

5 YEARS AGO? SEEMS LIKE A DECADE

ICE STORM MADE CHRISTMAS 2013 SPECIAL, WRITES TED BROWN



TED BROWN
Column

Christmas is one of those times of the year when we accumulate memories.

We remember the good and the bad - the loss of a loved one, or, at the other end of the scale, moments of joy.

Five years ago we were hit by that ice storm from hell. Memories of December 2013 are deeply etched in my mind.

Many have said Christmas 2013 was spoiled by the storm, as limbs and trees collapsed around us. Some folks left town to bunk with family, while others stayed home to tough it out.

The Sidekick and I had no options. At the time, we had a barn full of sheep, so we had to stay close by to watch over our flock.

Like countless others, we endured seven days with no power. To maintain the needs of the barn and two houses, I ran our tractor driven generator at the barn to water the sheep, then moved it to the farmhouse to run the furnace and water pump for a couple hours, then over to the second house to do the same.

To add to the problem, the tractor couldn't be shut off for any extended length of time. Being a diesel, if it got too cold, there was nowhere to plug in the block heater.

The Sidekick and I established a routine to keep things running, living in the living room, with the fireplace lit for some warmth. The tractor was

fuelled daily, to the tune of about \$60 a day.

When Dec. 24 rolled around, we decided the Brown family Christmas would have to be cancelled or moved to another location.

Due to the power outage and ice, the Christmas Eve service at Limehouse Presbyterian Church was cancelled. My second daughter had power, so we dropped by for her annual Christmas Eve reception, then we attended the Christmas Eve service at Knox in Georgetown.

Driving home through that dark silent night of the rural areas, I thought of how peaceful it had become. No traffic, no sounds, nothing to shatter that solitude.

Peace on Earth - it was almost comforting.

We stoked up the fire in the living room, and I went outside to start the generator to run the furnace and warm the house a bit.

Unknown to The Sidekick, I had wired the Christmas tree into the furnace circuit. As I flipped on the power, the living room was bathed in the warmth of the Christmas tree lights.

I entered the house, and found her standing there with tears running down her face. "Thank you," she said.

"It's Christmas," I said, "We're entitled to be a little bit frivolous. I'm gonna run the tractor and generator so

we have heat all night."

Before the early light of Christmas morning crept into the room, I lay there on the sofa, pondering Christmas. It was 6 a.m.

Suddenly the tractor outside started to sputter and cough. In seconds we were bathed in dark silence - no fuel.

Cursing it, I grabbed a fuel can, knowing full well I had to bleed the fuel lines. A diesel won't run with air in the lines.

Braving -16 C temperature, with The Sidekick holding a flashlight, I pumped that little primer with my bare hands.

It wasn't a typical Christmas morning.

But days later, as others complained how their Christmas was "ruined," I had to disagree.

Christmas 2013 wasn't anything like previous Christmases. It was stripped bare to the basics.

But in doing so, it made us realize how precious Christmas really is.

This year, take a moment to reflect upon those less than perfect Christmases, for just a moment. Then immerse yourself in the glory and warmth of the season around you.

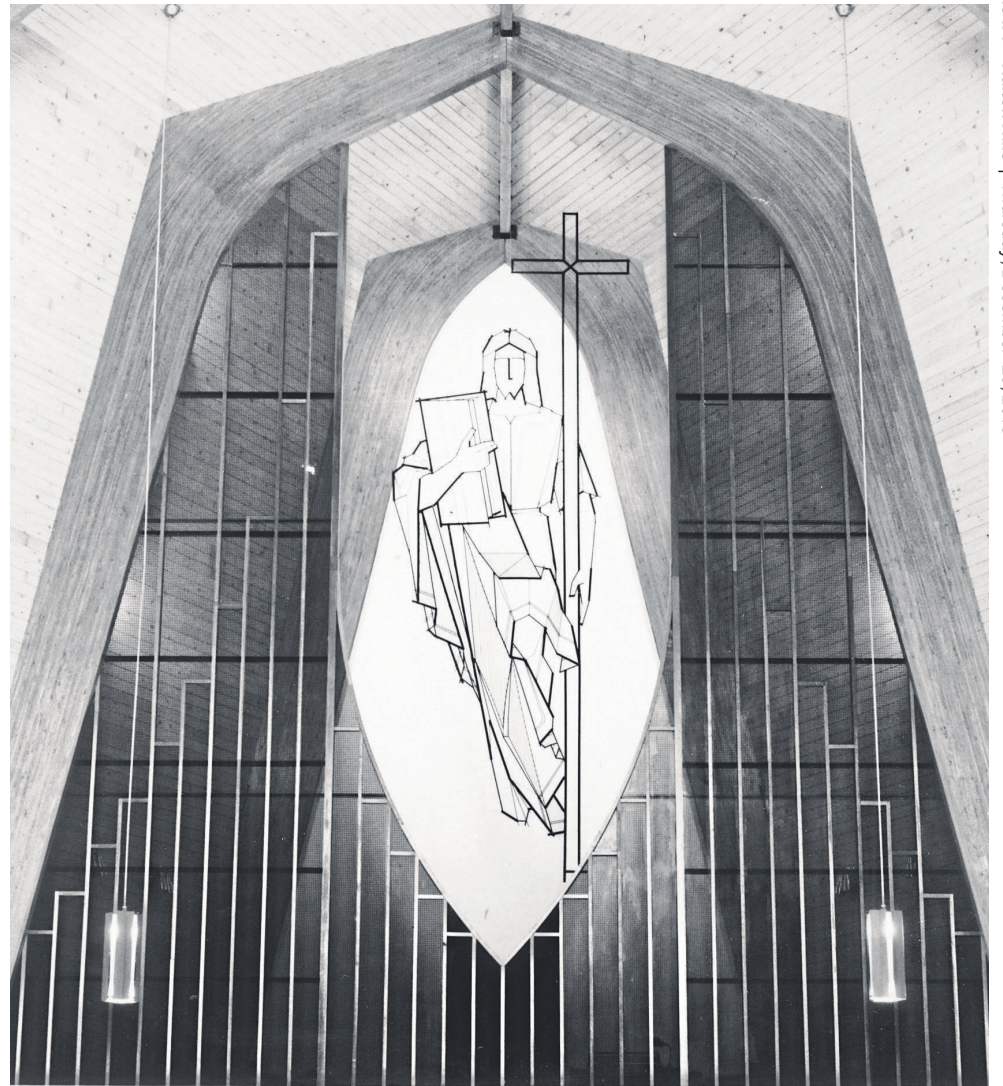
Wishing a merry Christmas to all, and all the best in the coming year.

Ted Brown is a freelance journalist for IFP. He can be reached at tedbit@hotmail.com.

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THE WAY WE WERE



I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE



Peter Jones/photo

The photographer captured the soaring beauty of Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church, showing the soaring 20-foot wrought-iron depiction of the second coming of Christ by Gastone Fantuz. Amica is currently building on the Maple Avenue site. The 1965 sculpture was transferred to the new Holy Cross on Argyll Road.

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