

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

An American Baptist Church
134 North Main Street, Geneva, NY 14456
(315) 789-3220

E-mail: genevafbc@rochester.rr.com
Web Site: genevafirstbaptistchurch.org

OUR STAFF

The Rev. Phyllis Granger, Pastor
Bill Robbins, Assistant Pastor
Nancy Robbins, Secretary
Don Will, Organist

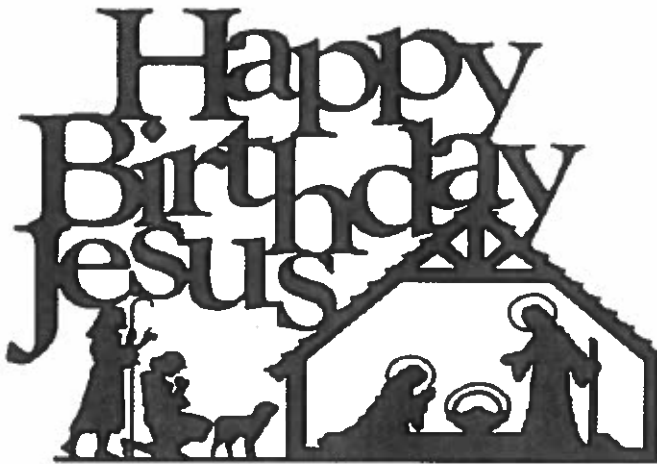
OUR CHURCH OFFICERS

Beverly Simons - Moderator
Bill Robbins - Visitation/
Christian Education/Evangelism
Geoff Marshall - Personnel Manager
Gary Hartman - Property Manager
Verne Marshall - Financial Advisor
Judy Hartman - Fellowship Coordinator
Sheila Griffin - Worship
Susan Belding - Missions
Peter Achilles - Treasurer
David Belding - Financial Secretary
Nancy Robbins - Church Clerk

OUR SCHEDULE

Neighborhood Saturday Lunch Ministry - 11:45am - 12:15pm
Worship - Sunday, 10:00 a.m.
Fellowship - Sunday, 11:00 - 11:30 am
Bible Study - Sunday, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
Prayer Time - Wednesday, 5:00 pm

Newsletter of FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
134 North Main Street
Geneva, New York 14456
(315) 789-3220



DECEMBER
2018

December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Lunch 11:45am
2 Worship 10am Pastor Bill Nate Sealy Birthday John Frederick Jr Birthday	3	4	5 Prayer Time 5pm	6	7	8 Lunch 11:45am
9 Worship 10am Pastor Bill Rich/Jeanine Principio Anniversary Eleanor Hartman Birthday	10 Andrea Belding Elson Birthday	11	12 Prayer Time 5pm	13	14	15 Lunch 11:45am
16 Worship 10am Rev. Granger	17 Jason/ Jeannette (Frederick) Bastedo Anniversary	18 Board Mtg 6pm	19 Prayer Time 5pm Nancy Lamberson Birthday	20	21	22 Lunch 11:45am
23 Worship 10am Rev. Granger Gail Jensen Birthday	24 Christmas Eve Service 7pm	25 <i>Happy Birthday Jesus</i>	26 Prayer Time 5pm Preston Dinkel Birthday	27	28 Michael/Marcia Peters Anniversary	29 Lunch 11:45am Susan Belding Birthday
30 Worship 10am Dale Wakley Karen Rasmussen Birthday	31 Robert Benson Birthday					

Pastor Page

December 2, will be the first Sunday of Advent. Our Advent wreath has four candles—Hope, Peace, Joy and Love surrounding a center white candle called the Christ Candle. This candle symbolizing Jesus' birth will be lit on Christmas Eve. Traditions like the Advent wreath help keep our focus on Christmas as a celebration of Christ's birth more than on shopping for the perfect gifts, decorating, and getting "everything done."

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;
He is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2:11

The angel told the shepherds about the birth of the Messiah. The Israelites had waited for the Messiah all their lives. He had finally come. God gave us the perfect gift—Jesus Christ, our Savior. As we celebrate the birth of this precious Christ child, it is hard to remember that the cross and a crown of thorns loom in his future. Christ was born to die in our place. God had two choices: Either let us die to pay for our sins, or allow a substitute to take our punishment and die in our place. He mercifully chose the latter. Christ's substitutionary death freed us to live for and with God.

Messiah means "Anointed One." Anointed as Priest and King, He fulfilled over four hundred prophecies during His first coming to earth, and the rest will be fulfilled when He comes the second time.

During Advent, we celebrate not only the birth of Christ but promise of His second coming. We, too, are waiting our whole lives for the return of Christ. Oh what a glorious day that will be when Christ comes to take us home to our Father.

This Christmas tell someone the story of a God who came to earth as a man to die for their sins. Also, thank the Lord for His willingness to humble Himself to become a man in order to save you and me from our sins.

Merry Christmas

Pastor Phyllis

Preaching Schedule:

12-2 Pastor Bill

12-9 Pastor Bill

12-16 Pastor Phyllis

12-23 Pastor Phyllis

12-24 Pastor Phyllis & Pastor Bill

12-30 Dale Wakley

Pastor Appreciation Celebration:

Thank you for showing your love and support, and thank you for your gifts. It has been my pleasure to serve you for so many years, and I look forward to serving you as we carry the light of Christ forward in the future.

Pastor Phyllis

Stamp Ministry;

Just a note to remind you to save the stamps from your many cards and packages you will be receiving this holiday season. Each stamp you donate helps Spanish speaking children receive Sunday School materials. I will be sharing the total number of stamps donated for the year in our annual report.

Sherry Kelsey

Christmas Bags

We will once again be making Christmas bags for our shut-ins. Please bring any donations by Sunday, December 9 so we can pack and deliver the bags that week. Cookies, small loaf breads, fudge, oranges, bananas, Christmas candy, chocolates, cheese or peanut butter crackers and such would be great. We will be packing seven bags this year. Thank you in advance for your donations.

To our church family,

Thank you for your kind words, thoughts, prayers, and gifts during Pastor Appreciation month. It is such a blessing for us to be part of a caring and loving church family.

With all our love,

Pastor Bill and Nancy Robbins

Report from the Financial Secretary

My job at Thanksgiving consists of preparing the mashed potatoes and butternut squash. About an hour ahead of dinner, with a mix of excitement and trepidation, I begin my work. Will there be enough food? Have I given myself enough time? Will the consistency and seasonings turn out okay? But, after a few minutes on the job, I find myself focusing on the task, slowly relaxing and enjoying the noisy banter and friendly chaos of a kitchen at thanksgiving. In the end, concerns and doubts all evaporate in the warmth of celebration among family and friends and the surrounding spirit of goodwill.

What generates this special spirit of gratitude and appreciation which are the signal hallmarks of the Thanksgiving holiday? I think the answer resides in the title itself. It is the “*giving*” that leads to that wonderful feeling of “*thankfulness*”. It begins with the recognition of how God has bestowed on us gifts far beyond anything we deserve or have earned. As we begin to truly understand how deeply God has blessed us and how much He loves us, fears and doubts melt away replaced by a sense of deep humility. In this state our natural response to God’s abundant love is to share that spirit of giving with everyone around. And as that thankfulness, generosity and love flow through and around us, we know this is exactly what God wanted us to experience and share.

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Corinthians 9:11-12

Attendance

November 4	November 11	November 18	November 25
38	40	43	34

Pledging

It was yet another month of extraordinarily generous giving. Based on the initial pledges for the year, our anticipated collections through November were \$54,526. But the actual amount of our congregation’s pledge-giving was \$64,586. *This is over \$10,000 more than expected, imagine that!* Even before December we are already running well above our total pledge for the year.

So where does this superabundance of charity come from? A few have shared their thoughts with me and say that their additional giving was primarily inspired by the spirit of love and the earnest dedication to outreach that they see in our congregation. It is programs like the food ministry under Judy, Dusty’s Christmas box drive, Preston’s substance abuse ministry and our weekly Saturday lunch. It is the openhearted way people chip in to offer a hand with tasks around the church. It is the loving kindness we share in prayer concerns, in our greeting of visitors and in calls to shut-ins. It is the Christian concern for people around the world shown in our mission efforts. It comes from how the Holy Spirit is moving through us. It is a superabundance that transcends financial measures.

Dave Belding, Financial Secretary

World Mission Offering 2018 Update

During October’s month of discipleship, we followed Christ alongside missionaries working to promote economic and community development in Haiti, to improve health and wellness in Bangladesh and to abolish global slavery in Thailand. With so much help needed worldwide, this year’s **World Mission Offering** of \$601 towards *International Ministries* is a faithful response to God’s call to bring the love of Christ to our brothers and sisters around the world.

Thanks be to God for opening our hearts as we strive to be the “salt of the earth” in our ongoing journey with Christ.

Susan Belding
Mission Coordinator

We are currently accepting donations of funds for Christmas gifts for the church staff which includes the two Pastors, choir director, secretary and cleaning person. Please give your donations to either Geoffrey Marshall or Becky Achilles.
Thank you.

Personnel Committee

New address for: Sheila Griffin
3921 State Route 374, Apt. 109
Lyon Mountain, NY 12952
griffin123172 @yahoo.com

THE PASTOR STOLE OUR SPOON!

A pastor had dinner at the home of a couple in his church. After he left, the wife said to the husband, "I think he stole our spoon!" This bothered her for a whole year.



ChristmasMessyPictures.com

A year later the couple had the pastor for dinner again. Unable to resist, the wife asked, "Did you steal our spoon last year?" The pastor replied, "No, I put it inside your Bible."

Have you read your bible today?

Retired
Ministers &
Missionaries
Offering

Why is RMMO Important?

Your gift does make a difference. These heartfelt wishes of appreciation for the Retired Ministers and Missionaries offering reiterates the importance of sustaining this mission. Hear from those who have served.

Why is RMMO Important?

Retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses often have limited resources to adequately plan for the future. RMMO provides financial support to those who have helped build our churches. Thank You checks, as well as emergency financial assistance, are made possible by the contributions of American Baptist congregations to the annual Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering.

The assistance provided by RMMO restores that lifeline and ongoing connection to the ABC family.

This offering is rooted in thankfulness and honors the individual acts of support and faith that recipients have shown to their congregations and communities.



"This annual offering is a reminder that the work God has called us to do is remembered in the churches we have served over the years and just as we supported the offering every year, now to become the recipient is truly a blessing. Many pastors influenced me in my younger years, and I'll always be indebted to them. May this legacy continue as God's people remain faithful and generous."

— Pastor from Springfield, OH

"Thank you for the RMMO Thank You Check. It could not have come at a better time! Hurricane Irma destroyed 25% of my 14-year-old roof and the insurance adjustor said it must be replaced. God is good all the time."

— Retired Pastor from Leesburg, FL

"Every year of our ministry, and in fact also in 24 years of retirement, we presented the RMMO to our church. Also we always contributed each year and still do. I realized that help would be available should I become financially stressed in the future."

— Retired Pastor from Edmeston, NY

"It is so good to know that retired pastors are not forgotten even after many years of retirement from active ministry, even though many of us are still involved in the Lord's work. These generous gifts are a source of real encouragement to us to continue to use our talents, even though in a lesser way."

— Retired Pastor from Abilene, KS

These kinds of stories are common at many ABC churches around the country. Your gift sustains the women and men who tirelessly carried forth God's work.

Recipients of Thank You checks express gratitude not only for the gift but for less tangible benefits, such as evidence of God's providential care, encouragement, hope and assurance that they have not been forgotten by their ABC family.

We will receive RMMO on Dec. 2-30.
Please help us reach this year's goal of \$ 500.

04/26/00

the show. Call 315/781-LIVE to order or for information on ticket outlets.

ARK STORY RETOLD

If Noah lived in the United States today...

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said, "In one year I'm going to make it rain and cover the whole earth with water, until all flesh is destroyed. But I want you to save the righteous people and two of every kind of living thing on the earth. Therefore, I'm commanding you to build an Ark."

In a flash of lightning, God delivered the specifications for an Ark. In fear and trembling, Noah took the plans and agreed to build the Ark.

"Remember," said the Lord, "You must complete the Ark and bring everything aboard in one year." Exactly one year later, fierce storm clouds covered the earth and all the seas of the earth went into a tumult. The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard weeping. "Noah," he shouted, "Where is the Ark?"

"Lord, please forgive me," cried Noah. "I did my best but there were big problems."

"First I had to get a permit for construction, and your plans did not meet the code. I had to hire an engineering firm and redraw the plans. Then I got into a fight with OSHA over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system and flotation devices.

"Then my neighbor objected, claiming I was violating zoning ordinances by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission.

"Then I had problems getting enough wood for the Ark, because there was a ban on cutting trees to protect the Spotted Owl. I finally convinced the U.S. Forest Service that I needed the wood to save the owls. However, the Fish and Wildlife Service won't let me catch any owls. So, no owls.

"The carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone could pick up a saw or hammer. Now I have 16 carpenters on the Ark, but no owls.

"When I started rounding up the other animals, I got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me only taking two of each kind aboard. Just when I got the suit dismissed, the EPA notified me that I could not complete the Ark without filing an

THE COMMUNITY TRADER

environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. Still no owls.

"They didn't take very kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the Creator of the Universe. Then the Army Corps of engineers demanded a map of the new flood plain. I sent them a globe.

"Right now I'm trying to resolve a complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that I am practicing discrimination by not taking godless, unbelieving people aboard. The IRS seized my assets, claiming that I'm building the Ark in preparation to flee the country to avoid paying taxes.

"I just got a notice from the State that I owe them some kind of user tax and failed to register the Ark as a recreational water craft.

"Finally the ACLU got the courts to issue an injunction against further construction of the Ark, saying that since God is flooding the earth, it is a religious event and therefore unconstitutional. I really don't think I can finish the Ark for another five or six years," Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear, the sun began to shine and the seas began to calm. A beautiful rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up hopefully.

"You mean YOU are not going to destroy the earth, Lord?"

"No," said the Lord sadly, "I don't have to. The government already has."

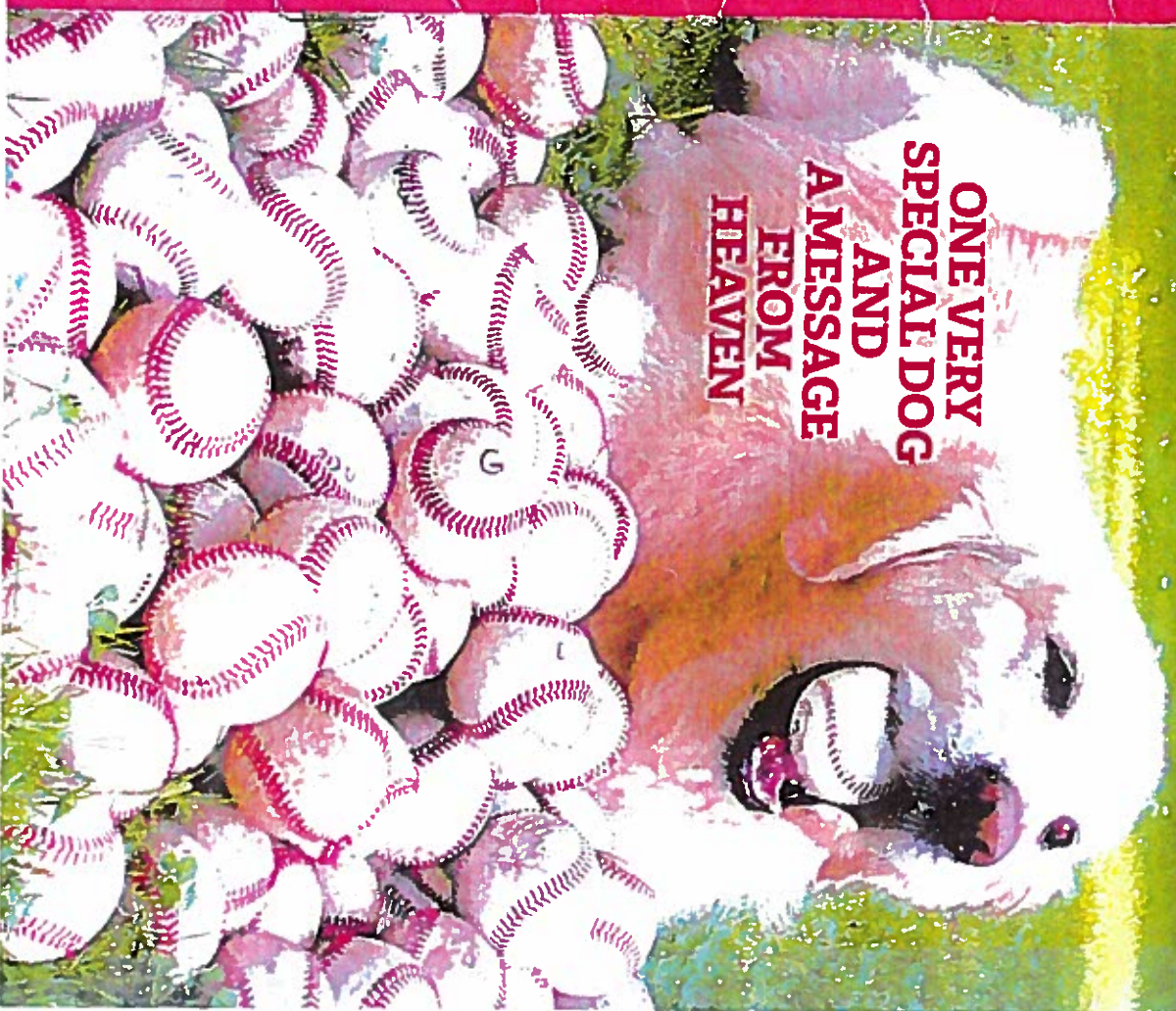
(Author unknown - from the Web)

SEPT/OCT 2018

all creatures

The Animals Who Share Our Lives

ONE VERY
SPECIAL DOG
AND
A MESSAGE
FROM
HEAVEN



PHOTOS COURTESY SHAUNA KATTLER

Ripley's Believe It or Not

There's just something special about golden retrievers.
Especially this one

By Shauna Kattler, Kirkland, Washington

THE DAY WE HAD long been dreading finally arrived. My husband, Dean, and I knew it was time to say goodbye to our beloved golden retriever Ripley. The vet was coming over that afternoon. That morning we took him to the park, knowing it was going to be the last time he would ever play ball.

For 13 years, not a day went by that we didn't play ball. Now I bounced the ball on the pavement in front of the cart Ripley sat on and he weakly tried to catch it in his mouth. The past couple of weeks his breathing had worsened and he gasped for air.

Dean touched my shoulder. "Just a little bit longer," I said. I knew putting Ripley down was the best choice, but I wasn't ready. Not yet.

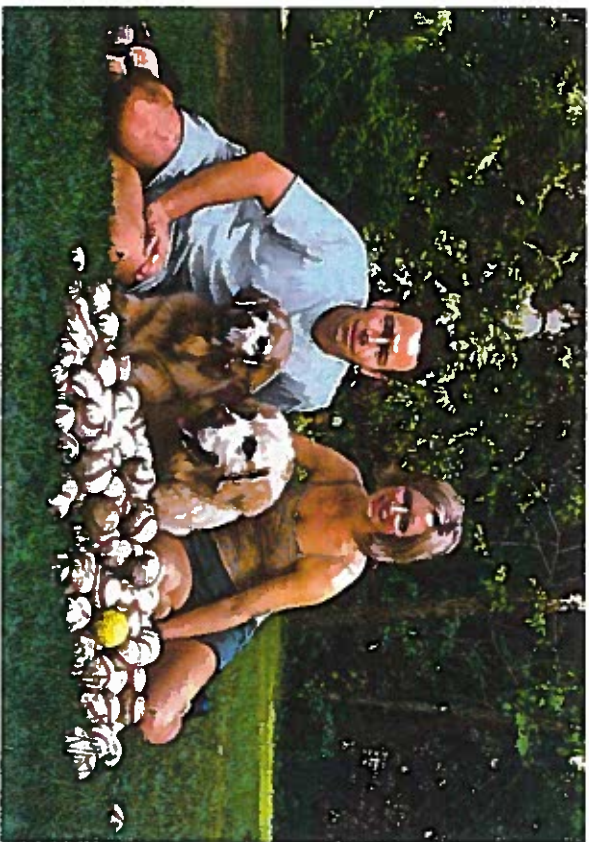
How could I let him go? He'd been with Dean and me almost as long as we'd been married. We didn't have children, so our dogs became our kids. We moved often for Dean's work—we had lived in Castlegar.

Ripley had a knack for finding lost baseballs. One year he found 330!

Kelowna and Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada, and then in Seattle before settling in San Jose, California. The dogs were my anchor and helped me feel settled, no matter where we lived.

My parents gave us Ripley as a Christmas present when he was just 10 weeks old, a month after Dean and I got married. His thick downy blond fur, black button nose and chubby stature made him look like a baby polar bear. His huge paws were an indication of the 100-pound adult he would become. As with all new parents, we showered Ripley with attention. Dean even invented a game. He'd lie down on the floor next to our puppy, toss a tennis ball into the air and Ripley would use Dean's stomach as a springboard, launching into the air and catching the ball before it could hit the ground.

I had my own game with Ripley. I sat at the bottom of the stairs while he sat at the top holding a ball in his mouth. He'd let the ball drop and watch, fascinated, as the ball bounced



Dean and Shauna on one of their frequent outings with Ripley and Holly.

down the steps one at a time. When it hit the last step, I caught it and tossed it back to him. Each time he caught the ball he gnawed it like it was the first one he had ever seen. He never tired of this game and could play it for hours.

The following Christmas Dean brought home Holly, a small female golden. The two dogs quickly became inseparable. For each of the dogs' birthdays, we took them to McDonald's. We ordered a double cheese-burger meal—a burger for the birthday dog and one for the other so neither would feel left out. Celebrating a kid's birthday was one thing, but a dog's? To me, our dogs' birthdays were just as important.

It wasn't until shortly after his tenth birthday that we discovered Ripley's true nose for the ball. Specifically, baseballs. Dean and I had just moved from one neighborhood in Seattle to another. Nearby was a

large park where we walked every day, with mulched paths, shady trees and plenty of squirrels that Holly loved to chase. Ripley, however, had other things on his mind besides squirrels. One day his nose caught a scent and he veered into the bushes.

"What did you find, Ripley?" I asked. His tail was going round and round like a windmill, so I could tell it had to be something really good. He emerged triumphant with a baseball in his mouth. "Good boy!" I said, kneeling down to give him a hug.

That was just the beginning. There were seven baseball fields at the park and every time we went there, Ripley was on a mission. He'd zigzag in and out of the bushes, under the bleachers and come trotting back with a baseball in his mouth. Sometimes he'd stop in front of a bush, his tail wagging, look at me and then stare pointedly back at the bush. That meant he'd located a

baseball he couldn't extract. Even if I couldn't see it right away, he'd stand there unwavering, as if to say, "I know it's there." Sure enough, after digging around on my hands and knees, I'd find a ball tangled in the underbrush.

As Ripley's collection of baseballs grew, we resorted to collecting them in a trash can in the garage. On average he found one or two a day. His record in one day was 12! I felt like a mom who'd just seen her kid hit a home run.

Ripley found 220 baseballs that year. We donated them to the Little League. A few local newspapers had picked up the story and Ripley became a minor celebrity. No one could quite explain where all the balls came from. Had the Little Leaguers really lost that many?

The next year Ripley found 330 baseballs! When the off-season came, however, he seemed sluggish on our walks. I noticed he was dragging one of his hind legs.

The paralysis got worse. Numerous trips to the vet couldn't diagnose the problem and an MRI came back inconclusive. I bought a back-end harness to hoist up Ripley's rear as I walked him. Soon it was Little League season again, and even with his disability, Ripley found 150 baseballs. However, I couldn't keep half-carrying him everywhere we went. I outweighed Ripley by only 12 pounds and my whole body ached from supporting his weight. "Come on, Ripley," I snapped one time. "You can walk faster!" Yet when I looked into his eyes, they told me he was doing the

best he could. God, I prayed, there's got to be a better way. Please help Ripley. Help me.

I was out shopping for plants one day and spied a large flat garden cart. That's it! Perfect for hauling Ripley. I immediately bought one. From the moment we lifted Ripley onto it, he was as happy as a dog let loose in a room full of bacon (or, in his case, baseballs). Ripley loved riding in his cart to the park.

When Ripley was 12 years old, Dean got transferred again, to California. Two weeks before we were due to move to San Jose, I felt two lumps on both sides of Ripley's neck. I took him to the vet and this time there was a diagnosis: lymphoma. The word chilled me. Ripley started chemotherapy.

I took the dogs for walks at the park in San Jose three times a day. Though the park didn't have any

Ripley was on a mission. He found one or two baseballs a day. His record in one day was 12!

baseball diamonds, I knew Ripley loved being there. We developed a new game where I bounced a tennis ball in front of Ripley's cart and he'd catch it in his mouth and gnaw on it. I would walk over and grab the slimy ball from him and toss it back again. I got more exercise than Ripley, but he loved it and that was all that mattered.

Due to Ripley's condition, we got a lot of attention at the park. "I see



you here with your dogs every day and admire your commitment," one woman said, even offering to help if I ever needed a break. Another woman brought me coffee and a bag of donuts, saying, "It warms my heart how you care for him." A firefighter stopped me to tell me how much he appreciated my dedication to my dog.

One summer day a group of women came up to us. "Can we pray with you?" one of them asked. In the middle of the park, these strangers encircled Ripley and me, and together we prayed. I needed it. The chemotherapy wasn't working and Ripley was getting worse.

Now the lymph nodes on either side of his throat were so swollen it was hard for him to breathe. I tried to comfort him as much as I could. Finally, Dean urged me to make the call to the vet. We had one last morning in the park with Ripley.

I bounced his ball to him for a few more minutes and Ripley played with it as best he could. Finally, we took him home.

The veterinarian arrived. Dean and I wrapped our arms around Ripley one last time, sobbing as we said our goodbyes. Then our golden boy was gone.

I don't know how long I'd been crying when Dean suggested we take Holly for a walk. "It'll be good for us to get out of the house," he said. Reluctantly, I agreed.

We pulled Ripley's cart out, the same one he'd sat on just hours earlier. Holly climbed aboard. She glanced from side to side. "Where's Ripley?" her eyes seemed to ask. Dean and I headed down the street in silence.

We had just walked into the park when something lying in the grass caught my eye. Something white.

A baseball.

I looked around. There were no ball fields here. There wasn't even anyone near us. No kids playing catch, no dogs playing fetch. Just Holly, Dean and me.

I picked up the baseball and held it to my heart. I didn't have to wonder where this ball came from. I knew. 🐾

I found this poem while sorting through papers at Mom's house and would like to share it with you. – Pete Achilles

My First Christmas in Heaven

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below
With tiny lights like Heaven's stars, reflecting in the snow.
The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away a tear
For I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear
But the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.
I have no words to tell you, the joy their voices bring,
For it is beyond description, to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me; I see the pain inside your heart.
But I am not so far away, we really aren't apart.
So be happy for me, dear ones, you know I hold you dear.
And be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I sent you each a special gift, from my heavenly home above,
I sent you each a memory of my undying love.
After all, love is a gift more precious than pure gold.
It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other, as my Father said to do.
For I can't count the blessings or love He has for you.
So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear.
Remember, I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.



May your holiday season be blessed with
Peace, Love & Joy.

Merry Christmas Happy
New Year!

