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A lasting Christmas gift to cherish

Christmas is a beautiful time of the year. Families gather together to exchange gifts, and the joy and smiles on the faces of our children are one of God's richest blessings. Unfortunately, there are many children who will not share that joy this holiday season. In particular, I think of the children who are in need of foster parents. There are countless children who have not nor will ever experience the blessing of a home or a family. I am grateful to God to be a member of a wonderful organization known as ChildPromise, Inc., a 138-year-old Philadelphia based non-profit that celebrates the promise of each foster child through its commitment to their success. ChildPromise, Inc. was formerly known as Baptist Children's Services and their mission is "to support quality residential and education services for children and youth. Furthermore, they are committed to fostering a sense of responsibility and accountability in children and youth,



Rev. Charles Quann

by creating opportunities."

Dr. Nathaniel J. Williams, president and CEO of ChildPromise, has a heart for foster children. Under his leadership many programs have been initiated that seek to provide love and care for foster children. PROFS, an initiative of ChildPromise, which stands for providing resources for future standouts, provides mentorship, guidance and support for nine students at Kutztown University. There are currently 45 foster children attending Kutztown, where we firmly believe that "failure is not an option", as they are provided with a blend of emotional, educational and financial support.

The number of foster children in our society is ever growing. Christmas is a wonderful time of the year to reach out and make a commitment to be a foster parent or to financially support ChildPromise, Inc. Earlier this year ChildPromise held a gala to recognize individuals who have given love and support to foster children. Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, a former New York Knicks player and Philadelphia native, was the guest speaker, and he shared a very loving story of how his life was blessed by others. I marvel at Ken and Irene Campbell longtime supporters of ChildPromise, as they were honored at the gala for their commitment in giving so much to others without seeking any recognition. I have taken up the mantle of leadership as chair of board of directors of ChildPromise, with the thought in mind, if we can help one child to God be the glory! This Christmas give a gift that lasts and contact ChildPromise at (267) 368-7639 or at www.childpromise.org.

I reflect upon my own childhood, particularly around the Christmas season. We did not have much, but we did have family. I cherish those Christmases that were so meaningful to me, memories that have lasted my entire life. Beyond my own sons, daughters and grandchildren, I am committed to work tirelessly in helping foster children. I marvel at those who have a heart to care for children beyond their own biological families. At Bethlehem, we are blessed to have as a member, Valerie Crabbe, founder and CEO of Being Beautiful Foundation. She and her husband Larry have taken numerous foster children into their home. This is an example that each one of us can contribute in some way in making the lives of these children better.

I remember the quote, "You really can change the world if you care enough." This Christmas open your heart and experience the incredible

blessing that comes when you bless a child. Thank God for the Babe of Bethlehem, for in the Gospel of Matthew 1:23 we find these deep and profound words, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us."

I believe with all my heart that if we can help one foster child they will reach his or her potential, and not only will God be pleased, but the life of that child will be a blessing forever.

On behalf of my family and the Bethlehem church family, we are thankful for the gift of Christ in this joyous season, and wish you a Merry Christmas, and a blessed New Year. Make this Christmas a WOW experience with a foster child, "Wonderful Opportunities Waiting."

The Rev. Charles W. Quann is the pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Spring House.