Welcome to the last of 13 weekly prompts on **Gladness and Generosity.** We hope reading them hasn’t taxed your generosity too much.

To summarise, we can be glad because we have a generous God.  He gives to us every day.  But the high point of his giving is the gift of his only Son, born in a stable.  Giving gifts at Christmas is a response to God giving Jesus, but a response we need to carry on through the year.  We have so much, materially, in time and talents.  How can you be generous this year?

Some thoughts from an American, written on a plane going home from Africa: ‘*For the last few hours the place had been rocking with joy.  The impossibly bright and varied colours of women’s dresses swayed and swirled like so many flags. And the singing – harmony, echo, rhythm, call and response.  If you’ve ever worked up a sweat celebrating the goodness of God and life and love as they do in an African Pentecostal church, you know what I’m talking about, and if you haven’t, I hope you someday will.*

*But I noticed that many had scars or wounds from the last civil war, and that many of the outfits looked a little loose, because these are thin people, often subsisting on a single meal a day, depositing insufficient calories to compensate for the withdrawals made by HIV and related diseases.*

*Why are the most blessed often the most restrained in their worship, and why are those who have the least in terms of health, wealth and safety the most ready to make a joyful noise and sing for joy to the Lord’?’*

To close, here are Paul’s words in his second letter to the Corinthian church, chapter 9, verses 6 – 9:

Remember that the person who sows few seeds will have a small crop; the one who sows many seeds will have a large crop.  Each one should give, then, as he has decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly. And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause. As the Scripture says, “He gives generously to the needy; his kindness lasts for ever”.

*Produced by Daphne and John Wilkins on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John).  You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.*