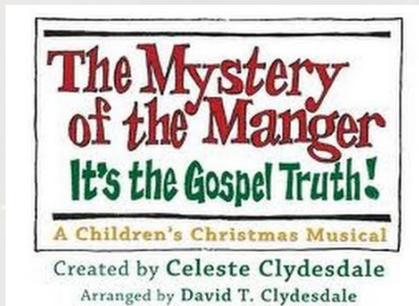


# FAITH *news*

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH | COLLIERVILLE, TN | DECEMBER – VOLUME 12

## Sunday Advent Service

December 1, 15, 22



**Children & Youth  
Christmas Play**  
Sunday, December 8  
8:15 am & 11:00 am



## Midweek Advent Service

Wednesday, December

4, 11, 18

5:00pm Family Meal

7:00pm Advent

Worship Service

## Christmas Eve

4:30pm Lessons & Carols with Candlelight  
(Contemporary)

7:30pm Lessons & Carols with Candlelight  
(Traditional)

11:00pm Holy Communion with Candlelight

## Christmas Day

10:00am with Holy Communion

## Sunday, December 29

10:00am Traditional Service with Holy  
Communion - (No Sunday School)

*Invite your family and friends. Impact cards with service information will be on the information desk in the narthex.*

# When Jesus Ruins Christmas

by Merritt Demski

The theology of the Incarnation has ruined Christmas for me. It sounds weird, right? Jesus is the “reason for the season,” so how could any discussion that involves Him ruin Christmas?

Perhaps I should clarify: The theology of Jesus’ incarnation has ruined “cultural” Christmas for me. Now, I’m not saying here that trimming a tree isn’t fun or that the Bing Crosby Christmas music playing in stores doesn’t ever inspire warm and fuzzy feelings, but these things just don’t seem as important or meaningful to me as they once did. Family and cultural traditions are enjoyable and worthwhile, sure, but once I began to wrap my head around the theology of the Incarnation, all the fluff surrounding our cultural celebration of Christmas simply took a back seat.

When we talk about “the Incarnation,” we’re talking about the birth of Jesus. We’re talking about God taking on human flesh. (The Latin root word *incarnare* literally means “to make flesh.”) The Incarnation is discussed in each of the Gospels, but John opens his Gospel with what is perhaps the most jaw-dropping presentation of who Jesus is, from “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1) to “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who

is at the Father’s side, he has made him known” (John 1:18). If you’ve read the other Gospels and come away with any questions regarding the identity of Jesus of Nazareth or the purpose of Holy Scripture, read John. He clears things right up from the very start. Not only is Jesus a man from Nazareth, but He’s also the Son of God. Remember when God created everything in the beginning? Jesus was there. He IS the very Word through which all things were and are created. And now, in the Incarnation, He comes to save His creation.

Reminders of the Incarnation are all around us at this time of year, but how often do they put us in a fitting state of wonder and awe? I see plastic nativities depicting the event of Jesus’ birth and note only how well or cheaply they’re put together. I see the doll carried up the aisle by the children in the Christmas service at church and wonder only if this is its fourth or fifth decade of pageant service. Rarely do I stop to process what the plastic creche and the well-worn doll really signify — what is really being said by these simple objects.

But then, for a brief, fleeting moment, it clicks: In Christ, the God of all creation took on the flesh of His creation. That God is at the same time Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is three persons, and yet there

*Continue next page...*

is only one God. Christ is both true God and true man. Suddenly the Bing Crosby music fades away and I'm struck by the awe of God's "enfleshment" ... His taking on flesh ... His Incarnation. I sit back and celebrate with every fiber of my being the arrival of the King of kings and Lord of lords. I recognize the truth that Christians gather together — on Christmas and every Sunday — not simply for the sake of cultural tradition, but to praise the One who was announced by angels. Glory to God in the highest!

This earth-shaking realization can leave me feeling a little underwhelmed by the ways in which we typically respond to the angels' "good news of great joy."

"The King of kings and Lord of lords has arrived! Quick, bake gingerbread cookies shaped like little men! Put out the snow globe lawn ornaments! Hang an odd sock for a red-suited man who grants all our wishes — if we're not too naughty!" How much less cosmically awe-inspiring are these things than the event they purportedly celebrate? How often do they serve not to ornament our celebration of Christ's birth but distract us from it? The second Person of the Trinity deliberately became man for us. The Son who appeared to people throughout all of Holy Scripture came in the flesh. He laid His glory aside to serve you and me. To live. To suffer. To die. To rise again in glory. To give us life.

In Acts 20:28, Paul shares some words of encouragement as he is getting ready to leave the elders in Ephesus: "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" (emphasis mine).

Take a moment to re-read that. Paul has just told the elders of Christ's Church in Ephesus to watch over the flock, God's Church, "which he obtained with his own blood." Sure, we remember the birth of Jesus, but do we remember that He was 100 percent man and 100 percent God? Do we remember that He felt the beatings? That He felt the spit? That He heard the curses and felt the nails?

God loves us so much that He sent His Son, who was, as we confess in the Nicene Creed, "begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made." In that tiny baby, "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9) — for our sakes.

The Baby in the manger is the perfect One who redeems us in our imperfection. Immanuel, "God with us," is still with us, not just at Christmas but always through His Word and Sacraments. The same body that went to the cross is now resurrected

*“When Jesus Ruins Christmas” continued...*

in glory at the right hand of the Father and given to us at His table each week.

God is not out there hiding from us. He’s here. With us. In the flesh.

Part of me is sorry if you read this and find suddenly that the gingerbread man you’re chewing tastes a little less jolly or that the inflatable Santa in your front yard looks a little less fun, but part of me isn’t. You can celebrate cultural Christmas with family and friends — enjoy the time you share

with them! — yet even so, I hope and pray that the glorious theology of the Incarnation ruins Christmas for you as it has for me. And I can’t feel sorry about that.

Far from it: I pray that every day of our lives in Christ would be so ruined.

*The Rev. Merritt Demski is associate pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Ill., and a regular guest on KFYO Radio’s Concord Matters.*

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2018/when-jesus-ruins-christmas/>

## Life Thoughts in the Church Year

**Life Thoughts in the Church Year** are designed to help pastors and congregations see the church year through the lens of the sanctity of human life. Listed below are for the month of December.

**December 1 – Advent I** – Some call “sexual liberation” and “individual autonomy” progress. But abortion and assisted suicide show how serving flesh and self enslaves only to death. “[S]alvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11b). Jesus draws and drives us toward a better hope: forgiveness, resurrection, everlasting life, Kingdom of heaven. Real progress means trusting the Word of the Lord and receiving even the least of these as precious neighbors.

**December 8 – Advent II** – “[W]elcome one another as Christ has welcomed you” (Romans 15:7). Does the Almighty Maker view you as an inconvenience? Does the Heavenly Father call you parasite or persistent vegetative? Has He not indeed exalted and honored you above any other creature by making Himself your Servant and Savior (Romans 15:8-10)? And shall we not likewise embrace embryos and aged neighbors in the same grace?

**December 15 – Advent III** – “Put not your trust in princes” (Psalm 146:3a). Neither ought we allow politicians, researchers, or even physicians to decide the purpose, worth, and duration of a human

life. They cannot even spare themselves from sin and death, any more than we can. Human survival and salvation belong in the hands of Him who makes and favors each one (Psalm 146:5-7). And we rejoice whenever He enlists the experts—and the rest of us—as His agents!

**December 22 – Advent IV** – The Gospel has adopted at its heart. Joseph took Mary’s baby for his own (Matthew 1:24), and man adopts the God who had adopted His created beings as His children. We rejoice both to own this grace and to enact it unto others. It energizes us to receive every child as gift instead of as a right. And God extends this opportunity to any Christian home, not just those experiencing infertility!

**December 29 – Christmas I** – “God sent forth His Son, born of woman ... to redeem those who were under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5). Jesus became just like each of us—zygote, embryo, fetus, infant, toddler, kid, teenager, and grown-up. In doing so, He demonstrated how precious He would have us see ourselves and every other member of our race in all ages, appearances, and abilities. Let us celebrate our Lord’s gestation as much a part of His blessed incarnation as His birth!

<https://www.lutheransforlife.org/media/life-thoughts-in-the-church/>

# Reach Out and Touch Someone

By Lynette Auch

**David:** His surgery was only supposed to include a short hospital stay and some rehabilitation time. Nearly five months later, and after repeated surgeries to clean out infection, David remained hospitalized—several hours from home. As we walked into his hospital room, his eyes lit up, and a surprised smile spread across his face.

**Randy:** He had suddenly been taken ill, which started him on a whirlwind of emergency-room visits, hospital stays, home health care, and several near-death occurrences. Feeling helpless, hopeless, and defeated, his wife told us that Randy was starting to plan his funeral. Our visit could well have been what the doctor ordered to lift his spirits and to offer prayers of healing for him.

**Teri:** When we walked into the intensive care unit to see a friend, the nurse told us that she was sleeping. As I was writing a note to leave for her, Teri woke from her nap, and, after seeing us through her door window, she started waving and motioning for us to come in. Even though she could not speak because of the breathing apparatus, we held her hands, prayed, and assured her of our love.

Society marvels at modern science and medical advancements—and so it should. God has given mankind the ability to understand and develop many good things. At the same time, humans also choose to use technology for destructive purposes which are neither God-pleasing nor good for those created in His image.

Science and technology will never be able to take the place of the presence, touch, or relationship of another caring human being. Just a short internet search will result in a wave of studies documenting the emotional and physical need for touch. But we don't need the internet or scientific studies to show us that.

**“Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness’ ... So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them”** (Genesis 1:26-27 NIV).

Notice the pronoun “us.” Just as God the Father is in relationship with His Son and His Spirit—the Trinity (three Persons/One God)—we too, being created in God's image, were created for relationships.



God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit demonstrated their relationship throughout Scripture.

**“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. ‘Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?’”** (Luke 2:49 NIV).

**“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’”** (Matthew 3:16-17 NIV).

**“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you ... And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began”** (John 17:1b, 5 NIV).

Jesus demonstrated relationship as He reached out and touched people throughout His short ministry on earth. With His hands or His presence, He touched, healed, saved, and showed His love and compassion. Jesus taught and demonstrated how to fill the human need for touch and relationship.

**“Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy”** (Matthew 8:3 NIV).

**“And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them”** (Mark 10:16 NASB).

**“Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and**

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*"Reach Out and Touch Someone" continued...*

**after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva" (Mark 7:33 NASB).**

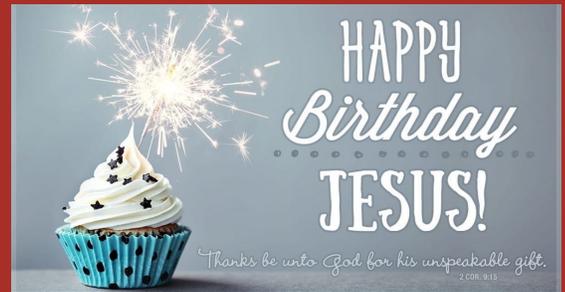
**"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me'" (Matthew 25:34-36).**

Perhaps some of you will recall the 1980s AT&T telephone ad slogan, "Reach out and touch someone." Through God's Word, Jesus taught us how to reach out and touch someone.

David, Randy, and Teri were all getting some of the best medical care that modern technology has available, but it cannot hold a candle to the touch and love of another caring human being.

*Dear Heavenly Father, help us to let Your love shine through us as Your hands and feet reaching out and touching those in need. Amen.*

<https://www.lutheransforlife.org/article/reach-out-and-touch-someone/>



Zach Price	1-Dec
Anna Alexander	8-Dec
Ryan Bristol	8-Dec
Garrett Gilmore	9-Dec
Annie Cox	11-Dec
Jeanette Estes	11-Dec
Bob Cannoles	12-Dec
Janet Hethmon	12-Dec
Bonnie Price	12-Dec
Brendan Wynia	13-Dec
Kerry Alexander	14-Dec
Neil Durst	16-Dec
Tiny Buckley	18-Dec
Evan Hacker	18-Dec
Daniel Lightsey	19-Dec
Maggie Rutan	19-Dec
Jackie Bowman	20-Dec
Rick Slayton	20-Dec
Samson Fernandez	25-Dec
Rod Bristol	27-Dec
Chris Galbraith	27-Dec
Debbie Larson	27-Dec
Linda Applegate	29-Dec
Christine Arena	29-Dec
Jennifer Bristol	30-Dec
Hilary Sauls	31-Dec



Rick & Sue Bruback	2-Dec
Bob & Diane Cannoles	5-Dec
Phil & Sharon Raby	17-Dec
Howard & Maria Jackson	19-Dec
Duane & Lois Marshall	28-Dec
Frank & Katie Landry	31-Dec

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>8:15am Traditional Service</p> <p>9:40am Sunday School</p> <p>11am Hope Worship</p> <p>1pm Christmas Play Rehearsal</p> <p>1pm Sr High Youth - Rock Climbing</p>	<p>2</p> <p>6am FLP Members Registration</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>9:45am Mom's Bible Study</p> <p>10am FLP Practice</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>10am FLP Practice</p> <p>6pm Ladies Craft Night</p> <p>6pm PC Basketball Practice</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>5pm Family Meal</p> <p>5:30pm Christmas Play Rehearsal</p> <p>7pm Advent Service</p> <p>Praise Team Rehearsal</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>5:45pm Traditional Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>6pm PC Basketball Practice</p>	<p>6</p> <p>FLP Closes at 4pm</p> <p>5pm Doors Open at Faith</p> <p>7pm Collierville Christmas Parade</p>	<p>7</p> <p>8am Men of Faith</p> <p>9am Christmas Play Rehearsal</p> <p>9am Quilters</p> <p>1pm PC Basketball Practice</p> <p>9pm Sr High Youth - Cosmic Bowling</p>
<p>8</p> <p>8:15am Children &amp; Youth Christmas Program</p> <p>9:40am Sunday School</p> <p>11am Children &amp; Youth Christmas Program</p> <p>5pm Confirmation</p> <p>5:30pm LWML Christmas Dinner</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>9:45am Mom's Bible Study</p> <p>10am FLP Practice</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>10am FLP Practice</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p> <p>6pm Trivia Night @ BooyaS</p> <p>6:30pm Elder Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>10am FLP Christmas Music Program</p> <p>5pm Family Meal</p> <p>7pm Advent Service</p> <p>Praise Team Rehearsal</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>10am FLP Christmas Music Program</p> <p>5:45pm Traditional Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>10am FLP Christmas Music Program</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9am Futsal</p>
<p>15</p> <p>8:15am Traditional Service</p> <p>9:40am Sunday School</p> <p>11am Hope Worship</p> <p>5pm Confirmation</p> <p>7pm Sr High Youth</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>9:45am Mom's Bible Study</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>17</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>12:30pm Church Staff Meeting</p> <p>5:30pm Ladies Dinner and a Movie</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>5pm Family Meal</p> <p>7pm Advent Service</p> <p>Praise Team Rehearsal</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7am FLP</p> <p>5:45pm Traditional Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7am FLP Half Day</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>21</p> <p>8am Men of Faith</p> <p>9am Futsal</p> <p>9am Quilters</p>
<p>22</p> <p>8:15am Traditional Service</p> <p>9:40am Sunday School</p> <p>11am Hope Worship</p>	<p>23</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p>	<p>24</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>4:30pm Christmas Eve Worship</p> <p>7:30pm Christmas Eve Worship</p> <p>11pm Christmas Eve Worship</p>	<p>25</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>10am Christmas Day Service</p>	<p>26</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p>	<p>27</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p>	<p>28</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p>
<p>29</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>10am Worship Service</p>	<p>30</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p>	<p>31</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p>	<p>1</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>7pm Praise Team Rehearsal</p>	<p>2</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>3</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>6pm Futsal</p>	<p>4</p> <p>FLP Winter Break</p> <p>8am Men of Faith</p> <p>9am Futsal</p> <p>9am Quilters</p>

# Connect as Christ's Family

**Rev. Rob Harbin**, *Senior Pastor*, [Pastor.flc@comcast.net](mailto:Pastor.flc@comcast.net)

**Rev. Clayton Sellers**, *Associate Pastor*, [pastorclayton@faithcollierville.com](mailto:pastorclayton@faithcollierville.com)

**Jenny Whitely**, *Worship Leader & Missional Minister*, [flcmusic.jenny@faithcollierville.com](mailto:flcmusic.jenny@faithcollierville.com)

**Dina Foshee**, *Preschool Director*, [flpfaithcollierville@gmail.com](mailto:flpfaithcollierville@gmail.com)

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**Christine Acomb**, *Church Office Manager*, [office@faithcollierville.com](mailto:office@faithcollierville.com)

**Lisa Blair**, *Accounts Payable & Receivable (Mon & Thurs)*, [finance.flc@comcast.net](mailto:finance.flc@comcast.net)

**Mark Scott**, *Church Council President*

**Bruce Acomb**, *Head Elder*

**Alan Lang**, *Treasurer*

**Ardith Morgan**, *Property Trustee*

*Announcements and/or Articles for Happenings or Newsletter, please email [office@faithcollierville.com](mailto:office@faithcollierville.com)*

507 New Byhalia Road, Collierville TN 38017

Church Office: 901-853-4673

Preschool: 901-853-0050

Church Office Hours:

**Monday–Thursday** 9:00AM – 3:00PM    **Friday**    9:00AM - 12:00PM

Website: [Faithcollierville.com](http://Faithcollierville.com)

The Mission of Faith Lutheran Church is:

## ***Embracing Our Community – Connecting as Christ's Family***

Just as Jesus spent time embracing His community with His care, the people of Faith believe we are strategically placed to reach out and share His Good News with our community. Our goal is to advance the Gospel and make Christ's love known to all. Living the Gospel. Proclaiming the Gospel. Advancing the Gospel. Through Christ's love at Faith Lutheran, friends become family.