



# Grace Tidings



A Newsletter of Avalon Grace Church

December 2025

## Unwrapping Heaven's Greatest Gift

*(Portions of this article from Rev. Timothy Porter, 2017)*

Just a few days before Christmas, a postal worker at the main post office found an unstamped, handwritten, envelope addressed to God. Curious, he opened it and discovered that it was from an elderly woman who was in great distress because all of her savings—\$200—had been stolen. As a result, she wouldn't have anything to eat for Christmas.

The postal worker, full of compassion, went to his fellow postal workers and took up a collection for the woman. They all dug deep and came up with \$180. Putting the money in a plain envelope, with no note or anything, the postal workers sent it by special courier to the woman that very day. A week later, the same postal worker noticed another unstamped letter that had been addressed to God in the same handwriting. In it, he found a brief note:

"Dear God, Thank you for the \$180 that you sent me for Christmas, without this gift, it would have been a bad Christmas. P.S. It was \$20 short, but that was probably because of those thieving postal workers." 😊

What are you hoping to receive this Christmas???

American Express did a survey recently and found that 31% of people said that receiving a "fruitcake" would be the worst gift of all. In fact, more people indicated that given a choice between a "fruitcake" and receiving nothing at all, they would choose "nothing." The survey then went on to say how people get rid of a gift that they don't want: they return it, toss it, re-gift it to someone else or donate it to charity.

*(continued on page 2)*



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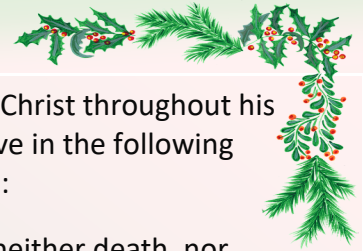
**Pastor Phillip McClellan, Jr.  
Pastor Emeritus Arthur Sims  
Kathleen Smith, Editor**

**All Are Welcome!**

**Sunday Worship 10:30 AM  
(Sunday Messages available on website)  
Children's Sunday School 10:45 AM**

**"And to make all men see  
what is the fellowship of the mystery,  
which from the beginning of the world  
hath been hid in God, who created  
all things by Jesus Christ: . . ."  
- Ephesians 3:9**

## Unwrapping Heaven's Greatest Gift (continued)



We all know the Bible says that it is more blessed to give than to receive. However, as we approach Christmas, with all of the giving and the receiving, even the biggest Scrooge among us likes to receive a gift.

For many, including myself, one of the best parts of receiving a gift is the anticipation and the excitement that comes from unwrapping a gift chosen especially for you. Everyone reading this knows exactly what I am saying!

Well, regardless of whether you get a fruit cake, a new iPhone, a new set of slippers, or that bike you have been dreaming of, none of that really matters!

The greatest and best gift that has ever been given is the Love of Jesus Christ, not just by our Lord's birth, but the purpose of His birth as told by our apostle Paul: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Reflection upon this gift, the apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 9:15: "Thanks be unto to God for his indescribable gift!"

Paul, who was never at a loss for words when

pondering the gift of Jesus Christ throughout his epistles tells us of God's love in the following verses (and so many more):

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, now powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8

As Christmas Day approaches, we look forward to being together with family, decorations, tree lightings, giving and receiving gifts and social gatherings. All these are fun but fleeting. So let us never forget that eternal joy is only found in our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. All thanks be to God for the greatest gift of all: the promise of eternal life in heaven through the birth, life, death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and all the heavenly blessings that await us!

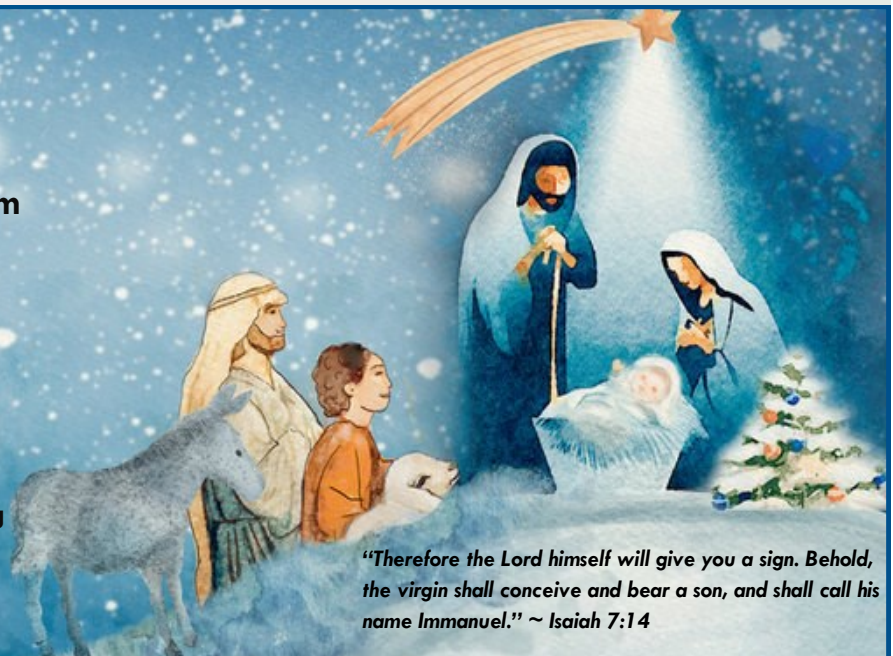
From Janet and the entire McClennan family, we wish you all a joyous and Merry Christmas! God bless!

Pastor Phil

**Please plan to join us on  
Sunday, December 14, 2025  
at 10:30 AM  
For our Annual Christmas Program**

**When we set aside a brief time  
to read the Scriptures that chronicle  
Our Lord's incarnation  
and remember His Birth.**

**It will be a time of reflection, praise, song  
and remembering the birth of our Savior,  
The Lord Jesus Christ**



*"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." ~ Isaiah 7:14*



**T**hank you all for participating in this year's ministry with your monetary gifts and little toys, story books, stuffed animals, coloring books, toothbrushes, and even T-shirts for kids across the globe. Avalon Grace Church had a total of 7 shoeboxes filled to the brim with toys and Christmas gifts to delight little children in addition to another 8 more shoe boxes purchased on-line due to your generous gifts supporting this wonderful ministry! Our Naples community filled enough shoeboxes to send 2 semi-trucks full to Atlanta to be distributed. We will be able to track our boxes to see where they are delivered. Thank you all so much! Here are some pictures of shoe boxes ready to be shipped! Thank you!



EXAMPLE OF A SHOE BOX FILLED WITH TOYS AND GIFTS



**A**valon Grace Church also will be sending \$400.00 to Brazil's Project ABBA. ABBA is a ministry of "Things to Come Mission" that reaches children with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Recife, Brazil. The Campos and Le Febers have been missionaries with "Things to Come Missions" in Brazil for many years. Each year, Avalon Grace Church participates in providing poor and underprivileged children an opportunity to hear the Gospel and receive a few small Christmas gifts.

Your generosity made that happen for 40 kids! Thank you so much for your generous gifts and prayers for the success of the outreach in reaching more souls for Christ and your support of this life-saving ministry.

## Thanksgiving Day Dinner at Avalon Grace Church

**T**here's an old saying, "many hands make lighter work." Preparing for Thanksgiving dinner is always an enormous task; but this year as in the past, included lots of helping hands preparing various side dishes to compliment our turkey dinner with yummy desserts! Thank you all for making Thanksgiving 2025 so much fun to be with family and friends here at Avalon Grace Church. It was a great success! Thank you!



# Christmas Cards

By Kathleen Smith



Every Christmas, my husband and I send out about 40 Christmas cards to family and friends up north and we include a tract of the gospel message with an annual Christmas letter that conveys what's new and going on with us here in Florida.

Sending out Christmas cards is a Smith family tradition and a joy to do! For Richard and me, Christmas is a great way to tell people about Jesus! It is our hope and prayer that people read the tracts we include in our Christmas cards and that God, by His grace and Holy Spirit, opens hearts to hear the salvation message.

However, there was a time when I avoided sharing my faith at Christmas, afraid that (especially) my family, who are unsaved would reject me for sharing the gospel and count me as a religious fanatic or that I would offend them because, to be honest, at the time, I was more interested in pleasing them and trying to maintain relationships with unsaved family members than I was about deepening my faith and relationship with my Savior, Jesus Christ. Can you relate? I questioned myself . . . am I ashamed of my faith?

Here's what the Word of God spoke to my heart that set me free:

"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." – Galatians 1:10 - This verse was a wakeup call for me.

That verse, praise God, put everything eternal into perspective for me about relationships—family or otherwise! Thank you Jesus for your love and allowing your children to grow in grace and truth despite our fears, lack of faith, and mess ups! The Lord always sees and understands where we are in our faith, how young or old we are in Him, how we may have stumbled

or not understood, but with each step in our growth, by His grace, we grow in Him as we mature in Christ. He loves us so much!

So, is sending Christmas cards good evangelism? I think so! It certainly can be a way of sharing the gospel and scattering seeds in every Christmas card you send!

Too often, the tracts and sentiments tucked inside our loving yuletide greetings end up in the trash can or recycling bin to those who may not be open to or interested in the good news of God's free gift of eternal life through the death, burial, and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And that's okay. It's on them. But be encouraged!!!!

Our Lord never begged anyone to follow Him and He did not try to persuade anyone to believe in Him or stay with Him. He simply told the truth, and that's what our Christmas cards do! God sees and knows every person on our Christmas card list who is unsaved and needs to hear the gospel and who . . . some day . . . may respond by reading God's Word in a simple tract included in a Christmas card.

Christmas is a time, I think, to sprinkle seeds of God's Word and His gift of His only begotten Son in Christmas cards.

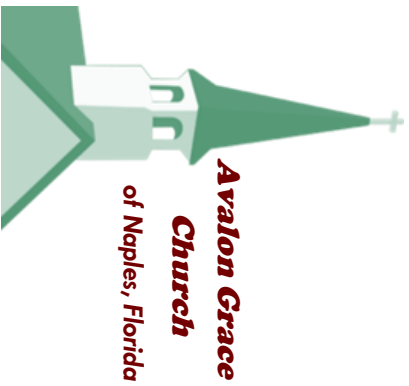
It is an opportunity for believers to share the simple truth of God's grace and His gift of eternal life to our friends and family in every Christmas card we send sharing the gospel of God's grace and gift of eternal life! And pray for each recipient!

Merry Christmas with love!





"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." - Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)



**Avalon Grace**  
**Church**  
of Naples, Florida

# December 2025

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY  
TO YOU!**



- 7th Christian Stevens
- 10th Jordan McClellan
- 15th Henry Scholz
- 18th Willard Barrett
- 18th Barbara Marshall
- 19th Rick Baldwin
- 19th Kathleen Smith
- 28th Art Sims

**COMING IN JANUARY 2026**

- 4th 9:45 AM Sunday  
Breakfast

1 2 3 4 5 6



**PEARL HARBOR  
REMEMBRANCE DAY**

7 8 9 10 11 12 13  
9:45 Sunday  
Breakfast  
10:30 AM Sunday  
Worship  
10:45 AM Children's

14 15 16 17 18 19 20  
10:30 AM Sunday  
Worship  
& Christmas Program  
10:45 AM Children's  
Sunday School

21 22 23 24 25 26 27  
10:30 AM Sunday  
Worship  
The LORD'S Supper  
Observed  
10:45 AM Children's  
Sunday School  
**Christmas Eve**  
**Merry Christmas**  
**(First Day of Winter)**

28 29 30 31  
10:30 AM Sunday  
Worship  
10:45 AM Children's  
Sunday School  
**Happy New Year**