

# St. Timothy's Banner

## Christmas 2022



John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

**John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.**

## The Plan

By Do Fox

The day of My birth  
Was planned before time began,  
Mankind was being clustered into nations  
With a common language that many spoke.  
This was a vehicle that My Father used  
To spread the news of His salvation.  
It started small, in a stable,  
But spread, at first, by shepherds,  
Then later, by the many who believed in Me.  
My servant Paul preached in several lands,  
And those who heard him shared their faith.  
I am with those who share this news,  
The news that rebirth is freely offered  
To all who turn to Me in trust.  
Oh, how the Father welcomes  
All those who put their trust In Me.  
“I am the way, the truth, and the life”,  
Come and see what rebirth does  
Both in your own heart  
And in the hearts of those you love.  
Life becomes full of purpose  
As My life takes root in your heart.  
Your inner light grows brighter  
As your will is gently molded into Mine.



# The First Christmas

By Rev. Dan Endresen

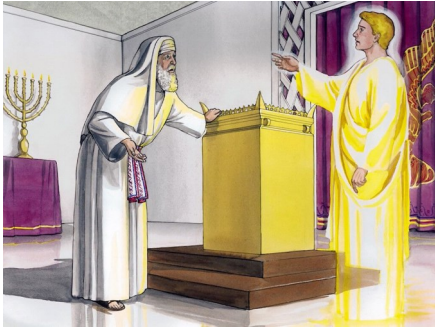


Well, here I am in the first week of December, with the Advent/Christmas season once again being affected by Covid. This time it's me. Yes, covid finally caught up to me and my wife nearly three years after the first case in Canada was confirmed. I am grateful it is the Covid 21 version and not the 19. Maria and I are the latest in our family to contract it. (Only our son remains not having had a confirmed case – praise God!) So, I am sipping tea and being thankful that I have the strength to sit up and write after just two and a half days with Covid.

We normally try and compensate for the cold and darkness this time of the year making time more joyful and uplifting by being with those we love. But once again I find myself in isolation. I'm wondering about the rest of my Church family this Christmas – Will it be a joyful one spent with loved ones? Because of Covid, the last time I was together with my extended family for Christmas was 2019. The plans are in place. But who knows?

Of course, the first Christmas (whether it was December or not) was also spent in isolation. It was not spent with family and friends welcoming the firstborn son of Mary into the world and supporting the new mother. It was spent in a barn, perhaps, where travelers kept their donkeys, because there was no room for the couple in the inn. It seems there was not much compassion there. Being in isolation was an everyday reality for some shepherds in a nearby pasture watching sheep who were oblivious to what was happening just over the hill. But that Christmas God broke the isolation, first by sending an angel with good news to these unexpectant shepherds, and the glory of the Lord shone around them – and then a multitude of heavenly host showed up praising God, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!” The angels didn't stick around with the shepherds – it would have woken the baby. No. They went back to their place in heaven, but they had expressed what they needed to humankind. And what they said and did inspired the shepherds to go quickly and break the isolation of Joseph and Mary. They went and shared the great news with them and anyone else who would listen to them, “...there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”. Wouldn't you have liked to have been there to receive such news? Thanks to God, through those very same shepherds, you still can receive it. You can as you read and accept the words that the angel passed on to them, now to you: “...there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”. If you are in isolation today, let those words break it. The Savior is born to **you!**

In some recent research I found that the word “Christmas” means “the anointed one has been sent”. That we know this Christmas. And more than that, we know what he was anointed for – to be our Savior. He was sent to lay down his life for us so that we might live forever. And he took his life up again. Let's rejoice in that life! “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,” through Jesus Christ our Lord.



# God's Plan

By Rev. Dan Endresen

God had a plan. A very big plan. A plan for redeeming the world from the grip of sin and death. God also knew about the plight of the righteous couple, Zechariah and Elizabeth. He had heard their prayers over the years for a child. And God, no doubt, arranged for the lot to fall on Zechariah, the priest, to burn incense at the altar at that time, and sent the angel, Gabriel, just then with his message. Gabriel brought the good news about a son to be born to Zechariah and his wife; an answer to prayer and much more than that. He didn't simply say, "your prayer has been heard, ...your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son". No. He told them that this son of theirs was going to be more than just special to them, he was to "be great in the sight of the Lord..., and filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth". Their son was to be set apart for God, and God's purpose, which was to "turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. He was to "...go as forerunner before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah" and "make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." Lk 1:17

Well, seeing the angel in God's temple and hearing all he said, Zechariah was understandably troubled and fearful – a natural response to a supernatural experience. But in his response, he totally blew it by expressing doubt at the truth of the message – listing the natural limitation of himself and his wife. And we might feel inclined to excuse Zechariah as simply using natural logic – but we must remember that, in his response, he was conversing with this supernatural being who brought him the message. It seems that he might have been so focused on the word that pertained to the birth of a future son that he missed the bigger picture – about his son being the fulfillment of scripture – the prophet that Israel had been waiting for referred to by the prophet Malachi, the very last word of God of the Old Testament. As a priest, Zechariah should have been anticipating that and been glad that he could play a part in that fulfillment. But it seems that something was

wrong. We can speculate that he might have had some resentment that God had not answered his prayer when he and Elizabeth were young – but we don't know. We might also think to excuse Zechariah's word due to the shock of the para-normal – perhaps like Peter's outburst on the Mount of Transfiguration. But the angel, interestingly, did not excuse him. He took offence at his words. As a priest, Zechariah should have known better than to question him, especially knowing prophetic scripture. The angel said, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.<sup>20</sup> And now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will be silent, unable to speak, until the day these things take place."

The negative response of Zechariah had not been simply from shock. Angels understand and expect that reaction when they appear to human beings. What they don't expect is unbelief expressed by a priest who knows scripture, and is conversing with them. And so, the otherwise blameless Zechariah was held responsible for his unbelief. It seems, Zechariah was asking for a sign of proof that would endure after the angel had gone. The Archangels' very presence wasn't enough. And Zechariah got what he asked for. You want a sign? Here it is. His words of doubt had got him in trouble. He was left mute – unable to share the good news with others until it came to pass. How many times does God bless us by fulfilling his word, and we go on unsatisfied, demanding more, and even doubting his good promises? How impatient and unbelieving we can be, sometimes much like Israel in the wilderness. Now, let's fast-forward to Mary. Like Zechariah, Mary too was naturally troubled having an encounter with the archangel, but, it seems, more troubled by his strange greeting than his appearance. "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you!" And most translations add, "blessed *are* you among women!" This spiritual being seems to address her as royalty. And then he explains why. He tells her what will take place inside of her, which, by the way, goes way beyond what Zechariah was told.

Listen again to what the angel had said to Mary, “You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.”<sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.<sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end.” And instead of saying, “How can I be sure of this”? like Zechariah, Mary’s response is, “How will this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?” If you think about it, that’s a strange response to being told she would mother Israel’s king to be. You would think she might have asked, “When will this be? But the when, must have already been settled as imminent. Otherwise, it would have been obvious that Joseph, who she was betrothed to, who was of the lineage of King David, would father the child. The only English version that transmits the imminence is the NRSV, which has the angel saying, “And **now**, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son”.

Then Mary is told the answer to her question, “How will this be...?”, which goes beyond bizarre, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God”. But Mary didn’t doubt the truth of the word, and didn’t even wait to consult with her mother or father or even Joseph, to whom she was betrothed. She was God’s firstly, and immediately replied, “Yes, I am a servant of the Lord; let this happen to me according to your word.” No wonder her relative, Elizabeth would later prophesy this about her when Mary came to visit, “...blessed is she who believed that what was spoken to her by the Lord would be fulfilled.” That was said vis a vis her own husband’s expression of doubt at the message given him from heaven.

This brings me to the meaning of the word “believe. The word “believe” is translated from the Greek verb, *pisteuo*. And it is not simply to trust the truth of a word. No. This “believe” denotes both a personal commitment and understood consequences from believing. It involves taking action based on the truth of the word. In Mary’s case, her belief was expressed by her response, “let it be”. That was her consent that God’s word act on her. “I am a servant of the Lord; let this happen to me according to your word.” That expressed her

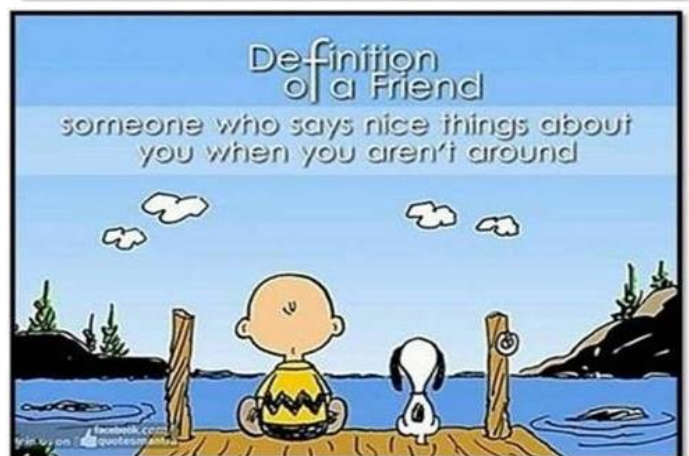
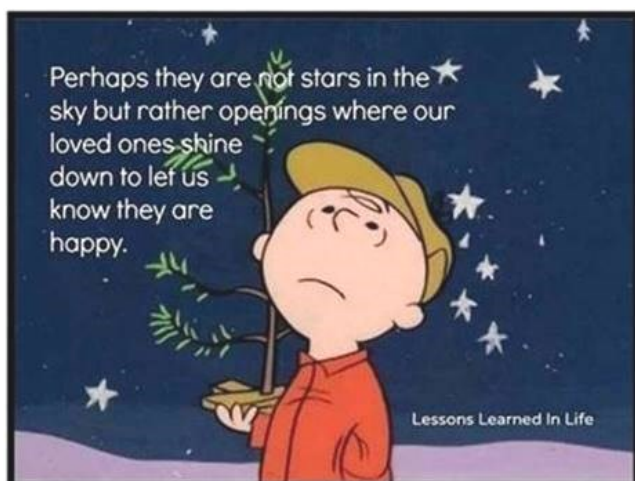
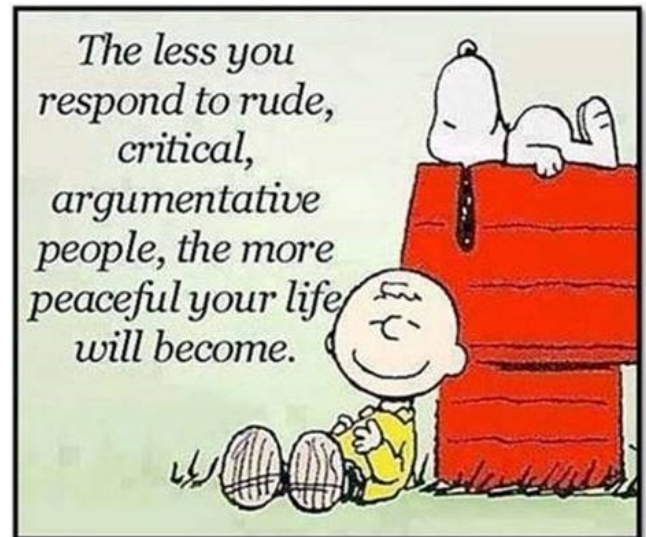
faith and submission to the word, and to the Lord. What about us?

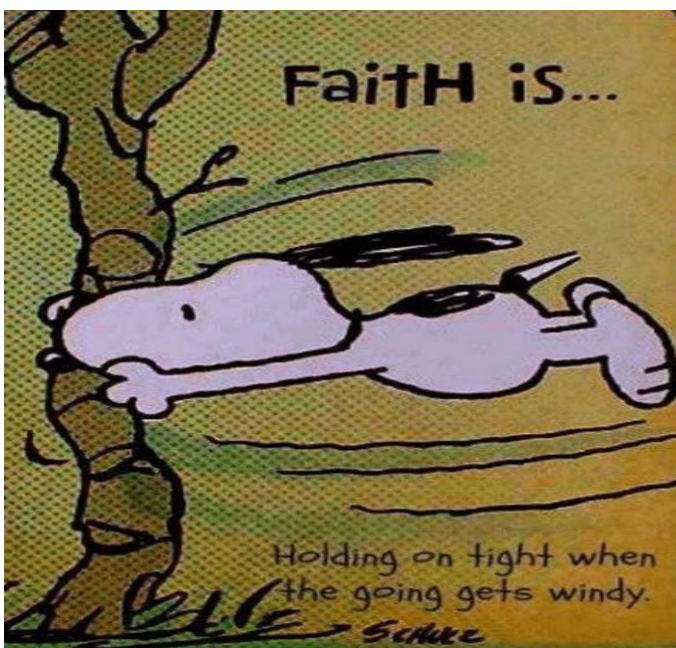
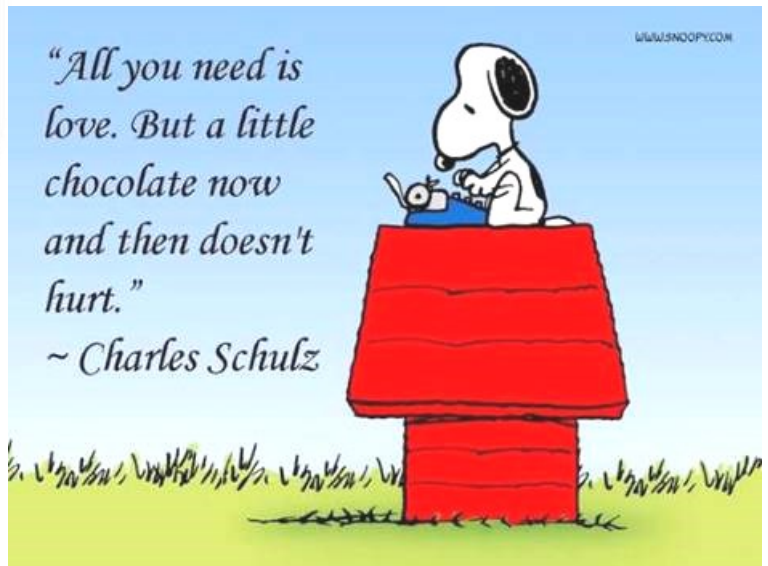
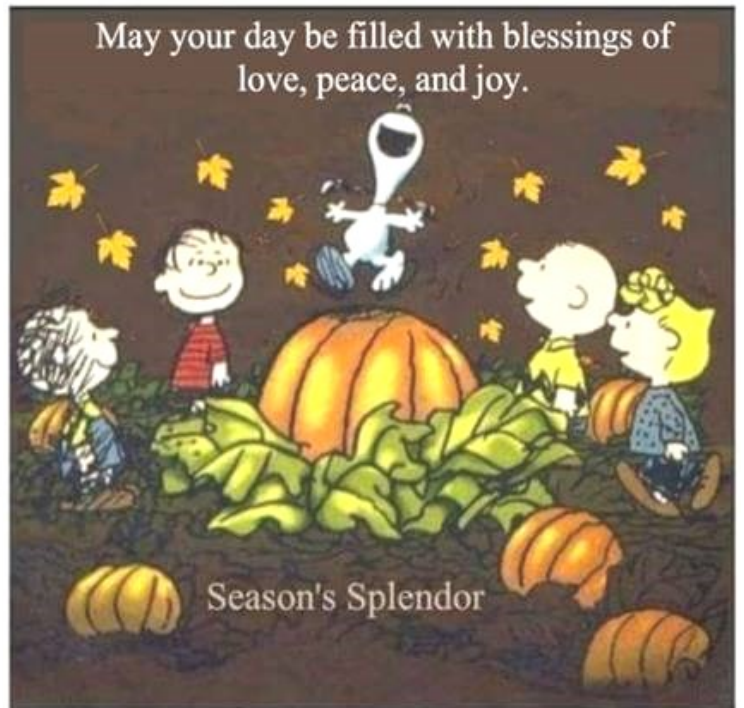
Let’s read now from Luke 2, verse 4. “Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,<sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.<sup>6</sup> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.<sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.<sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.<sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.<sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”.

How do you respond to that good news? “...there is born to you ...a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”. That good news was sent to you by the angel from heaven, and then some shepherds, and then Mary, and then Luke, right down to you through me tonight. Do you say like Zechariah, “How can I be sure of this?”, and object to the good news with natural reasoning to invalidate it? Do you give natural reasons of your limitations why it shouldn’t be – the wonderful grace of God? Or perhaps react negatively because of some disappointment with God in the past even though it is what you’ve hoped and prayed for? Some say, “I need more evidence that I am saved from sin and death through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice than what was reportedly said by Jesus and the apostles in the Bible and affirmed by his witnesses today. That’s not enough”. Well, those will get the signs they are looking for but it will cost them. Thank God he is merciful and some nine months later Zechariah acted on the word he received by writing the name the angel gave his new born son on a tablet. As soon as he did that, he was able to speak again, and prophesy. But it is so much better to be like Mary and just say “Yes. Let it be” to the word of the Lord immediately. Saying yes to God’s Word is the only way you’ll ever conceive his life in you. Receive the holy word of God today, that “...there is born to you ...a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”.

It was October 3, 1950 when Peanuts first debuted in seven newspapers under the United Features Syndicate. Developed by Charles M. Schulz, who was raised Lutheran in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota, Peanuts ran for nearly 50 years and was published in 2,600 newspapers, 75 countries and 21 languages. I hope you will take the time to look at these gems of wisdom from Charles Schultz. The message is timeless.





Submitted by the late Carolyn White

I thought I would send the lyrics to the meditation song since many are probably unfamiliar with the words. My mom showed it to me in one of her very old hymn books while I was visiting her.

Lois Meier

### Verse 1

Down from His glory  
Ever living story  
My God and Savior came  
And Jesus was His name  
Born in a manger  
To His own a stranger  
A man of sorrows  
Tears and agony

### Chorus

O how I love Him  
How I adore Him  
My breath my sunshine  
My all in all  
The great Creator  
Became my Savior  
And all God's fullness  
Dwelleth in Him

### Verse 2

What condescension  
Bringing us redemption  
That in the dead of night  
Not one faint hope in sight  
God gracious tender  
Laid aside His splendor  
Stooping to woo to win  
To save my soul

### Verse 3

Without reluctance  
Flesh and blood His substance  
He took the form of man  
Revealed the hidden plan  
O glorious myst'ry  
Sacrifice of Calv'ry  
And now I know  
Thou art the Great I Am



## From Small to Great

By Do Fox

The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,  
He lay a helpless baby,  
Not in great wealth, or golden halls  
God's promise wasn't, "maybe".

He came, despite the threat of death,  
His parents acted quickly,  
They went by night to save His life  
King Herod's act was sickly.

The Lord of all embraced His role  
To reveal God the Father,  
He healed the sick, He raised the dead,  
Salvation was His bother.

Although it cost Him all He had,  
His death meant life forever,  
For all who love, and come to Him,  
Their sins remembered? Never!

He'll come again to rule the world  
And Satan's evil realm destroy,  
For peace will shine, and fill all hearts,  
And Earth shall radiate His joy!







# Humour



## Ramblings of a Retired Mind

I was thinking about old age and decided that old age is when you still have something on the ball but are just too tired to bounce it.

I thought about making a fitness movie for folks my age and call it 'Pumping Rust'

I've got that dreaded furniture disease. That's when your chest is falling into your drawers!

When people see a cat's litter box they always say, 'Oh, have you got a cat?' Just once I want to say, 'No, it's for company!'

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older. Then it dawned on me. They were cramming for their finals.

The older you get the tougher it is to lose weight because by then your body and your fat have gotten to be good friends.

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

If you smile when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame.

Aging: Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Some people try to turn back their 'odometers'. Not me. I want people to know why I look this way. I've travelled a long way and some of the

roads weren't paved.

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to your youth, think of Algebra.

You know you are getting old when everything dries up or leaks.

One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.

Ah! Being young is beautiful but being old is comfortable.

Three retirees, each with a hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March Day. One remarked to the other, "Windy, isn't it?" "No," the second man replied, "it's Thursday." And the third man chimed in, "So am I. let's have a beer."

A man was telling his neighbour, "I just bought a new hearing aid, it cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art. It's perfect." Really," answered the neighbour. "What kind is it?" "Twelve thirty."

**Lord, keep your arm around my shoulder and your hand over my mouth.**

From the archives of Bob Sumner



# CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

P U P C H R I S T M A S N D N L I C  
 Y U L E T I D E O M H F C P U U F E  
 L D C T I N S E L C O K R R T M R L  
 I E A E I M Y N P Z L E H E C V U E  
 G C R G U L I J O L L Y O S R C I B  
 H O O G I X A S Y W Y S L E A L T R  
 T R L N N N B T R F N I N C X C A  
 S A E O O H G D M L R L D T K C A T  
 F T R G E M E G C E M A S E Y K E  
 E I S B L S L O R M I T Y K R C E K  
 S O S N O W M A N B Y T O B E L L S  
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 E P M P O I N S E T T I A D T R E E

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|-------------|------------|
| Angel       | Jingle     |
| Bells       | Jolly      |
| Carolers    | Lights     |
| Celebrate   | Mistletoe  |
| Chesnuts    | Noel       |
| Christmas   | Nutcracker |
| Decorations | Ornaments  |
| Eggnog      | Poinsettia |
| Festive     | Presents   |
| Fruitcake   | Snowflakes |
| Garland     | Snowman    |
| Gingerbread | Tinsel     |
| Holiday     | Tree       |
| Holly       | Yuletide   |

