

Happy Birthday Gentle Savior

The Good News

By Pastor Stan Hoobing, Hope, Valby Lutheran church

We look for "good news" in big, brightly decorated wrapped packages under the Christmas tree, a million dollar lottery ticket, a generous retirement fund or an all-expense paid trip to southern California for the Rose Bowl.

People living thousands of years ago in ancient Palestine thought that "good news" would come in the form of a ruler from the grand and glorious dynasty of David in the rich and well to do city of Jerusalem. God had other ideas. He was going to bring "good news" in a leader who would administer justice and righteousness, care and protection and lasting peace, not from the "holy city" Jerusalem, but from a small insignificant village, Bethlehem.

God in his own time and own way did provide "good news". Jesus the Christ, God's chosen "good news", was born not in the palace of kings and royalty, but in a manger in a stable behind a third rate inn in a village called Bethlehem. And he was hailed as "good news of great joy for all people" by an angel, visited by some lowly shepherds, and foreigners who traversed afar on seeing the rising of his star.

God continues to come to us with "good news" of justice, righteousness, care, protection and peace in simple yet profound ways. He comes in the reading of His word, water in baptism, and bread and wine of holy communion, as the prophet Micah tells us:

"But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrath, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days...And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord in the majesty of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace". Micah 5:2, 4-5a NRSV.

"Follow Me"

Willow Creek Branch

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

At this holy season, when we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we extend our love and special greeting to all. We bear witness that Jesus of Nazareth, born of Mary on a joyful night long ago, is the Savior of all mankind. We pray for the peace that only He can give.

For nearly 2,000 years Jesus Christ has been an inspiration to millions. The Christmas spirit is the Spirit of Christ. It makes our hearts glow with brotherly love and friendship and prompts us to kind deeds of service.

Love for God our Father, for Jesus Christ and for one another should be our Christmas theme now and always.

During His earthly ministry, the Savior blessed the sick. He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead.

Through the ages, His ministry has always been the same: "Follow Me". As we follow his footsteps today, we too, have opportunities to bless the lives of others. Chances to render service come to everyone. Whom can you help this Christmas? Who awaits your visit?

There is yet time this year to extend your helping hand and loving heart to some of our Heavenly Father's children. As we serve Him in this way, we are surely following His son.

May the Christmas season find love and a desire to help others abiding in our hearts and homes. And when the Christmas observance is over and we are filled with the Spirit of Him whose birth we celebrate, let us continue to follow Him.

May God be with you this season and always.

Joy to the World

By Rev. Lea Mathieu, Ione United Church of Christ

We sing about it, we read about it, we expect it at Christmas. But what, really, is joy?

It differs from happiness, that wonderful, fleeting feeling of warmth and cheer that comes with our lucky or hard-won fortune in things and love. Happiness is a gift to be treasured, but it is not a foundation to rely on, nor should happiness be the goal of our being.

Joy, though, is as rock-solid as the faith on which we stand. Our deepest joy comes not from our external circumstances, but from our central and eternal identity as God's beloved children. Happiness is a gift, but joy is our heritage.

Spiritual joy comes from being "anchored in love" not just the love we share with each other, for which we give thanks, but anchored in the love of God, which no one can give to or take from us. This is the joy that comes from being rooted in the "ground of all being", a wonderful name for God, conjuring up limitless nurture and sustenance and growth.

At Christmas, this joy comes from knowing that divine love became incarnate in the life of Jesus Christ just for us, through the sheer exuberant grace of God. And through him, "beloved, we are God's children now" (1 John 3:2). This is the fountain of our joy.

But "joy to the world" is not a seasonal gift. As believers we are challenged to live and share Paul's command to "rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

May this joy be yours, be deep and be for always. Amen.

Known Gift! or Concealed Surprises?

By Pastor Duane Jones, Nazarene Church

Some years ago my parents had very little money to get one another a present for Christmas. It was agreed, with what money they had, one gift would be purchased for both of them. For a long time they had desired an electric typewriter. So one was purchased. Once home the "gift" was carefully wrapped and put under the tree. On Christmas morning they jointly unwrapped it and set it out for all visitors to see. They could not have been happier.

We should all be thankful that God used the same example for us. How good would your chances be of getting into heaven without God's help. You and I could only guess at those things that we could try, to please God, to win in His favor. Even assuming that "Heaven" actually existed.

Here is some good news. Not only has God assured us that there is a "Heaven", He has also sent us a gift with a personal messenger to tell us how to get there. He sent Jesus Christ, His Son. And God paid the highest price possible for this gift. The price was the death of Jesus on the cross. The gift of your salvation was not only paid for in full, it was then given to you and me at no cost. Through the grace of God, this gift is free. No surprises.

How would you feel if you were to hunt and search and guess all your life long as to "how to get to Heaven" only to find out that you missed the requirements. Whether you missed heaven by just a little bit or by a lot, you would be discouraged (and

probably mad at God). What you were searching for was a concealed surprise. Even today God gives you a personal choice of believing in Him or not. But the choice is yours.

The Word of God tells us in John 3:36 what the concealed surprise is: "Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him". However, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life".

We celebrate Christmas in thanksgiving for the gift of "life" through the birth of Jesus Christ. Christians follow Jesus Christ not out of fear of Him, nor that we will miss heaven. No, we follow Christ because He has shown to us the way to heaven. Fellow Christians, we can rest assured that we have the known gift from God, and in that gift, there are no concealed surprises.

Don't Be Afraid

Pastor Perry Melnychenko, Seventh-Day Adventist Church

A cold night. A warm fire. Shepherd watching over their flocks. The angelic host.

We can repeat the story without even thinking about it. Pretty sad actually. We've become so familiar with the story of Christmas that its impact is diminished. And yet if there was ever a time when we needed the "Good News" that the angels heralded over the hillside, it's today. Ours is the age of the phobia. A time when people live from fear to fear. Consumed by the cares of life. Lives that teeter on the very brink of despair.

"Don't be afraid", came the angelic message to the shepherds that night so long ago. They weren't so different from you and me. It was more than a fear of their heavenly messenger that filled their hearts that frosty morning. They, too, knew what it was to live on the brink of despair. They, too, knew what it was to drink deeply of life's fears.

But the "Good News" that the angel brought would change all that. He was a message of peace. Not a peace grounded in some abstract ideology. Not a peace founded upon principle. But a peace rooted in flesh and blood. One that could weather any and all of life's fears. One that was incarnate in the baby in the manger, the Prince of Peace.

The invitation extended to the shepherds is open to all who desperately need relief from life's cares. Come to the stable and find the peace that can only come from the One who is peace.

On behalf of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church I would extend to you the invitation to allow Jesus to fill you with His gift of peace this season and in every season of life. To find in Him the hope and perfect love that casts out all fears.

"Don't be afraid".

The Gift of the Christ Child

Fr. Gerry Condon, St. Patrick's Catholic Church

The Christmas rush engrosses most of us--the cards, the carols, the creche scenes. Consumerism is pervasive, sentimentality surrounds us. Christmas would not be the same without these. However, we must look beyond these. When we do, we find that there are layers of this great mystery that we can explore each year. In reality, the gift of the Christ Child confounds, confronts, and comforts us.

The gift of the Christ Child confounds us. This is a mystery that baffles the mind. There is something about this Child, homeless, dependent, defenseless, that intrigues us. Even a casual thought questions our values for possessions and social status. This Child demonstrates that we really do not need all those things that consumerism wants us to have. In fact, He shows us that we are precious for we also are children of God.

This Child confronts us. Rich and poor, kings and shepherds, come to worship Him. He does not put labels on them. He accepts them irrespective of their nationality, skin color, or philosophical persuasion. So, He challenges us to question our prejudices, and if need be, to let go of them.

The gift of the Christ Child comforts us. What image can more effectively evoke hope in our lives than a little child. In the presence of a child, we feel strong. The very dependence of a child makes us draw on all our resources. It even enables us to overcome our fears. Is it any wonder that from the Christ Child comes the light of hope that darkness cannot overcome.

This Christmas let the gift of the Christ Child confound our minds, confront our weakness, and comfort us with the gift of his life.

It Takes Fellowship to Grow

Rev. Bob Dowrey, Heppner United Methodist Church

Even during the Christmas season we all need encouragement in Christian fellowship. "All the believers were together and had all things in common" Acts 2:44. This is our goal.

A story is told of a person who received two angel fish for Christmas. One of them died, and the other one seemed to be sluggish and sick. It lost much of its activity. When the new angel fish were introduced into the tank the lonely one became lively and swam around with them.

These fish remind us that we lose something if we try to live our Christian lives in isolation. Jesus was born into this world on Christmas day to help us overcome our isolation from God. We need worship and fellowship to grow in grace, strengthen our love for God and our faith, and to commit ourselves to God's service.

May God bless you and yours this season.

Bad News Self Fulfilling

The Rev. Alfred F. Miller, All Saints' Episcopal Church

Amongst the many and varied headlines of our daily lives, God steps in and causes us to pause. We are often told bad news (not in the local paper of course) at a rate of five to 10 times more often than good news. We are so often told that we cannot keep up with the pace of new change in our culture. I believe the more bad news we hear, the more we are told we are out of control; the more true this all becomes because we believe it. This is the nature of self-fulfilling prophecy.

At Christmas we pause due to traditions, celebrations and remembrances. This "pause" is a Godly moment. And this moment is filled with "Good News". God has become one of us to draw us closer to God. Jesus is the climax of God's creative, loving work on earth. The Lord God has constantly communicated good news to those who follow in the way. From since the beginning of time has been loving humankind. At Christmas, we remember this.

So, we give gifts because God loves us. We receive gifts because that is what God has offered to us. We share good news even in the midst of troubled hearts, broken lives and an unprecedented culture of change. In our hearts and minds we pause and care for God's gift of life in Jesus Christ because he wants to touch us.

May God bless you, your family and all those you love as you take leave this Christmas.

Christmas church services announced

St. Patrick's and St. Williams Catholic Church
St. Patrick's and St. Williams churches have announced their Christmas schedule.

Saturday, Dec. 24, St. Patrick's will hold a vigil Mass at 9 p.m. with the children's candlelight procession and the blessing of the manger scene.

On Christmas Day, Christmas Mass will be held at 11 a.m. with the singing of Christmas carols.

St. Williams Church in Ione will hold their Christmas day Mass with the singing of Christmas carols at 8:45 a.m.

United Methodist Church

Christmas Eve services Saturday, Dec. 24, at Heppner United Methodist Church will be held at 10 p.m. In addition to the choir singing, there will be solos and congregational singing. Everyone is invited to attend.

Christmas day service will be held at 10:30 a.m. "Come and celebrate both the Lord's day and our Savior's birth at the same time," said the Rev. Bob Dowrey.

Hope-Valby Lutheran church

"Candles, Carols and Communion" will be the theme of this year's Christmas Eve Service at the Hope-Valby Lutheran parish. Pastor Stan Hoobing will preach on the theme of "A Light In Our Darkness" based on the scripture reading of Isaiah 9:2-7.

Service at Valby Lutheran church located on the Ione-Gooseberry Road, will begin at 6 p.m. Sarah Carlson will sing a special selection "O Holy Night" and Rikka Tews will accompany the congregation and the soloist on the organ.

An outdoor lighting arrangement will greet the worshippers at the 9 p.m. service at Hope Lutheran Church in Heppner.

A joint church service with the Hope-Valby Lutheran parish and All Saints Episcopal church will be held at the Hope Lutheran church on Christmas day. Service will begin at 10:30 a.m. This special "Carols and The Word" service will feature Dr. Jeanne Berretta accompanying the congregation on the piano. Special preacher will be Ms. Rachel Hoobing, a senior from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA. Her Christmas day sermon will be entitled "King of Hearts".

Monday, Dec. 26, Pastor Stan, Carol, Rachel and Matt Hoobing will host the family's annual Christmas open house for members and friends of the Lutheran congregations. The open house will be held at the Lutheran parsonage from 2 to 8 p.m.

PUBLIC NOTICE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF MORROW

ESTATE OF:
ROY W. LINDSTROM,
Deceased.

No. 94-PR-029
NOTICE TO
INTERESTED PERSONS

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been appointed and has qualified as the personal representative of the estate. All persons having claims against the estate are hereby required to present the same, with proper vouchers, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, as stated below, to the personal representative at: P.O. Box 218, Pendleton, Oregon 97801 or they may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings in this estate may obtain additional information from the records of the court, the personal representative or the attorney for the personal representative.

Dated and first published:
December 14, 1994

Katherine G. Lindstrom
Personal Representative
P.O. Box 363
Ione, Oregon 97843

LAWRENCE B. REW OSB
#61072

COREY, BYLER, REW,
LORENZEN & HOJEM
Of Attorneys for Personal
Representative

222 S.E. Dorion Avenue
P.O. Box 218
Pendleton, Oregon 97801
503-276-3331

Published: December 14, 21
and 28, 1994

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Morrow County Court is accepting applications for one person from the Irrigon area to serve a four year term on the Morrow County Planning Commission. A letter of interest should be submitted to the Morrow County Court, P.O. Box 788, Heppner, Oregon 97836 by December 31, 1994

Morrow County Court
Published: December 14 and
21, 1994

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF SESSION MORROW COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

Notice is hereby given that on January 9, 1995, at 9:00 a.m., the Board of Equalization of the County of Morrow, Oregon, will meet at the County Courthouse in Heppner, Oregon, to:

Hear petitions for reduction of the real market or assessed value of property as of July 1.

Hear petitions to excuse penalties for late filing of real or personal property returns.

Act on recommendations from the assessor made under ORS 308.242 when no petition has been filed.

Petitions for reduction of the real market or assessed value of property must be filed with the clerk of the board not later than December 31, 1994.

A schedule of hearings for those who request to be present will be posted 48 hours prior to the meetings at the Morrow County Courthouse.

Executive sessions may be held during the session as required by ORS 308.290(7), ORS 308.411, and ORS 308.413.

All other hearing will be scheduled as time allows. If you have requested to be present at the hearing you will be notified of the time and place to appear. Contact the Board of Equalization for further information.

It shall be the duty of the persons interested to appear at the time and place appointed.

Barbara Bloodworth,
County Clerk

Morrow County, Oregon
Dated at Heppner, Oregon this
21st day of December, 1994
Published: December 21, 28,
1994; and January 4, 1995

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Morrow County Public Works Department is accepting sealed bids for one (1) new 1994 model light truck with standard cab and chassis heavy duty frame, big block engine, 5 speed manual/4 speed automatic transmission, dual rear wheels, GVW 15,000 lbs, 155-160 inch wheel base, air conditioning. Bids will be opened on Wednesday, December 28, 1994 at 10:00 a.m. in the public works office located at Lexington, Oregon. Award of bid by Morrow County will be based upon most responsible bid submitted. Morrow County reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Morrow County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, National origin, sex, religion, age and handicapped status in employment or the provision of services.

Published: December 14 and
21, 1994

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Morrow County Court is accepting applications for one person from the Heppner area to serve a four year term on the Morrow County Planning Commission. A letter of interest should be submitted to the Morrow County Court, P.O. Box 788, Heppner, Oregon 97836 by December 31, 1994

Morrow County Court
Published: December 14 and
21, 1994

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Morrow County Court is accepting applications for one person from the Irrigon area to serve a four year term on the Morrow County Planning Commission. A letter of interest should be submitted to the Morrow County Court, P.O. Box 788, Heppner, Oregon 97836 by December 31, 1994

Morrow County Court
Published: December 14 and
21, 1994