



**SPOKANE COUNTY
CHAPLAINCY
SERVICES**



SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CHAPLAINS TO SERVE YOU

Mark Smith

Lead Chaplain

Robert Kinnune

Cliff Custer

Jake Burkholder

Fasitupe MeaFua

Teresa Smith

Gino Palomino

Office phone:

509-477-6625

P. O. Box 18752

Spokane, WA 99208

www.spokanecountychaplaincy.com

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THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

As I think of Christmas's past my mind is instantly drawn to the sights, sounds, and excitement of the season. For the past few years I have had the joy of bringing those same memories to life with my own son. I can't help but be drawn to the story of the very first Christmas.

It was a simple scene, likely quite cold. A young couple far from home and friends in a rough place with only a feeding trough to place their precious child. In Bethlehem the traditional birth place of Jesus was not a stable, it was a small cave with a trough carved out of the rock. Not exactly what we have seen in Christmas Nativity scenes and décor. Yet this rustic place was the scene that marked the greatest event in the history of all mankind. God's Son was made a human and came here to save us all. God promised to send His Son

the Messiah—the one who would deliver His people. Jesus could have come fully grown, full of power, or at the very least, born of earthly Royalty. This is what most people were expecting. A messiah to save Israel and restore it to its former glory, out of Roman control. But that was not God's plan. Jesus arrived in the arms of a young girl, wrapped in a plain blanket, a perfect gift given from the very heart of God.

God sent His only Son to die for us in all our brokenness. In Romans 5:8 it says exactly that: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Jesus came so we could know what real love is, love that never fails, love that never disappoints, love that never betrays. God sent His Son into a corrupted world so that we may have hope.

Jeremiah 29:11 reassures us of this: "For I know the plans that I have for you, 'declares the Lord,' plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

How are you doing this Christmas season? You too can have hope, and peace through a relationship with Jesus Christ. You can receive God's Christmas gift to you through faith, simply by talking to Him. He knows your heart and is not concerned about specific words or prayers. He just wants you.

May you and your families celebrate this Holiday Season full of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.

Merry Christmas,
Chaplain Mark Smith

