



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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Happy Holidays from Dean Larry Gossen,

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Starting in November, through the Thanksgiving season, and all the way through the end of the calendar year, I just love the atmosphere, the attitudes, and the opportunities to show our gratitude.

Regardless of which holiday you observe during the season, one thing they all have in common is a focus on gifts, family, friends, and celebrations. I, for one, celebrate Christmas, but I have friends who celebrate other holidays during this time.

I love to listen to Christmas music. We used to wait until Thanksgiving before we pulled out the box of CDs (yes, I'm still pretty much old school) and started listening to our favorite songs. Now, it seems we start listening earlier and earlier each year. I believe it might have been November 1 when the first "I heard the bells" came wafting from the CD player.

What I find interesting is how everyone's taste in music differs, even with Christmas music. I recently did an internet search for "100 best Christmas Songs". I must say I wasn't too surprised and actually knew a few of the top 10 to 15, but I really hadn't even heard of most of the songs on that top 100 list. My typical playlist sounds a lot different than that.

Then I searched for "classic Christmas Songs," and the list became a little more familiar. I guess those are the ones I grew up listening to, and there are fond memories of family gatherings in the living room as we decorated the tree up until we opened the presents.

My next search was for "traditional religious Christmas songs." This search generated the song list that we would sing in church every Sunday during the Advent season, that time between Thanksgiving and Christmas. These songs were very familiar to me.

This is when I decided that no search would generate a "Larry's favorites" playlist. As I look through our (several) boxes of Christmas CDs, I see albums from a very eclectic group of artists. From George Strait, Vince Gill, and Alabama, to Bing Crosby and Andy Williams, or Sandi Patty, Pentatonix, Chris Tomlin, or The Martins, my favorites are as varied as ever.

My point is this. I may have my favorites, and you might have a totally different taste in Christmas music, but that's okay. We can still be friends. We don't have to see eye-to-eye on our music options. We probably even like different foods, different vehicles, or different types of TV shows or movies.

The same is true in our everyday thoughts, beliefs, or politics. We do not all see things in this world the very same way from the very same perspective. And that's okay! That's the great thing about this country – we all have the freedom to be ourselves. And we can still be friends.

During this holiday season, my prayer is that people will just get along, that friends will take care of each other, that neighbors will watch out for their neighbors, that families will hold civil conversations around the dinner table, that drivers will show a little grace when the roads are crowded, and that we can all be thankful for whatever blessings we have.

On behalf of the Gossen family and the entire NCTA community, I want to wish everyone a Happy Holiday season, Merry Christmas, and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

