



THE BELL

December 2021

Gather, Love, Serve, Impact

The Most Precious Gift

Here we are halfway through December, and I still have a lot of shopping to do for Christmas. I'm sure that I am the only one who has this problem and everyone else reading this has had their Christmas shopping done for weeks, your gifts are already wrapped and sitting under your Christmas tree that was put up the weekend after Thanksgiving. The first few years after Robin and I were married my Christmas shopping was confined to the day before Christmas. Well, those days are over. These days there are just too many to buy for. The wife, kids, parents, siblings, friends, co-workers. Uff, it's just a little overwhelming. Have you ever considered why we do this? Why give gifts at Christmas?

Exchanging gifts at this time of the year has been a tradition, sometimes small and eventually growing to what it is today since the Jewish people began exchanging gifts during Hannukah in celebration of the return of Jerusalem and the rededication of the Second Temple in approximately 153 B.C.

For most of us gift giving is recognized as an outgrowth of the work of Nicholas of Bari. Nicholas was an early Christian bishop of Greek descent from the city of Myra in Asian Minor. He is also known as Saint Nicholas of Myra, or Nicholas the Wonderworker.

However, if you really want to get to the heart of it, our gift giving customs likely trace back to what we read in Matthew 2:11-12, "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened

their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route." Here the wise men, or magi, have come to worship the newborn King and to offer him their gifts.

As gifts they present him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Each of these serve a specific purpose in describing Jesus' role and future work:

Even in that day gold was exceptionally valuable and was considered by many as only fit to be used by kings. Which is fitting since Jesus is the King of Kings. The offering of gold is a form of worship by the wise men. It also would provide the funds necessary for the new family to escape to Egypt and live there until the threat posed by Herod had passed with his death. The other two gifts while valuable speak more to Jesus' future and the work He would accomplish on our behalf.

Myrrh is an exceptional perfume that was used in the embalming of the dead in the first century A.D. However, myrrh is a gum that is usually transported in as a hardened gum that would then be crushed, heated, or rubbed to make it useful. It is only when the gum is being manipulated in this way that it would give off its fragrance. Which is much like Jesus would experience many years later as he was beaten, humiliated and crucified. It is in that scourging and agony that Jesus does His greatest work for us. It is through His humiliation,

persecution and death that we are forgiven, our debt is paid, and we are redeemed by His blood. Frankincense is used during worship in many churches. It represented the wise men worshipping

the King of Kings, but it also speaks to Jesus' work as a priest on our behalf. Much like the Jewish High Priest offered up a continual line of sacrifices for the people of Israel, Jesus offers up one perfect sacrifice for all time for all people. There is also the intercessory role that Jesus plays. When Satan points out our shortcomings, sin, and failures to us and to God, it is Jesus who stands for us and reminds Satan and us that He has already paid our ransom.

All of this is important is describing for us who Jesus is and what it is that He does for us each and every day. But even this doesn't explain gift giving at Christmas. Because the true reason behind giving gifts at Christmas is to remind us of the greatest gift the world has ever known. That small seemingly insignificant baby born to an insignificant couple, Mary and Joseph, in an insignificant barn in an equally insignificant town of Bethlehem. That baby, Jesus, is the reason for our gifts, this Christmas season and most importantly our Salvation.

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Luke

2:14)

Calendar

12/16-Liberty USFW at the Embers at 6:30. Bring wrapped gifts and 2 dozen cookies.

12/19-Children's Church during worship

12/19-Monthly Potluck with Committee B hosting

12/22- No DEEPER

12/24-Candlelight Service 6:00 PM

12/26-Watching Blooper Reel from "A Children's Country Christmas" 10:00 AM

12/29-No DEEPER

1/2-Monthly Meeting following worship

1/2-Children's Church during worship

1/5-DEEPER meal 6:00 and classes 6:45-7:45 PM (potluck)

1/9-Quaker Men's Breakfast 8:00 AM

1/9-Christian Ed meeting 8:30 AM

Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That is why it is called the present.

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Missions

Thank you to those who donated towards Right Sharing of World Resources, FUM Global Ministries, and Jennifer Davis in Rhode Island for the Thank Offering.

Our White Gift offering in December will go towards Mesquakie Friends Church and Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS). The Missions Committee of Ann, Leah Woiwood, and Veronica Daniel will be planning the Missions that BLFC will support in the coming year—January through December, and are asking for your input. This is your church and it's your mission. The Mission Committee will begin giving an update on a specific mission the 2nd Sunday of the month in preparation for the mission giving on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

Youth Report

Charlene Martin reported that DEEPER will not be meeting the last 2 weeks of December. The Mesquakie trip planned for today was canceled due to lack of responses. The Youth Group is currently working on local missions and is starting to plan for a trip that could be inter-generational. They ask that the meeting be in prayer for new projects. It was suggested that Mac and Bernie McDonald from Mesquakie come and speak to the youth. 10-12 youth have been coming on Wednesday evenings. The Youth Report was approved.

Youth

There are two upcoming events for youth to attend in January.
1/22-Winter Jam Christian Concert in Des Moines 1/30-IAYM Winter Retreat in Boone for grades 5-12 More details to follow as the dates get closer!



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Come
Join us
for the annual

Bangor Liberty Friends Church
Candlelight Service Featuring
the Premiere Showing of the film "A
Children's County Christmas"
Starring BLFC Youth Friday,
December 24, 2021, Christmas Eve at
6:00 p.m.

There will be a link on the BLFC website after
7:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve to watch the
Candlelight Service including, "A Children's Country
Christmas".

Sunday, December 26, at 10:00 a.m., in place of regular
Sunday School classes, there will be a time of fun and
fellowship as we view the blooper reel
from the film "A Children's Country Christmas". This will
be held in the Fellowship Hall with a light
breakfast provided by the Christian Education Committee.

Library Ledge-Christmas

Find a good spot on the sofa or in a big stuffed chair
with a hot cup of cocoa and a good book from our library this
Christmas. We have so many! The Best Christmas Pageant
Ever, Angels at
Christmas, Celebrate Christmas and the Beautiful
Traditions of Advent, Wild West
Christmas, Christmas Hearts, Silent Star, Esther's
Gift, Sharing Christmas Every Day by Helen Steiner
Rice, Julotta: a story of faith & love by Tracie
Peterson, The Christmas
Sweater, At Christmas the heart goes home: a holiday treasury
by Marjorie
Holmes, A midnight clear: stories for the Christmas season by
Katherine Paterson, A Christmas promise: a
Cape Light novel by Thomas Kinkade & Katherine
Spencer, Chicken Soup for the Soul Christmas and The
Bridge by Karen Kingsbury.

We have so many more! Don't forget we have children's
Christmas books in the fellowship hall. Merry Christmas!

MYSTERY FRIEND

Our Mystery Friend for December was born in La Hachadura Departamento de Ahuachapan, El Salvador. This person has 2 older brothers and 2 kids. This person went to Perry High School and Iowa State University. He/She does international beef sales for an Australian Company. They sell into Canada, Central and South America. He/She loves this job because they have the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. Favorite foods are steak, pupusas (Salvadoran dish), and seafood. Most people would not know that this person hiked Half Dome in Yosemite when they were 5 months pregnant with their second child. They walked 22 miles in 15 hours. Since this person was little they have wanted to visit Paris. In 2015 they visited Paris and some of the famous spots there. He/She loves that everyone is very nice, friendly, and caring at Bangor Liberty. Letters in our Mystery Friend's name are:

AAAAEEEEIIIOOUBDDDGLLLLNRSSVY

Also Known As: IIIIEDSTWLLL

The Mystery Friend for November was Thomas Gilmore.

LIBERTY USFW

Eleven ladies of Liberty USFW met at the Bangor Liberty Friends Church on November 18 for movie night. As a book on Fred Rogers of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood is on the current USFW Reading list this year the ladies enjoyed watching the movie "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" which depicts how a troubled man with an assignment to interview Fred Rogers is changed by the experience. Movie theater treats were provided by co-hostesses Darlene Bradley and Kay Feltz. The next meeting will be at the Embers in Marshalltown on Thursday, December 16 at 6:30 with Ann Nichols and Leah

Woiwood as hostesses.

