

ENRICH YOUR HOLIDAY COME TO CHURCH THIS CHRISTMAS

Christmas Services

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church
Confessions: Christmas Eve—3 to 4:30 p.m. and 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Masses: Christmas Eve—12 midnight and Christmas Day—11 a.m.

St. William's Roman Catholic Church
Masses: Christmas Day—8:45 a.m. Confessions before Mass.

All Saints Episcopal Church
Christmas Eve Service to begin at 11 p.m. with traditional carols as a prelude to the service of Christmas Eve Midnight Mass. Everyone welcome.

United Methodist Church
Christmas Eve Candlelight celebration to begin at 11 p.m. and last until midnight. Everyone invited to join in celebration.

Ione United Church of Christ
Christmas Eve Family Candlelight Service—7 p.m. and Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service—10:30 p.m.

Hope Lutheran Church
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service—7 p.m.

Valby Lutheran Church
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service—9 p.m.

St. Patrick's and St. William's Roman Catholic Churches

Salvation Through Christ

The anniversary of our Lord's birth is one of the greatest feasts for all Christians. Each year as this great day recurs, we read or hear the story of the first Christmas as narrated by St. Luke. The gospel graphically describes the incidents of that blessed night—the arrival of Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem as the evening shadows were falling, their unsuccessful attempts to find lodging and their recourse to a cold, damp cave on the hillside, where in the silence of the night, Christ our Saviour was born. There was joy in heaven and on Earth.

The purpose of the coming of the Son of God to Earth is very clear and simple. He came to make infinite satisfaction to His heavenly Father for the infinite malice of sin and to merit for all mankind the graces necessary to attain eternal happiness. From the days of His mortal life He directed all His thoughts and intentions towards the salvation of the human race.

Today the world stands in need of salvation, even as it did the first Christmas night, almost two thousand years ago. Indeed we are slowly but surely returning to the pagan customs of old. Wickedness and Godlessness seem to be more widespread at the present day than they were at the time of Christ's coming. But, today as of old, the only way to recover peace and happiness is to return to Christ and His laws. If those who are striving to solve international problems and to preserve peace amongst men would imitate the shepherds and go in spirit to Bethlehem and beg the Divine Child for light and help, there would be far greater assurance of peace for the world than is afforded by the councils of statesmen who will not call on God.

Yours in our Lord,
The Rev. John A. O'Brien

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

A Christmas Story

In "Precious Jeopardy: A Christmas Story," by Floyd C. Douglas, it was Christmas Eve and Phil was disgruntled because he had just lost his job. His financial situation had been difficult enough when he was working; now it seemed impossible. Phil refused to join his family in Christmas Eve activities, and he grumbled about everything that was happening.

Later, Phil called from the hallway. "I've stepped on a needle." Phil clamped the pliers and pulled. Out came half of the needle!

The next day, Christmas, Phil drove to the hospital, but paused outside the door. Somewhere he had heard that if you get a tiny piece of metal in your body and do not remove it, it could eventually move to one of the vital organs and cause death. For some reason, Phil decided to leave the needle fragment in his foot and take the consequences. He drove home and told his wife that everything had been taken care of.

From that moment Phil believed his life was in jeopardy. He decided he would try to make the most of each day. He treated each member of his family with kindness, and for the first day in a long time, felt close to them.

"Precious Jeopardy" ended on Christmas eve one year later. Phil was happy and at peace. As the clock struck midnight, his wife handed Phil her gift—a small box containing a tiny fragment of steel, pierced through red velvet. She had found the other half of the needle a few days after the accident but had secretly kept it because it had, in a sense, given Phil back to his family.

May we all appreciate the life that Jesus Christ has given us, and may we strive each day to make others happy. Christmas is a joyous season. It is a time of good will to others; which we hope will continue throughout the year. We rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ and his life on earth.

The Rev. Curt Perkins

All Saints Episcopal Church

Christmas 1981

The 12 year-old asked her father if he was ready for Christmas, and he replied "No, unfortunately," and then added he probably wouldn't be for several weeks after Christmas, either. The younger child, age nine, jumped with glee, exclaiming that he had been ready for weeks. He couldn't understand why anyone could wait until the last minute to get ready, as only nine-year-olds can put across so pointedly and painfully to older family members.

How much like the biblical characters do we find ourselves to be, repeating these same omissions, building expectations, hoping, dreaming, and then come crashing into the reality of what is, rather than what we would like it (life) to be.

The prophet Isaiah (9:2 ff) proclaims the coming of a new king who will deliver the Israelites to peace (shalom) and re-establish the Davidic kingly line in a secular fashion. This becomes a part of the hope of the whole Jewish tradition over centuries: A king to re-establish a God-centered people, chosen by God. Yet, over time, this secular idea of a monarchy gave way to a Messianic deliverer-king: A true Emmanuel, as proclaimed by Micah chapter five.

It is this Emmanuel's birth that we celebrate in our own various family traditions on December 25. We celebrate and rejoice, though we often are not ready to, like the father of my story, or some of the first century Jews. We get so caught up in the first coming and get centered in on Bethlehem that we lost sight of the purpose of Advent's introduction purpose—the proclamation of Salvation, the arrival of Emmanuel for the whole world, as heralded by the Heavenly Hosts in Luke 2:13 ff. Without Bethlehem, there is no Gethsemane, no real intrusion on history and no real salvation and God's gift of Grace.

The Rev. Edwin Watts

Christmas Reflections

(Editor's note: Local clergy have been invited to share their thoughts of Christmas in this special Christmas issue. Following are their accounts):

First Christian Church

The Angels Came

The angels came bringing a tremendous message to the shepherds on that first Christmas, 2,000 years ago. The message was, "Fear not; for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be for all the people."

We, at the First Christian Church, hope that all men everywhere will find the courage promised by the angels at Christ's birth. In a day and age where we are confronted by fear-inducing news everyday, the reality of Jesus Christ's birth can bring courage.

We also pray that men everywhere may discover the joy that Christ came bringing to all. This joy comes when the person of Christ is realized and felt in one's life, even 2,000 years after his birth.

We wish each and everyone a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Rev. Don Shelton

Hope and Valby Lutheran Churches

The Gift

"Mommy, read me a story.
"David, will you stop bugging me! I've got to get these cookies baked for your Christmas party!"

Ho! Ho! Ho! 'Tis the season. Tinsel and tension. Everyone wants to be happy—especially at Christmas. So we try to make things so right.

If I can get the right gift for you. (Oh my budget.)
If the decorations are beautiful. (Don't touch that!)
If we can just see all the people that we really like. (I've got a splitting headache.)

The heart of Christmas is giving. Right? So we give, and give, and give until we give out.
I think we forgot the secret.

Christmas is a giving time because of a first gift. God gave us a baby—Jesus. A present to us of good life. A present without a price tag. A gift of joy that only asks us to be good receivers. No more.

"I have come," says Jesus, "that you may have life abundantly." The gift asks no return from us except that we enjoy the life he gives us.

The heart of Christmas is giving: God giving us his gift of life.

Come first to the manger bed and open your present from our Father. He promises you will then have a very merry Christmas.

The Rev. John Maas

Christian Life Center

A Christmas Prayer

As we pause on the threshold of our Lord's birthday, may we be drawn into the orbit of His pure and holy love. As we look into the manger, may we become as little children in simplicity and in the acceptance of that faith which our Lord makes possible. As we join the shepherds in adoration and worship may we be humbled in mind and spirit. As we join the angelic hosts in songs of peace and goodwill may there be a song of peace and goodwill in our hearts. As we are bathed in the rays of the starlit night may we be alive with light and hope.

Send us from this transforming experience renewed and rededicated by the spirit of love and service which your Son and our Savior brought to light and life at the time of His birth. Amen.

The Rev. Doug Thomas

Church of The Nazarene

Christmas—Everyone Gets Involved

Christmas—the only holiday of the year when the whole world gets involved.

We have national holidays that we celebrate in America. The rest of the world goes on while we celebrate. Not so with Christmas. Almost everyone is involved.

Whatever a person's motive: to make money, to commercialize, to do good deeds, to feel good because they have gone to church for the first time all year, or simply to celebrate Jesus' birthday. There seems to be a different attitude and spirit among people at Christmas time.

There would be no Christmas if God had not loved us and sent His Son, Jesus Christ into the world "To save the people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

In your rush these days, preparing for the big day, have you stopped to think of the reason you celebrate Christmas? King David wrote in Psalms 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God."

To be still means to stop and be silent, calm, and quiet. To restrain enough to enjoy life and those around us. But most important, to be still and know HE is God. After all it is God's Son's birthday.

Have a Merry Christmas.

The Rev. Floyd Wilks

United Methodist Church

Grace, Peace, Love

One of my favorite quotes is from Gerald Kennedy. I think that he catches the true meaning of Christmas when he says, "Let this Christmas season be a renewing of the mind of Christ in our thinking, and a cleansing of our lives by his pure presence. Let his joy come to our weary world through us."

One has only to look at the evening paper or tune in a favorite news broadcast on the television or radio to understand what is meant by the term "weary world." Throughout the world there is warring and starvation and suppression. Generally the mood of people has become one of apathy—the feeling that nothing can be done and so we must just live with it. Or it has become one of opportunism—the blatant disregard for anyone or anything as we move to accomplish our own interests.

It is as if we have never heard of the Almighty God who rules all creation. Or if we have, we have shelved that idea and moved through life in complete disregard for His Moral laws of existence.

And yet, as one looks over the world we must realize, I think, that this is precisely the situation into which God entered in the Christ Child of the Bethlehem stable.

It was a time—not unlike our own—when the world seemed totally lost and out of control. It was a time when God cared, and when He showed His care through the incarnation of Christ, and when he said in that one splendid event that changed all history, "I have come to seek and to save the lost." A time when God reached out into the darkness of our lives with all the love and all the grace and all the mercy of the Almighty and touched his children in a way that they would never again completely forget.

And so once again we join throughout the world to celebrate this great act on God's behalf. Once again we are reminded that we are not alone in all that surrounds us. Once again we find God saying to us that our lives can be different... that they don't have to stay this way forever! The good word, then, is found in the words of the angel who spoke to Joseph and said, "... Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel," (which means, God with us).

Come and sing praises to the Almighty God for the Gift of Christmas... The Christ Child born into a world of need, with the gift of Salvation for all!

Grace, Peace, Love
The Rev. S. Michael Sheridan

United Church of Christ

Christmas Time

Christmas time: God-with-us-time
Praising the works of Creator
Knowing the love of Christ
Feeling the breath of Spirit

Welcoming Emmanuel? God with us.

Christmas time: Present-time
God's Presence in our presents,
in our present
Giving us creativity, love...
salvation!
Inspiring our giving.

Christmas time: Greeting-time
Cards, letters, calls, even shouts
Dusting off once-a-year addresses
Relishing each family's news
Displaying our cheer!

Christmas time: Tradition-time
"Because we always do" time
Baskets for the poor
Treats and carols for the shut-in
Love for the children.

Christmas time: Nativity-time
Amid the bustle of the day-to-day life
A babe born in a stable!
A star beams, angels sing
Shepherds gawk, wise men travel
This day is holy.

In all-times we can indulge
in these Christmas time joys
We're limited
only by our lack of imagination
For Christ is always with us
the present is the time for presents
the mail service runs year 'round
the needy are in need in every season
and the Christ can be born in our hearts
each day!

Merry Everyday!

The Rev. Cathy Barker

Christmas Cantata slated

The Hermiston Nazarene Church will present a special Christmas Cantata entitled "The King of Love" at the Heppner Nazarene Church on Sunday, December 27 at 5 p.m., weather permitting. The Cantata is to be presented under the direction of the Rev. Larry McNaught. Everyone is invited to attend.

AN OLD FASHIONED DESSERT IS A HEARTY WINTER FAVORITE

RAISIN BREAD PUDDING

1 (1 pound) loaf Raisin Bread, diced
4 eggs
1/2 cup sugar
1 quart milk
2 teaspoons vanilla
1/4 cup butter or margarine

Place bread cubes into a greased 3 quart casserole. Beat eggs in bowl. Beat in sugar, milk and vanilla. Pour mixture over bread cubes. Dot top of casserole with butter. Bake in 350° oven for 40 to 45 minutes or until puffed, brown and firm to the touch in the center. Serve hot or cold. Delicious served with sliced peaches, whipped cream or scoops of vanilla ice cream. Serves 6 to 8.

Seventh-day Adventist Church

BETHLEHEM—Drive Slowly

BETHLEHEM—Drive Slowly—so a road sign is warning travelers to this Palestinian town. Bethlehem is a very real place, where men have to be warned lest they drive their cars too speedily through its streets. Bethlehem has links with an ancient past—Ruth and Boaz; David, the King; and the child Jesus.

Yet, it stands in the present because it has a real message for us today as it had nineteen hundred years ago. God with man—"for unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." Here heaven and earth are linked together—"and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save his people from their sins."

Jesus, Saviour, the Star of Hope, the Desire of all the ages, and the only future this world can claim—that is the meaning and message of Bethlehem!

We will do well to slacken our foolish pace and pause awhile. The eternal is breaking into life, the spiritual world impinges upon the material. There is not much time in this age of speed, for reflection and meditation. We are in the treadmill of constant business and engage in life's endless activities.

Today, the glory of Bethlehem is still there. During the festivities of this season, let us capture it and find the solace and joy Bethlehem can give, as we slow down, pause, and reflect upon the true meaning of Bethlehem.

The Rev. Gunnar Sjoren

Holiday Fun With California Dried Figs



"There's holiday excitement all around." Now is the time to plan for the festive moments. Luscious, plump, nutritious California dried figs can bring enjoyment during this season in cookies, poultry stuffings, cakes, desserts, muffins, and as wonderful gifts all by themselves. Both golden and dark shiny dried figs bring a touch of fresh sunshine goodness to everyone you want to remember. Make up your own fig gift packs or purchase them already beautifully packaged.

Here's the quickest, easiest candy yet... you'll want to let older children make it themselves. How nice that dried figs add a bit of good nutrition to holiday sweets!

If you have a food processor, use it to chop figs in a hurry. Just snip off stems and add sugar called for in the recipe to processor bowl along with whole figs. One or two on-off figs and figs are chopped fine. Or, use a kitchen scissors dipped into hot water to cut figs with no fuss or stickiness.

CALIFORNIA FIG-PEANUT BUTTER ROLL
3 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 cup finely chopped California Dried Figs
1/2 cup evaporated milk
1/2 cup chopped peanuts

Melt butter, stir in peanut butter, milk and vanilla. Remove from heat, add sugar and California Dried Figs. Blend together and knead on board until smooth. Form into 2-inch rolls; coat with peanuts. Chill until firm; slice. Makes about 30 slices.