

## **The Gift of Love**

Christmas Eve Family Service – Christ Church Greenville – J. Gary Eichelberger  
Luke 2:1-20 – December 24, 2014

This afternoon, tonight, and tomorrow – we celebrate the “good news of great joy.” We celebrate love—and love by its very definition is something that is given, that is shared.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.’ God loved us so much—that he gave us Jesus. The gift of love.

The Bible tells us that many things about love. That “love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” That “love is from God.” That “God is love.” And the Bible tell us that, “since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.”

And here we are tonight, gathered together in this crowded church, surrounded by love. God is certainly with us in this place.

Love put together these costumes. Love arranged the music that we heard. Love decorated this church. Love brought all of these children here tonight on a cold and wet, dreary day. And these children – each of you – loved us by being up here tonight.

And, tomorrow, we revel in love. We feast. And we live into the excess of God’s love—God’s great gift of Jesus.

And, filled with that love – bearing that great gift (and the many other smaller gifts that we hope to receive tomorrow) – we will be inspired with gratitude and love.

Tomorrow, as you open gifts, as you give gifts, as you sit down to dinner, as you welcome people into your home, as you are welcomed into the homes of others, I want you – everyone here – I want to encourage you to share the gift—to share the gift of God—to share the gift of Jesus.

And I want to offer you one simple way to do that – by letting folks know that you love them—by sharing your love with them—you are sharing God with them. So, I simply want to challenge you to say “I love you” to as many people as possible tomorrow.

And I want to see if you – up here, all of you shepherds and angels and cows and donkeys and sheep and camels – can help us get the ball rolling tonight. Each of you has people that you love sitting out there in the congregation. I want you to look out there at them—and if you can’t find them right now—just imagine that you are looking at them, and, on the count of 3, I want you to share God with them by saying, or even shouting, “I love you!” Do you think that y’all can do that?

One-two-three: [CHILDREN RESPOND]

Amen.