



Yucca Breeze December 2020

THE UNITED CHURCHES OF HOT SPRINGS

PASTOR'S PULPIT:

CHRISTMAS GIVING

IRIS W. BRAY

Christmas is for giving
And for showing that we care,
For honoring the Christ Child
With the loving gifts we share

The wise men gave of riches;
The shepherds, faith and love.
Each gift, in its own measure,
Was smiled on from above.

Let every gift be treasured;
Not always size or price
Determines the extent of love
And willing sacrifice.

Handsome gifts with festive trim
Brings smiles of sweet content,
But modest gifts of humble means
Are oftentimes heaven sent.

Whether it be large or small
Each gift will share in part
The message of true Christmas joy
If given from the heart!



I love this poem: it reminds us that the real gift of Christmas is always in giving. The older I get, the more I realize that frankly, I really don't need a lot. In fact, I really don't need to "get" anything. Nowadays, I simply enjoy perusing, pondering and purchasing little things for the people that I truly love. Giving itself is the best gift that I get. Which kind of leads me to share the following Christmas poem. I share this almost every year, mainly because of its rich message of what being a pure hearted "giver" is all about:

The Story of the Christmas Guest

Helen Steiner Rice

It happened one day at December's end
Some neighbors called on an old-time friend.
And they found his shop so meager and mean,
Made gay with a thousand boughs of green.

And old Conrad was sitting with face ashine,
When he suddenly stopped as he stitched the twine.
And he said, "My friends, at dawn today,
When the cock was crowing the night away,

The Lord appeared in a dream to me.
And He said, 'I'm coming your guest to be.'
So I've been busy with feet astir,
Strewing my shop with branches of fir.

The Real Gift of Christmas

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The table is spread and the kettle is shined,
And over the rafters the holly is twined.
And now I'll wait for my Lord to appear;
And listen closely so I will hear,

His steps as He nears my humble place.
And I'll open the door and I'll look on His face."
Then his friends went home and left Conrad alone,
For this was the happiest day he had known.

For long since his family had passed away.
And Conrad had spent many a sad Christmas Day.
But he knew with the Lord as his Christmas Guest,
This Christmas would be the dearest and best.

So he listened with only joy in his heart,
And with every sound he would rise with a start,
And look for the Lord to be at his door,
Like the vision that he had had a few hours before.

So he ran to the window after hearing a sound,
But all he could see on the snow covered ground,
Was a shabby beggar whose shoes were torn.
And all his clothes were ragged and worn.

But old Conrad was touched, and he went to the door
And he said, "Your feet must be cold and sore.
I have some shoes in my shop for you.
And I have a coat to keep you warmer, too."

So with grateful heart the man went away.
But Conrad noticed the time of day
And he wondered what made the dear Lord so late,
And how much longer he'd have to wait.

Then he heard another knock, and he ran to the door,
But it was only a stranger once more.
A bent old lady with a shawl of black,
And a bundle of kindling piled on her back.

But she asked only for a place to rest,
a place that was reserved, for Conrad's great Guest.
Her voice seemed to plead, "Don't send me away,
Let me rest for awhile this Christmas Day."

So Conrad brewed her a steaming cup
And told her to sit at the table and sup.
After she had left, he was filled with dismay,
For he saw that the hours were slipping away

The Real Gift of Christmas

The Lord had not come as He said He would,
And Conrad felt sure he had misunderstood.
When out of the stillness, he heard a cry.
"Please help me and tell me - Where am I?"



So again he opened his friendly door,
And stood disappointed as twice before.
It was a child who had wandered away,
And was lost from her family on Christmas Day.

Again Conrad's heart was heavy and sad,
But he knew he could make this little girl glad.
So he called her in and he wiped her tears,
And he quieted all of her childish fears.

Then he led her back to her home once more,
And as he entered his own darkened door,
He knew that the Lord was not coming today,
For the hours of Christmas had all passed away.

So he went to his room, and he knelt down to pray.
And He said, "Lord, why did You delay?
What kept You from coming to call on me?
I wanted so much Your face to see."

Then softly, in the silence, a voice he heard.
"Lift up your head - I have kept My word.
Three times My shadow crossed your floor.
Three times I came to your lowly door.

I was the beggar with bruised, cold feet;
I was the woman you gave something to eat;
I was the child on the homeless street.
Three times I knocked, three times I came in,

And each time I found the warmth of a friend.
Of all the gifts, love is the best.
I was honored to be your Christmas guest.

*May Christ be your guest this season — Much Love and Many blessings,
Pastor David and Bernice*



**THE POWER
of a
SIMPLE
GIFT**

SHOE BOXES 2020
We Reached Our Goal
100 Boxes were filled!!
*May God bless the givers
and the receivers!!!*



The Real Gift of Christmas

(Continued From Page Two)

DECEMBER Birthdays:

8 Gordon Brooks
10 Nancy Cuckler
13 Pat Collogan
15 John Johnson
16 Lynn Buchholz
17 Jean Meadows
18 Mike Buchholz
20 Mark Posthumus
24 Don De Vries
26 Claude Bent



25 Jerry & Jeanne Wyatt
25 Wayne & Sally Hageman

If your name is not included on the Birthdays and Anniversaries list and you would like it to be added, please contact the church office by email: uc@gwtc.net or call 745-5640.

THIS AND THAT

EMERGENCY TEXT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

This service will enable us to send a notification in case church needs to be cancelled due to bad weather (or any other emergencies). *You have to opt in to be a part of this system of notifications.* If you wish to receive these texts, please provide your name and cell phone number by *calling the church office*, or by *sending an email to ucassist@gwtc.net*. Once your name is added, you will receive the following text message:

“Hi [Your Name], this is Pat De Smet (or Bernice Cook). I’m using Remind to send important updates. Reply YES to the above text and your name will automatically be added. Please ignore the text asking for your birthdate.”

ATTENTION BAPTISTS!!

Our local American Baptist Annual Denominational Meeting will be held Sunday, December 6th, at 11:15 am in the Fireside Room. In addition to the usual annual reports, elections, budget discussion and other business items, the meeting agenda will include discussion and action regarding mechanisms for welcoming new Members and calling special meetings. We hope to see all denominational members there! ~ Garry Strauser

THANK YOU FROM THE FAMILY OF JIGGS & LUCILLE MOWER

“My parents Jiggs and Lucille Mower were members of your church for over 40 years. They absolutely loved serving God at our church! Enclosed is a memorial check in their honor. Please use it for fellowship, designated for kitchen supplies, coffee, cookies, etc. I know soon our churches will be open again and the funds can be spent on necessary kitchen supplies. God Bless, Peg Waugh”

DECEMBER MISSION EMPHASIS:

Our Mission emphasis for the Month of November will be the *Hot Springs Ministerial Association’s Needy Fund*. Our December loose change offering will be donated to this mission. Giving envelopes for the month of December will have a line designation for this fund.

HAITI MISSION FUND RAISER:

On Friday, December 4th, Annie and crew will offering boxed dinners in the Lynn’s Dakotamart parking lot, **following the Journey of Lights Parade**. Donations will go the Haiti Mission. *This will be in lieu of the annual soup supper usually held in our Fellowship Hall.*

SUNDAY WORSHIP:

The Board of Trustees has approved moving our Sunday Worship Services back to the SANCTUARY, with **MASKS REQUIRED AT ALL TIMES IN THE BUILDING**. Several pews have been roped off to assist with social distancing. Viewing screens in the Fellowship Hall, Fireside Room and Bethany Room are also available.

Mark Your Calendar!

D2D Informational/Organizational Meeting

Sunday, January 17, 2021 — In the Fireside Room — 11:15—Noon

Watch for more details





HYMN HISTORY

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

Latin hymn from 12th century
English translation by John M. Neale, 1818-1866

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end. (Luke 1:32, 33)

The preparation for the celebration of our Lord's birth begins four Sundays before Christmas Day. This begins the period known as the Advent season. Advent centers on the Old Testament prophecies concerning a coming Messiah prophesied 600 years before His birth. At the time, the Jewish people were living in captivity in Babylon. For centuries thereafter, faithful Jews earnestly anticipated the Deliverer-Messiah with great longing and expectation, echoing the prayer that He would "ransom captive Israel." And finally, the long awaited heavenly announcement came – "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord!" (Luke 2:11).

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" was originally used in the medieval church liturgy as a series of antiphons — short musical statements that were sung for the week of vesper services just before Christmas Eve. Each of these antiphons greet the anticipated Messiah with one of the titles ascribed Him throughout the Old Testament: Wisdom, Emmanuel, The Lord of Might, The Rod of Jesse, Day Spring, and The Key of David.

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go. [Refrain]

3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the law,
In cloud and majesty and awe. [Refrain]

4 O come, Thou Rod of Jesse's stem,
From ev'ry foe deliver them
That trust thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. [Refrain]

5 O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. [Refrain]

6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadow put to flight. [Refrain]

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all humankind;
Bid thou our sad divisions cease,
And be thyself our Prince of Peace. [Refrain]

Bible References:

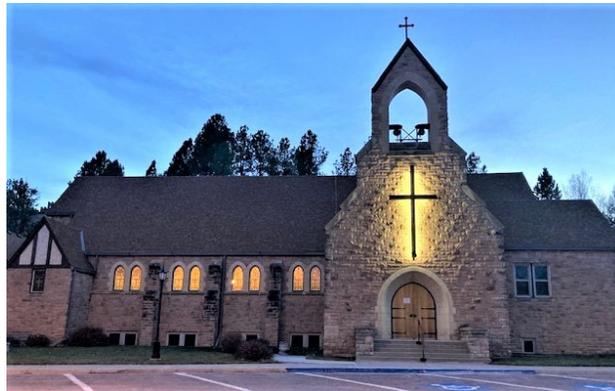
Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 11:1; 22:22; Matthew 1:22, 23; Luke 1:78, 79; Galatians 4:4,5.

Christ came not only to be the Emmanuel – "God with us" – but even in a more personal way, *God in us*. Carry this truth throughout the Advent Season.

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HOT SPRINGS, SD



Merry Christmas Blessings to All!

