

At the Heart of Christmas 2021

What is at the heart of your Christmas? Parties, gifts, church, carol singing, family.....what if I was to say the Holy Family? This may not be what you expected. However, the Church of England has its strap line - '*At the Heart of Christmas*' plus a heart logo with the Holy Family at its centre. It certainly makes you think what is the real meaning or purpose of Christmas. It also helps us to get to the heart of the matter! So I am suggesting 3 possible ways to do so.....

1) *The Heart of Christmas - Giving*

“For God so loved the world that He GAVE His one and only Son...” (John 3:16)

Christmas is a season for giving, whether it is in the form of gifts, money, time or even love. We generally treasure the gifts we receive at Christmas time. At the same time we are encouraged to be givers. When we give, it is amazing how God blesses us back in return. Let's remember that on the first Christmas morn, God gave '*His one and only Son, Jesus Christ*'. Because God gave, millions have encountered His love, salvation and blessings throughout history. Let's ask Jesus for a new heart of generosity this year as we spread the love and goodness of God lavishly! The only blessing some people may receive during Christmas, could well be from you!!

2) *The Heart of Christmas - Family*

“Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19)

A vital part of our Christmas celebrations is the time spent with family. The Christmas season is so special that many people travel miles to be home. We see a beautiful family portrait on the night that Jesus was born. When the shepherds came to Bethlehem, "*They... found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger*". Mary and Joseph clearly built a strong, godly family. This year, can we build some precious Christmas memories with our family? Can we strengthen and encourage one another? Can we heal a strained relationship? God loves all families and we need to treasure all the precious memories. We could also befriend someone who has no family to celebrate with at Christmas. Let's pray for our family to receive special grace this Christmas that will unfold many beautiful moments.

3) *The Heart of Christmas - Humility*

“He (Jesus) humbled Himself” (Philippians 2:8)

At the heart of the Christmas message, is humility. It speaks of how the mighty Son of God, took on a human form, and came down to earth in humbling circumstances. He was born in a manger; not a palace. His parents were possibly peasants, not the rich of society. The message of His birth was announced to humble shepherds and not to those in the seats of power. His birth and His very life, showed a level of humility never seen before. As we approach Christmas, let's ask God to give us the same attitude of humility that was in Christ Jesus.

So let's work together as a church and community to highlight and share with others what is really at the heart of Christmas this year.

May the Lord bless you and your families this Christmas season.

Rev. Alison