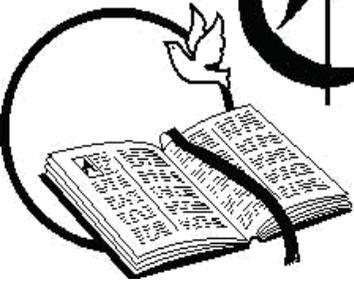


THE GOOD NEWS FREE

Just Keeps Coming



“...GO HOME TO YOUR FRIENDS, AND TELL THEM WHAT WONDERFUL THINGS THE LORD HAS DONE FOR YOU AND HOW MERCIFUL HE HAS BEEN.” MARK 5:19

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December 2017

The Christmas Guest

It happened one day at the year's white end;
Two neighbors called on an old-time friend.
They found his shop, so meager and mean,
Made bright with a thousand boughs of green.

And Conrad was sitting with face a-shine,
When he suddenly stopped as he stitched a twine,
And said, "Old friends, at dawn today,
When the cock was crowing the night away,

"The Lord appeared in a dream to me,
And said, 'I'm coming your guest to be.'
So I've been busy with feet astrir,
Strewing my shop with branches of fir.

"The table is spread and the kettle is shined
And over the rafters, the holly is twined.
And now I will wait for my Lord to appear,
And listen closely so I will hear
His step as He nears my humble place,
And I open the door and look in His face."

So his friends went home and left Conrad alone,
For this was the happiest day he had known.
For long since, his family had passed away,
And Conrad had spent a sad Christmas Day.

But he knew with his Lord as his Christmas Guest,
This Christmas would be the dearest and best.
He listened with only joy in his heart,
And with every sound, he would rise with a start.

And look for the Lord to be standing there,
In answer to his earnest prayer.
So he ran to the window after hearing a sound,

But all that he saw on the snow-covered ground...

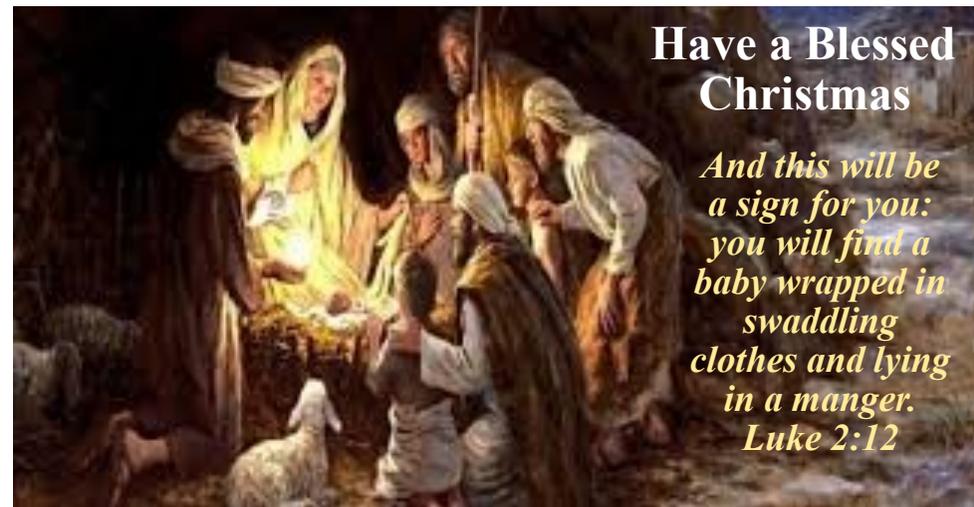
Was a shabby beggar whose shoes were torn,
And all of his clothes were ragged and worn.
So Conrad was touched and went to the door,
And he said, "Your feet must be frozen and sore.
I have some shoes in my shop for you,
And a coat that will keep you warmer, too."

So with grateful heart, the man went away,
But as Conrad noticed the time of day,
He wondered what made his dear Lord so late,
And how much longer he'd have to wait.
When he heard a knock, he ran to the door,
But it was only a stranger once more;
A bent old crone with a shawl of black,
A bundle of branches piled on her back.

She asked for only a place to rest,
But that was reserved for Conrad's Great Guest.
But her voice seemed to plead, "Don't send me away,
Let me rest for a while on Christmas Day."

So Conrad brewed her a steaming cup,
And told her to sit at the table and sup.
But after she left, he was filled with dismay,
For he saw that the hours were passing away.

The Lord had not come, as He said He would,
And Conrad felt sure he had misunderstood.
Out of the stillness, he heard a cry,
"Please help me and tell me where am I?"



Have a Blessed Christmas

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Luke 2:12

He stood disappointed, as twice before,
But shook off his sadness and went to the door.

It was only a child who had wandered away,
And was lost from her family on Christmas Day.
Again Conrad's heart was heavy and sad
But he knew he should make this little girl glad.

So he called her in and wiped her tears,
And quieted all her childish fears.
Then he led her back to her home once more.
But as he entered his darkened door,

He knew that the Lord was not coming today
For the hours of Christmas had passed away.
So he went to his room and knelt down to pray,
And he said, "Dear Lord, why did You delay?"

"What kept You from coming to call on me?
For I wanted so much Your face to see."
When soft in the silence, a voice he heard:
"Lift up your head, for I kept My Word.

"Three times My shadow crossed your floor,
Three times I came to your lonely door.
For I was the beggar with bruised, cold feet.
I was the woman you gave to eat.
And I was the child on the homeless street."

Jesus told us in Matthew 25:35-4

35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

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Innocent Eyes

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

Proverbs 17:22

A man took his son fishing one day. After a few hours in the boat with not much to do, the son started asking his father some questions.

"How does the boat float?" he asked. The man thought about the question for a moment, then said, "I don't really know, son."

"Well, how do fish breath underwater?" The man scratched his head. "I guess I don't know the answer to that one either." "Why is the sky blue?" the boy persisted. The father replied, "I really don't know, son."

The boy started to worry that his father was getting upset at all the questions. "Do you mind me asking questions, Dad?" His father immediately reassured him. "No, of course not, son! If you don't ask questions, you'll never learn anything!"

A guy was on the side of the road hitchhiking on a very dark night and in the middle of a storm. The night was rolling on and no car went by. The storm was so strong he could hardly see a few feet ahead of him.

Suddenly he saw a car coming toward him and stop.

Without thinking about it, the guy got into the back seat, closed the door and then realized there was nobody behind the wheel! The car started slowly; the guy looked at the road and saw a curve coming his way. Scared, he started to pray begging for his life. He hadn't come out of shock, when just before he hit the curve, a hand appeared through the window and moved the wheel. The guy, paralyzed in terror, watched how the hand appeared every time right before a curve.

Gathering his strength, the guy finally jumped out of the car and ran to the nearest town. Wet and in shock, he went to a restaurant and started telling everybody about the horrible experience he went through. A silence enveloped everybody when they realized the guy was serious.

About half an hour later, two guys walked in the same restaurant. They looked around for a table when one said to the other, "Look John, that's the dummy who got in the car when we were pushing it."

A man comes up to the owner of a lumberjack business and says, "I need a job and I think I'm pretty good."

The owner replied, "Okay, show me what you can do, chop down that redwood over there." The man said okay and left. Five minutes later he came back and was done.

The owner was shocked and asked, "How did you chop that tree down so fast?"

The man said, "I got a lot of practice in the Sahara."

The owner replied, "You mean the Sahara desert?"

"Yes" he said, "or at least that's what they call it now."

While talking with my semi-deaf uncle one evening, I noticed that his "hearing aid" was actually an earphone from a transistor radio. The wire had been cut and was sticking out of his shirt.

"How does that help your hearing?" I asked.

"Don't help my hearing none," he replied. "Makes people talk louder."

A young man had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your bible a little, and get your hair cut, then we will talk about it."

A month later the young man came back and again asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said, "Son, I'm real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied your bible diligently, but you didn't get a hair cut!"

The young man waited a moment and replied, "You know dad, I've been thinking about that. You know Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair."

His father replied, "Yes son, and they walked everywhere they went!"

A young man called his mother and announced excitedly that he had just met the woman of his dreams. Now what should he do?

His mother had an idea: "Why don't you send her flowers, and on the card invite her to your apartment for a home-cooked meal?"

He thought this was a great strategy, and a week later, the woman came to dinner. His mother called the next day to see how things had gone.

"I was totally humiliated," he moaned.

"She insisted on washing the dishes."

"What's wrong with that?" asked his mother.

"We hadn't started eating yet."



Tom was so excited about his promotion to Vice President of the company he worked for and kept bragging about it to his wife for weeks on end.

Finally she couldn't take it any longer, and told him, "Listen, it means nothing, they even have a vice president of peas at the grocery store!"

"Really?" he said. Not sure if this was true or not, Tom decided to call the grocery store.

A clerk answers and Tom says, "Can I please talk to the Vice President of peas?"

I have five siblings, three sisters and two brothers.

One night I was chatting with my Mom about how she had changed as a mother from the first child to the last.

She told me she had mellowed a lot over the years:

"When your oldest sister coughed or sneezed, I called the ambulance. When your youngest brother swallowed a dime, I just told him it was coming out of his allowance."

There's a man trying to cross the street. As he steps off the curb a car comes screaming around the corner and heads straight for him. The man walks faster, trying to hurry across the street, but the car changes lanes and is still coming at him.

So the guy turns around to go back, but the car changes lanes again and is still coming at him. By now, the car is so close and the man so scared that he just freezes and stops in the middle of the road. The car gets real close, then swerves at the last possible moment and screeches to a halt right next him.

The driver rolls down the window. The driver is a squirrel. The squirrel says to the man says, "See, it's not as easy as it looks, is it?"

My husband and I took our two-year-old daughter to the home-improvement store. Madison got tired of walking, so my husband let her ride on his shoulders. As he walked, Madison began pulling his hair. Although he asked her to stop several times, she kept on.

Getting annoyed, he scolded, "Madison! Stop that!"

"But, Daddy," she replied, "I'm just trying to get my gum back."

A woman was taking her time browsing through everything at a friend's yard sale, and said to her, "My husband is going to be very angry I stopped at a yard sale."

"I'm sure he'll understand when you tell him about all the bargains you found," her friend replied.

"Normally, yes," she said. "But he just broke his leg, and he's waiting for me to take him to the hospital to have it set."

For months he had been her devoted admirer. Now, at long last, he had collected up sufficient courage to ask her the most momentous of all questions:

"There are quite a lot of advantages to being a bachelor," he began, "but there comes a time when one longs for the companionship of another being -- a being who will regard one as perfect, as an idol; whom one can treat as one's absolute own; who will be kind and faithful when times are hard; who will share one's joys and sorrows."

To his delight he saw a sympathetic gleam in her eyes. Then she nodded in agreement.

Finally, she responded, "I think its a great idea! Can I help you choose which puppy to buy?"

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A Soldier's Night Before Christmas

T'was the night before Christmas,
He lived all alone,
In a one bedroom house,
Made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney,
With presents to give,
And to see just who,
In this home did live.

I looked all about,
A strange sight I did see,
No tinsel, no presents,
Not even a tree.

No stocking by the mantle,
Just boots filled with sand,
On the wall hung pictures,
Of far distant lands.

With medals and badges,
Awards of all kinds,
A sober thought,
Came through my mind.

For this house was different,
It was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a soldier,
Once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping,
Silent, alone,
Curled up on the floor,
In this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle,
The room in such disorder,
Not how I pictured,
An American soldier.

Was this the hero,
Of whom I'd just read?,
Curled up on a poncho,
The floor for a bed?

I realized the families,
That I saw this night,
Owed their lives to these soldiers,
Who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world,
The children would play,
And grownups would celebrate,
A bright Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom,
Each month of the year,
Because of the soldiers,
Like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder,
How many lay alone,
On a cold Christmas Eve,
In a land far from home.

The very thought brought
A tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees,
And started to cry.

The soldier awakened,
And I heard a rough voice,
'Santa, don't cry.
This life is my choice.

I fight for freedom, I
don't ask for more,
My life is my God,
My country, my corps.'

The soldier rolled over,
And drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it,
I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours,
So silent and still,
And we both shivered,
From the cold night's chill.

I didn't want to leave,
On that cold, dark night,
This guardian of honor,
So willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over,
With a voice, soft and pure,
Whispered, 'Carry on Santa,
It's Christmas Day, all is secure.'

One look at my watch,
And I knew he was right,
'Merry Christmas my friend,
And to all a good night.'

This poem was written by a peace
keeping soldier stationed overseas.

*Submitted by Liz Moreno
Wharton, Texas*



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HUGS From Heaven

Instead of **Hugs from Heaven** this month, I want to share with you my **Hugs TO Heaven**. I just want to take a moment to say 'Thank You, God, for all you do for us every day'

We are so blessed to live in this United States of America. Even with all the problems we have, it is still the best place on earth to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I could have been born anywhere in the world, but God blessed me when he let me be born in America.

God blessed me with the most wonderful parents in the world. It is so easy for me to relate to God's unconditional love for me because of the unconditional love of my parents. They taught me right from wrong, to work hard and be honest with everyone, and most of all, they taught me of God's amazing love for me. I knew my Dad and Mom would always love me and be there for me no matter what I did. So many of my friends and acquaintances weren't blessed with loving parents, and it is so hard to them to even imagine how very much God really loves them. Understanding His love is something I've always accepted because of the way my parents loved us. Now that God has blessed me with wonderful children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, I try to pass on the love that my parents gave me.

I know it sounds ridiculous to say that I thank God for my colon cancer, but I thank Him for what I learned from the experience. If I hadn't gone through the surgery and the chemo, I would never know how close I could be to God, closer than I ever dreamed possible. I learned through that

experience that when God is all you have, God is all you will ever really need. He gave me such a peace and assurance of life that He would always be with me in whatever life dealt me. I have no fears because I know He will always do what is best for me according to His will for my life, even if I don't like it or understand it.

I'm so thankful for the sacrifice of Jesus, God's only son, who was crucified on a rugged cross over 2,000 years ago to pay the price for all of our sins. After three days in the grave, He arose and continues to live today. He has gone to prepare a place for all his children. I have the assurance that when He said He is coming back to get His children to join Him in heaven, someday, that He will indeed keep His promise. I can't imagine living without God's love and peace every day. I am so thankful for that.

I know we just celebrated Thanksgiving, but in reality, every day should be Thanksgiving for those that love the Lord. We are preparing to celebrate Jesus' birthday, a holiday we call Christmas. Let us remember the real reason for the celebration. The world is trying so desperately to remove Christ from Christmas. It is our responsibility as Christians to share God's love with all we meet this year and keep Jesus the reason for the season.

Tell everyone you see this month in an excited and loving voice "MERRY CHRISTMAS!!" That's what I plan to do.

*In His Love,
Diana Boring
San Felipe, Texas*

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The Tablecloth

A new minister and his wife came to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve. They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc., and on December 18 were ahead of schedule and just about finished.

On December 19 a terrible tempest - a driving rainstorm - hit the area and lasted for two days.

On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high.

The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home. On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity, so he stopped in. One of the items was a

beautiful, handmade, ivory colored, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a Cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later.

She sat in a pew and paid no at-

tention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area.

Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet. "Pastor," she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials 'EBG' were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten "The Tablecloth". The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the

next week. He was captured, sent to prison and she never saw her husband or her home again.

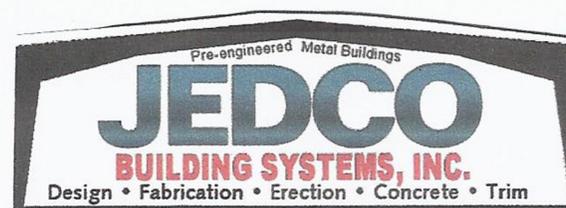
The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth, but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home. That was

the least he could do. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a housecleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return.

One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood, continued to sit in one of the pews

(TABLECLOTH continued on page 6)



Proverbs
3:5-6



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Whatever you do, do it with all of your might, as working for the Lord, not for men.

Colossians 3:23



Mamie Eisenhower's Fudge

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon plus 1/2 cup butter (no substitutes), divided
- 3 milk chocolate candy bars (two 7 ounces, one 1.55 ounces), broken into pieces
- 4 cups (24 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 jar (7 ounces) marshmallow creme
- 1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk
- 4-1/2 cups sugar
- 2 cups chopped walnuts



Directions:

1. Line a 13-in. x 9-in. pan with foil and butter the foil with 1 tablespoon butter; set aside. In a large heat-proof bowl, combine the candy bars, chocolate chips and marshmallow creme; set aside.
2. In a large heavy saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the milk, sugar and remaining butter. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil and stir for 4-1/2 minutes. Pour over chocolate mixture; stir until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth and creamy. Stir in walnuts. Pour into prepared pan. Cover and refrigerate until firm.
3. Using foil, lift fudge out of pan; cut into 1-in. squares. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

(TABLECLOTH continued from page 5)

and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving.

The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike?

He told the pastor how the Nazis came, how he forced his wife to flee for her safety and he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a prison. He never saw his wife or his home again in all the 35 years between.

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little

ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier.

He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine.

And we know that all things God works for the good of those that love Him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

True story written by Pastor Rob Reid

Submitted by Patti Hanson Katy, Texas

FUN WITH GOD'S WORD

Use the scriptures below to find and circle the **BOLDFACED** words. UNDERLINED WORDS will be found together.

K	I	N	G	D	O	M	N	S	R	E	L	U	R	L	K	V	E
L	T	R	N	N	Y	B	I	E	S	W	G	L	I	A	I	C	V
R	O	S	O	I	I	G	N	I	M	O	C	N	Z	D	I	F	E
P	S	S	W	T	E	D	E	U	D	M	S	Y	C	T	T	A	R
A	H	E	S	T	H	U	L	D	L	A	O	R	S	G	P	I	L
D	E	N	U	E	T	F	N	O	I	N	L	U	V	N	G	T	A
X	N	S	G	H	N	I	S	S	H	M	J	A	S	I	K	N	S
F	O	U	I	M	F	T	P	N	C	P	W	L	T	H	D	E	T
D	R	O	B	S	F	J	A	C	N	P	U	M	L	S	E	M	I
O	H	E	F	O	R	E	V	E	R	F	J	I	R	I	B	N	N
G	T	T	T	S	T	I	V	R	R	U	D	G	P	L	X	R	G
Y	S	H	U	K	O	S	A	E	S	G	T	H	E	B	K	E	F
T	D	G	R	A	T	N	D	N	G	H	N	T	C	A	E	V	A
H	I	I	T	E	M	N	E	I	S	V	A	Y	A	T	D	O	T
G	V	R	D	R	O	L	E	S	N	U	O	C	E	S	B	G	H
I	A	O	L	W	P	R	I	N	C	E	O	F	P	E	A	C	E
M	D	S	Q	X	W	D	D	O	G	B	T	S	T	I	F	J	R

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9: 6-7 NIV

(This prediction was written about 700 years before the actual birth of Jesus and all of the predictions came true)

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The Christmas Season

Twas the days before Christmas, and all through the Church
The pews are all filling, as everyone perched.
The hands are all shaking, and greetings abound,
Soon I'll go to the pulpit, prepared to expound.
I spent the whole week trying to hear what God's saying,
Studying, reading, and earnestly praying
The choir has practiced and taken great care,
Their singing this morning, for weeks they've prepared.
We've had Christmas sermons of Angels and Wise men,
Of Shepherds and mangers, no room at the Inn.
I pray that this week, the message will do
The job of moving the folks from the pew.

But I must keep it brief. I must watch my time,
For at noon I will hear the watches all chime.
This is a season so full of Distractions,
But we know that this world has no satisfaction.
If we don't share the Gospel of Christ,
Not just his birth, but His paying our price.
If we speak of the manger, but not of the cross,
The fullness of Jesus, somehow gets lost.
This Christmas season, do Jesus a favor,
Make it a season to share Christ the Savior.

*Pastor Andrew Large
Waikiki Baptist Church
Honolulu, Hawaii*

The Night When Love Was Born

On a cold dark night in Bethlehem,
In a stable far away.
A baby boy was born for us,
And new hope was ours that day.

Because of the love God felt for us,
And I know His heart was torn.
He sent His Son as a sacrifice,
On the night when Love was born.

He was not born on holy ground
But born as lowly as could be.
This King of Kings who in a manger lay,
Would die for you and me.

He was sent from Heaven's glory,
And from the Father Who was left alone,
To live and die as a sacrifice,
On the night when Love was born.

The bright star that we see tonight
Reminds us of our home,
That will be ours for all eternity.
Because of the night when Love was born.

Written by Karen Bunker



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Admission is
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Sat., Dec. 16, 2017 - 2:00 p.m. & Sun., Dec. 17, 2017 - 11:00 a.m.

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phillip.hassell@TexasBaptists.org
 979-530-6906 or 979-836-5117

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It's Not MY Birthday!

My six year old grandson, Matthew, had gone to the mall to shop for Christmas, when we ran into my friend, Amy.

Amy patted Matthew on the head and with a smile she said, "What do you want for Christmas?"

To my delighted surprise he gave the most profound answer I've ever heard when he said, "It's not MY birthday! It's Jesus birthday, and I know exactly what he wants. He wants ME!"