



THE VISION

December 2021

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them and...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...”

Amen. Matthew 28:19-20

I enjoy reading Max Lucado’s devotionals! This devotion spoke to me, and I trust God will use it to speak to you.

“Call Him Jesus” the angel told them both because that is the name that means “The Lord is salvation” and this Lord, Jesus, is all about salvation. Salvation from sin, guilt, shame, death, and, yes, political mudslinging. Gabriel added, “he will be great.” Great enough to silence storms, banish demons, command viruses, vacate a few graves, including his own. He’s going to be great.

Do we not need a great king? This world is so chaotic, life is so fragile.

I’m for the Hope of Christmas. I am praying that He will do what our national leaders seem unable to do, calm us. Unite us. It’s going to take a miracle. Yet, if Christ is willing to show up in a barn, then a Senate Chamber and Oval Office are within his reach.

There is so much shouting going on. On the airwaves, shouting. On the news broadcasts, shouting. On social media, shouting. All sides, shouting.

We need calm and gratefully, we have it. It’s called Christmas.

Father Josef Mohr needed this reminder. He pastored the small church of Arnsdorf near Salzburg, Austria. The congregation, like the village, was comprised of simple people. They were farmers and woodworkers. There was more poverty than affluence. They worked long hours and endured harsh winters. Christmas was one of their few respites. The pastor did his best to make the holiday service special for his flock.

But this year, 1818, he had a problem. The organ had become unfit for use. It was old. Mice had eaten at the bellows. The church needed a new one. But they didn’t have the money. Father Mohr went

to his organist and expressed his chagrin, “We must have something special for midnight mass.”

What is Christmas, they wondered, without music? On the day before Christmas Eve, the Father was called to administer last rites to a dying woman. By the time he returned to Arnsdorf, the hour was late. The valley and the village lay in darkness. The priest paused on a height overlooking the town. The events had left him sad: the useless organ, the death of a parishioner, the cold night and long journey.

His heart, like the valley, was lost in shadows. But then he saw a faint light of a distant home. Against the black curtain of night, it shone even brighter. The priest pondered the light, then thought to himself: It must have been something like this—that silent, holy night in Bethlehem. Suddenly inspired, he hurried home, sat over his desk, and wrote:

*Silent Night, Holy Night,
All is dark, save the light,
Yonder where they sweet vigils keep,
O’er the Babe, who, in silent sleep,
Rests in heavenly peace,
Rests in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night, peaceful night,
Darkness flies, all is light;
Shepherds hear the angels sing.
Alleluia! Hail the King,
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.*

Upon arising the next morning, he took his lyrics to Franz Gruber, his organist. Within moments, Gruber imagined the perfect melody. When he sang the song to his wife, she told him, “We will die, you and I, but this song will live.”

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Deacon's Devotional

The Gift of Christmas

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

I once observed a little child when she was given a present. The wrapping paper was quickly removed. The box was opened and when she saw her present, her eyes lit up like any child's would. She played with her gift for a while. But soon, her attention shifted to the box and the colorful wrapping paper. I was amused to see her more interested in the box and the paper than in the actual gift she had been given.

We may laugh, but we often do the same at Christmas time. We celebrate Christmas with gusto, but our attention is often given more to the boxes and wrapping paper than to the actual Gift of Christmas. I'm not talking about the gifts we spend hours buying and exchanging at Christmas. I am referring to the greatest gift—the gift of God's Son, which Christmas celebrates.

Jesus is God's unique Gift to us; He is the "One and Only" (John 1: 14, 18). He is God's indescribable Gift to us (2 Corinthians 9:15). Nothing that we give and receive at Christmas can match God's Gift to us. He truly "pitched His tent among us" (John 1:14) and came as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (v. 29).

Tragically God's Gift was not well-received. This "world did not recognize him" and "his own did not receive him" (v. 10-11). Yet the promise remains, that all who received God's Gift would become the children of God (v. 12).

John's gospel points to the Gift of Christmas without any distractions or sentimentalities. There is just the Gift; no packaging or wrapping paper; not embellished with cultural and popular practices – so that we do not miss the Gift that is extended to us.

Today we face the danger of wrapping the Christmas Gift with cultural and sentimentalized trappings and commercial glitz – that serve to turn our attention away from the Gift of Christmas. May we not be like the little child who ignored the gift and played with the wrapping paper. Rather, may we receive into our hearts the best (and essential) Gift of Christmas from our Father in heaven. That is the best thing that can happen at Christmas.

Consider this:

- What can you do this Christmas season to stay focus on Jesus? What might possibly distract you?
- How might you celebrate Christmas differently this year at home or in church so that Jesus Christ remains as the main focus?

.....from Our Daily Bread adapted from Apprenticed to Jesus by Robert Solomon

I pray we will all accept this wonderful gift into our lives and honor and worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas to all, Buddy Hogge



Christmas Doves

"...and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove..." Matthew 3:16

Would you like to place a Dove on the tree in memory or in honor of a loved one? A dove can be placed for a minimum of a \$5.00 donation, but more will gladly be accepted. Donations will go to support benevolence. The deadline is **Wednesday 12/15** and doves will be placed on the tree as donations are received.

A dove contributors list will be included in the Christmas bulletin. Place your form and payment in the labeled box in the Narthex. If you have any questions, contact Paulette Ashe at 642-3251.

Thank you for your generosity!

Christmas Eve Service

Invite your family and friends to join us for a beautiful candlelight Christmas Eve Service on December 24 at **5:00 pm**.

There will be Christmas music, scriptures, and the Lord's Supper.



Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table

By
Louie Giglio
BOOK REVIEW BY AMY JACOBSON

What a read! The author, Louie Giglio, receives a text from a dear friend that changed his life and prompted him to share, with all who will read or hear, that the enemy shouldn't be given a place at our table. The biblical truth of this statement is found in the cherished 23rd Psalm. Giglio was particularly comforted by verse 5, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" Yes, God prepares us a feast and sets a table for two right in the midst of our troubles, amongst our enemies. This book settled my mind and refreshed my soul. Highly recommended.

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It has. Christmas is not Christmas without the song, "Silent Night". We cherish its promise. The world still sits in shadows. Death casts its shroud. Misfortune silences the organ. Yet, whatever the generations bring, the light of Jesus still shines.

Thank you, God for Christmas. Thank you, God *it's* Christmas. Because this Christmas, we really need Christmas.

For me, I thank you, Max Lucado, for listening to the Holy Spirit's voice in writing our devotion!

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Bud Goude

God grant you lightness in your step
A smile on every face you meet
Loved ones gathered at your hearth,
and at your door, good friends to greet.
A holy hymn upon your lips,
A window candle burning bright,
And may the Good Lord bless your heart
And come to dwell there Christmas night.

Irish Christmas Blessing submitted by Barbara Fryer



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

Christmas is rapidly approaching and at this time of year we are called to pray for our missionaries who are spreading the Good News all over the world and support them with the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The Week of Prayer for International Missionaries is November 28–December 5.

This year our goal for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is \$2,700.00.

Some Interesting Facts About Lottie Moon



- 1840—Born into a wealthy southern USA family
- 1858—Became Christian after a Holy Land trip
- 1861—One of the first American women to earn a Master of Arts college degree
- 1862-1865—Teacher and nurse during the Civil War
- 1873—Sailed September 1st to China as a missionary, to teach, plant churches and care for women and children
- 1888—Challenged WMU to financially support international missionaries. This became our annual Christmas offering.
- 1912— Starved to death with her Chinese people. (Fellow missionaries were taking Lottie to America at that time)

**Lottie Moon was only 4 feet 3 inches tall.
BUT WHAT A GLORY TO GOD!!**

Deacon of the Week

- 12/5—Gus Saunders
- 12/12—Debra Wood
- 12/19—Sonya Anthony
- 12/26—David Crummett

Nursery Workers

- 12/5—Howard Warren
- 12/12—B. DeRosa/L. Walton
- 12/19—Jamie/Bailey Moore
- 12/26—Howard Warren

December Ushers

- Sonya Anthony
- Stan Gandee
- Jamie Moore
- Stewart Wood

December Tellers

- Tommy Ashe
- Buddy Hogge

Sun. Sch. Nursery
Sharon/Howard Warren



CHURCH WORKER'S

Older Children's Church

- 12/5—Connie Stewart
- 12/12—Alice Smith
- 12/19—M. McNeil/D. Gandee
- 12/26—Connie West

Younger Children's Church

- 12/5—Lynn Walton
- 12/12—S. Anthony/N. Dyson
- 12/19—D. Goude/J. Marshall
- 12/26—M. Wagner/R. Wells

Christmas Cantata and Dinner

Please make plans to join us
Sunday, December 12th at 11am
as our chancel choir presents our
Annual Christmas Cantata.
All are invited to worship and celebrate with us!

The Annual Christmas Dinner will follow the
Choir's Cantata. Please **sign up** in the
Narthex by **December 5, 2021** with your name
and number attending.

The meal will be provided.

We look forward to seeing you!



Sunday Schedule

Sunday School (All Ages)- 9:40am
Worship Service— 11:00am
C.A.R.E. Ministry—2:00pm

December 2021



Wednesday Schedule

6:00pm: Youth Bible Study
6:00pm: Children's Choir & Bible Study
6:30pm: Bible Study & Prayer Meeting
7:30pm: Choir Practice

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Advent Bible School 6:30 pm	2	3 A.A. Meeting 8:00 pm	4
5 Lord's Supper & 2nd Advent Lighting 11:00 am Deacons Meeting 3:00 pm	6 AHG & Trail Life Ministry Meeting 6:30 pm Building & Grounds 7:00 pm	7 Community Morning Out 9:30 am	8 Advent Bible School 6:30pm	9 New Fellowship Hall Reserved	10 A.A. Meeting 8:00 pm New Fellowship Hall Reserved	11 New Fellowship Hall Reserved
12 3rd Advent Lighting & Christmas Cantata 11:00 am Christmas Meal 12:00 pm NO CARE	13	14 Community Morning Out 9:30 am	15 Advent Bible School 6:30pm Called Business Meeting 6:30pm	16 Acree Circle 10 am Vision Articles Due	17 A.A. Meeting 8:00 pm	18 AHG & Trail Life Wreath Laying Yorktown National Cemetery 12:00 pm Emma Crawford Quilting 9:00 am-4:00 pm
19 Children Sing & 4th Advent Lighting 11:00 am	20 AHG & Trail Life Ministry Meeting 6:30 pm	21 Community Morning Out 9:30 am NO ARMSTRONG CIRCLE	22 Advent Bible School Birthday Party for Jesus 6:30 pm Youth Christmas Party 6:00 pm	23	24 Christmas Eve Service & 5th Advent Lighting 5:00 pm OFFICE CLOSED	25 <i>Happy Birthday Jesus!!</i> <i>Merry Christmas</i>
26 Mollie Trainum Preaching 11:00 am NO CARE	27	28 Community Morning Out 9:30 am	29 NO CYM ACTIVITIES	30	31	

December Birthdays:

Pastor Bud Goude	12/1
Brad Burgess	12/4
Sue Magowan	12/7
J.E.B. Hutson	12/11
Ann Smith	12/11
Daniel Eifes	12/14
Sarah Starkey	12/15
Beverly West	12/15
Kyle Jenkins	12/19
Kaleb Coates	12/21
Charlene Diggs	12/27
Madalyn Arquette	12/29
Alyssa Owens	12/30
Murielene Swindeck	12/30
Aaron Cirillo	12/31
Taylor Burgess	12/31

Anniversaries:

Ricky & Amy Green	12/24
Chris & Hope Hutson	12/30

