



# Bethlehem Aboriginal Fellowship

December 2024



## A Sign

It's that time of year again – the Christmas season. A time of longing, wishing and hoping with expectation. It is also a time to ponder.

I remember the decisions we had to make when my family was young. We had two children of our own plus two others that we were asked to look after. There wasn't enough income to fulfill every wish, much less pay for all the expenses. "It's Christmas time again, what are we going to do?" We had three choices. Choice #1 – pay the rent. Choice #2 – pay the utilities. Choice #3 - buy Christmas presents for the kids. Choice #3 won out every time. We were put in this position every season so along with the season's greetings came the overdue bills which said, "possible disconnection". Happy New Year! If only we could have given our children an "I owe you" for Christmas, but that really wouldn't work!

Many Christmas' ago, my wife and I received a brand new baby girl right out of the hospital. A distant family member wasn't able to raise her, so we were asked to care for her. What a gift she was especially in that season. Scripture tells us of another gift given quite unexpectedly. "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger". Luke 2:12. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given". Is. 9:6a. This child came into the world gift wrapped in swaddling clothes as some older versions read. This was a very visible sign for all to see.

Another visible sign is mentioned in John's gospel. "Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen". John 20:6-7. There were only the wrappings left, nothing else. John 20:8 also says, "Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed". The sign of the wrappings pointed to the precious gift that had been within. He accepted that gift for himself because he saw and believed.

Even though there seemed to be nothing in the wrappings, Jesus was and still is a gift for everyone. For unto us this child was given, a sign that says, Rejoice!

*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. 2 Cor 9:15.*

*By Pastor Lyle Blackbird*



## Wishes for Christmas

We asked people in our congregation what was a wish or dream they had for Christmas....

**Elaine:** I wish more people in our community could celebrate Jesus' birth with joy and anticipation.

**Gerry:** I dream of more peace on our streets – that the hard drugs would stop and that there would be more treatment centres.

**Joe:** I wish I had a pair of glasses that finally work.

**Evan:** I wish that people would understand what Christmas and Jesus' birth means for us here and now.

**Kurt:** I dream that I could go with my family to Disney World.

**Rena:** A dream would be to have my own house, even just a tiny one bedroom.

**Frankie:** My dream is to stay at home, just where I am now. I like it there.

**Dmytro:** I wish that everyone would be happy and that there would be no more war in the Ukraine or anywhere.

**Joe:** I wish my Ukrainian friends would get their Canadian citizenship.

**Astra:** I wish my aunty would be healed of her cancer so she would be around for her young children.

## Christmas Miracles and Gifts – True Stories

My parents had gone away for Christmas and left me with some family - my uncle, aunt and a cousin. My cousin took me to a Barry Moore crusade one night. I was right near the front by the stage but I was on the far end and had a whole row of people between me and the aisle. When Barry Moore asked who wanted to accept Jesus into their life, I knew I wanted to and I think I put up my hand. But I was too embarrassed to squish by all those people in the row to go up to the front. Barry said if I was too uncomfortable to come up I could stay where I was and pray the prayer. So I did! I became a Christian that night, right around Christmas.

By Kurt

When I was fifty years old my parent passed away. Being single, I had spent every Christmas until then with them. So the first Christmas morning when I was on my own, I decided I needed to establish some of my own traditions. But it was weird and felt pretty lonely. I had just begun to read the Christmas story from the Bible when the doorbell rang. It was my foster girl who had been AWOL for about a week. She had decided to come back home not even realizing it was Christmas day. Together we read the Christmas story, had breakfast and had a fine time together. It was a beautiful way to spend my first Christmas not so alone after all. The Lord is so good.

By Beth

