

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Well, now it seems we have finally had our first bit of snow, and thanks to the Ely Memorial High School and their Play Troup, I am guessing some of us are “Dreaming of a White Christmas, just like the ones we used to know”!

Ah yes, “Up on the rooftop reindeer pause, out jumps good old Santa Claus, down through the chimney with lots of toys, all for the little ones Christmas joys.---Ho, ho, ho! Who wouldn’t go! Ho, ho, ho! Who wouldn’t go! Up on the rooftop click, click, click down thru the chimney with good Saint Nick”.

Ah yes, “Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.---The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes; I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray; bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.”

*Clearly, we have been exposed to, not one but two very different perspectives on **CHRISTMAS**:*

One perspective on Christmas is based on a vast variety of secular traditions, “Up on the rooftop reindeer...”

Another perspective on Christmas is derived from God’s prophets of old as told orally and the Good News of the Gospels as recorded later in God’s Holy Word, “Away in a manger...”

One perspective on Christmas at its’ worst is a great commercial venture seeped in profit margins, and at its’ best is a heartwarming expression of love shared by people one with another through various gifts and kindnesses.

*Another perspective on Christmas is steeped in the **WONDER** of **GOD’S** gracious **LOVE** for all humanity: Let us refresh our minds with the words of the angel, as shared with the shepherds, who were out in the fields watching their flocks by night, “Do not be afraid; for see- I am bringing good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”*

One perspective on Christmas is frosted cookies, decorations, lights on houses and trees with packages wrapped with bows underneath and the busy noise of Santa’s workshop. A celebration focused on a moment in time.

*Another perspective on Christmas is that as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew and a prophecy fulfilled: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,’ which means, ‘God is with us.’” Yes, God in Jesus leaving behind the wonder of God’s Kingdom to journey with us, in order to guide us **HOME**. A celebration for the here and now with **ETERNAL** implications!!!*

*Let us pray one for another during this special season of the year in a spirit of “**MERRY CHRISTMAS**, which finds each one of us splashed with the renewing **WONDER** of **GOD’S** gracious **LOVE**; a **LOVE** which is meant for each of our brothers and sisters in the Family of God and is meant for us!!!*

Love in Christ,

Pastor Dana