

Pastor Sailer's Page

Faith Lutheran Church
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CHRIST WAS BORN “UNDER LAW” TO REDEEM US LAW-BREAKERS

*This motivates and empowers us to be law-keepers!
(Even when don't always like a specific law.)*

You are not going to like what I'm about to write. The city fire code (law!) says three things have to stop in churches at Christmastime because such things are fire hazards: 1) the use of natural Christmas trees, unless they are “flocked” or are in an area protected by a fully code-compliant fire sprinkler system, 2) candelabra in church aisles, and 3) *no, it can't be!* the passing of flame, candle to candle, in the pews.

The Church Council, wanting our congregation to be a law-keeper and not a law-breaker, has determined we will comply with the fire code (law!). The Council members believe Christians, of all people, ought to strive to uphold the law, God's law or man's, and so should Christian congregations. For we know codes and laws have been put in place for our good. Our protection. In this case, so that we don't burn the church down or set our sister's pretty Christmas dress on fire.

The result? We now have artificial trees in front of the nave, and we will have no candelabra in our aisles and no individual candles for worshipers as we sing “Silent Night” on Christmas Eve.

This strikes a blow to tradition and nostalgia and beauty in worship. But let us choose to not let it affect our worship of the Christ Child!

For consider what the Christ was born to do: *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under law, to redeem those who were under law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”* (Galatians 4:4-5).

The Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit, devised the moral law, took on human flesh and was born into the world where laws of all sorts would apply to Him—the 10 Commandments themselves (the moral law), Roman Empire law, Nazareth civil law, and Jewish ceremonial law.

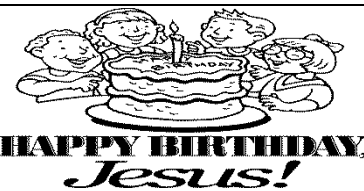
To put it more concretely, Jesus was in a place where “honor your father and mother” applied to Him. If required of Him, He went to the tax collector's office and paid His taxes to Rome. He parked the family's donkey in designated parking zones, if they had them. He went to the synagogue every Sabbath with Mary and Joseph.

Whatever the requirements were – the laws were – Jesus carried them out. He did so perfectly, sinlessly.

But we don't. We are law-breakers.

But here's the really good news: Jesus was “born under law, to redeem those under law.” Though He was true God, the Giver of the law, yet He willingly, as true man, put Himself under law that He might keep it for “those under law” – including you – and thus earn for them the righteousness that a just and holy God properly expects and demands.

Hmm. Jesus' perfect keeping of the Law counts for you. And His sacrifice on the cross pays for the many, many times you've sinned, failed to keep the Law. Your sins are forgiven. Heaven awaits you. Such good news compels you and me to be law-keepers, not law-breakers, even when it means we use artificial trees instead of real ones. Even when it means we forgo the use of individual candles as we sing “Silent Night.”



3RD DAY OF CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION –

Sunday, December 28, during the Christian Education Hour (9:15-10:15 a.m.). This *Intergenerational Sunday School* time will include left-over Christmas treats (you bring them!), singing some of the carols we might not have sung during worship services at Advent and Christmas (such as “We Three Kings”), and a fun time of exploring more truths about Jesus' birth. You'll want to be with us for this fun and educational experience. But please, please, please, bring some of those sugar cookies to share!