



Have you ever given or received a gift that was full of significant meaning and value? Maybe you received from your child a colorful drawing of your family with a simple, but sincere message saying, "I love you." Maybe you gave your Bible to someone while serving on a mission trip, hoping they would receive the words of Jesus with an open and receptive heart. The giving of gifts, no matter the season, is one of the tangible ways we show love to those around us. Gifts have the potential to be so much more than satisfying a wish list!

In the narrative of Jesus' birth, we are told of Magi who travel across the world to give Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were clearly not on Jesus' wish list, for he was just an infant! Yet, these gifts are full of significant meaning and value. Gold – a gift fit for a king. Frankincense – an aroma directed to God. Myrrh – a gift for one who suffers.

The gifts of the Magi foreshadow the greatest act of love one could ever offer. Jesus Christ came to earth and sacrificed his own life so that we might live. Micah 7:18 declares, "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, for he delights in steadfast love." The birth of Christ in the humble town of Bethlehem was an act of delight for God. His delight is in his abundant and steadfast love for his creation. As you celebrate Christmas, likely with the giving of gifts, remember God's delight to send his Son. Receive Christ's salvation and experience the love of Jesus in your life

CBC at Home & Advent Devotional December 24, 2023

LOVE

the Bethlehem Candle

Sermon: Matthew 2:1-12 & Micah 7:18-20

Holy God, You have created all of us with a desire to belong and, even more, a longing to be fully known and deeply loved. We may express this love or have it expressed to us in various ways on this earthly plane. However, it is only in your incarnation, obedience, suffering, and the embrace of your cross that we find complete and total love. In your sacrifice, we witness love in its purest and most perfect form. You have demonstrated this love to redeem our brokenness and reconcile our fractured communion with you.

What response can be given to such a gift of incarnate love? As you have given this perfect gift of Christ, may our response be to simply receive it.

Yes, to receive this gift with thankfulness, and, Lord God, may we fulfill this love by giving of ourselves wholly to You and in love to one another as well. In the power of your Holy Spirit, without reservation, let us love one another with perfect love You have given us in Christ, and may we give You all glory in Him. Amen.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do we give gifts to one another on Christmas?
- What gift has Jesus given us? How do we receive the gift of salvation?
- Why do you think God stirred the hearts of distant Magi to follow a star and bring gifts to a baby lying in a manger in Bethlehem?
- If you could give any gift to Jesus what would it be? How can we express thankfulness and worship to God for the gift of salvation he has given us?

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS FROM THE SERMON

(Matthew 2:1-12 & Micah 7:18-20)

- What parts of your life do you see in each of the characters highlighted this morning? Is there an area of your life that you are like Herod?
- What "journey" has God asked you to take? Do you have examples of journeys you failed to take or did take? How have these journeys shaped your faith?
- Is there anything that particularly stood out to you from the sermon?

FAMILY QUESTIONS

- How did Jesus' life prove He really was God's chosen one, the Christ?
- How could we thank Jesus for being the Christ, the chosen one who came to pay the punishment for your sin?
- How can we take time during the advent to show people the love of Jesus?

CHRISTMAS CAROL QUIZ

The phrase on the left comes from a Christmas Carol that has its' base in Christian worship.

The words are in the exact order as they appear in the song, but the phrase may not necessarily be the complete line of text. It is your job to fill in the title.

NO Song title has been repeated.



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| "star with royal beauty bright" | _____ |
| "fortune or riches untold I'd rather have Jesus" | _____ |
| "a voice as big as the sea" | _____ |
| "and wild and sweet" | _____ |
| "where ox and ass are feeding" | _____ |
| "deep and dreamless sleep" | _____ |
| "that Jesus Christ is born" | _____ |
| "from Heavens all gracious King" | _____ |
| "dawn of redeeming grace" | _____ |
| "echoing their joyous strain" | _____ |
| "the stars in the sky looked down" | _____ |
| "to save us all from Satan's power" | _____ |
| "join the triumph of the skies" | _____ |
| "let men their songs employ" | _____ |
| "born the king of angels" | _____ |
| "a thrill of hope" | _____ |
| "where they lay keeping their sheep" | _____ |
| "glory to God in the highest" | _____ |
| "fear not he said for mighty dread" | _____ |
| "with heart and soul and voice" | _____ |
| "come sailing in on Christmas day, on Christmas day" | _____ |



WEEKLY PRAYER

- Our Men & Women in Uniform
- Kurt & Andrea Eichstadt, Cru Florida
- Ron Rasmussen, Elder
- Miles Schmidt, Media Specialist
- Free to Serve Lifestage & class
- Fox River Baptist Church, Appleton
- Those who do not yet have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus (Col 4:2-4)

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love.

He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot.

You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Micah 7:18-20(ESV)