

Los Altos Church of Christ

*"...being of the same mind, maintaining the same love,
united in spirit, intent on one purpose." Philippians 2:2*

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This Sunday

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."
Luke 2:10-11*

❖ **Special Christmas Worship Service...11:00**

Come celebrate Jesus' birth. As usual, bringing up gifts will be part of the service. We will be sending them to Mountain States Christian Home in Longmont, Colorado. (Link to MSCH can be found on the church webpage.) We ask that you only bring gift cards. Ideas for gifts cards: Target, Walmart, Kohls, and JCPenney.



Wednesday Night Fellowship...Dinner at 6:30 and the video is at 7, Max Lucado's "The Message of the Manger". We will not meet on December 22 and 29.

PRAYERS *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 minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7*

- Praise that Jill's surgery went well and she is on the way to recovery.

Continue to pray Jeff's mother...Patti...the Townsend family...Jennifer and John...Peggy Spivey's back problems...Judy McClure...Howie's outreach...Amber's step-father and sister...Terry Shipp...the Jang family... Lu... Autumn and Brooke...Mike and Sharon... Christine's mother... Berry... Barbara... Gwen and her son Caleb... City of Children... Healing Hands International... Japhet's work in Zimbabwe...and New Hope Uganda.

Thought for the week...

You can never truly enjoy Christmas until you can look up into the Father's face and tell Him you have received His Christmas gift. - John R. Rice

The Gift of Christmas: The Wait

Phil Ware

What's the longest wait you have had to endure? (Not a pleasant subject, I know. But just hang in there a bit, it gets better; you just have to wait a paragraph or two and you'll get to the good part!) Waits come in all sizes — the “wait” until the baby gets here, the “wait” until the weight is off, the “wait” until you graduate, the “wait” until you get married, the “wait” until you get drivers license... But maybe the hardest “wait” of all for me happened every year when I was a little kid. It was that horribly long “wait” from the time the Sears and Roebuck (remember them?) catalogue arrived until Christmas came. Wow! It seems like they mailed that thing out earlier every year and Christmas came later!

Now one thing you must know about me; it is HARD for me to wait! I don't like it at all. Never been good at it. But Christmas has always brought out the worst in my ability to wait. Once when I was a boy, and I snuck in real late one night and opened my “mystery present”. I was disappointed in the gift. I was disappointed in myself for peaking. Most of all, I was disappointed in having to act surprised when I opened it the second time in front of the rest of the family. I wish I had waited.

Because of my problem with waiting, I've always loved Peter's description of the wait the prophets had, and how the angels even had a hard time waiting and trying to figure out everything said about Jesus:

The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. (1 Peter 1:10-12 RSV)

I still remember my beloved Bible professor Dr. Neil Lightfoot, standing up on his tiptoes saying something like, “Ah yes! The coming of Christ was something that even the angels stood on tiptoe trying to see as they tried to look over the horizon of history.”

Christmas time is an interesting, wonderful, and bewildering time. Now I assume you know that we don't really know when Jesus was born--at least not the exact day or even month of the year. Most likely it wasn't in the winter since shepherds were out in their fields at night. However, if we will hold our skepticism just a bit and stand on tiptoe with open hearts, I do believe that we can find some amazing gifts that our Father has left for us. We won't find them under a tree or in a stocking. No, we will find them in an amazing story of a baby and his little family who were caught up in the dazzling display of God's sacrificial glory. It was, of course, glory in the ordinary, found as it was in simple everyday folks who believed that God kept his promises because he loves his people.

How and when the end of this wonderful story of God's glory will be written is still a lot more mystery than popular writers would lead us to believe. But I, for one, have decided to join the angels on tiptoe and revel in the greatest of all stories ever told, penned by the Master Storymaker himself. However, I hope you don't wait on me - or anyone else for that matter. No, go unwrap this gift right now and give the first two chapters of both Matthew and Luke a little read. As you do, ask God to help you see past the ribbons, bows, papers, and sparkling lights so you can find his greatest gift.

P.S. I'm really not any better at waiting for Christmas now that I'm older. Since I'm the adult, I say we can start opening one present a night every night, starting December 20th. Not a bad idea. You might try it sometime. Unless you find it too hard to wait until the 20th!