Christmas Day - December 25th

Matthew 2:11

Brenda Barnes

Christmas Day – a beautiful day of celebration with others around us, good food, and, of course, the gifts. When I was a child, we received one large (main) gift, a handmade gift (usually a crocheted sweater or poncho) and our stockings, which were filled with little gifts, fruit, and candy. We thought we were rich. Now the pyramids of gifts that my extended family provides for one another demonstrates what I view and experience as excess. I read somewhere that instead of giving numerous gifts to one another, we should be more thoughtful, using the example of the Magi. A gold wrapped gift would be something the recipient truly wants. The frankincense gift should remind the recipient to meet with Jesus (a devotion book or music CD or journal book); this gift could be wrapped in white. The myrrh gift can be anything that prepares the body (lotions, soaps, shampoo, shaving cream) and reminds us that Christ's coming in the flesh has significance beyond the manger. This gift is wrapped in dark paper to remind us that Christ was born to die and rise again not just for humanity, but for all of Creation, as it groans in anticipation of salvation.

I have rebelled against the excess. Instead, I give the three gifts, wrapped as noted and then I use the rest of my holiday budget to give gifts to Creation on Christmas Day. I feed the birds. I feed the deer and buy them a new saltlick. I feed the crayfish in the stream behind the house. These are my gifts to the Lord of all Creation.

PRAYER: Jesus Christ, Lord of All, you came that we might have life and have it in abundance, but we take the abundance for granted. Give us an understanding of the need to take care of Creation in dismal winter weather and allow us to see You in all that You have created. AMEN

Action Item: Smear pinecones with peanut butter or suet and roll them in bird seed. Hang these "bird feeders" on Christmas Day for a special treat. (The peanut butter/suet gives extra nutrition to the birds during the winter weather.)