

## Is it Christmas Time Already?

**How many of you already have Christmas decorations up?** OK, how many of you think that Christmas decorations should NOT be put up until AFTER Thanksgiving? I think some people if they had their way would keep the tree up year-round. Stores seem to think that way as many of them start pushing Christmas spending in July. Each year we seem to start the holiday season earlier than the year before.

I love the holidays. What I don't care for is how commercialized it all has become. We have lost the true meaning of what this season is about. If stores can start early talking about Christmas spending I thought it only fair to start early stressing the real reason for this season, the birth of Jesus, the hope of the world.

If ever our world needed hope it is today. We can't turn on the news or even troll Facebook without it being in our face. We are now more in turmoil and conflict than ever before. Our divisions seem deeper and what divides us appears wider. People are desperately looking for hope and healing. That hope and healing can ultimately come from only one person, Jesus. This is why he was born into the world.

His message of peace is our message. We have been commissioned by him to take his story to the ends of the world. That world starts right here in our community. It spreads from here to around the world. Our purpose here at our church is, **STATE YOUR MESSAGE STATEMENT.**

We accomplish this through all the various missions and ministry initiatives we do here. Those initiatives take time and money. Your generosity of your time and money makes this happen. Without you we cannot do what God has for us. So, this morning as you give know that your gift will go to advance the Kingdom.

Throughout this holiday season we want to be about focusing upon the real reason for the season, Jesus. Let's proclaim his message of hope to our world that needs that Good News. Let's serve and give as if the lives of our neighbors depend upon us because truly it does. As those around us focus on buying gifts let's show them that the greatest gift of all, Jesus, can be theirs for free!