



Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior! Merry Christmas!

Luke 2:12 "This will be a sign to you; You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." *NIV*

Throughout this Advent season, we have been unwrapping the gifts of Christmas. As I sit to write this, we unwrapped the gift of hope and will be unwrapping the gift of peace; by the end of the Advent season, we will have also unwrapped the gifts of joy and love.

There's a story about a woman who was buying wrapping paper on Christmas Eve. She had five rolls of expensive wrapping paper. She turned to the woman behind her and said, "I can't believe I'm spending more than \$25 on wrapping paper. It seems like such a waste for something that's going to be torn off and thrown in the trash tomorrow. But at least I won't have to get back in that traffic and go to another store."

The woman behind her didn't even bother to tell the woman buying the wrapping paper about the sale she had seen, where wrapping paper was a fifth of what the woman ahead of her was going to spend. Instead, she said to the woman in front of her, "Oh, it is expensive, isn't it? But it will look lovely under your tree."

Think about the origin of the gift giving tradition. We give gifts at Christmas because the Wise Men gave gifts to baby Jesus. But were they wrapped? I don't remember wrapping being mentioned in the Christmas story, except in two places...

Luke 2:6-7. "When baby Jesus was born; While they were there (Mary and Joseph), the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She *wrapped him in cloths* and placed him in a manger because there was no guest room available to them."

Luke 2:12, "And the angel said to the shepherds: 'This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby *wrapped in cloths* and lying in a manger.'

Swaddling a newborn was a common practice in those days. It made the child feel protected and secure. However, for the shepherds, it would have presented a foreshadowing of what was to come. When a lamb without blemish was born and selected as a temple sacrifice for Passover, its legs were wrapped or swaddled to keep it blemish free. The shepherd would have found Jesus wrapped, just like the chosen lamb.

The first Christmas gift was wrapped.

As you look at the beautifully wrapped gifts under your tree, remember that the most important gift of all – the one that was wrapped just for you – is Jesus Himself.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, our hearts are full just thinking about the first Christmas Day. Thank you for taking on the form of man, for humbling yourself, and leaving your throne for us, for me. Thank you for becoming the last sacrificial lamb, once and for all. I am wrapped in gratitude pondering your amazing gift. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Love,

Pastor Becky

A special Christmas Offering envelope is enclosed in the letter sent to you if you wish to provide a financial gift to the church at this time in honor of Jesus' birth.

We will have our Christmas Eve Candlelight service on December 24th at 7 pm.

We worship together every Sunday morning. You are welcome to attend the 8:15 am service or the 10:45 am service. You can also watch the 10:45 service on Facebook, YouTube, or by going to our website:

www.reynoldsvillefmc.org