

## Pastor's Corner December 2019

So I'll admit it, I'm a sucker for those old Christmas TV specials. You know the ones I mean, "Santa Clause is Comin to Town" (with Fred Astaire), and "Frosty, the Snowman" (with Jimmy Durante), and "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" (with Burl Ives – I think the Bumble is adorable), those ones.

But the best is, without a doubt, "A Charlie Brown Christmas", the classic Peanuts cartoon. I watch it every year, and I love everything in it. If I could only play one song on the piano, it would be "Linus and Lucy", from that cartoon (spoiler alert, I can't play it. JS Bach, sure, Vince Guaraldi, not so much).

The best part of the show is after the rehearsal has fallen apart, everyone has walked out on Charlie Brown, except his best friend Linus, Christmas seems to have been ruined, and Charlie Brown cries out if anyone knows what Christmas is really all about. And Linus, one of the great theologians ever, says, sure, he knows what Christmas is all about. He walks on the stage, calls for the spotlight, and says, "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, <sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2, the real Christmas story. And he walks off stage, back to Charlie Brown and says, "that's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."

There is so much associated with the holiday called Christmas. Snow (but not too much, please), decorated trees,

garland, tinsel, all manner of other decorations (we used to have a tree in every room of our house when I was a child). Elves (on a shelf or otherwise), Santa (I've been very good this year), flying reindeer, Rudolph, Frosty, Jack Frost. Presents (I have ideas if you need them), stockings, cards, letters, phone calls, live chats. Fancy dinners, simple meals, traditional foods (Swedish meatballs are an annual treat at my house, much better than the pickled herring and lutefisk of my youth), cookies (if there is a better cookie than a spritz I don't know what it is), pies, cakes. Favorite seasonal songs and familiar carols being sung, or listened to.

All of those things are wonderful, and amazing, and awesome, and special, and to be treasured and celebrated and enjoyed. All of them, in whatever combination you have them, work together to make Christmas the warm, wonderful time of year it is for so many people. Enjoy them as much as you can, as much as you are able, and if the enjoyment is difficult for you, for any reason, then allow the joy and warmth of other's celebrations to filter in to you just a little, so that their joy might be your joy, as well.

But in the midst of it all, at the very heart of it all, remember Linus on that stage. And remember what Christmas is really all about – a baby in a manger, who is more than just a baby. The baby who is also the Son of God. The baby who is, in fact, God, now a human being. God becoming one of us, one with us, in order to save all of us. To you is born a savior, who is Christ, the Lord. Your savior is born. You are saved because this one baby is born, and laid in a manger, and watched over by shepherds, and serenaded by angels, and raised by Mary and Joseph. You are saved because this baby becomes a man, who lives his life wholly for others, and who models the truest, purest love for all, and who freely gives his life for the sake of

all, and who is raised from the dead so that all may life eternal life, with the God who is not far away, but is here with us. As a baby, as a man, as God, as our Lord, as our Savior.

To you is born your Savior. That's what Christmas is all about (insert your name here). Merry Christmas to all!! See you in church, especially on Christmas Eve, at either 4PM or 7PM, when there will be carols and candlelight and holy communion and joy and fellowship for all who come.

Peace,

**Pr. Paul**