

**THE ADOPT A  
FAMILY AT  
CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**



---

***Geiger Memorial Brethren Church  
2543 West Lehigh Avenue  
Phila., PA 19132-3207  
(215)229-2967 FAX 228-9940***

***Rev. Anthony DiBenedetto, Jr.  
Pastor***

## INTRODUCTION

Christmas is the most difficult of all seasons of the year for poor families and individuals, as well as those who are alone for the holidays. Great bouts of depression and an overwhelming sense of hopelessness are experienced by adults; and genuine disappointment, as well as hurt, is experienced by children.

The "Adopt a Family at Christmas" program is an attempt to help poor families and individuals celebrate the Birth of our Saviour by providing some holiday food and gifts, in the name of Jesus, that will dispel their gloom and sense of hopelessness, and bring holiday joy. We also endeavor, with so much pain and sorrow in the world, as we celebrate our Saviour's Birth, to share our bounty with others even as Jesus suggested in Matthew 25:31 thru 46.

In addition, we are careful to share the Gospel through the written and spoken word. The Christmas story is read and prayer is offered for the family.

## HISTORY OF THE IDEA

Prior to the Christmas of 1990, we received a call from Pastor Erwin Morrison of the Covenant P.C.A. Church of Willow Grove, PA requesting the name of a family whose Christmas they might brighten with gifts and Christmas dinner. It seems that each Christmas Eve they have a custom of children bringing gaily wrapped empty packages to place under their church Christmas tree. The Pastor's wife, Joanna, felt that this was a somewhat meaningless activity and developed the idea of actually filling the gift boxes and delivering them along with Christmas dinner to a needy family on Christmas Eve. Pastor Ben, her brother, was contacted and a number of families were suggested with not one, but two families being chosen. The gifts and food having been assembled at the Christmas Eve Service, Pastor Ben and Mrs. Morrison with her family came into the city and were taken to the homes of the families that had been selected. It was a rather revealing and overwhelming experience as well

as one that was deeply satisfying. Since then other congregations and individuals have become involved in this program.

## WHAT'S INVOLVED

1. Choosing the number of families you want to "adopt"
2. Gathering at least two gifts for each person in the family and the wrapping of those gifts with Christmas paper
3. Writing a Christmas card with a personal greeting for each family member
4. Gathering food for a full course Christmas dinner-the amount of food depends on the size of the family - Remember to thaw the turkey so it can be cooked on Christmas day. (We notify the family in advance of your gift). Be sure to include:
  - An appetizer (juice, fruit cocktail, etc.)
  - Basic vegetables (potatoes, corn, peas, yams, green beans, etc.)
  - Stuffing mix
  - Turkey (sized according to family)
  - Desserts (cakes, pies, etc.)
  - Gravy mix or any other needed condiments
  - Rolls or bread and butter
  - Beverage (hot and cold)
  - Various other items needed for preparation (or that you choose to add)
5. If you are able, you are encouraged to give additional food that will last for several days or more.
6. Inclusion of Spiritual materials that will introduce the family to Jesus or encourage them in the faith
7. Inclusion of Church Bulletins, Daily Breads, etc. as well as a self-addressed stamped envelope with note paper and pen if you would like the family to write to you - Be sure to ask them to do so by writing a note to them.
8. Delivery of the items to the chosen family will be by arrangement with Geiger Church. It may be Christmas Eve, or any other day; but not more than 3 days before Christmas. Special Delivery arrangements can sometimes be made.

9. You are expected to deliver the food and gifts to the home of your Adopted Family. Any size group is welcome. We will send someone with you to make the delivery

10. The reading of the Christmas Story from Luke, a word of testimony from several of your people, and prayer are expected to be offered.

11. Leave a disposal camera with your family to take pictures on Christmas Day. Make arrangements to pick up the camera after New Year's Day.

## WHO CAN GET INVOLVED?

1. A church congregation
2. A Sunday School class or organization within the congregation
3. A family
4. An individual
5. Christian schools or individual classes
6. Fraternal groups
7. Police Officers
8. Company groups

## WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Believers who want to help others
- Money for gifts and food
- Believers who are not afraid to put self last and others first
- A heart full of God's love
- A desire to make some poor family's Christmas a little happier and to introduce them to Jesus as Saviour ; if they don't know Him
- To make some Christian family's Christmas a little brighter and to encourage them in the faith

## HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

It's easy:

- 1) Just make the decision to adopt a family!
- 2) Give a call to Pastor DiBenedetto at 215-229-2967 and make your decision known

- 3) Receive the family information that will enable you to prepare
- 4) Make arrangements and plans that will enable you to have what you need by Christmas Eve
- 5) Do pray for your "Adopted Family" to have a blessed and spiritual Christmas
- 6) Make arrangements for delivery with Pastor Ben

#### **CONTACT PERSON**

**Rev. Anthony DiBenedetto, Jr.**  
**AKA: Pastor Ben**  
**Geiger Memorial Brethren Church**  
**(An Inner-city Ministry)**  
**2543 West Lehigh Avenue**  
**Phila., PA 19132-3207**  
**(215) 229-2967 FAX (215) 228-9940**

#### **WHERE DO WE GET THE FAMILIES?**

Geiger Church is involved in an inner-city ministry that reaches out to the people in the community through a variety of social and spiritual ministries. Some families are referred to us by responsible individuals who live in the area. Others come through involvement in "The Master's Table" or come to our attention through the ministry of the "Shepherd's Pantry". Both of these programs are part of our Outreach Ministries. Some are referred to us by the members and friends of the congregation. We also endeavor to encourage families who are going through difficult times as well as Christian workers with the same purpose in mind as in our service to poor families. Neighborhood schools (7) are contacted in September for the names of families who need help or encouragement. Pastor Ben discovers some through his contact with people on the street.

#### **CONTINUING CONTACT WITH "ADOPTED" FAMILIES**

You are encouraged to maintain contact with "your" family through visits, letters, newsletters and the bringing

of an Easter dinner similar to the Christmas dinner. No gifts are necessary, but needed items may be given.

#### **OUR PURPOSE**

Simply stated our purpose is to obey the command of Jesus to publish the Gospel everywhere we go and in addition, to meet the physical needs of those to whom we minister. It's difficult to share the Gospel with people who are hungry, or sorrowing, or need clothing or other necessities of life. Spiritually we are able to meet their needs through services, meetings, seminars, and discipleship programs. Where physical necessities are concerned, we need your help because our resources are limited. Emotionally, we can provide counseling, friendship, and a sense of belonging. Educationally, we need help to implement GED, tutoring, and literacy programs.

The "Adopt A Family at Christmas" is just the beginning of a program that can span the entire year. God grant us the wisdom and resources to carry out our dream.

revised 9/2002