

A Christmas Visitor

I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful
(2 Corinthians 7:4).

BY GWEN S. JONES
(Based on a true story)

Please, Mom, can we invite Sister Fuhriman just *one* more time?" Greg pleaded. His younger brothers' anxious faces poked out from behind Greg like pegs on a coat rack.

"It will be Christmas Eve, and she shouldn't be alone," Layne said. Scott and Jim nodded.

"You know how many times we have tried to invite Sister Fuhriman to our house," Mom said. "She rarely goes out. But you may invite her for Christmas Eve if you like."

The boys cheered and bounded outside.

Soon the door burst open again. "It's a miracle, Mom!" Greg called. "She said she'd love to come. Isn't that great?"

The next day snow started falling. Greg knew that Sister Fuhriman avoided going outside in bad weather, even to the mailbox. "Do you think she will still come tomorrow?" Greg asked. Mom wasn't sure.

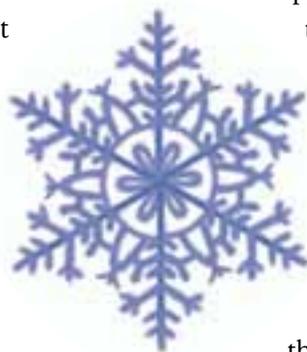
On Christmas Eve, Aunt Carolyn and her three children arrived just as Layne finished cleaning up the kitchen after dinner. "Can we go get Sister Fuhriman now?" Layne asked.

"All right," Dad said. "Remember to help her as she walks across the road. It's slick outside."

"We will, Dad," Scott said.

"And if she decides not to come after all, don't make her feel bad about not coming," Dad said.

"We won't, Dad," Greg said. The boys stepped outside into the snow-covered landscape. The snow had stopped falling, and there was still a little daylight to show them the way.



Eight-year-old Adam was helping Bekah and Jill get into their costumes for the family Christmas pageant when the boys stepped through the door—helping Sister Fuhriman inside! She smiled cheerily, her cheeks bright from the cold.

The family tried not to seem so surprised that their guest of honor had really come.

Dad made Sister Fuhriman feel welcome and helped her choose a seat next to Mom. Greg slipped out of his coat and sat at the piano. After an opening prayer, he began to play Christmas hymns softly. Scott read from the Bible as the younger children acted out the story of the first Christmas. Wearing a bathrobe, three-year-old Bekah reverently played the part of Mary while Dan pretended to be Joseph. Jill played the part of an angel with a gold garland pinned in her hair. Cousins played shepherds and Wise Men, all come to worship the infant King.





Soon the strains of “Silent Night” faded, and the reverence of the sacred story gave way to hugs, smiles, and compliments all around. To finish off the night, they enjoyed Mom’s warm cinnamon rolls. All too soon, the evening was over.

The boys again put on their coats, hats, and mittens to escort Sister Fuhriman across the road. The glow of the porch light pushed away the darkness, making their walk across the snow-packed country road pleasant in spite of the cold.

“Good night, Sister Fuhriman,” Greg called as he and his brothers turned back toward their house.

“Merry Christmas,” Sister Fuhriman called. “And thank you.”

Greg glanced over his shoulder just before he stepped back into his house. Sister Fuhriman was still on her porch, watching. She waved.

Some months went by, and the family moved to a different town. The following December, Greg came into the house carrying an envelope. “We got a letter from Sister Fuhriman,” he called. He tore it open and read:

“I will miss your family this Christmas. I don’t believe

I ever told you how much I enjoyed Christmas Eve in your home. I must tell you now what I did not tell you then.

“Some years before you moved into the house across the road from me, I had a dream. I could see your house, all lit up and glowing. When I awoke from that dream, I had the most wonderful, happy, peaceful feeling—something I had not experienced very often since my husband’s death.

“Months went by, and I forgot all about my dream. Then came your invitation for Christmas Eve. I had such a wonderful time sharing in your family celebration.

“After the boys walked me back home, I stood on my porch to make sure they returned home safely. Just then I noticed your house all aglow. It was the same picture I had seen in my dream years ago, and I had the very same feeling of peace. I just wanted

you to know how I appreciated you.”

As Greg read Sister Fuhriman’s words, he remembered the warmth he had felt that night. He was grateful his family had shared their celebration with Sister Fuhriman, bringing her Christmas comfort and joy. ●



President Gordon B. Hinckley,
“A Season for Gratitude,”
Ensign, Dec. 1997, 4.

“Christmas is more than trees and twinkling lights. . . . It is peace.”