



WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS WITH PASTOR LYLE WAHL

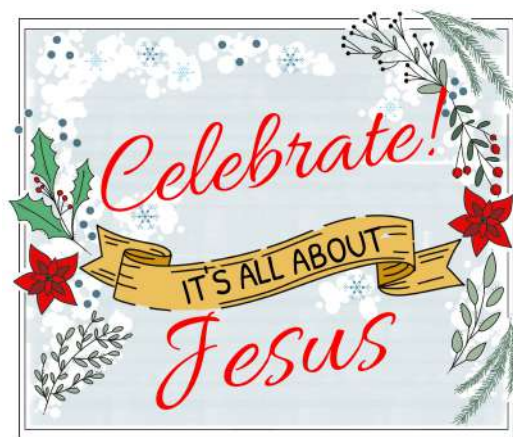
22 December 2023

Celebrate!

Christmas is a time of celebration, and it is celebrated in many different ways.

There are many typical, if not universal, traditions for celebrating Christmas in North America.

Christmas trees, lights—inside and out, stockings on the fireplace, nativity scenes, Advent calendars and devotionals, church services and, of course, special food.



There are different traditions in other parts of the world. For example, in Japan families often celebrate with a fried chicken meal (which, I'm told, started with a KFC ad campaign in the 1970s). Some people in China include giving apples to each other. People in France and the Netherlands often put out shoes to be filled with treats. Some Christians in Ethiopia fast the day before Christmas, then go to church on Christmas morning dressed in white, followed by visiting and feasting.

Traditions can be very meaningful. Whatever our traditions, we need to remember and keep the truth of Christmas in the spotlight. Luke tells us,

there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock at night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood near them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And so the angel said to them,

“Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you:

you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army of angels praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased.” (2:8-14)

That is what Christmas is all about. God gave the perfect gift—Jesus Christ, God the Son to rescue, redeem us from our sin and give us life forever with Him.

Some time ago a little five year-old girl looked out her apartment window at the many beautiful Christmas displays. She had an ongoing serious illness which kept her housebound most of the time.

One day she talked her father into taking her out to see some of the Christmas sights. There was a beautiful life-sized nativity scene in a park nearby with Christmas music playing in the background. They stopped. She was drinking in the sights and sounds as her father retold the story of Jesus’ birth to be our Savior.

When he finished, after a brief silence, she gathered her energy, dashed into the display, grabbed the baby Jesus doll and rushed back to her Dad. As you can imagine, this caused quite a stir. Her father was beet-red in embarrassment. He asked, “Why did you do that?” Her quiet, but straightforward answer was, “If this really *is* Jesus, why can’t we take Him home?”

She asked a great question. One which has a great answer— all of us, each of us can take Jesus home, have Him with us every day, every season. Jesus, the Savior of the world, the God over all creation.

You can receive Jesus now by telling God that you realize Jesus came and died for you so your sins can be forgiven and you can have an everlasting relationship, life with Him by placing your faith in Jesus. If you are not sure that Jesus is your Savior, or have questions, contact us. We would be glad to talk with you so you can know and receive the greatest present ever given — *Jesus*.

For all of us who have received Jesus Christ, God’s perfect gift, who have our sins forgiven and a relationship with God, thank Him! Celebrate Jesus’ birth!

Pastor Lyle