

IN THE CHURCHES



Christmas Message

By Rev. S. A. R. Wood
Trinity Anglican Church,
Thornhill

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King an event took place which began the most tremendous movement in the history of civilization. Looking back two thousand years we cannot help wondering that the birth of one tiny child, among the thousands who must have been born that same night, should have been so significant; and this sense of wonder can only be satisfied as one realizes that, in Jesus, God "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory."

As, later on, people saw this small boy grow up, this glory showed in what you and I call "goodness."

Christmas is above all a religious festival, a time when we try to take to ourselves some of the goodness of the infant Jesus, which, as he later showed men, resulted in happiness.

What a pity it is that so many of us forget that the happiness is not possible without the goodness.

Christmas is a time when we wish each other Happiness. My message to you this Christmas is a very simple one — "Search for the goodness and you will surely find the happiness."

So I wish you all the joy of this happy season, and pray that the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and yours through the New Year.

Christmas Message

Rev. S. W. Hirtle, Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church

Once again 'tis Christmas, the gladdest, merriest day of the year. An air of expectancy fills the hearst of young and old alike. Why all this excitement. Why all these preparations for parties, feasting, etc.? What does Christmas really mean? Is it just a season for the exchange of gifts, of merrymaking? No. People gave gifts and made merry long before Christmas was celebrated; for example, the old Roman Saturnalia, a

pagan festival. Yet the giving of gifts and the receiving of gifts is a worthwhile part of Christmas, for at this season we celebrate with joyous abandon God's Great Gift of Love to all mankind in the Person of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. We give gifts to God, and to our fellow men, because God first gave Himself to us. The very purpose of Christmas is seen in the message and song of the angels, — "A Saviour is born, which is Christ, the Lord," and "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Yes, Let us make merry. Let us rejoice. Let us give gifts not only to each other, but to the poor, the unfortunate, etc. And above all let us give our lives, our all to Him, Who gave himself for us that we might not perish, but have eternal life.

Christmas Message

Rev. Frederick McGinn, P.P.
St. Mary's Catholic Church,
Richmond Hill

Once again, as we prepare ourselves for Christmastide, our message and our hopes for you must be substantially the same as in other years. It is this, that you continually strive for a greater understanding and a deeper appreciation of the true, spiritual significance of this great Christian festival. This can be accomplished only by prayer and thoughtful meditation.

On Christmas Day we observe the Birthday of Our Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the coming of the Son of God into this world to redeem and save us. On Christmas Day we commemorate the great mystery of the Incarnation, the fact that God became a man; that the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity took on a human nature and appeared in this world to attract us to Himself and to convince us of the certainty of Divine Love.

Let us, for a moment, and in a spirit of true faith, contemplate this Infant lying in the manger. His eyes are closed, He sleeps, He does not outwardly manifest what He is. In appearance, He is only like all other infants, and yet,

being God, being the Eternal Word, He is, at this moment, judging the souls that appear before Him. "He lies upon straw, and yet, as God, He sustains the universe and reigns in Heaven". This child, just beginning to grow, is the Eternal Whose Divine Nature knows no change. He Who is born in time is like-wise He Who is before all time; He Who manifests Himself to the shepherds of Bethlehem is He Who, out of nothing, created the nations that "are before Him as if they had no being at all." If He needs a little milk to nourish Him, it is still by His hand that the birds of heaven are fed.

May such thoughts, arising from your priceless possession of true, Christian faith, fill your minds on Christmas Day. May your will be in complete tune with the Will of Christ. If this is so, then, you may be sure that the great blessings belonging to the proper observance of Our Lord's Birthday will be granted to you in rich abundance.

Christmas Message

Rev. E. E. Kent
Thornhill United Church

Once again we have come to the time of the year that is the best — Christmas, with its cheer, its gladness and its spirit of goodwill. It is a time dedicated to childhood and the home. The trees are gaily decorated and gifts, so carefully wrapped, are waiting to delight the recipients. Generosity marks the season as thoughts turn to others less fortunate, and efforts are made to assist to make their Christmas a happy one. Worshipers will gather in the Churches on Sunday and Christmas day and with thankful hearts lift their voices in the singing of carols and quietly bow their heads and praise Him who has given us the greatest gift of all — the Child of Bethlehem. Oh what unaccountable bless-

ings have stemmed from that little stable in Bethlehem! What influence was liberated to change the moral and spiritual climate of the earth! What hopes dwell in the heart of the Christian from the angelic song that rang out so long ago, proclaiming "Peace on earth among men of goodwill."! From Bethlehem's star there shone a light that can never fail. The birth of a little child to Mary and Joseph has revealed the Spirit of God and the meaning of life, making mother and child forever sacred and softening the heart of the world. The manger, the mother, the babe, the shepherds, the angels — the sounds and experiences of that first Christmas — must ever remain sacred to the hearts of Christians. Though this all happened so long ago amid the Judean Hills, yet the holy light lingers still with us to exalt and bless. Welcome, thou best season of the year — may thy spirit remain with us through the coming years. A Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all!

Greetings At Christmas

By Rev. Charles G. Higginson
Richmond Hill United Church

We must be on our guard to see that Christmas is not smothered under a wrapping of legend and fiction. We celebrate an historic event, the Birth of Jesus Christ. His coming into the world marked a new beginning for mankind.

The Gospel writers tell the story with restraint and tenderness. They invite us to behold the fulfilment of God's promises to men, to receive God's answer to our deepest longings. God has visited and redeemed his people — this is the glad news they bring to us.

And if our hearts are open to the promptings of God, we shall hear the jubilant music of the angels and worship at the manger, offering to Him our best gifts of love and service.

May God's peace be yours this Christmas.

Yuletide Greetings

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We take this joyous occasion to extend to you our very best wishes for this Christmas and for the coming year.

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of us this time of the year.
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not born of the Season,
but of one's associations
throughout the years. It is
in this spirit that we wish
our friends a very joyous
Yuletide and a successful
New Year.

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