



Dear Church Family and Friends,

For more than thirty-five years, my wife Nancy has been saying to me, “When we get into September, Christmas is just around the corner. Yet again we decorate, shop, wrap presents, listen to Christmas music and prepare for our Advent season culminating in our birthday celebration of our Messiah.

Most of us have a flood of memories each Christmas season. Like you, I have many fond memories that include family gatherings, presents and special events in what has become known as “The most wonderful time of the year.”

My age now affords me many to reflect in. I would like to share one of the many I am able to recall.

I remember waiting for the evening news the week of Christmas 1968. Three brave astronauts: Frank Borman II, James Lovell and William Anders were the first to leave Earth and enter into an orbit of our moon. The powerful Saturn V rocket sent them on a first-time space flight to another astronomical object, our moon.

I can recall being fascinated with NASA and the incredible steps into the unknown that they took. Apollo 8 slowed into lunar orbit on December 24, 1968, about fifty miles above the moon’s surface. So, on Christmas eve 1968, these space travelers were the first to see an ‘Earth’ rise over the moon’s horizon.

Their message to us:

William Anders said: "For all the people on Earth the crew of Apollo 8 has a message we would like to send you".

*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."*

Jim Lovell then said: *"And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."*

*And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."*

Frank Borman continued: *"And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so."*

*And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the seas: and God saw that it was good."*

Borman then added, "And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas, and God bless all of you - all of you on the good Earth."

I pray those very same words to you and your family in this Christmas 2021 season of celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior – Jesus the Christ.

Amen and Merry Christmas!

*Pastor Brian*