

# In the spirit of Christmas

## Christmas kindles warm glow

The warm glow of Christmas candles kindles a warm glow in human hearts. In time the candles die out and the glow is gone. However, the glow and warmth in our hearts need not die out. The Lord Jesus, whose birth we honor at Christmas time, is well able to keep the warmth and glow there — and to use us as His candles, bringing light and warmth to this sin-darkened world. Thereby kindling warm glows in other hearts. This is the true spirit of Christmas.

Don Reiber, pastor  
Heppner Seventh-day Adventist Church

## Will they begin to understand?

A Christian rock singer by the name of Randy Stonehill has a song on one of his albums which poses a very serious question that each one of us must answer for ourselves. It is a question especially relevant as we come into this most precious of seasons this year.

"I wonder if this Christmas they'll begin to understand  
The Jesus that they celebrate is much more than a man?  
Because the way the world is I don't see how people can deny  
the only way to save us was for Jesus Christ to die.

And I know that if Saint Nicholas was here he would agree  
That Jesus gave the greatest gift of all to you and me.  
They led Him to the slaughter on a hill called calvary.  
And mankind was forgiven when they nailed Him to the tree.

But most of all the children they're the ones I hope will learn  
That Jesus is our Savior and He's going to return.  
And Christmas isn't just a day  
And all days aren't the same.  
Perhaps they'll think about the word and see it spells His name.

So Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas

I wonder if this Christmas they'll begin to understand?"

I wonder if this Christmas will be the time when we all begin to understand  
that Christmas has a meaning deeper than just one day. Have you truly  
understood the meaning of Christmas for yourself? If not, attend Church and  
discover what it is all about. Let's all understand the meaning of Christmas  
this year.

Don Shelton, pastor  
First Christian Church

## Promise to David

All of the familiar features of the Christmas story go back to God's Promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 for added emphasis and fuller meaning. These are the star, a sceptre, "the King of the Jews," Bethlehem, and the voice of an angel announcing, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

May God forbid that we permit this glorious promise given to David to become buried under the wrappings, ribbon, tinsel, and excelsior of the Christmas tree this year. Let us push back the fanfare and celebration in order that we might worship Him, acknowledge His Kingship, bow to His sceptre, be subject to His throne, and look for Him Who is coming, "Lord of Lords and King of Kings."

Jay Rowley, pastor  
Friendship Baptist Church, Lexington

## Exchanging gifts is appropriate

Among the special joys of Christmas is the giving and receiving of gifts; a process completed as gifts are unwrapped, opened, enjoyed, and as thanks are said. This is appropriate, since the origin and core of Christmas has to do with a gift - God's unspeakable gift to us. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." As we open our gifts this Christmas, let's not forget to open our hearts to Jesus, the gift beyond all gifts, and to thank God for Him, for "...whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The Rev. Rick Everson, pastor  
Hope-Valby Lutheran Parish

## Elks slate Dec. 22 party

The Heppner Elk's Lodge will be holding its annual Tom and Jerry Party this Saturday, Dec. 22 starting at 6 p.m. There will be live music and dancing.

Also a reminder that this is the last week to buy your discount tickets for the New Year's Eve crab feed at the Elks.

Buy your ticket before Friday, Dec. 21 and save \$2.50 on each ticket, says club manager Dallas Harsin.

"We'll be serving whole crab this year, and we'll even supply the bibs. It's going to be a lot of fun," he said.

## Legion & Aux. slate Xmas party

The American Legion and Auxiliary will hold a Christmas party at the home of Clayton and Evelyn Sweek Friday, Dec. 21 from 7-9 p.m. said an organization spokesperson.



AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenus was governor of Syria.)

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: (because he was of the house and lineage of David)

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger: because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

St. Luke 2:1-20

## Blessed are the peace makers

"Blessed are the peacemakers," said Jesus, "for they shall be called children of God." The Prince of Peace came to us, showing us how to be peacemakers through love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

Peace is too rare in this world... wars continue; only a minority experience life in its fullness; conflict rages in families. We need peacemakers.

The babe born in a humble manger is our source of peace. Through him we have the strength to be peacemakers in this season and throughout the year, and by sharing love, showing acceptance, and daring to forgive freely.

Peace be with you.

Cathy Barker, pastor  
Ione United Church of Christ

## Is your tree ready?

Is your tree up and decorated? A common question for this time of year. It sure wouldn't seem like Christmas without decorated trees, would it?

The Bible tells about many different kinds of trees. In the Gospel of John, Chapter 15, we find Jesus talking about Himself as a tree. In verse one, chapter 15, Jesus said, "I am the True Vine." To sustain life, the branches must be connected to the vine which gives them life. We are the branches that carry the beauty of God's love to the world. If branches bare no fruit they are cut off, thrown into the fire, the Bible tells us.

Let us look at what our Christmas trees could remind us of. The lights represent the saviour, Jesus the light of the world. We also are to be lights to shine God's love to others in a dark world. The colorful ornaments are the fruit of the spirit that should be coming from our lives such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self control (Galatians 5:22-23). Garland can be a reminder of God's continuing love, protection, and blessings to His people. The angel or star on top points us upward toward heaven to the God who loved us so much He sent His Son Jesus to another tree. This tree is not so beautiful in appearance, but is beautiful to those who come to it and find new direction for their lives. This tree is called the Old Rugged Tree or the Cross where Jesus died for the sins of the world. That my friend is the reason for Christmas.

As you see these Christmas decorations this season, may they be reminders of what they represent. Is your tree (Life) ready for Christmas?

Rev. Floyd Wilks, pastor  
Heppner Church of the Nazarene

## A most precious gift

Christmas time is special; a different time for families and friends. We sing "O come, O come, Emmanuel" as a way of preparation in our lives for the marking of that very special event that changed human history once and forever. A child is born who is to be King of Kings, not as a king ought to be born, as judged by our material standards, but in a lowly miserable fashion, amongst animals and their smell and in their habitat. We marvel at such a birth and birth place. Why do we marvel?

What is there that is so special, so marked about this birth from so many others of the first century? Do we marvel because God's humor shines bright as the Morning Star in and through such a humble beginning? Is it because from this birth comes the One who will redeem each of us in our brokenness and our estrangement and alienation, that we marvel? Or, does it move to a much deeper, personal level of our beings, that place unseen by others that makes us stop and reflect on the who we are in our lives and relationships that cause us to marvel that God should love you and you, or

yes, even me, in such a way that marks us as "Special handling required" "Fragile"? So special in fact, that God's word made flesh, is come amongst us to redeem us, by His Birth, His Death, and his Resurrection. A most precious gift of life, unearned, misunderstood, but a gift of Gifts, from a Loving God that has ransomed each of us just by this humble birth, that we mark this season and every Christmas Season. But God is not with us only at Christmas time. (Emmanuel is Hebrew for God is with us) God, just because of this humble birth is with us all, always. May you all have a most Joyous Christ's Mass.

The Rev. Ed Watts  
All Saints' Episcopal Church

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