



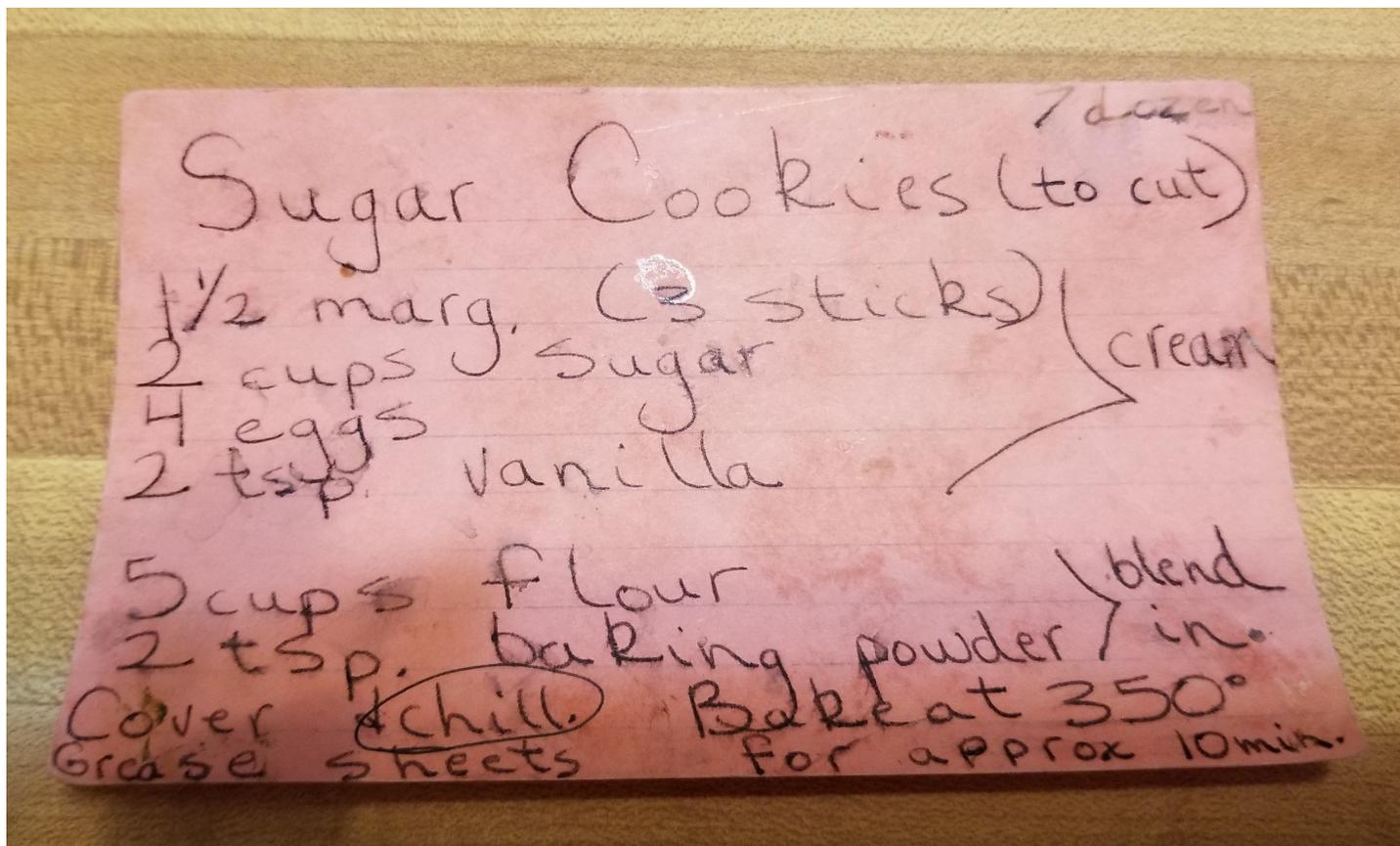
A Christmas to Remember

The first Christmas I can remember was when I was five. We lived in Renton, Washington, just outside of Seattle. That year, I received two really wonderful Madame Alexander baby dolls (the ones with soft bodies that are about the same size as a real baby). One was blonde and the other brunette; I still have them. I also got a nurse's bag with a cape and a hat, and a small, blue, record player. It was quite a haul, but the best part of that Christmas was that both sets of Nebraska grandparents drove to Washington to spend the holiday with us. While I didn't yet understand what Christmas was all about, I did learn that it was about family.

In later years, I came to understand what that small event, the birth of a baby, meant to the world. A miracle in a manger. On Christmas Eve 1993, just a week before my first child, Amanda, was born, I cried as Alex Beadell sang "Mary's Lullaby," Mary's song of joy and lament as she contemplates her child's destiny and importance to the world.

Merry Christmas! Susan

Bob and Michelle have been received a lot a phone calls requesting Sally's Christmas Cookie recipe. They wanted it to be posted to the website and said Sally would want to share her recipe. So here it is ... in her own handwriting.



FROSTING

- 1 stick margarine
- 1 glob Crisco (1/2 c)
- 2 lb. bag of powdered sugar
- 2 tsp butter flavor
- Water to mix 2 Tbsp+ (Maybe up to 5Tbsp)a

Gail...I am so happy to see your name on the liturgist schedule! It so reflects "Live Like Sally" and reminds me of another instance in our lives. When we lived in St. Paul, NE, the football coach & his wife had a 2 year old son who died from quick pneumonia, or whatever they called it at that time. I can still picture Janean holding him on their rush to Grand Island, and he couldn't breathe. At his funeral, our pastor made it clear that Johnny didn't get to live out a full life, so we had to make it our mission to live it for him by doing extra our whole lives. That's what you're doing for Sally...and for Johnny.  What a blessing!

... Sandy Amos

ONE MORE DAY

If Christmas is hard,
If you've lost someone dear,
Just look in your heart ...
And you'll know they're still here

The star in the sky.
The light falling snow.
The robin outside,
It seems like they know.

If this is a time,
When you're struggling through
Just do what you can,
For what matters, is you.

There's no need to be merry.
There's no need to be bright.
Just do what you can,
It will all be alright.

... Poem provided by Janet Trout



Patsy Netta's Christmas Cookie extravaganza!

Patsy and her family have quite the cookie making project going! Family memories that last a lifetime.



Sandy Amos is also providing us a little trip down memory lane with a reflection she wrote for an Advent Devotional the church produced in 1985! Here is the actual cover used in 1985. The following pages are an exact copy of her reflection. Enjoy!



Matthew 13:13 "This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand."

Christmas is a feeling. The very word creates images of your mind. Snowflakes, Candlelight, Angel hair, Cattle lowing... Or are your images different? Too much to do. Too little time. Too many presents. Too much money. Why is it far too easy to be caught up in negativity about the most positive of experiences?

This all-too-human characteristic was brought home to me two years ago at the UMW Christmas bazaar. I was standing by the treasure trove of "white elephants," engrossed in other people's cast-offs. A figurine of a little girl reading a book caught my eye and I picked it up, examining it carefully. "Hmmm - looks pretty old. Colors all faded. Paint peeled off. Made in Japan. Around her waist a huge crack that widens in the back. Rattles when shaken - must have chips of broken glass inside. Price? 10¢ Seems a bit high." Beside me, two other people noticed the figurine in my hands. "Look at that darling little girl. Such a sweet face. That red ribbon looks so cute holding back her curls. And see--the little bib matches the ribbon. What an adorable pose - sitting there with a book on her lap, pointing her chubby little finger at the picture of the duck. Her clothes and shoes are so pretty and old-fashioned. And what a bargain - only 10¢!"

I walked to the cashier and paid 10¢ for my treasure. Karen and Darren Mattheis had just taught me another lesson. It was kind of a variation of that popular phrase of a few years ago: "What you see is what you get." This version was, "What you look for is what you'll find." Why had I been tuned to see only the defects? Why did I so readily dismiss something as worthless? Could it all come down to attitude? To state of mind? Two weeks after the bazaar, Darren died. At age 19 he finally yielded to the leukemia that had invaded his last 3 years of life. But look

at his attitude - all he could see was good in the smallest object or least significant situation. What a lesson for the living!

This Christmas season, why not make your expectations positive? Reach for that Christmas feeling. Fashion your images through rose-colored glasses and sparkly bright snowflakes. As I'm preparing for Christmas this year, I'll walk past my little figurine many times every day for she occupies a prominent place in our home. I'll smile when I see her, for I don't see the crack anymore. Instead I see the glory. It's all in how you look at it.

Sandy Amos

