



The Two "G's"

GRACIOUS GIVING AND GOBSMACKED GRATITUDE.

Amidst the trappings and tinsel of the Christmas season, it is the blessing of giving that reflects the heart and grace of a Heavenly Father who first gave.

Personally, I enjoy searching for and finding that one "perfect gift;" the one that elicits surprise and happiness as it is opened and received. You've likely experienced it too . . . the pleasure on a spouse's face, the sheer wonder and excitement in a child's eye, the warmth of a loved one's affirming glance across the living room. Somehow the act of giving warms our hearts and draws giver and recipient ever closer. I've found myself pondering, could it be that the delight of giving is a tangible way in which the image of God is reflected in and through us?

In the Epistle of James, the author writes, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

Perhaps we give good, and sometimes perfect gifts, precisely because it is the nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, living in and with us, to bless those we loves.

At Christmas time, not only are we givers, we are also recipients. This past summer I was introduced to the word, "gobsmacked" by some British friends. An adjective, the Cambridge Dictionary offers, "so surprised that you cannot speak." Recall for a moment a gesture, a kind word, a gift where the sense of surprise left you struggling for words of appreciation. As recipients, these too are special moments when we experience a sense of value and worthiness and when our sense of happiness and gratitude are peaked.

The Psalmist exhorts us to "come before Him with thanksgiving, and extol Him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods."

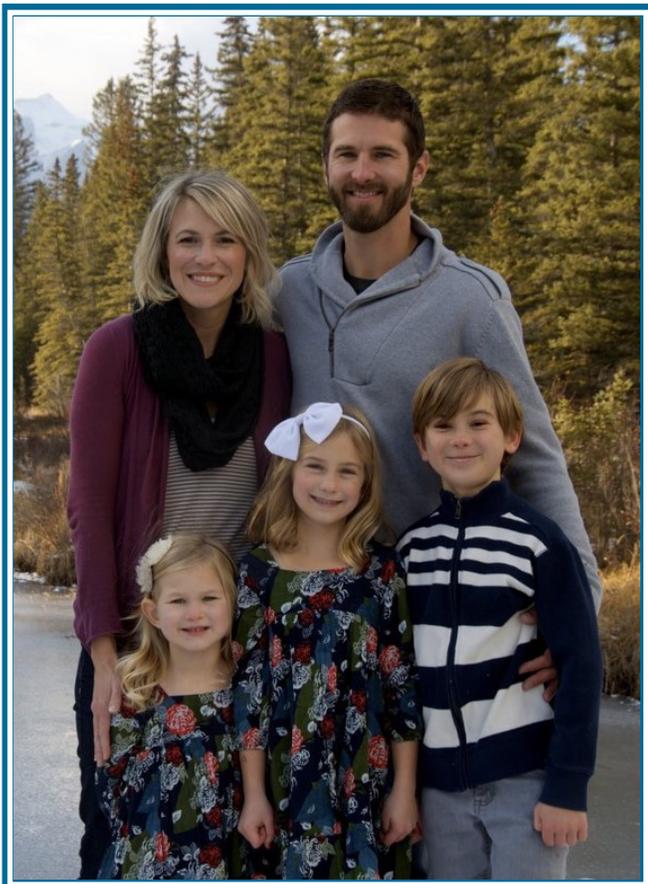
In this season we will celebrate Jesus. We will tell the story of Immanuel in a variety of creative ways. Lights will shine in darkness illuminating our senses to the profound spiritual reality of the Christ event. In the birth of Jesus the story of a gracious Giver and of the perfect Gift is narrated. It tells of loved recipients, and of gobsmacked gratitude. May we, during this Christmas season mirror the character of the Father as a gracious giver. May we find ourselves, speechless, with gobsmacked gratitude in response to all the blessings we receive.

A YEAR OF GOOD GIFTS!

As a staff, we seek to facilitate a physical place and a spiritual space where God is free to work unhindered in the lives of those who come seeking rest and renewal.

We rely on God's provision and grace. This year has seen much by way of His good gifts:

- Provision of a new-to-us plow truck and four-wheeler.
- Increased financial provision, the significance of which is in the value and worth communicated to our guests. Thank you!
- A wonderful response to new "lunch and learn" initiatives aimed at expanding awareness and engaging new partners.
- Passionate volunteers and trades people who lift the expression of care for guests to new heights.



- Dan and Kristi Bittle and their family who have become such a delightful part of the team as Director of Facilities
- Marlin and Susan Kroeker, Gerry and Heather Wyman, Colleen Krey, and Ted Horton who so beautifully model Jesus' servant heart and love for our guests.
- Prayer warriors who faithfully seek the Father on behalf of our campus and guests.
- Deeply invested Board members and spouses who, along with our staff and volunteers, beautifully embody the mission and vision of Fairhaven.
- Expanding denominational and para-church awareness and ministry partnerships.
- The gift of silence and solitude experienced across our campus.
- The mystery of Jesus' presence to and at work in our guests.

A FEW NOTES FROM THE RECIPIENTS OF YOUR GENEROSITY . . .

To the Fairhaven Staff,

Everywhere I look, although I don't see anyone in the flesh, I see the evidence of the many people who have worked hard so that my husband and I could come and be ministered to here at Fairhaven. The attention to detail expresses such a deep love for us, a couple whom you have never met, but loved on never-the-less. Words cannot express my gratitude for the hours of work and prayer that makes this place a peaceful oasis and healing ground.

Thank you seems limp and void of the magnitude of feelings and emotions we have towards you, gracious people serving the Lord anonymously. God richly bless you and know that every little cookie, tissue box, landscaping, décor, seat, walking paths, the lavish cottage, was greatly appreciated and was part of our journey of healing and restoration. Don't ever underestimate the little things; it's the small stuff that tells me "I am worth it."

Thank you for allowing us to share your view and gift us the time to be still in God's creation, and find each other beneath the years of serving others. Blessings, M & C.



To ALL of you who work so hard to make this place a heaven for people like us, Thank You so much for all that you do and for you prayers and concern. T & L.



Thank you for your hospitality at Fairhaven the last few days. Our time here has been much needed and refreshing as we head into a new phase of life. Thank you for your kindness and words of wisdom. We feel we've been able to process some important things that will help guide us to our next season of life. We wish you a great time in your continued ministry here and we look forward to returning one day. Blessings, D & T.



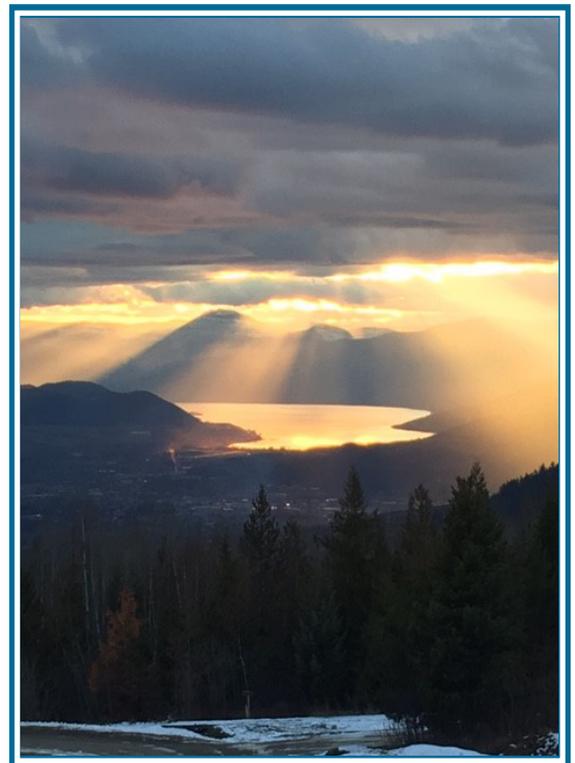
Thank you so much for your care and wisdom during our recent visit. We appreciate so much the ministry and how it has refreshed and refocused our hearts. With appreciation, B & D.



I just wanted to send a note to say how much S. and I enjoyed our time in the Hermitage this past weekend. It was so quiet and relaxing. We didn't care if it was not great weather, and we did actually see a quick glimpse of the view of Vernon at one point, but that wasn't why we were there. How refreshing to spend a weekend doing lots of talking. Our time with Tony helped S. and I be able to talk about what was going on in our lives in a way that fostered even more dialogue once we left our session with him. Thank you for providing a place of such solitude and reflection. What a blessing to walk into the unit and see a note that someone was actually praying for our time here as well. What a gift this whole weekend was to us. Thanks again to all of the wonderful people who work to make "Fairhaven" happen. C & S



Be encouraged! Your partnership with this ministry is making a profound difference in the hearts and lives of those called to kingdom purposes.



Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the City of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord!



IN CONCLUSION

A recent consultant to our Board commented, "There is no more complex, demanding, and diverse role in society today than that of a pastor."

Thank you for leaning in and giving, though prayer, through financial gifts, through shared talents and skills, through inviting others to partner with us, or through the simple act of referring guests to us. Your generosity is indeed an expression of your worship of Jesus. Thank you for the privilege of being a ministry through which your care and compassionate connects tangibly with ministry leaders and their families.

As we discern God's leading into 2019 we are excited about the opportunities to touch a growing number of ministry leaders, spouses and their respective families; expanding the care and retreat provisions for our guests through the addition of a full time Director of Operations; and in laying a "solid foundation" for a next building phase. There will be more to share during the Spring Dinner Tours. Stay tuned.

With the end of 2018 on the horizon, may I encourage you to prayerfully consider a year-end gift that may be used to further the blessing this place has and is becoming for so many.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the onsite team, and our volunteers, Gwen and I wish you and yours a wonderful Christ-centered season.

Blessings,

Tony Schnare,
Executive Director.

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