

Whole” (I’ll have much more to say in the future about this book).

Berry laments of grandiose rhetoric and observes of real life:

*[Real life] speaks in exacting detail of land and people, lives and places, work, good work, neighborhood and neighborliness, love, grief, and joy. As opposed to the rhetoric of triumph, the rightly guiding words are “humble” (humus, ground), and “ordinary” (ordo, order) and “familiar” (familiaris, domestic). Only the humblest, quietest, most beautiful and arable work of the workaday world can effectively oppose and answer the overbearing work of human power and glory.*

A few weeks ago, I discussed our pressing need to remake our political culture by focusing more on community and less on Election Day. Such a makeover would have extraordinary positive effects throughout life, not just on political discourse. Here, Berry echoes a similar sentiment and it strikes me as deeply applicable to the holiday season. Life is full of simple emotions and struggles. Those feelings—love, grief, joy, and more—are amplified by the season. We need not repress, express, or cope with those feelings using grandiose gestures. Instead, we need only guide ourselves by focusing on the humble, ordinary, and familiar work.

It might sound boring in the year 2022 and maybe it is. But how might our lives be improved in this season if we focused on the simple things? How might we improve our own lives and the lives of others if we focus on good work and neighborliness? To me, there is no greater calling than doing just that. Doing good work and serving our neighbors is far more meaningful and powerful than anything you can buy on Amazon or at Walmart. Yes, it is even more meaningful than buying your significant other a vehicle without telling them (which, if you believe holiday

television ads, is a thing that people do, but that’s another topic)!

Berry concludes that chapter in the book with the words of English Romanticist poet William Blake: *“He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars; ‘General Good’ is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, and flatterer.”*

Doing good does not require a giant government project or any level of fame. If so, you are probably going to be disappointed. Or, as Blake points out, you are doing it for the wrong motives. Doing good requires only minute particulars. As we make our way towards Christmas and a new year, may we seek out true good work by doing those minute particulars.

Simple service towards our neighbors (which includes everyone in our community) goes a long way toward doing actual good for those who need it. Folks may not even realize how much they need that simple service until they receive it. And by focusing on the humble, ordinary, and familiar work that needs doing, I think we’ll find that our own enjoyment of the holidays will be better than we could imagine.

*James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to West of 98 wherever podcasts are found.*

### Growers report healthy demand for fresh-cut Christmas trees

The Christmas tree business is merry and bright, with farms specializing in the traditional holiday decoration reporting brisk sales.

Stan Reed, Executive Secretary for the Texas Christmas Tree Growers Association, said Christmas tree farms across the state have been busy.

“A lot of them will be sold out of the choose-and-cut trees this weekend,” he said. “Right now,

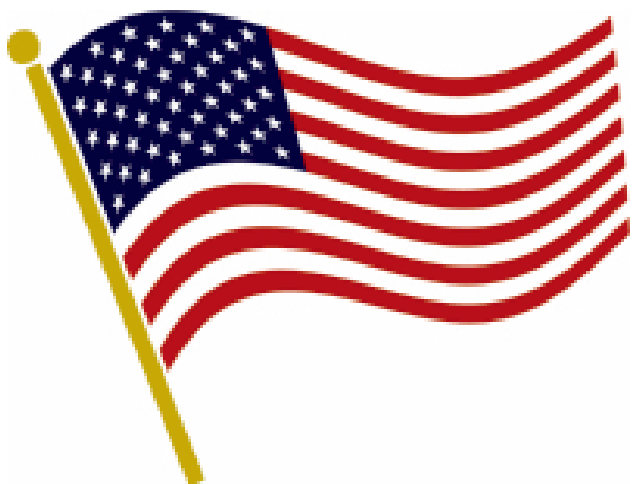


**Open House!** Several Robert Lee businesses and offices participated in the annual Christmas Open House event on Friday, December 2. Pictured above during their respective open house events are Austin Street Coffee House and Ivey Motors. See the next page of this issue of *The Observer/Enterprise* for more open house photos.

everybody seems to be doing well.”

*(Continued on next page)*

## Please Pray for our Communities, Our County, Our State and Our Country



***And Don't Forget to Pray for Rain!***



### PROPANE SERVICE

Wheat Energy Services has recently purchased the propane operations of Askins Propane in Robert Lee/Bronte and will continue the Askins tradition of providing quality propane service in Coke, Nolan, and surrounding counties. Please give us a call or come see us for all of your delivered propane, propane cylinder fills, delivered fuels, or other related needs.

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