

Christmas Messages From the Clergy



REV. F. C. GUYREND
Georgetown United Church

THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS

Was the Christmas time any message for a world distraught and fearful as ours is today? Can we do anything at Christmas, in the person of the Babe, the form in which, of all His creations, He would be most utterly and helplessly dependent on the service of man. Here God gave Himself into the keeping of man, knowing that the salvation of the world, the very end of all His creative power, was dependent upon man's response to that incommunicable, unimagineable, and ineffable truth.

REV. E. G. BAXTER
Georgetown Baptist Church
TO FRIENDS IN THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

To wish you a happy Christmas may seem to be only a greeting, customary at this time of the year, or a passing pleasantry in keeping with the day. But, I assure you, my thought for you is deeper than just that. The sincere Christmas wish is a prayer: for only God can give a happy Christmas, and this He does through the gift of His Son. Some may ask: "When did this custom of greeting and giving at Christmas begin?" The answer is simple. "When God out of a loving heart, gave His Son from heaven to all mankind, and with Him sent greetings of peace and goodwill."

REV. W. G. O. THOMPSON
St. George's Church of England,
CHRISTMAS

On the first Christmas morn, the angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds as they kept watch over their flock, and they were "sore afraid." The angels first word to them was "fear not," and he told them that they were to be "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." Then the heavenly choir joined the angelic messenger, and caroled the Gloria in Excelsis, with its conclusion, "On earth peace, to men of goodwill." Peace in a world at war? Does the Christmas message apply today? Yes, in all the world, in Germany, and Italy, Greece, England, China, Japan, Georgetown, there is a Christmas message of peace — but, to men of goodwill. To all men everywhere who hate tyranny and love mercy, who hate lies and love the truth, who hate war and love peace, who love God and their neighbours, who are ready to work, and even to fight, for what they sincerely believe — to them the Christmas angel says "fear not." May we show ourselves to be men of goodwill in family, church, community, and this unhappy world. May the peace of the Christ-child be with all who read these words, and with all the children of God, wherever they may be.

REV. A. O. W. FOREMAN
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

And the angel said unto them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." This is the message spoken by the Angel to the shepherds on the morning of Christ's birth, and it is one of comfort and hope.

the right, and exactly the manner so far as it is in our power to do. Let the bells be rung, the carols sung, the gifts be buried. In so far as possible lead every child to the manger to worship. Here in Canada what is there to hinder the old saying "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." Perhaps not so much as never was the call louder than at this time to make all our Christmas cheer and gladness an act of worship. "As much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

REV. S. R. COLEBROOK
St. John's (Anglican), St. Paul's, Norfolk St., St. Stephen's, Hanover, Church of England

KEEPING CHRISTMAS
It is good to remember that each and every one of our church and secular leaders embodies a certain spiritual idea which should form part of our daily lives. The spirit of Christmas and gratitude ought to be with us always, but it is made clearer and stronger by the celebration of Thanksgiving. We should be thankful for the things we are given, but they are squandered and encouraged by the meaning of Dominion Day.

It is good therefore to observe Christmas as we do. To lift us above the common world, the daily task. But there is something better than the mere observance of the Day, and that is to keep it throughout the year. Christmas Day embodies a Spirit that no other day contains. It is the day that we are to live in, the world that we are to live in, the world that we are to live in. In that gift, that blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago there is shining the glory and wonder of the Eternal Love of God for sinful men and women. It is the fact of this gift that has transformed all ideas of living and giving.

REV. J. O. TOTTEN
Ashgrove United Church

CHRISTMAS REVEALS GOD

It is related of a wise Eastern ruler that when he died, he left word to his people that his son would be their king, and though they had never seen his face, they would judge of his goodness by his acts. The people promised obedience. The influence of the new ruler was wise and kind, and like the beams of the sun, it streamed out of the royal palace, bringing joy to every subject. The people marvelled and said, "We see him not; how do we understand us so well?" They came to the palace gates and said, "Let the king suffer us to see his face." The king came forth to them in his royal robes, and when they saw him they rejoined and said, "We know him by his acts. He had walked often with thy face." He had walked often with them as their friend, showing love and kindness to all, that when they saw him in his palace, his kingly robes did not disguise him. They knew him.

REV. ARTHUR LEGGETT
Norval Presbyterian Church

"The Angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11. The account of the birth of Christ, the greatest event in the world's history, is portrayed in the Gospel by the pen of a Master. It is beautiful with songs of human rapture ascending to heaven and visions of shining angels descending to earth. It is deeply imbued with holiness expressed in the joy of Elizabeth and Mary, the adoration of us in the shepherds, the prayer and prophecy of Simeon, and the testimony of Anna.

REV. CHARLES CUMMINGS
Norval United Church

DECEMBER 25th
What disharmony! Screaming bombs, merrily ringing church bells, Hitler's curses, Christmas carols, joy, disharmony — but hope. The spiritual blackout is not complete, else the bells were silent and the carols had ceased.

In spite of the fury of madmen the manger of Bethlehem is still central. All the streams of ancient history converged there, and there the streams of modern history had their rise. In spite of Herod, Hitler and Company, the Babe of Bethlehem still smiles. His smile of purity and love makes sweet and glad every Christian home. "The Babe of Bethlehem suggests Egypt of refuge for the stricken children of Europe."

Christian folk have carried the manger from Bethlehem and placed it in the centre of their homes. Call it a cradle if you will — as we kneel beside it we feel the Christ-child near. Kneeling there, between the screeches of air bombs, we can still hear the angels sing. At that cradle the soldier finds his courage, the soldier his bravery, the mother her calm and fortitude. It is not true, that to protect the purity, innocence and love of that manger we assume the present struggle and seek to shield the innocent from victory if the manger is despoiled and the child harmed? We are called to do a double duty this Christmas — to continue the struggle we are in, pursuing the right as God gives us to see

REV. F. J. L. MURPHY
Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church,
Georgetown

"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel." Isaiah 7:14. Christmas is the day of all days in the annals of time; for it commemorates God's infinite power and goodness — the incarnation of the Divine Word, the assuming of human nature by the Eternal Son of God. Whether we consider the Incarnation in all-surpassing excellence, or in the lessons that it teaches to mankind or in the countless blessings that it has heaped upon us, we must confess that it is the greatest, the most memorable, the most inspiring, the most sublime that has ever taken place in the whole history of God's dealing with His creatures.

After the fall of Adam, God left man, the "beast of the field" to his own devices. "For if we had been redeemed at once we would not realize the greatness of the Fall or the depth of our degradation. But when it became manifest to all that man would never rise but was given by yearning lower and lower to the state of the brute, God sent His only begotten Son into the world to become a child among men in order to lead men back to God."

At last the final moment had arrived and the Eternal Father commanded His angels to attend the birth of His Divine Son. The portals of Heaven flew open and a vast multitude of the heavenly army, headed by the highest of the angels sped forth. The angels knew that it was in the city of David, that the Babe was to be born; for the prophet had foretold it. In the meanwhile the shades of night were fast falling, and two weary, foot-sore travellers might have been seen wending their way from Jerusalem towards Bethlehem. They had come a four days journey over the rough, stony paths from the distant town of Nazareth to be enrolled in their native city of Bethlehem. We may not stop to relate all the events of that great night, the story in main is too well-known. But let us recollect the lesson that it teaches to mankind.

And what lessons may we not learn from the child Jesus as He teaches from His pulpit in the manger? He comes in the form of innocent childhood to impress upon us, as our first lesson, that as such is the kingdom of heaven, and that it is only the pure in heart that shall even see God. He casts aside all the riches of the world for fear if He surrounded Himself with them we might learn to love them, and forget that the riches of this world are but dust compared to the priceless treasures of the world to come. And who was worthy of higher honour on earth than Christ and His blessed mother? What woman that ever lived could compare with the Blessed Virgin, who was of the royal race of David, the mother of God and queen of earth and heaven? And before the infant Jesus every knee should bow of those who are in heaven or on earth and under the earth. Thus Christ teaches us in the stable that our highest honour is to be the foster child and heirs of an everlasting kingdom.

But the most essential lesson to learn from the Babe of Bethlehem is our bounden duty to love God above all and our neighbour for God's sake. "Let us love God," says St. John. Because He first loved us, and delivered Himself up for us. "When we realize as we ought that the apparently helpless infant in the manger is the infinite God, who holds all creation in the hollow of His hand, the Eternal, the All-True, who fills heaven and earth with His presence, and that He has set aside all His Divine perfections, and chained Himself forever to a clod of earth, our human nature, in order to show His love for us, in order to disarm us of fear, and in the loveliest and most attractive of all forms, the form of childhood, to draw our hearts to love Him, our Creator and Redeemer, we must surely feel that it is our highest duty to love Him, in turn, with every fibre of our being."

And when we remember that the Son of God thus humbled Himself for the love of us, our neighbour, we begin to understand that we cannot truly love God unless we also love our neighbour. This is Christ's commandment to us: "Love one another as I have loved you." So great as Christ's solicitude for us, that He assumed and morally identifies Himself with the person of each and every one of us, so that whatever is done to us and our neighbour, He considers it as done to Himself. "Amen, I say to you as often as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

In the mind of Christ, therefore, to love our neighbour for the love of Christ, means to treat our neighbor as we know we ought to treat Christ. We often condemn the inhabitants of Bethlehem in their heartlessness in refusing a lodging for the Holy Family, and that our hearts would have acted so differently. But we must recollect that if the Bethlehemites knew what we know they no doubt would have welcomed the mother of God. But the real reason why they refused a lodging for the Holy Family, we have made them immortal, was because they did not observe the commandment to love their neighbour for the love of God. If they had done this they would have harbored Christ Himself.

This is the plain teaching of Christ from the manger, and it is this teaching that has and will transform the world. How could anyone take the life of a helpless child, born or unborn, when he knows that God will consider the act as done to the child Jesus? How could women be any longer dependent on the will of men, when they believe that Christ would regard it as treatment accorded Himself? And how could slavery continue to exist in the presence of this teaching? How could men oppress his fellow man and deprive him of his just share when they believe that Christ, their Ruler and Judge, will regard it as done to Himself. Christ Himself, has given the full solution of all the social problems that to-day trouble humanity. Anyone who takes all meaning and force out of Christ's teaching, and merely throwing dust in the eyes of the people when he continues to speak of putting in

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Traveltalk "Suva — Pride of Fiji"
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"I LOVE YOU AGAIN"
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Cartoon "Ugly Dino"
Final Chapter "Zorro's Fighting Legion"
Matinee at 3 p.m.
Tuesday and Wednesday, December 31, Jan 1
"THE SEA HAWK"
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Cartoon "Catnip Capers"
Band "Have You Met Yvette"
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