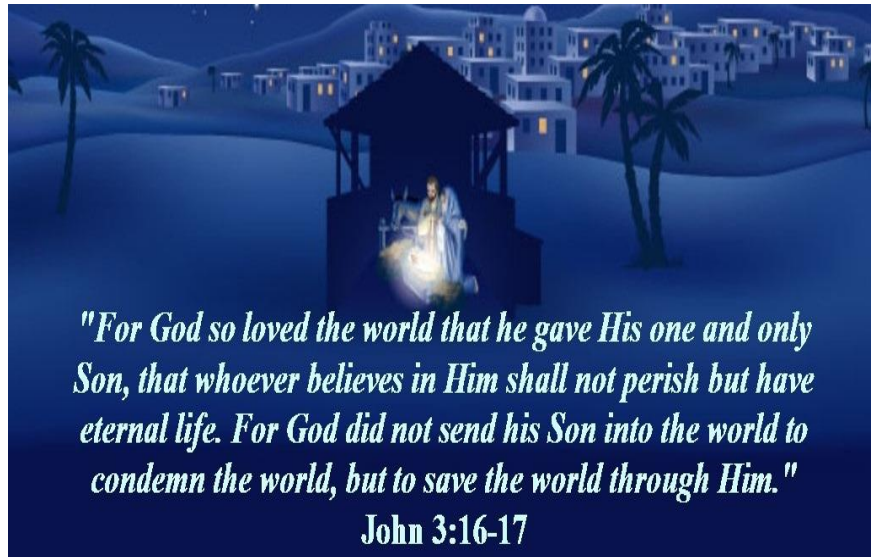


Dear **B**rothers **A**nd **S**isters **I**n **C**hrist,

We associate gift giving with Christmas as we gather with family, friends, and loved ones and exchange carefully chosen gifts with one another. We do this because giving gifts is our way of showing our love for one another. It's easy to give a gift to the ones we love. But how easy is it to give a gift to the ones who have wronged us or hurt us in some way? God's law demands that that we love our enemies. Where we have failed and for that failure deserve nothing but God's wrath and punishment, Christmas reminds us that our Savior God has succeeded!



"For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

John 3:16-17

The image of the Christ child lying in a manger in a cattle stall in Bethlehem is a wonderful reminder that God loved and because He loved, He gave. He gave His only begotten Son to save sinners. What makes this gift so incredible is that God loved us while we were still sinners and He gave His only begotten Son into death for us sinners who were at enmity with Him.

Christmas is about the incredible love of God and that same love taking the necessary steps to save sinners like us the whole world over. Christmas is about love in action! The action that God took on our behalf was the sending of His Son. The action Christ took on our behalf was the dying on the cross to pay for our sins. By God's grace and mercy we are loved by Him and thus saved through His miraculous virgin birth, His sinless life, His willing and sacrificial death, and His glorious resurrection.

Because of His love for us, we now, in turn, are given the great privilege of loving others as He has loved us. This love for others takes actions as we go into all the world proclaiming the Good News of our Savior! I count it a great blessing from our Lord to work alongside so many eager, dedicated, and faithful servants of the Savior in His harvest fields.

As many of you already know, I have accepted the call from our Lord to serve as the CLC Visiting Missionary. This means that I will be giving up my duties as chairman of the CLC Board of Missions. And I will begin my new duties as Visiting Missionary at the beginning of January. I am looking forward to the opportunities and blessings of visiting many of you on an annual basis as we will continue the work of training faithful preachers of God's saving Word as we strive together in our Savior's harvest fields.

I ask for your prayers for my family, for the congregation I have served for nearly 19 years, for me, and for each other; that the Lord would grant to each of us His wisdom, patience, love, and guidance as together we transition and move forward in service to each other and our Savior's kingdom. Please know that each of you will be in my prayers.

On behalf of the CLC Board of Missions and my family, I wish you all very blessed celebration of our Savior's birth and I pray that the Lord will continue to bless each of you and those you serve with all that is needed in the New Year!

Your brother and fellow servant of our Savior,
Todd Ohlmann