

Does It Matter?

The Christmas season is here. Advent officially starts today – December 3rd. Radio stations have been playing Christmas music for weeks. Downtown is decorated with blinking lights. Black Friday sales have kicked off the shopping season. Christmas cards are arriving in increasing numbers each day. We are constantly reminded of how many shopping days there are until Christmas. The Christmas season is now in full swing. Materialism is at work, but something else happens this time each year. It is the season to strengthen relationships and to show our love for others – family, neighbors and co-workers. We become more social as our calendars fill up with Christmas events, office parties and musical concerts. Christmas lights illuminate the neighborhood. As the song says, “It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas.” It is a season in which everyone participates, Christians and “not-yet-believers,” alike.

For most of the year, a growing segment of our community ignores or pushes back against Christianity. Yes, even now, some want to substitute the name the season to be “Holiday” instead of Christmas. But, this time of year, even the secular community celebrates Christmas. Does it matter if they don’t yet believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? We may wonder, “What are they celebrating?” Rather than being judgmental, take the opportunity to spread the Good News among all people.



Certainly, the secular view omits the birth of Jesus as the centerpiece of the celebration. Lighted Santa Claus and reindeers, rather than manger scenes, dominate the outside decorations. Christmas music often features titles like “Let it snow,” “I’ll Be Home for Christmas,” “Here Comes Santa Claus,” or one of my personal favorites, Karen Carpenter’s “Merry Christmas, Darling.” Still, even the secular community embraces the Christian principles of giving, love, family, peace and joy. (All they need is the Hope of Jesus to complete the advent wreath.) Christmas brings people together in love and to give gifts to each other, even traveling great distances to be together.

Certainly, the reason for the season *does* matter, but the “seeds of faith” are planted in all who experience it. People may be at a different place in their lives as they focus on the merriment rather than the birth of Christ. Regardless of where people are in their Christian walk, we have the opportunity to model our faith. We can tell others that Jesus is the reason for the season. We can invite others to worship services, as the opportunity presents itself. We can shine the light of Jesus to those around us who are living in darkness. God is at work through us at this magical time of the year. We can’t make unbelievers believers, but we can share our unconditional love with those around us. Our role is to present Jesus to our part of the world, and let the Holy Spirit go to work.

The lights on the tree and in our yards are the “light of Christ.” It is our hope that unbelievers will see the light through us. When they do, it is another Christmas miracle that opens their hearts and encourages others to come to faith. Let your light shine this Christmas and throughout the year.

Question: How do you share the light of God to a darkened world at Christmas?

The idea of this devotion comes from a letter written by Matthew C. Harrison, President, The Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod.