

# Words of Christmas inspiration...

## The God of Surprise

A certain Jewish baby, conceived out of wedlock, born into poverty in a backwater region of the Roman Empire, is not only remembered but celebrated and worshiped more than 2000 years later. Surprise!

The significance of that birth was announced by angels not to his parents, not to the governing authorities, but to no-count shepherds in the middle of nowhere. Surprise!

That baby was the creator of the universe, and yet he chose to put on human skin and experience suffering and insult and betrayal and an excruciating death he had the power to avoid. Surprise!

That baby grew up to be an itinerant preacher with a short career and a reputation for hanging out with despicable characters and engaging in questionable behavior—sitting down to dinner with liars and cheats, feeding the hungry for free, forgiving

the undeserving, healing on the wrong day of the week, chastising respectable religious authorities, claiming God as father. No surprise: behavior like that got him killed.

That baby had no place to lay his head right from the start, and not until the Friday he was laid to rest in a tomb—a temporary rest, followed by the greatest surprise of all: his Sunday eruption out of that tomb, when he burst forth from death into life.

Every surprise—his birth, his ministry, his death, his resurrection—was directed toward the same end: to teach us about God's love, to free us from slavery to sin, and to restore our broken relationship with the God whose love for us, surprisingly, never ends.

This Christmas, consider celebrating the God of Surprise with a little surprise of your own. Give an unexpected gift

to someone who can't (or won't) gift you back. Love that Christ Child by loving your neighbor with the gift of a shoveled walk, or a loaf of bread, or a listening ear, or some other creative gift you haven't thought of yet. Be a surprise, and then experience the surprise of being filled full with joy.

"May Jesus himself and God our Father, who reached out in love and surprised you with gifts of unending help and confidence, put a fresh heart in you, invigorate your work, enliven your speech" (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 The Message).

*Pastor Katy Anderson  
Hope Lutheran Church  
and All Saints Episcopal Church*

The shared ministry of Hope and All Saints will celebrate Christmas Eve at All Saints with a service of lessons and carols, candle lighting and communion beginning at 7 p.m.

## The Real Christmas

Luke 1:67-79—"Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 'Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham: to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by

the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'" (NKJV)

This prophecy, given by Zacharias, is commonly referred to as the benedictus. Zacharias had lost his voice when he doubted the angel of the Lord who told him that he and Elizabeth (his wife) would conceive and have a child in their old age. After Zacharias revealed the name John to the crowd, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and uttered this benediction after being given back his voice. John was only the forerunner to Christ. John was born approximately six months before Christ.

Luke's version of the benedictus reveals the reason why we celebrate the real Christmas. God gave us the gift of His Son, conceived in Mary

by the Holy Spirit (by God), before she knew a man. Jesus, as God's only Son, would grow up, be crucified, and God would raise Him up on the third day, conquering death and sin and providing a way of salvation to those who put their faith and trust in Him.

There are some who say that Christmas can mean many things to different beliefs. Some just call it a holiday. An atheist recently put up a beer cross. (I'm not sure of the meaning.) When I see these different ideas and statements, I thank God that we have the freedom to express all of these views. We should pray every day and thank our Creator (Jesus Christ) that we have the freedom to express the real meaning of Christmas—the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior!

Have a joy-filled Christmas,  
*Sam Bellamy  
Heppner Christian Church*

## Boardman 4-H club helps with tree lighting



The Boardman 4-H Community Club recently helped out at the Boardman Chamber of Commerce Christmas Tree Lighting event held Dec. 4. Pictured are (back) Emily Taylor, Taylor Hamby, Glaya Baker, Rex Neilson, (middle) Brianna Snyder, Isabella Ganvoa, Santa, Jared Snyder, (front) Megan Gilbertson, Makaila Lantis, Will Keefer and Cheryl Taylor. Not pictured: Malysa Smith and Skylar Wightman. —Contributed photo

## Heppner TSA successful at regional competition



Front: Rylee Wagoner, Jake Lindsay, Bryan Fowler, Daichi Walters, Kolby Currin and Kai Arbogast. Back: Kaelyn Lindsay, Tim Jaca, Logan Grieb, Jesse Boyd and Cade Arbogast. —Contributed photo

The Heppner Technology Student Association Chapter competed in three events on Thursday, Dec. 12, at Blue Mountain Community College.

The Heppner team won first and second place in Flight Endurance, second and third place in Structural Engineering, and second place in Manufacturing Prototype.

Flight Endurance involves building a rubber-band powered airplane and getting it to fly as long as possible.

The task in Structural Engineering was to build a beam truss that would hold as much weight as possible but be as light as possible.

Manufacturing Prototype challenged the students to design and build 20 Christmas toys. Heppner designed and produced a Race Car Board Game.

The toys were then divided up among all the teams competing and donated to charity.

Students used skills learned in class and spent many hours outside of class

time at TSA work sessions to prepare for the events.

The next competition is Feb. 27 and will include Architectural Renovation, Lego Robotic, 3D Modeling and Promotional Graphics.

The last regional competition is May 1 with Fashion Design, Dragster Design and Technology Problem Solving.

A number of Heppner's TSA students, along with advisor Dave Fowler, are beginning their plans for attending the National TSA Competition in Washington, DC held June 2014.

## Sheriff's Report

**October 17:** -Morrow County Sheriff's Office received report of a dog barking for two days straight on Church St. in Heppner. A deputy checked the area and was unable to locate anything.

-MCSO received report of a woman and a heavy set dark haired man in a white SUV with two antennas, possibly with the press trespassing on Depot Lane in Irrigon.

-MCSO received report from an Irrigon woman that she was assaulted the previous day by an unknown man possibly looking for her husband.

-MCSO received report from someone with

the Oregon Trail Library District that someone had set up a camp on the creek behind the library in Heppner.

-MCSO received report from a Heppner subject that dogs were being severely neglected at a residence. The caller said the dogs were tied up with no food, water or shelter. A deputy responded and determined that the dogs were healthy with plenty of food and water.

-MCSO, Boardman Ambulance, Boardman Fire received request for an ambulance for an 81-year-old male with chest pains and having trouble breathing in Boardman.

The patient was transported by ambulance to Good Shepherd Hospital in Hermiston.

-MCSO received report that Multnomah County Sheriff's Office arrested Jean Jacques Blondeau, 43, on a Morrow County Circuit Court warrant for Failure to Appear/Possession of Methamphetamine. He was lodged at Multnomah County Jail with \$10,000 bail.

-MCSO received report of suspicious activity on Homestead Lane in Boardman. The caller advised that his daughter saw an older white Dodge pickup pull up to their shop and another subject came over and got in the vehicle. A deputy responded, but was unable to locate the vehicle.

-MCSO received report from a man in Irrigon that someone hit his car while it was parked at the Irrigon Shell. MCSO responded.

-MCSO received report from an Irrigon man that an

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If you are a resident of Morrow County and you wish to take advantage of the services above or desire more information, Please call any of the following numbers to set up a LOCAL appointment or just to talk:

Bobby Harris @ 541-676-9925 or 541-256-0175  
Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) @ 541-676-9161