

Share the love of Christ with your neighbors this Christmas

By Michelle Van Loon



Too many of us live in neighborhoods where we don't always know our neighbors' names, but the cultural goodwill of the Christmas season offers us a unique window of opportunity that can allow us to form new connections with those living on our block.



These connections begin with prayer. If you haven't prayed regularly for your neighborhood, now is a great time to begin. The Pray 4 Your Block website has a variety of helpful resources to encourage you (<http://www.pray4yourblock.org/resources.php>). While you're visiting the site, please do "plant a (virtual) flag" to show you've begun praying for your neighbors.

"Each one of us who follows Christ has been commissioned by Him to take the gospel to the world (Matthew 19:20, Acts 1:8)," said Debbie Stackhouse, Catalyst's Director of Renewal. "Just as the disciples were called to begin their proclamation of Christ right where they were, in Jerusalem, we begin right where we are. Our neighbors are our 'Jerusalem'."

At Christmas, a welcome gesture of friendship is to drop off a platter of home-baked goodies at your neighbors' homes. "This year, I'm planning to do some extra baking so I can give sweets to all the neighbors on my block," said Debbie. "I will include a short Christmas greeting like the one here that includes an offer to pray for them if they have any needs."

And if you're looking for suggestions for how to extend your Christmas connection with your neighbors into the New Year, this article from a staffer at WMBI offers some helpful encouragement: http://justbetweenus.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=80975

We'd love to hear how *you're* reaching out in prayer and friendship to your neighbors at Christmas and through the year. Please e-mail me (mvanloon@catalystweb.org) with your stories.

We're glad you're our neighbor!

*As we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we hope you enjoy these gifts from our kitchen. If you have a prayer need or request, we'd be happy to pray for you. You're welcome to stop by anytime!
Have a joyful holiday and a blessed 2010.*

The Stackhouse family

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