

WISHING EVERYONE

God's gift to everyone

This time of year, if you look through the cards and listen to the carols long and hard enough, you might tumble to the fact that, as much as we love to give gifts, we're actually on the receiving end of the best gift ever: God Made Flesh, born to die and rise for us.

God offers this gift to everyone. Some let it drop to the ground, unopened. Some grab hold of it with both hands, but then misplace it among the presents under the tree, or simply lose track of it amid the distractions and demands of an ordinary day. But there are some who let that Best Gift Ever work in them and on them and transform them into more compassionate

people, more patient, more loving, more at peace, more like Jesus.

Look for them. Learn from them. Be one of them. They too are imperfect, and yet perfectly loved and forgiven by the Giver of all good gifts, the One we often sing about with our First Friday Friends of Jesus: "Alpha, Omega, Beginning and End . . . Savior, Messiah, Redeemer and Friend."

May Jesus, the best of all gifts, be your Prince of Peace not just for a season, but for a lifetime.

Rev. Katy Anderson
Hopeful Saints
Ministry
All Saints Episcopal
and Hope Lutheran

Christmas Messages Best gift ever

When I was a child, the best gift I ever got for Christmas was Ft. Apache – a plastic cavalry fort with plastic walls, a plastic blockhouse on one corner, plastic horses and plastic troopers that I could either put on the walls or jam on the horses. It beat the heck out of the sleeping bag I got the next year and the wrong sized cotton shirts I got every year from Grandma. Best gift ever....

Until I became a parent. For a lot of years, the best gift of Christmas was having the kids around the tree, just being family. As a kid I hated the annual Christmas family photo shoot, but when my kids were growing up I loved it. Oh, the neckties and the 142 piece socket wrench sets were nice, but it was just being together that made the season special.

Now, with the kids raising their own families and scattered here and there, the power of the Christmas season is, for me, found in being part of a community of care and love and grace – a community that seems

to come together each year about this time. It is the singing of carols together. It is the giving trees and the community outreach that tug at our hearts every Christmas. It is holding candles – real or electric – on Christmas Eve and singing "Silent Night".

It is love. Familial, community, spiritual, faith-based love that always seems to find its voice at Christmas – more so than at any other time during the year.

Each year, the faces that gather around the tree change a bit. Some are now long gone; some are still such recent losses that our hearts ache as we look at the seats they used to fill. All are at least one year older as the seasons change for each of us as well. Family changes, over time.

But the love, the Spirit of Christmas, holds fast to our hearts. And that is the best Christmas gift of all....better, even, than Ft. Apache.

Rev. Jim Monroe
Heppner United
Methodist Church

Who Is This Baby Boy?

If we look to the Bible to find out who this boy messiah is, there is only one answer. Isaiah 9:6 talks about this boy messiah hundreds of years before his birth by saying, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Notice some of the names given to this boy messiah:

"Counsellor," the same name given to the Holy Spirit, Comforter/Counselor (see John 16:7).
"The mighty God," because this boy was God Himself in the flesh (see John 1:1 and John 1:14).

"The everlasting Father," because when you have seen Him, you have seen the Father (see John 14:8, 9 and John 10:30).

The Bible says in Colossians 2:9, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The Bible appears to be saying in this text that in this baby boy resides all three persons of the Godhead: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

God is one (see Deuteronomy 6:4 and Mark 12:29). So who is this baby boy? This baby boy is none other than the fullness of the Godhead wrapped up in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world and the Messiah to come. Amazing!

Pastor Dean Lifshay
Heppner Seventh-Day
Adventist Church

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