – Screwed us over again! This little story begins with Walmart. Since this is “A Not-So-Cynical Look...”, I won’t go off about Walmart, but I will simply state the facts: the pump in our windshield wiper cleaner fluid dispenser stopped working after the last time we got an oil change at Walmart. We didn’t really need it until Christmas night, when we were driving past the city of Chicago, and apparently smog + snow = some sort of disgusting pollution paste. So visibility is limited, and we still don’t know exactly what happened since we’ve driven this route dozens of times, but basically the express lanes on I-90 seemed to suddenly dissolve into city streets. So now it’s 10:30 on Christmas night, and we’re wandering around in the city. We can’t see out the back of the car since there’s tons of Christmas presents, and we can’t see out of the front of the car because of the pollution paste. This is where Jill comes in – and she directs us straight back to I-90. Only problem is, our van can’t just jump guardrails; we needed an entrance ramp, and Jill was only directing us to streets that crossed over the expressway and didn’t actually intersect with it. So we crossed bridge after bridge, and we criss-crossed I-90 until one of those streets had an entrance ramp. Then Jill freaked out and tried to get us off of the expressway again, but she got her power button pressed – we knew our way from there.

Kalachkies – I have a fun memory of a Christmas years ago when my forgetful Polish grandmother was sitting in her wheelchair, instructing my equally Polish uncle and myself how to make kalachkies, a usually delicious Polish cookie. The end results were inedible and referred to as “hockey pucks”. This year at Christmas, my husband’s cousin made homemade kalachkies – real ones, no hockey pucks, and they were delicious! Thanks Lilly!

Late night drive – One night, we took the kids out in the car in their pajamas with some snacks, and we drove through the snowy countryside to a town about 30 minutes away for a

drive-thru lighted display that's just wonderful. Late night drive could also refer to my husband's and my peaceful drive home (after the unscheduled tour of the city) while the kids were asleep all the way from Illinois to Ohio – nice.

Mashed Potatoes – My mother-in-law is a great cook! I guess it's been awhile since the last time I had her mashed potatoes, because I didn't remember how they tasted. But I told her the truth after Christmas dinner – they were the best mashed potatoes I've ever had!

Noodles – My mother-in-law's spaghetti sauce also came with EIGHT pounds of whole wheat gourmet organic pasta! I love whole wheat pasta – it actually tastes better, and you don't get the pasta-stomachache / horrible stuffed feeling that can accompany pasta over-indulgence.

Onions – One of my favorite holiday dishes is creamed onions, and it was a nice surprise to see this dish on the Christmas buffet. Fortunately for me, my husband can replicate the taste of his mother's creamed onions – yum!

P.A.S. – Pompous Ass Syndrome – my poor brother-in-law is a victim. Enough Said.

Quiet – With 4 kids and Christmas celebrations spread out over 2 weeks, there really wasn't much of this.

Revenge – My brother and sister-in-law gifted our kids 3 little gumball machines. Cute, but not when you realize how many gumballs needed to be pried out of our candy-obsessed toddler's little hands, for one thing. Who would give little kids gumball machine gifts? Wait, isn't that what we got her 3 kids last year?!? I'm all for re-gifting; I really think it's a smart thing to do. But maybe next year I'll choose our Christmas gifts more carefully...

Snow – It's been snowing on and off for a week and a half here in Ohio. The Chicago area was unexpectedly blanketed with

about a foot of snow on Saturday – thank goodness we left for Ohio on Friday night!

Turkey – We ate it and it was good.

U-Turn – see “J” – Jill the GPS. Besides the time we were lost in Chicago, Jill caused us to make at least one other U-turn on this trip.

Vile – Odor in Gary Indiana – I don’t care what the Music Man had to say – Gary Indiana STINKS! Literally!!!

Weather – I was worried about it all week, but thankfully, it didn’t impede our journey in the slightest.

X-changing gifts – Ok, that’s too generic? What else could X stand for, the rating of Monie’s Blue Boob story? We x-changed gifts many gifts, and that’s all I’m going to say.

Yellow Puppy – When our friends heard about our family’s heartbreak, they gifted us a gigantic (stuffed) dog. This cute puppy’s headband wouldn’t even fit on my head, and she wears a sweater that could probably fit me – or at least all 4 of my kids in it together... so cute and so thoughtful, and the kids LOVE her!

Zoo lights – With everything that was going on during this December, I’m so thankful that we were able to make it to one of our favorite Christmas destinations this year – the Toledo Zoo for their Lights Before Christmas displays. Beautiful lights in a peaceful atmosphere, and if you get there early enough, you can see some zoo animals, which is probably my favorite thing to do in the whole world!

Hope you had a Merry Christmas, and best wishes for a great New Year!!!

Merry Christmas!

I haven't really felt up to blogging lately (one of those major life change things – NOT one of the good ones and NOT something I'm going to discuss on a blog right now), but I couldn't let the holidays go by without sending good wishes to everyone (anyone?) who still reads my on-hiatus blog. Bear with me, I'll probably be back soon. Here's to hoping 2010 is better than 2009!

Have a very merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year!

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:14

Favorite Christmas Movies

The 'What's Your Favorite Christmas Movies / Tv Specials' poll has been done before, but I thought I would obtain my own consensus. After all, opinions change from year to year, and I'm also interested to see what people like. Feel free to choose more than one answer and also to add something I may have forgotten.

[poll id="11"]

Thanksgiving Favorites

I forgot to poll our Thanksgiving guests, but I was wondering about everyone's favorite Thanksgiving dish. Judging by what the kids had for breakfast this morning, I would say my kids' favorite Thanksgiving dishes are as follows:

Taylor, age 9 – sweet potatoes (we put marshmallow creme in ours)

Sammie, age 5 – mashed potatoes and gravy

Disney, age 3 – oatmeal (ok, so oatmeal wasn't at the Thanksgiving dinner, but Disney didn't really eat Thanksgiving dinner, so I don't think she has a favorite dish. She LOVES oatmeal though!)

Christopher, age 16 mos. – turkey

And for lunch, Mom and Dad had their first delicious leftover sandwiches. They were so good we think we'll have the same for dinner. We got a smoked turkey this year, and it was delicious! It was great to not have to mess with cooking a turkey with great company and all these little ones underfoot. There are so many ways to make a leftover sandwich; the best way is of course with creamed onions. We didn't have any creamed onions leftover this year, but my husband's yummy mashed potatoes make a really good leftover sandwich condiment. And not having leftover creamed onions is a good thing – I'm glad people enjoyed them! Creamed onions are my favorite Thanksgiving dish AND my husband's! So what's yours? Feel free to add anything in the comments section I may have forgotten!

[poll id="10"]

Happy Thanksgiving!!

I am thankful every day for all that I have, but today is an excuse to feast in celebration of our thankfulness. Here's to hoping you have a safe and happy holiday!



I Want A Customized Cupcake Car For Christmas...

I really don't, but try singing this blog post title to the tune of "I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas", just for laughs. And for further amusement, here is a picture of the customized cupcake cars, which of course come complete with candy caps for the contraptions' captains!



All joking aside, thankfully I don't know anyone who could or would blow \$25,000 on one of these, now that is just a waste. The title of the article I found this in was intriguing, ["9 Extravagant Holiday Gifts"](#), but honestly, I didn't find much amusement beyond the cupcake cars; maybe you'll disagree when you click on the link above.

It's A Little Late, But...

Another blog here on tangents.org who was describing [cool kids' Halloween costumes](#) reminded me of some high tech Halloween costumes I saw on the internet last week and forgot to post. [Click on this link](#) and enjoy, maybe get some ideas for next year. I especially like the first one; gadgets and gizmos that make it seem as if there is a giant hole right through a person!