

Merry Christmas,

Every holiday season I watch one of my childhood favorites, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. You probably remember it well, Charlie and his friends are performing a Christmas pageant, and Charlie asks, “Isn’t there anyone who can tell me what Christmas is all about?”

Linus steps up, with the spotlight shining on him and recites *Luke 2:8-14*:

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

And then he says, “That’s what Christmas is all about, *Charlie Brown*.”

A couple of things stand out about this 58 year old Christmas special that resonate with me. One is quite subtle but you may have picked it up. When Linus gets to verse 10 he says “*fear not*” as he drops his ever present comfort blanket. It’s as if, the good news of the gospel is more secure than what typically brings him comfort.



Linus’s “*fear not*” moment reminds me of the many men and women who have come to the Mission this year to enter into our program, and dropping everything else that they have relied on to bring them comfort in life to pursue a new way of life.

The other thing that stands out is the clear message of peace proclaimed in the text. Peace on earth, good will to men is the message that we certainly need to be reminded of during the advent season. We do our best to keep it on our mind, we may even have the word peace hanging on our tree, in our front yard covered in lights, or displayed on our walls. And our pastors proclaim this peace in advent sermons leading up to Christmas.

The world has a contrasting message for us that doesn’t take a break for the holidays. We don’t have to look too far and we find that distress and conflict are proclaimed anytime we turn on the news. We hear about wars happening on the other side of the globe and people being divided politically over every issue under the sun. It seems as if nobody is really looking for peace, at least the type of peace that it proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Coming in January 2024 - Poverty 101 Workshops
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In Colossians 1:19-20 we find where true gospel peace comes from. *“For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”*

This is where it all starts for us at the Mission, and for all of us really, with reconciliation with God, with peace by the blood of the cross. And a very important way that we both show our love of God and experience His love for us is in our relationships with self, others, and the rest of creation. This is why restoring relationships is at the heart of our approach to poverty elevation.

This Christmas, keep us in your prayers as we aim to reach the lost and gather the reached that are living in poverty to the point of homelessness in our community. Pray that they *“fear not”* and drop everything else that they have relied on to bring them comfort in life to pursue a new way of life and maybe this year they will come to know what Christmas is all about!

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU
 AND YOUR FAMILY THIS
 ADVENT SEASON!

John Ball

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

In honor of Jesus Christ
by Ken & Diane Capp
and Barbara Carse

In honor of David Meyer
by Frank Albert

In memory of Jerry Armstrong
by Mary Armstrong

In memory of Earl Best
by Nickolas & Lindsay Boosalis
In memory of Norm Bishop
by Breta Smith

In memory of Wallace & Lucille Brill
by Judy Addington

In memory of My Good Brother Bruce
by Lynn Baker

In memory of Jami Anne Burk
by Pete & Margaret Jackson

In memory of Dale Covey, Jr.
by Robert Covey

In memory of Gene Covic
by Frank Albert

In memory of Steve Cutts
by B. F. Croucher

In memory of Alan Dover
by Peggy Dover

In memory of Sandy Earl
by Bill Earl

In memory of James Estep
by Vivian Estep

In memory of Buck Fixsen
by Patricia Fixsen

In memory of Steve Fixsen
by Patricia Fixsen

In memory of Rochelle Roby Frymire
by Paul & Janice Roby

In memory of Ernie Gallop
by Muriel Gallo

In memory of Steve Ganong
by Joanie Ganong

In memory of Barrie Grant
by Bonnie Grant

In memory of Gladys Grow
by John Grow

In memory of Billie Joe & Joan Hunter
by Dusty & Debbie Hoffman

In memory of Pat Lee
by Robert Phillips

In memory of Jim LeRoy
by Paula LeRoy

In memory of Lu Lull
by Joyce Lull

In memory of Duane Maddox Clay
by Gary & Nancy Payton

In memory of Willard Marsh
by Marilyn Marsh

In memory of Dan Moore
by Bonnie Patterson

In memory of Billie Ray Nering
by Ken & Diane Capp

In memory of Mary Virginia Newell
by David Newell

In memory of Patricia Piter
by Steve Piter

In memory of Karen Reid
by Phyllis Newton

In memory of Jim Ronda
by Connie Ronda

In memory of Larry Root
by Glenda Root

In memory of Nancy Scafani
by David Scafani

In memory of Jerry Scheid
by Jackie Scheid

In memory of Dorothee Shadzad
by Michelle Hobbs

In memory of Duane Shinn
by Dianne Carter

and by Garland & Roberta Shinn
In memory of Marjorie Skeen

by Ken Skeen
In memory of Arlene Smalley

by Diana Ianora
In memory of Elizabeth Anne Sutton

by T. Holt Sutton-Selbicky
In memory of Aaron Ter Best

by Dean Ter Best
In memory of Judy Westcott

by Jim & Marilyn Kelley
In memory of Jody Williams

by Albert Williams
In memory of Garry Wilson

by Arline Wilson
and by Betty Rule

In memory of Jackie
by Jonathan Lucky

Thank you for equipping us to restore lives in our community!