



***For to us a child is born, to us a
son is given.....
And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace*** *Isaiah 9:6*

Jesus, the “Prince of Peace” was born in Bethlehem during the census decreed by Caesar Augustus. In contrast to “O Little Town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie”, the crush of the crowds that night must have been anything but peaceful. Hotels were full and tensions likely were running high. Travellers were stressed out and weary.

One couple, Joseph and Mary, were no doubt frantic to find a place to stay that busy night, because Mary, after a long and arduous trek from Nazareth, was ready to give birth. “No Vacancy” signs were out all over that crowded town. Perhaps it was a sympathetic inn keeper, turning them away, who offered them a place in the stable out back.

Not a bad idea! What I know of animal filled stables is that when it is cold outside they are warm, quiet and peaceful inside. So unwittingly or perhaps by divine inspiration, the inn keeper provided a place of peace for the Prince of Peace!

Two thousand years later the need for people to respond to desperate needs of their neighbours remains. We often ignore or do not fully comprehend Jesus’ message of peace. We rush through the Christmas season. We fight crowds of shoppers. The stressors of life tend to overcome us. It is a great irony today that we ignore the message of the One who offers peace to a troubled world, even as we busy ourselves preparing to celebrate His coming.

Unfortunately, this is not just a Christmas problem. Wherever we look in our communities, we see neighbours weighed down with the cares of living, the cares of coping.

About 900 of our neighbours have sought counselling at Shalom this year for help in dealing with such things as stress, anger, depression, relational and personal issues. More often than not, these folks have difficulty affording the quality care provided by Shalom’s highly skilled counsellors. Frequently, the problems clients face are exacerbated by the economic pressures that they experience. When the economy is suffering, the problems that people face are often intensified.

Shalom strives to make counselling available to all and fees vary according to the clients’ ability to pay. In order to subsidize the cost of receiving help, Shalom relies on people like you to give in order that our neighbours can find deep inner peace—find “Shalom”. (The average cost to subsidize a client’s counselling is a little over \$400.00.)





We are grateful that there are many generous people throughout the communities served by Shalom Counselling who have the financial ability and vision to help their neighbours. They know that as we help our neighbours to receive timely counselling, we help them to make life changing improvements in their lives. These changes help others, and ripple into our communities. We can all be “sympathetic inn keepers” and help people find peace.

We realize that these are uncertain economic times. We know that many who read this have already extended themselves in order to give clients at Shalom a hand up. We appreciate this support. And we are deeply grateful to many who pray for Shalom’s clients, and for Shalom’s dedicated staff.

Yet we know that there are many who, during this season when we are extra mindful of others in need, have the desire to provide financially to ensure that someone will have a better future.

Through your desire to help our neighbours find peace, our Lord has blessed Shalom with the ability to serve 900 clients directly in 2015.

We rely on you now to enable Shalom to plan so that we can serve at least this many again in 2016. Thank you for your generous giving.

I would like to close this message with the words of a Shalom client who emailed me the other day. After describing an extensive and rewarding counselling process, the client concluded like this:

*So Thank You Shalom
For your God given, God fearing staff.
For Light, Peace, Hope.
For safety, for Consistency.
For the essential essentials.
God Bless*

I would like to extend to you and those you love, wishes for a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with God’s richest blessings.

*Ralph Wold (Acting Executive Director)
(on behalf of the Shalom family)*



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