

Calvary United Methodist Church
December 23, 2018

CHRISTMAS CANTATA SUNDAY

Rev. Dr. A. Robert Cook

Children's Message:

Romans 12:10-12

Our children. How are you? You look great in your Christmas dress. Nice Christmas tie. (Thank you.) You are welcome. Christmas is exciting and Christmas Eve tomorrow and you are excited; you are pumped, right? (Yes.) Is there anybody here who doesn't have a tree up yet? Not yet? You don't have your tree up? (Nope.) Really? (We didn't get it yet.) You didn't get it yet? You have yours? (Yes.) It's already up? Well, if his is up, yours is up too, right? That's right. Okay. Well, since you haven't put yours up yet, what is the most important part about your Christmas tree? He's thinking. (The star.) The star. What would you say? (Child speaks.) What would you say? The star. Ornaments. (The water so the tree can live.) The water so the tree can live if you have a live one. The tree itself. Let me tell you the most important part about the tree that you never noticed. No one ever comes in and says, "That is the most beautiful tree stand I have ever seen." Has anyone ever said that? What a great tree...where did you get that? It sure wasn't K-Mart. Without the tree stand your tree would flop over, right? It would just be sort of like horizontal. The cats would like it, right? They would climb in and out. Everybody has a tree stand, right? You have a tree stand at home? You have another day to buy one. So, do you have your tree up? You have a stand, right? Even if it is an artificial one, you have a stand, unless you hung it from the ceiling. Anyone do that? You all have a tree stand.

No one notices it, you know, but once your tree is up and is in the stand and it is all decorated and everything is ready, then what's the most important thing about Christmas Eve? Giving? That's good. (Being with your family.) Being with your family. Yes, you are going to go to the head of the class. (Child speaks.) Do you want to preach today? You might be good, you know.

Well, young man, would you hand me that little nativity set to your left there. Not the basket, but the little set there. That's it. Thank you. This tells the story. You know, yesterday I thought I'd go out and I would buy a Christmas crèche and I went to Boscov's and couldn't find one. I could find Rudolph, I could find carolers, I could find the Grinch. I went to Target. I walked out of Target. There was a line about three hours long. Went to a few other places and my wife said, "We have this one." And this tells the story in all of its simplicity. It's about a little baby. You were a baby once; do you remember that? You do? It's about a little baby and it's about the mom and the dad and about God sending His Son and he is God's gift to us. There is a sheep there, yes. And he's wearing a very nice Woolrich sweater.

This is the point of Christmas: it is about Jesus who gave us gifts, which is why are you going

to make something for your mom? That's the right answer too. And when you do that, you make it in love, right. And then she'll hug you. Are you going to make something for your dad? And he'll hug you, right. Now, this is something I want you to remember: When you are 16 ½ and he's taught you how to drive and he gives you the keys, don't forget to hug him. Because he will really need the comfort. (Child speaks.) Well, you know, your mom is always right. He said he can't drive until he's 20, maybe 25. And your sister can't date till she's 25, right?

Jesus is God's gift to us and he's a gift from the heart of God to all of us. And that's why we give gifts and we give it out of love. But he's here. And there is no Christmas without him. That's the whole reason for the season. So we'll put this here and I need someone to help me light the Advent candle. So, who has a birthday over the Christmas season? You do? (My birthday is the 31st.) Anyone else have a birthday. Yours is what day? (14th) 14th of December? Really? Can you do this together? Okay, we'll light the Advent Candle. Okay. Come on up. And if you talk to anyone, they will say, "He forgot it in the first service." Fourteen people told me.

You hold part of it and you guide him, ok? The blue candle there. Perfect. Thank you for helping.

And now, let us pray: Thanks for our kids and the gift they are to us and the gift that you are to us, Lord. And in this day help us to remember that maybe the rest of the world won't see you, but we know because we are your people. And bless these little people, our loved ones. In Christ. Amen.

Thanks so much. Good job. Now, you have the basket right there. Would you be the person to help give it out?