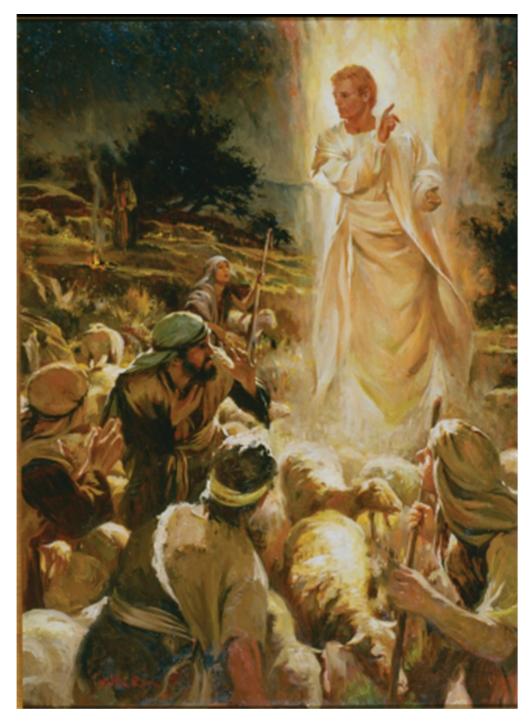
St. Tímothy's Banner Christmas 2021



Lk 2:11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

Lk 2:11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

The Saviour

By Do Fox

Oh, so many do not know What I can save them from. Unless you know your need Of saving Grace, My coming is in vain. It is those who know their poverty Of spirit, soul, and body That truly seek Me, And believe that I can meet Their deepest needs. The Love and Light that I bring Transforms your life in numerous ways. Fear is changed to confidence, Hatred is unravelled, and grows into Love. A deep relaxation soothes your nerves As you turn to Me in trust, And seek to know Our Father's will. Yes, you are linked, in unbroken union To Us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We enlarge your vision, Deepen your Love, and enfold you In a security that you have never known. We become One in purpose, One in vision, and One in commitment. The joy of Our union lasts forever! As you seek, so shall you find, This is My promise to you, beloved one.





An Enduring Christmas Gift

By Rev. Dan Endresen



I've spent the night under the stars in open fields with my brother and cousin when I was young. It's pretty quiet. I can imagine that having an angel of the Lord suddenly standing before me, and the glory of the Lord shining all around, would be absolutely terrifying. But it wasn't meant to be. The angel of the Lord had an exciting message to share to bless the shepherds with. Good news for those humble shepherds, for them to hear first, and then pass on to others – eventually to all humankind. They were the ones who were present and awake in that space in the universe. Why not tell them? Shepherds watched the stars every night, along with their sheep. They, if anyone, understood the vastness and glory of God – the God of all creation. "Do not be afraid", the angel said, "...for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people". Yes. It was the greatest, most joyful news of all time – for everyone. Lk 2:11 "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord". "...born to you". What would that have meant to the Shepherds? The New English Translation makes it clearer; 11 "Today your Savior is born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord". In other words, Your Savior was just born and he is the anointed Lord – the Messiah of Israel. And, yes that would be very good news of great joy for Jewish shepherds in occupied Israel...But why would it be for all people? Today, we know the answer to that question. Jesus was not born into the world at that time in order to save his people from Roman occupation. He was born to save us from sin, and the consequences of sin – God's wrath. Everyone who receives him as Lord gets the benefit of his salvation from sin. And He will come a second time to judge all and rule all. The angel went on: 12 "And this will be the sign to you: You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." This was the proof. That was not how you would normally find a new born baby – wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger – a feeding trough for livestock. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" Why all the heavenly pomp and praise?

Because God had finally begun the reconciliation process on earth that all the angels in heaven had been waiting for – the good will process that would eventually, bring peace to earth. But the process on earth would be rough and costly. ...It already began with Joseph and Mary and was not how anyone would have expected a royal heir to be born (Luke 1:32-33). There was hardship. Things were unpredictable. It took obedient servants who listened to God through his angels, and who trusted God when others would not have. It took submissive people to allow God to work it out through them, bumps and all.

The angels disappeared and the shepherds went to see. They would have known where all the mangers in Bethlehem were. They probably looked for a campfire. And there they found this new born Lord and Saviour, just as it was said. Why the fabric remnants and cattle feeding trough for a bed? ...So that the shepherds could recognise him as one of their own – poor – and be able to access him. There had been no room for Jesus' parents in the inn, and they had no one and no means to find any better accommodation. They were out in the open, one with nature like the shepherds, exposed to the elements of our world – our fallen world of futility that the Saviour would some far off day return to set free and restore to the full purpose of its Creator. But only after he grew up and died to redeem the world's people from sin.

Our fallen, corrupted world does not look as bad as it truly is. Its corruption is often hidden and disguised by men. Our world is still occupied by a foreign hostile power like Israel was at the time. Its occupier is sin – an often invisible but overpowering enemy to all who do not submit to Jesus as Lord. We don't see the extent of

sin's oppressiveness because we ourselves are too occupied with surviving, or getting ahead, concerned about how we are going to be fed and entertained and all. We don't see the world as corrupt as it is because it is often hidden from us. We get glimpses of hardship on the news, or when a disaster hits or the power goes out or something. We get glimpses when we are ill or when we visit those who are ill and dying.

When I lived downtown in the McGill ghetto and worked at the Royal Victoria hospital just up the hill, I used to be amazed at the disconnect between the two worlds that bordered one another – the hospital with all its sadness, suffering and death, and the university with all its happiness, youth and vitality. They were side by side with little interaction. A few weeks ago, I visited the ER of our local hospital and had a similar experience. The suffering people in the ER were isolated from the world outside – even from the closest members of their families. They were crying out for help to the few overworked staff. If you don't realize it yet, our healthcare system is beyond broken. Needy people are left alone without help because the hospital is understaffed and friends and family are not allowed to visit and help. Sadly, I also get the impression that some people actually might like the excuse that they cannot visit their suffering relatives. I get the impression that some actually don't want to face this new, grim reality. I understand. It's hard. It wears you out. And most people can avoid the reality of it, and of our broken world in need of a saviour for some time, but not for forever. It will catch up to everyone someday.

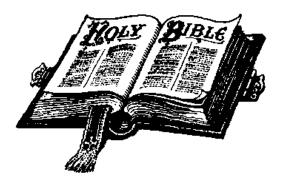
Even Joseph and Mary, despite the wonderful blessings and promises that they received, were not immune to hardship caused by the sin in this world. It even intensified for them. Though they were bearers of the one called Son of the Highest – who the Lord would give the throne of his father David to, and who would be Saviour from all enemies – they still had to submit to the pagan Caesar Augustus of Rome, whose troops occupied Israel. And because of his census Mary and Joseph ended up lacking proper shelter for themselves and their newborn baby, who was Christ, the Lord. That was unforeseen by them and God allowed it. God didn't have someone come along and give them gold along the way to Bethlehem. He did that afterward – for their flight to Egypt to save the infant's life – but not then. And God didn't arrange it so that they could at least be comforted in the home of a friendly person for the baby's delivery. He wanted to make the point that this world was in need of a saviour – a suffering saviour – who became one with us.

Well the world got its saviour that Christmas night, who lived his life as a suffering human though he was also God. And always, and especially, at this time of the year we need to be reminded of that – reminded of what Philippians 2:6-8 says, that Jesus, "though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. 8[And] He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross!" (NET) That was His enduring Christmas gift to us that we thank God for today. The world got its saviour that Christmas. But it is still in need of recognising him and welcoming Him as Lord.

Listen to the angels. It's all about recognising Jesus, and his act in giving his life as Saviour from sin in order to reconcile us, and the whole of creation to his goodwilled Father in Heaven. Jesus came to this earth and did what he did to bring peace on earth. But we must come and acknowledge our need of him as saviour. We must welcome him into our hearts as Lord. Only then we can pass on the good news of our Lord and Saviour to those around us and expect peace on earth.

Standing Firm

By Barbara Arnold



The last few months have been incredibly difficult. It started at the end of June, when our son Michael was diagnosed with colon cancer. He had surgery August 12th to remove the tumor. It was much larger than anticipated, but the surgeon said she was able to get it all. We rejoiced.

In September, Mike was told that unfortunately, it had already spread to his lymph nodes and liver, and that he would need to start chemotherapy.

At the end of September, Mike developed jaundice and was hospitalized. He was told that the cancer was Stage 4 and terminal. He was able to go home to his apartment, and his cat Socks, the Sunday before Thanksgiving, and either Alan or I were with him all the time. He died peacefully on Saturday October 16th. We were with him at the end.

So many people were praying that God would heal Mike and restore him to health. I don't know why God didn't answer those prayers as we hoped. I don't think that we're supposed to know. If we had all the answers, then we wouldn't need faith. I do know that God is good, and that He loves us, and that His ways are perfect.

The last few weeks, Philippians 4:6-7 have been on my mind.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your mind in Christ Jesus!"

Give thanks that our son died? No! But give:

- thanks that we had him for 38 years
- thanks that he recommitted his life to Christ the week before he died. [God did heal and restore his spiritual health.]
- thanks that he didn't suffer. He had very little pain.
- thanks for those 5 days he had at home, with us.
- thanks that we were able to be with him until the end.

I am learning that grief and peace can co-exist. I will miss Michael until the day I die, but I know that I will see him in heaven and that gives me peace.

For anyone who is undergoing trials, sorrow, troubles or grief, I would recommend praying Philippians 4:6-7, then as it says in Ephesians 6:15 (paraphrased), put on the shoes of peace and stand firm.

Thank you all again for your prayers, love and support.

Blessings,

Barbara Arnold





By Maria Endresen

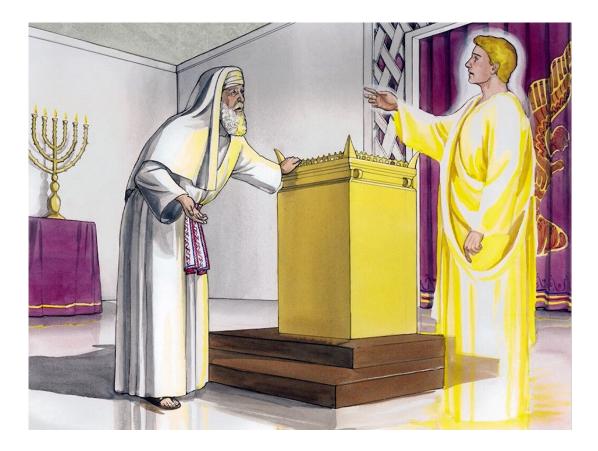


But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son and you are to give him the name John. "(Luke 1:13) Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years. "(Luke 1:18)

What prayer has been heard? I don't know about you but my impression from Zechariah's response to angel's great news is that he might have stopped praying for a son a while ago. Or maybe he prayed like the early church in the Acts (Acts 12:15). They prayed for Peter's release from prison but after his miraculous deliverance, when Peter knocked on the door, they thought it was his angel. They couldn't believe that God had actually answered their prayer. If Zechariah did stop praying, we can understand why. We can imagine that after he and Elizabeth got married, while their bodies were young and healthy, they prayed with fervor and faith for a desired child. And they had every reason to expect their prayers to be answered. They had promises from the Scriptures: "Worship the Lord your God... and none will miscarry or be barren in your land" (Ex.23: 25a, 26a). And "If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them...You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless" (Deut. 7:12a, 14a). We learn from Luke's gospel, Zechariah and Elizabeth were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly (Luke1:6). Can you imagine their grief and disappointment all those years not having their natural desire fulfilled? But, even more, Elizabeth's barrenness had to cause them to not understand God's ways, as they knew it is the Lord who opens and closes the womb (Gen. 20:18; Gen. 30:22, 23) and they served Him so faithfully. And on top of that, there was their disgrace among the people. God spoke through the prophet Hosea that because of his people's many sins there will be no birth, no pregnancy, no conception (Hos. 9:7, 11b). People might have thought. "Who knows, maybe Zechariah and Elizabeth might have some secret transgressions".

They did have some examples from the history of Israel to give them hope and carry them through this hardship as there are a few instances of barrenness recorded in the Scriptures. The patriarch Abraham was childless until, at the age of 75, God promised him an heir. He had to wait another 25 years before holding his son Isaac in his arms for the first time. But God did give him and Sarah a promise. God spoke to Abraham one on one with a specific word (Gen. 15:4). Then there was Samuel's mother, Hannah, who suffered the reproach of barrenness for many years. The bitterness of her soul drew her to the Lord's temple to weep and pray. When Eli the priest heard her prayer and understood that it was birthed from anguish and grief, he confirmed right there to her that it would be answered (1 Sam. 1:17). But Hannah was still in her childbearing years. Not so with Zechariah and Elizabeth. No specific word from God. No prophecy from a priest. Silence – long silence that could make anyone give up praying. Most likely, the attitude of expectation had been worn out as their bodies were wearing out with age.

There was a very long time of silence for Zechariah and Elizabeth. Until, at the time for burning of incense that represents the prayers of the saints (Psalm 141:2, Rev. 5:8, Rev. 8:3, 4) an angel of the Lord appeared with the message that lifted up all the burdens of the past: "...your prayer has been heard". What prayer? Was it the prayer of the past? Remember, the prophet Daniel was told that his request was heard right away, but the answer, deliverance, was delayed because of the resistance of the prince of the Persian Kingdom (Dan. 10:12, 13).



Whatever prayer it was – either a prayer from the past, or a prayer which by then was lacking in faith – only God in His awesome wisdom knows. And God also knows the right timing for the answer. What a glorious answer Zechariah and Elizabeth received. If God would have answered their prayer right away, they would have had a son who would have brought bring them joy and gladness, but only to them. They prayed for a son, but God gave them so much more - not only to them but to many - to bring the people of Israel to their God (Luke 1:14 16, 17). John came to prepare the way for the Lord. Jesus says in Matthew 11:11 that "among those born of women there has arisen no one greater that John the Baptist." How marvelous are the ways of the Lord in the lives of His children! The life of Zechariah and Elizabeth was marked with the miracle and glory intertwined with brokenness and suffering – a foretaste of Jesus' life on earth. Our lives won't be any different.

In Luke's gospel Jesus is teaching us about being persistent in prayer, coming to him boldly and persistently day and night in order to receive a sure answer (Luke 11:8; 18:7). As I was thinking about it, I came to understand that sometimes our initial bold prayer turns into a whisper, a sigh of "Lord, you know", a painful void in a heart, a silent gaze at the hand of God as years go by without an answer. The important thing however, is that we continue to be upright in the sight of the Lord as Zechariah and Elizabeth were - without bitterness and resentment, but with a resolute surrender to God's lordship. That, to me, is an act of persistent prayer.

What is your burden of barrenness? What are the prayers spoken a long time ago with faith and fervor that haven't brought a desired answer? An unsaved child or spouse, injustice done to you that you're still carrying, the consequences of a broken friendship with no reconciliation in sight, long term sickness, a difficult marriage...? Don't be discouraged, God remembers your prayers and always answers them in His perfect time and in His perfect way. The birth of John the Baptist is an exceptional, unique story, but the same heavenly Father who performed that miracle cares dearly for you too. Look up to Him, even if it is only with the sigh, "Lord, you know". Live for Him in full surrender. His answer to your prayer will be glorious in His perfect time because of who He is.



CHRISTMAS 2021

By Suzanne Weagle

Here we are again, celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We KNOW He is Emmanuel, God with us. That statement in itself, is an awesome revelation. God, with us?

Yet, as we recount the recorded Word of His coming into this world, it never ceases to amaze me, the God of the whole earth, chose to enter this realm, as a helpless, human baby. He emptied Himself of His Deity.

So Mary gives birth to the Saviour of all mankind in the most difficult of circumstances and surroundings. Unsanitary, no seeming provision made for Mary, or Joseph, the key participants in our Saviour's birth.

Have you ever stopped to consider the circumstances in which He was brought forth? No bed to bring Him forth in, no water to wash in, cold, surrounded by unsanitary conditions, no midwife, Mary and Joseph alone.

Yet Father shows up, in the angels announcing His birth to the shepherds, and later, the three Wise men show up bringing costly gifts, that became provision for them all later, when they have to flee into Egypt to protect Jesus.

So, God comes to us, weak, helpless, totally dependent on the care and nurture of two human beings for His life. Father God trusted Mary to birth Jesus and Joseph to 'father" the Son of God. Does that not cause you to wonder? That is a glimpse into God's WAYS!

We do not like being weak, or sick, or the things that come with aging. We do not like troubles, trials, oppositions, rejections, injustice, roadblocks, yet often, these are the very circumstances that COMPEL us to seek God.

Yet Emmanuel came to us in just such circumstances. No matter what the source of such circumstances are, we know that God is with us. Not only with us, BUT LIVING IN US, no longer in that manger.

He came to reconcile us back to OUR FATHER, to make a WAY where there was no way. HE BECAME the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.

John 17:3 Jesus' prayer to our Father

And this is eternal life, that they (we) may KNOW YOU, the only TRUE GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom You have sent.

Do I really want to know Him? Or am I content to know about Him? Do I really want to know His heart, what makes Him sad, what brings Him joy?

Am I sensitive to His Holy Spirit, to know when He is directing my attention to a brother or sister who needs encouragement? Do I really want to know His WAYS?

Even more important, can He say He knows us?

As we celebrate HIS Advent, let's celebrate with HIS PURPOSE in BECOMING GOD WITH and IN US, the central focus of our hearts and minds. We need Him now, more than ever, as we observe those things, He warned us of, coming upon the earth.



Bethlehem



Genesis 35:19 – So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).

Joshua 19:14-16 – There the boundary went around on the north to Hannathon and ended at the Valley of Iphtah El. Included were Kattath, Nahala, Shimron, Idalah and <u>Bethlehem</u>. There were twelve towns and their villages. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of Zebulun, according to its clans.

Ruth 1:22 – So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in <u>Bethlehem</u> as the barley harvest was beginning.

<u>1 Samuel 16:1</u> – The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of <u>Bethlehem</u>. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

Micah 5:2 – "But you, <u>Bethlehem</u> Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

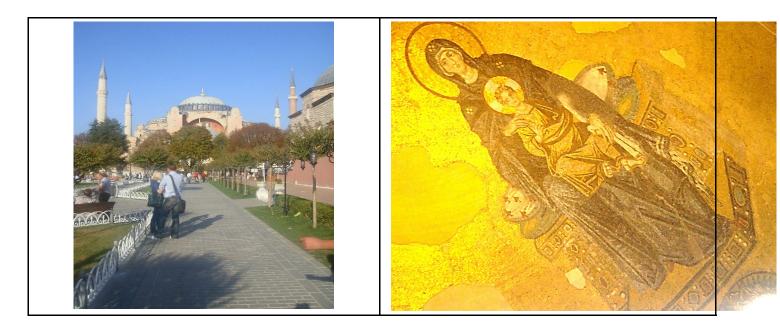
Luke 2:4 – So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to <u>Bethlehem</u> the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

<u>Matthew 2:1</u> – After Jesus was born in <u>Bethlehem</u> in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem

Matthew 2:3-5 – When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. *"In <u>Bethlehem</u> in Judea,"* they replied,

John 7:42 – "Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from <u>Bethlehem</u>, the town where David lived?"

Submitted by Harn Yawnghwe



Dates to the time of Patriach Photius I of the Byzantine church - 867 AD The mosaic was covered up during the Ottoman period. Rediscovered in 1847

The Hagai Sophia was built in 537 AD as the patriarchal cathedral of the imperial capital of Constantinople. It was the largest church of the eastern Roman Empire. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire in 1453, it was converted to the Holy Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque. Minarets were added. In 1935, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founding father of the secular Republic of Turkey, established it as a museum. In 2020, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey converted it back into a mosque. But tourists can still visit when the mosque is not in service. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The Hagia Sophia was dedicated to the Holy Wisdom (Sophia), the Logos, the second person of the Trinity. Its patronal feast day is 25 December to commemorate the incarnation of the Logos in Christ.

Submitted by Harn Yawnghwe



Memories

Lately, while looking through my old journal, (I still write up the day each day) I came across an article I'd written in 2007 for the church paper at St Michael and all Angels. It brought back so many memories, and it really happened, on a snowy day, when I was 68 years old. Here it is.

You can't fall out of God's Love

Recently Barrie and I had taken a week off to ski at Mt. Tremblant and had enjoyed several days of crosscountry skiing. Secretly, inside, I was quite proud of the fact that I hadn't fallen, even on the day we down hill skied together as a family.

However, on the last day there, Barrie and I went out on the cross-country ski trail, venturing a little farther than usual. It was snowing lightly, and cold, and after climbing a long hill I decide to turn back. Barrie headed on, saying he would catch up with me later. I started down the long hill, which curved around a large cliff at the bottom, creating a blind curve. There were two sets of tracks on the trail, one for coming out, and the other for returning home. I was sailing, fairly quickly down the homeward bound track, when suddenly I saw two young women travelling together towards me on both tracks! I yelled and tried to swerve onto the space between them! Then the girl in my track moved to the centre to get out of my way, and I had to swerve back to avoid hitting her. Losing my balance, I fell into the deep snow beside the track. I was angry, and told them rather vehemently, about the courtesy of using the correct tracts on a blind curve! I got up and skied on but began to feel badly about how I had spoken to the girls. I forgave them, and apologized to the Lord, praying that my words hadn't hurt their feelings. Just then, I sensed Jesus say "stop", and as I did, He came and hugged me! I was so surprised, and felt His love, even though I had felt ashamed of myself. Soon after this, Barrie caught up with me on the homeward trail. His first words were, "Did you draw me a heart in the snow back there on the trail?" I said, "no, not this time." (I had often drawn him hearts in the snow on

By Do Fox

other times we had been skiing.) Telling him the story of my fall, he laughed and said, "the marks in the snow back there look just like a big heart." I was amazed, and in reply chuckled, "well, I guess you just can't fall out of God's Love!" What a wonderful, all-seeing God we have!

Jn. 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friend

MY LOVE

By Do Fox

My Love is different from what you call love,

My Love engenders freedom,

And leads to lightness of Spirit.

My Love is compressed joy,

A sense of celebration will permeate everything you do.

My Love doesn't seek to contain,

But rather expands everything, and everybody you touch.

It is the buoyant energy

That sustains the universe!

This is what I offer to you, day in and day out,

If you would only come

And collect it from My Hands,

It would sustain and comfort you.

My Son knew My Love,

And extended it to you, My human family.

He is the One who makes it so available to you.

He is like the diamond

That gathers in the light and radiates it into your heart.

As you know Him, so you will come to know My Love,

Let the shackles of what you think is love

Fall from you, and come, and know My Love.

It will make you, also, into a diamond

That can radiate My Love to others,

And to the world!

Poetry

The List

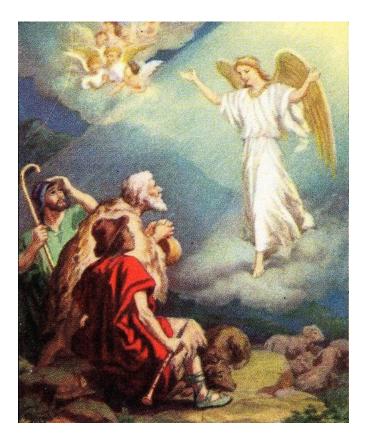
There is a list of folks I know All written in a book. And every year at Christmas time I go and take a look. And that is when I realize That these names are a part, Not of the book they are written in But of my very heart.

For each name stands for someone Who has touched my life sometime And in that meeting they've become The "Rhythm of the Rhyme". I really feel I am composed Of each remembered name And while you may not be aware Of feeling quite, the same, My life is so much better Than it was before you came.

For once that you've known someone The years cannot erase, The memory of a pleasant word, Or of a friendly face. So never think my Christmas cards Are just a mere routine Of names upon a list Forgotten in between. For when I send a Christmas card That is addressed to you It is because you're on that list Of folks I'm indebted to.

And whether I've known you For many years or few In some way you have had a part In shaping things, I do. So, every year when Christmas comes I just realize anew, The biggest gift that God can give Is knowing friends like you.

Submitted by Charlotte Paton



The Divine Revelation

By Do Fox

Heaven's Glory touched the earth That sacred night of nights, The God man came Into our flesh To show us Heaven's Heights.

The angel's message came to men Of humble station, low, Their senses shocked, they heard the news That God wanted to bestow.

To think the King of Glory lay In picky straw, as bed, A manger in a cattle barn Supported His sweet head.

The world He made, He came to save, So humbly full of Love, He was, and is, the Light that leads All people to the Heights above!

Humour





PUNS FOR FUN

Two silkworms had a race. It ended up in a tie.

- Sea monsters eat fish and ships.
- I have no beef with vegans.
- Calves have hooves because they lactose.
- I call my horse Mayo, and sometimes Mayo neighs.
- Frog parking only! All others will be toad.
- Dogs can't operate scanners, but cats can.
- Upholsterers never die, they just recover.
- Your debt will stay with you if you can't budge it.
- Relish today ketchup tomorrow!
- Hedge hogs, why can't they just share the hedge?
- Those who jump off the Paris bridge are in Seine.
- Before the crowbar was invented the crows had to drink at home.
- If you have to wear both mask and glasses, you may be entitled to condensation.
- Never iron a four-leaf clover you don't want to press your luck.
- Water is heavier than butane because butane is a lighter fluid.
- Some people are wise some are otherwise.
- The problem with practical jokes is that they sometimes get elected.



Submitted by Carolyn White

Question. What happened to the Christmas tree that ate the Christmas ornaments?

Answer. It got tinselitis. Ha Ha!

Submitted by Jennifer Mongeau

Christmas

Find words that are forward, up and down. No diagonal or backwards words.

