



## Pastor's Perspective – What If Nothing Was Under the Tree?

By Dr. Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

I'm not suggesting that you do without gifts this Christmas, but I would like for you to consider seriously what would be true of you and yours if you weren't financially able to give gifts, and didn't receive a single one. If that was the case with you, would you still be thanking God for His blessings and eager to recount them? Would you really? What about the members of your family? Please excuse me if I'm not convinced. The reason for my skepticism is simple: As modern day Christians, we are as sold to the consumerism of our day as the next guy. Have you listened to the disappointment if an expected gift isn't given, or if it is and it isn't just the way it was wanted?

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, he was able to testify to his contentment. He said: *I've learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret to being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want* (Philippians 4:11-12).

When he wrote to Timothy, he spoke of the reasonableness of contentment: *For we brought nothing into the world and can take nothing out* (1 Timothy 6:7). Then, urging a lifestyle of contentment, he said even more simply than to the Philippians: *If we have food and clothing we will be content with that* (1 Timothy 6:8).

### White Elephant Gift Exchange

We'll be gathering together again this year to celebrate the holidays with a White Elephant Gift Exchange. The idea with the gathering is to have a fun, pressure-free evening in giving gifts that are unique and, sometimes, regifted from previous years. Although there is a price limit of \$3, the better option is to simply find a "special" item around your house...something a great aunt gave you a long time ago, and you have been too afraid to get rid of it. Now is your opportunity! Wrap it up in the prettiest paper you can find, and hope someone loves it more than you ever could. Bring snacks to share and enjoy during the evening.



And when I read those words—whether in Philippians 4 or 1 Timothy 6, my reaction is the same. To use the vernacular: “We are so not there! That is so not us!” We have been so conditioned by our culture to expect a flood of material abundance (and as Christians, to read that as evidence of God's blessing), that to have anything less in gifts given or received would crush us, cause us to question God's care of us and we would term it: “Completely unacceptable.”

Somehow, we need to break loose of the consumerism of our day (and help the members of our families to do the same). Paul's counsel to the Philippians in this matter was to locate their joy in the Lord, not things the Lord might provide. He said: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* (Philippians 4:5). Not to be a broken record, but isn't this the key—to recognize that in giving us Himself the Lord has already given us everything we need?

What if nothing was under the tree? Chances are there will be something under yours—maybe even many things. But whether that's true or not, as Christians, we must come to the place where we are able to affirm in plenty and in want, and with sincere gratitude, that the best gift (and the only one that ever really matters) has already been given, which is Christ.

### Thanksgiving for SE Asia Ministry Trip Funding

Thank you for your gifts totaling \$3,966 for Pastor and Neita's trip to visit our ministry partners in SE Asia in mid-January 2013. Though short of our original \$5,000 goal, we are pleased to report that these funds were sufficient for the needs of this trip, enabling airline tickets to be purchased. This is the Lord's work, and we offer our thanksgiving to Him. We also praise Him for working through His people to supply the need. We are prayerfully looking forward to the Lindholms' trip, their ministry to our partners, and the report they will bring to the church afterward.



#### December Memory Challenge

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings You were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about Me in the scroll—I have come to do Your will, O God.’” ~ Hebrews 10:5-7

# Locked Inside This Tiny Babe

by Louanne Robinson

How did the world look  
 When you opened your eyes, started to cry  
 Gave a first sigh  
 All of your powers  
 Wrapped in soft skin, dimension and time  
 Did you know why... even then

How did it feel Lord?  
 To lay in the hay ...  
 not be able to say  
 Why you came here  
 How did it feel God?  
 To be locked there inside  
 For the sin of mankind  
 Did you know you must die ... even then



The total fate of humanity  
 Hung on your coming to earth  
 Clung to miraculous birth  
 of this little one  
 Man's key to eternity  
 Lay in a manger tonight  
 Hovering o'er star burning bright  
 Bright as the son it proclaims  
 It proclaims



## Money Matters

November Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$5,748
Weekly Need	\$5,105
Year-to-Date General Fund Giving	\$229,329
Year-to-Date General Fund Need	\$239,921

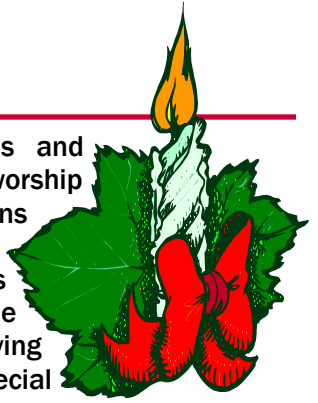
## A Gift for Our Missionaries

Each December a love offering is received for our missionary families. Our goal of \$4,550 will enable us to give each missionary family a gift equal to their monthly support from us.



# Calendar

Please invite unsaved friends and neighbors to our regular worship services and special celebrations this Christmas season. Pray that God will open their hearts to the wonderful truths of the gospel and bring them to saving faith in Christ. The following special gatherings are planned:



The Women's Ministries Christmas Party will be Friday, December 7 at 7:00 PM. All ladies are invited to attend. Please bring a wrapped Christmas gift to exchange (\$15.00 or less).

The Awana Christmas Party will be held on Saturday, December 15, at 11:00 AM in Fellowship Hall.

The ESL Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 20, at 8:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. The entire church family is invited to participate.

A Celebration of Christmas: The evening worship service on Sunday, December 16, will feature a Christmas choirs program as well as Scripture reading and special music from several individuals and groups.

Candlelight Service: A candlelight service will be held on Christmas Eve at 6:00 PM to celebrate our Savior's birth with songs, hymns and Scripture reading.

There will be no Awana on December 23 and 30. Also, there will be no mid-week ministries the week of December 23.

Nov. 30— Dec. 1	Men's Retreat
Dec. 7	Women's Ministry Christmas Party (7:00 pm)
Dec. 8	Leaf Cleanup (9:00 AM)
Dec. 11	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
Dec. 12	December Annual Meeting (7:30 PM)
Dec. 14	White Elephant Gift Exchange (7:00 PM)
Dec. 15	Awana Christmas Party (11:00 AM)
Dec. 16	Christmas Choirs Program (6:00 PM)
Dec. 20	ESL Christmas Party (8:00 PM)
Dec. 24	Candlelight Service (6:00 PM)

## Fellowship Baptist Church

5936 Rolling Road  
 Springfield, VA 22152