

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS**  
**Devotion by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz**  
**December 24, 2011 Christmas Eve**  
***Trinity Saint Luke's Children's Service***

<sup>10</sup>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. KJV



People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

**Baby Jesus was born for you!** That's what Christmas is all about. Baby Jesus born to save you from all your sins! My friend is in the hospital – on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor – in the very back corner of the hospital. There are signs everywhere that say you must wash your hands with powerful antibacterial soap very carefully – before you come into his room and when you leave, too! The door is shut and all the curtains are closed. That is never a good sign. My friend is in the hospital because he has Leukemia. Chances are – if you know very much about Leukemia – someone you love has had it, too! Leukemia is a type of cancer of the blood or bone marrow characterized by an abnormal increase of immature white blood cells called "blasts". Leukemia is a broad term covering a spectrum of diseases. In turn, it is part of the even broader group of diseases affecting the blood, bone marrow and lymphoid system. Whenever a person becomes very sick – one of the first things they check are your lymph nodes! If it spreads there – it is not a good thing! So – my friend is in the hospital. Do you know how people often complain about not wanting to go to work? The commercial that asks, "Do you punch a time clock on Monday morning and wish it would punch you back so hard you would be unconscious until quitting time on Friday?" The fact is – there are few things more painful and more frustrating than not being able to get up in the morning and do all the things that need to be done! My friend can't go to work – he can't go shopping for Christmas presents. He can't bake cookies or go to parties or put up a Christmas tree and decorate it! How can he have Christmas on the top floor of the hospital – in a room in the back corner – where everyone has to be very careful not to transmit germs? He will have Christmas – because Christmas is not about cookies and cards and parties and decorations and presents! Christmas is not about the "spirit of giving!" Christmas is not about it's more blessed to give than to receive – so buy something for someone less fortunate than you! Christmas is about the birth of a little baby born 2,000 years ago in the little town of Bethlehem! Baby Jesus is what Christmas is all about – and no sickness – no disease – no earthly trouble can spoil that! Baby Jesus born to wash away all your sins!

**Baby Jesus was born for you!** God's Word says: <sup>11</sup>**For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.** It happened the other day – a late night TV show host said parents should tell their children they got to open one early Christmas present – and then to video them – showing their reaction to this intentionally poor gift. The gifts were terrible – a black banana – a half eaten sandwich – an old toy. What's very telling and painful to watch – is the horrible reaction of the children! This is a terrible present – therefore you are terrible parents! The unappreciated presents are literally thrown at the parents. There are even obscenities – the kind of fit you would expect from a self-centered spoiled and sinfully self-

indulgent child! Shame on them! And shame on parents and grandparents – who have raised children with hearts too wrapped up in the things and stuff of Christmas! There was a news anchor the other day – after a group discussion about how Christmas is about a spirit – an attitude of giving and sharing – again missing the point of the Christ-child. The anchor said it's the presents! That's what Christmas is about – the presents! And he wasn't kidding! That's the really sad part! Christmas is about the birth of the Savior – the Son of God – made flesh to save us from our sins. Christmas is about Good Friday and Easter – the buying back of our immortal souls! Christmas is about the Son of God – the Son of man – born to die on the cross to forgive us!

**Baby Jesus was born for you!** <sup>12</sup>**And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.** There are all kinds of ways to wrap Christmas presents. I looked up the price for those ribbons that are like 4 feet wide – with huge bows – like you see wrapped around new cars in the driveway. They are for sale from \$650 all the way to \$25,500. You would have to have lots of money to buy going on \$26,000 just for the ribbon! There are adorable gift bags – with matching to and from tags fastened to the thick string handles! I like those, too. If you are very thoughtful – you can buy some beautiful baskets – then fill the basket with coffee or hot chocolate or what they call bath and beauty supplies – lotions and aroma therapy stuff. You can buy punches – and punch out snow covered pine trees, small buildings, and make a little 3-D pop up village on your package. Or you can punch out delicate snow flakes – a star of David – and sequin trimmed ornaments – and string them on some mohair yarn and wrap them around your gifts. There are all sorts of ways to make presents beautiful – with home made tags and wooden ornaments tied to the outside! And yet – the most wondrous Christmas present of all – was wrapped in the most ordinary way. There are still parts of the world where newborn babies – soon after they are born – and washed off and rubbed down are wrapped in swaddling clothes – strips of cloth. It's just about impossible to remember what it must have been like. To be safe for months in your mother's tummy – where it was all dark and warm and safe – hearing the steady woosh, woosh, woosh of your mommy's heart. And then to be born – out into this sin infected world. Where everything is so bright and cold and hard! Suddenly your arms and legs are flying all over the place! You take your first actual breath and you almost have to cry out! What in the world is going on?! And then you get wrapped up – warm and safe and tight – with your arms and legs all close together – just your little face sticking out – and your mom holding you close and tight and warm! What a relief! It's more than impossible to understand what that must have been like for the eternal Son of God! But he was born into this world to give his life as the ultimate sacrifice to forgive us. Wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger – the Savior of the whole wide world – the first and the ultimate Christmas gift for you. **Baby Jesus was born for you!**

Amen! *God bless us everyone!*



*Rev. Anthony E. Schatz*