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*Fear not; for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy;  
which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day  
in the city of David a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord.*



AS 2020 draws to its close, we all could use 'good tidings of great joy'. This Christmas many throughout the world are only able to worship the newborn Saviour from places of isolation, apart from family and friends, apart from their places of worship and the fellowship of their fellow Christians. Yet the grace of God remains present and true. His Word still rings out across the miles in the hearts and souls of billions seeking again the light of the Christmas Star, and the comforting message of the Christmas Angel.

The young couple that made their way to Bethlehem those many centuries ago, were also away from family and friends. Their journey was done in compliance with the decree of Caesar. For many of us, government orders require us to shelter in place this Christmas. Our journey to Bethlehem, like that of Mary and Joseph, is one of faith.

In the harsh realities of their time, the Holy Family sought for the will of God; in obedience to the message of the Angel, the Blessed Virgin Mary said 'yes' to God, and bore in her womb the Saviour of the world. Caesar's decree was troubling, coming so close to the time Mary was to give birth to her divine Son. Yet, even in this, the will of God was unfolding as decreed. The Saviour would be born as prophesied in the City of David. Isolated, anxious, wondering what was to happen, Mary gave birth to the Christ Child in an isolated stable amidst the humble creatures of God. The Creator Word born amidst His creation; come to redeem humanity from sin and death.

Many are anxious and troubled about the impact of the global pandemic this Christmas. 'Together apart' has become part of our lexicon. But God has not abandoned His people. The Giver of life, wisdom, and knowledge has enabled the gift of a vaccine, offering hope. People everywhere have examined what is important in their lives; and, in the face of fear and anxiety, have reached out with faith and love, making sacrifices for the wellbeing of others. Such is the heart of the Christmas message. The Gift of Love from the God who is love. The Child, born a King yet destined to die and rise again, the Saviour of the world; offering the ultimate sacrifice so that all who believe on His Name may have everlasting life.

This is what we celebrate once more this Christmas Season. We celebrate the Word-made-flesh who dwelt among us, whether we celebrate in the isolation of our room, in the midst of our family apart, or in the splendor of God's creation. For Christ lives! The message of the Christmas Angel endures! The love of God penetrates the darkness of our world, the struggles of our times. Hope overcomes despair; faith overcomes doubt; and love casts out fear. As Christians, let us take time this Christmas Season to share with others these glad tidings of great joy. The Saviour is born! Life, love and hope endure.

May I extend to you all my prayer for a blessed and joyous Christmas, as we welcome our Saviour King once more into our homes and our hearts.

+Shane