

PASTOR JIM'S THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS - CHRISTMAS 2019



Greetings Friends,

Christmas is right around the corner! Each of us, in our special way, is "making our own TO DO LIST, and checking it twice! ***The critical question is "what list are you making, and what's on it?"***

What about you, is your Christmas TO DO LIST filled with projects to do, *like baking cookies?* How about buying gifts ... *and baking more cookies?* Then there's making certain your house will look "just perfect" when your special guests arrive... *and baking more cookies?* Did I happen to ask if you've remembered to add "*baking more cookies*" to your list? ***So here's the critical question again, "what list are you making, and what's on it?"***

I wonder what was on Mary and Joseph's TO DO LIST on that first Christmas Day when their little baby Jesus was born in a stable? That question comes to mind for me when I look at the little Nativity Scene I have on my desk in my parsonage office. I'm guessing Mary and Joseph's Christmas TO DO LIST was focused on things very different than buying gifts, making sure the house looked perfect, and baking cookies. My guess is that their lists were "GOD FOCUSED TO DO LISTS"?

When I think about what a "GOD FOCUSED TO DO LIST" might look like, I think about all the different Bible verses I've read telling me how little baby Jesus lived when He became an adult. I think about the ways Jesus invited people to receive God's love. I think about the ways Jesus accepted people in spite of where they came from, and in spite of all the mistakes they had made. I think about the ways Jesus cared for folks who were the poorest of the poor ... and who were folks society looked down on... and wanted to ignore ... and forget. I think about the ways Jesus provided healing that cared for people's minds, bodies and spirits. Jesus fed and healed people's bodies and minds. I think about the ways Jesus told his followers to live as He lived, and then promised them that they would experience an abundant ... joyous ... and meaningful life!

When I think about creating my own "GOD FOCUSED TO DO LIST" for this Christmas, I start out by writing across the top of the page these words ***"Do my best each day to live like Jesus and act like Jesus and love people the way Jesus loved people!"*** Interestingly enough, once I start with those words, the rest of the list makes much more sense. I'm less stressed ... and I feel more at peace! Friends, blessings to you as you work on your own "GOD FOCUSED TO DO LIST" for this Christmas!

Please join us for Sunday morning worship on December 22 as we sing and hear wonderful Christmas hymns and hear the Bible story of the Birth of Jesus. Please join us for a beautiful Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Tuesday, December 24. You are invited to attend either or both 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm services. We will hear special music, sing joyous Christmas hymns, hear the Bible story of the Birth of Jesus, share Holy Communion and light candles to celebrate the birth of Jesus!

I pray you feel God's love and peace and hope this Christmas!

Love and Prayers,
Pastor Jim