

# and hope from area churches

## Joy to the World!

Joy? Really? It's been a hard year for a lot of people. So many well-loved members of this community have been laid to rest. Our country has been battered by violence, fierce weather, and an extraordinarily contentious election that has exaggerated our differences. Around the globe, thousands have been victimized by acts of terror, warfare, starvation—and by drowning, in an effort to flee those threats. For many people, joy has been very hard to come by this year. Fear seems like a better fit with reality.

But on Christmas, we're confronted with an angel who disagrees: "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people" (Luke 2:10). We're reminded that, thanks to God's limitless love and boundless generosity, we have access to joy of a different quality and kind than the fleeting emotion we've been missing. This joy isn't dependent on external facts, but on eternal truths. The birth of Jesus and his ministry, death and resurrection shine light and hope into every darkness, and give us reason to be joy-filled people even when, in the world around us, nothing seems right. When Jesus lights our way, we can have lasting joy at the core of our being—whether we're happy or sad, confident or fearful—because Jesus has shown us just how much we're loved and forgiven by the God who cared about us so much that he put on human skin and entered this messy world to prove it. God loves us. Period. Those who believe it get to experience a variety of joy that nothing—no sickness, no loss, no disaster—has the power to uproot from their hearts.

This Christmas, open your Bible and meet joy in the manger once more. Nurture that joy all year long with gratitude, generosity and compassion. But beware; joy can be highly contagious. This whole corner of the planet could get infected, one person at a time. Now wouldn't that be one of the best Christmas surprises ever?

Joy to the world indeed. Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing.

*Rev. Katy Anderson,  
Shared Ministry of Hope Lutheran and All Saints Episcopal churches*

## Let's Be Like Christ This Christmas

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, may we ever remember that He is the light and the way. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life'" (John 8:12).

Let's be more like Christ during this time of year. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). One of the best ways to let your light shine is to serve one another. As we strive to become more like Christ we will feel the love that our father in heaven has for each one of us.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20).

"And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophecy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26).

Christmas is all about Christ. Christ has set the example. May we ever remember to feast upon His words and do those things that we know to be right. During Christmas this year may we all give thanks to Christ for the many blessings He has given us.

*Elders Hall and Holliday,  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*

## The Manger and the Mandate to Love

A message from God, whispered by an angel. The simple, incorruptible faith of a young woman. The courage of her man.

An arduous journey. Nowhere to rest. A baby is born who lies nestled among God's creatures in a manger.

The angels sing and shepherds appeared to gaze lovingly upon the scene. A star shines bright for all the world to see.

The timeless story of the Nativity. Told and re-told throughout the ages.

Many of us will gather on Christmas Eve to hear the story one more time through scripture and song.

In our mind's eye we will see a beautiful baby Jesus, swaddled in old cloth, held tightly by his mother Mary while Joseph and the shepherds look on and animals mill about the stable.

Humankind's first glimpse of Christ the Lord, the King of Kings.

So warm and inviting. So nostalgic.

And for all that the Christmas season brings—for every Christmas story recounted in the Bible—we must remember this birth is the beginning. "Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

God's promise fulfilled. What a wonderful story.

But what comes next is where we, as loving, caring, human beings fit into the equation. "... And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

This is God's mandate for us.

As a community of believers it is our responsibility to look beyond the baby in the manger and reach out to all God's children. All. No exceptions.

Because the child in that manger is every child in the world. Like Syrian, Afghan or Somalian children trying to flee their war-torn countries or babies from Yemen or Ethiopia who are dying by the thousands from starvation.

The abused. The homeless. Those who have no access to healthcare or schooling or skills to keep their bodies safe from harm.

God calls us, every one of us, to do all we can and more.

We must open our eyes, our hearts and finally lend our voices loudly so no child in our city, on our own block or in a neighborhood across town goes without the basics of food, clothing and shelter and the love Jesus insists we share.

Our job is to spread that light that shone over the manger so the message of the adult Jesus to "care for the least of these" can come to fruition through our actions.

Our wish for the world is that the promise of that baby, born so long ago, becomes manifest through us all.

Blessings,  
*Patty Nance, Pastor  
Heppner United Methodist Church*

## Christmas Thoughts

Merry Christmas from Heppner Christian Church to everyone who reads these words. It is our prayer that you enjoy the traditions of Christmas, of decorated trees, lighted houses, dinner with family and sharing in the giving and receiving of gifts. Many of you will travel great distances to be with loved ones while others are fortunate to have family just down the street or out in the country a few minutes away. In all of your celebration it is our desire that you do not forget the real reason for Christmas and what it is truly about.

Christmas is the greatest love story to ever unfold to and for humanity. It goes beyond anything novelists, playwrights or movie directors can think of and write or portray in a movie.

Christmas is the story of God the creator's love for mankind, His creation. When we read the story of the birth of Jesus the Messiah in Luke 2 we are reading of the love God has for each of us. It is a story that is not for children only; it is a story for all of mankind no matter their gender, race, political affiliation or age.

However, it is not the end of the story but just the beginning of the story. When we read all the book of Luke, we find the baby (God in the flesh) in the manger grew up and became a man who truly lived among mankind. A man who fed the hungry, healed the sick, walked on water and turned water into wine. A man who had empathy for those whose loved ones were sick or had died. A man who made the religious leaders of His day very uncomfortable and, for that matter, makes many of our religious leaders today very uncomfortable.

Jesus (God in the flesh) did more than just love you and me; He was willing to sacrifice Himself so that we can have eternal life with Him in Heaven. As we celebrate Christmas this week I pray that we do not lose sight of why, on that night long ago in the little town of Bethlehem, the child was born to a virgin.

Let us not forget it was not breaking news on CNN or Fox News which announced His birth. It was announced by angels sent by God to tell the world what had happened. That the long-awaited Messiah had arrived. The promise was fulfilled and salvation had come for all of mankind. The love story was beginning to unfold for all of mankind to see.

Maybe Charlie Brown said it best when asked "What is love, Charlie Brown?"

"A man, called Jesus," was his reply.  
Enjoy love this season. Enjoy Jesus.  
*Minister Ray DeLoe,  
Heppner Christian Church*



## Weather doesn't stop annual Heppner Christmas event

-From PAGE ONE

Even though there was plenty of snow and ice on the ground on Thursday, it didn't stop Heppner Chamber's annual Christmas event. There was a meal served by the Heppner Elementary Parent/Teacher Club, a no-host bar set up by Bucknum's, elves to pose for pictures, Santa and, of course Scrooge (who gave out a few \$10 rewards cards, much to his chagrin). Altogether, there were 50 gift cards/certificates and 243 prizes distributed to those who shopped locally and participated in the reward cards program.

Prizes were donated by our local merchants: Cornerstone, Mustang Diner, Morrow County Grain Growers, Peterson

Jewelers, Dr. Dick Temple, Heppner High School, Bucknum's, Heppner Market Fresh Foods, Gateway Café, Murray's, Wood on Wood, Artisan Village, Dennis and Babette Wall, Heppner Auto Parts, Les Schwab, Pettyjohn's, Andrea Di Salvo-Usborne Books, Devin Oil/Shell Station; Devin Mobile-US Cellular, Hair I Am, Hair Expressions, Head to Toes Salon, Petra Payne-Scent-sy, Kellie Gray, and Brannon's Auto Repair

Prizes also were donated by out-of-town merchants: Alive & Well, Walmart, Hales Restaurant, Bi-Mart, Route 74, Starbucks - Hermiston and Pendleton, Columbia Center Mall, Hamley's Steakhouse, O So Kleen, Ranch and Home, Pend-



Steve Rhea doesn't look so Scrooge-like posing with Koooper Miller (left) and Cage Chandler at the Celebrate Heppner Christmas event last week. -Photo by David Sykes

leton Round-Up, Olive house, Outback, Prodigal Garden, PF Chang's, Cottage Flowers, Smitty's Ace Hardware, Texas Road-

# NOW HIRING DRIVERS

**MILES & MILES OF SMILES**

**Our success... It's All About Kids, Employees, & Customers!!**  
Mid Columbia Bus Company provides a family atmosphere for the employees to come to work each day and know they are appreciated.

**NOW HIRING SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS**  
Starting Wage \$11.75/Hr.  
Apply at:  
Mid Columbia Bus Co.  
541-676-5861 541-481-7551

## YOUR LAST MINUTE GIFT HEADQUARTERS!

LOOKING FOR UNIQUE CHILDREN'S TOYS? WE CAN HELP!

**Gift Cards**  
Espresso Cards

**SMALL APPLIANCES IN STOCK**

ELECTRIC KETTLES  
CROCK POTS  
WAFFLE MAKER  
FULL LINE PREP WORKS  
KITCHEN GADGETS

Floral Arrangements  
Centerpieces  
Customizeable Ornaments

**CHRISTMAS HOURS:**

December 24th closing 5 pm  
December 25th CLOSED ... Merry Christmas!  
December 26th open at 9 am.  
Pharmacy will be 1/2 day 2-6 pm- Floral dept. closed

**Check us out on facebook**

217 North Main St., Heppner Phone 676-9158 • Floral 676-9426 murraysdrug.com

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:  
**MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.**