

# Living Faith Messenger

2021 Winter Edition

## From the Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Troy Billow

### ***The Soul of Christmas***



Young Mary expressed the soul of Christmas through a prophetic poem to be recounted down through the ages and to be heard by all generations - spoken when she entered the house of Elizabeth her relative and professed it in this way as recorded in Luke 1:46-47 - she cried out loud by the Spirit **"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!"** In that moment Mary had come to realize that God was to bring great mercy and redemption to **"Abraham and his descendants forever"** (v.55) through this Holy child now growing in her womb. She burst with joy at the thought of God himself being their Savior. It also caused the child in Elizabeth's womb to leap for joy at the sound of Mary's voice and she was filled with the Holy Spirit in that moment. This other child in Elizabeth's womb was *John the Baptist* - who would be one of the kingdom's greatest Champions. This is the heart and soul of Christmas for Christians when we

celebrate this year and each year going all the way back to that starry night in Bethlehem where Christ was born - the town of Mary's ancestor King David. Do we burst with joy at the thought of Christ our Savior? And because of it - Have we become champions of His kingdom like John did?

The Angel Gabriel had said to Mary on that special day of revelation **"Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found**

**favor with God, and you will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High. The LORD God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end."** (V.30-33) Christ and his eternal kingdom was coming to earth through the birth of God's own son and Mary's soul deep down inside was rejoicing in this coming redemption to the house of Jacob and to all those who would discover the same faith of Abraham and become his descendants and heirs of this promise even though not by blood line. As the scriptures makes clear in Romans 4:16-17 **"Therefore the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring, not only to those who are of the law (Jews) but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham (Gentiles) - he is the father of us all as it is written: "I will**

**make you the father of many nations.” ~ Jesus.** This beautiful and powerful promise is for everyone who will believe in Jesus Christ this Christmas and receive this precious gift personally from God the Father – the gift of his only son born to the virgin Mary to be our Savior who provided forgiveness of sin at the cross where he died and gave hope for an eternal future where death will no longer exist because he walked out of that grave alive three days later! Hallelujah! Let your soul glorify this Christmas 2021 as Mary did that day long ago!

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## FARM LIFE IN INDIANA

By

Pastor John Billow

I am thankful I do not have to get up at 5 AM or earlier to milk 60 head of cows. Hi everyone! As you know, Pam Garber and I married on October 9<sup>th</sup> in her home church, Jefferson Community Church in Goshen, Indiana. We attend this church and on one recent occasion, I taught one of the adult Sunday School classes.

Pam owns a 200-acre farm in Bristol. She rents out 120 acres to a friend and neighbor. There is another

3.5 acres of grass to cut and 80 acres of woods where many deer roam and who feast on the corn. Living on a farm this side of heaven has been a long-time dream of mine.

We are well. It is quite a change for both of us. Pam was widowed for over two years when we connected. The four of us had been long time friends when Carol and I served as an Interim Pastor at the Jefferson church in 2014 and 15.

Pam is active in Bible Study Fellowship, a worldwide organization, where upwards to 300 women gather in Elkhart each week, on Tuesday morning, for intensive Bible study. She also works with her sister, Deb who runs a very active business, StampinUp! Pam also dotes on her young grand children ages 4-13.

I spend most mornings in my Study. Sermon preparation comes easy for me. Reading Biblical authors is a treat. And of course, reading the western history of the United States is my hobby. Running errands for Pam and cutting acres of grass is challenging. To help with the mowing and other chores, I'm considering buying a small tractor with a belly mower and front-end loader. These are some of the things we enjoy doing on The Farm! Much love and many blessings!

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*Thank you Ladies of Lilac Ministry, for volunteering to be in charge of Hospitality and decorating. Your hard work is truly appreciated*

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## Living Faith Youth Group

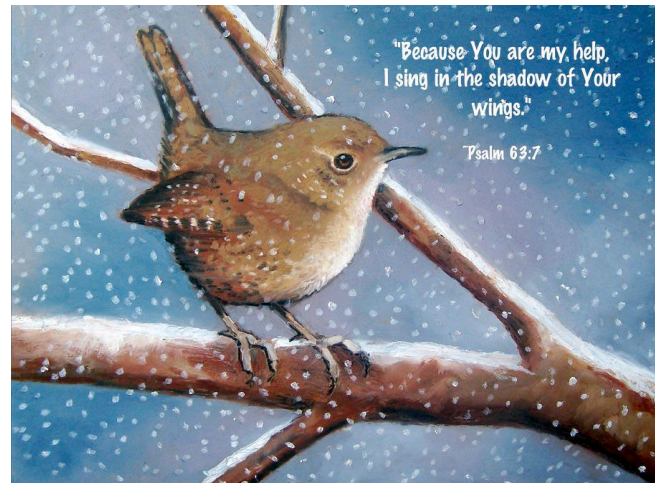
By: Megan Bustamante

Christmas time is always a fun time in any ministry but I especially love getting to spend this season with the children and youth. This year we have focused on teaching the story of Jesus' birth and the events around it during Sunday school, and on Thursdays our focus has been on the season of Advent and what it means. I love that we have the opportunity to learn about and discuss both of these things together during the week.

One of the highlights of this season for the youth ministries was packing shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Students on both Thursday nights and Sunday mornings were able to pack a shoe box full of goodies to be sent around the world for children that otherwise would not receive a Christmas gift. The students enjoyed getting to pick out toys and other items to pack, coloring and writing a Christmas card for their box and then praying together for the children that would receive the boxes. All together we were able to pack almost 20 boxes and are already looking forward to doing even more next year!

As we start to look towards this next year of ministry at LFCC, I ask that you prayerfully consider volunteering with the youth ministries. We are growing and it is so exciting, but it also means we need more hands-on deck to help do God's work here. I am specifically looking for volunteers available for serving occasionally on Sundays. If this is something that piques your interest, I would love to talk with you more about the opportunity.

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## Birthdays

### December

David Skowronski	Dec. 8
Robert Thompson	Dec. 14
Virginia Beehn	Dec. 18
Sarah Houdek	Dec. 19
John Billow	Dec. 21
Luci Houdek	Dec. 24
Joyce Skowronski	Dec. 25

### January

Jackie Gehle	Jan. 4
Lisamarie Williams	Jan. 4
Allyce Beechy	Jan. 16
Tom Heinrich	Jan. 21
Terry Zappa	Jan. 30

### February

Rob Case	Feb. 4
Ron Robison	Feb. 6
Keith Jacobs	Feb. 18

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### Those We Lost in 2021

David F. Masek, Jr.	Jan. 14, 1992 - Jan. 25, 2021
Mary Heemstra	Dec. 27, 1957 - Jun. 16, 2021
Martin Heemstra	Nov. 11, 1944 - Jun. 18, 2021

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**Virginia Beehn Moderator  
Council of Leaders**

Your Council of Leaders (COL) oversees a variety of things within the church – everything from paying the bills, support of church programs, church security, building and property concerns, special event planning, and much more.

Recent projects around the church included work on the septic system, installation of new thermostats for the heating and A/C for the building, and the trimming of trees in the back of the church that overhung the roof. Springtime will find us considering repairs to the roof from the tree branches scraping it.

Speaking of Special events, September 18th, the God's Warriors sponsored an outdoor event with music, games, free food, a Christian illusionist, representatives from Living Alternatives, and more. Many children and adults attended, along with some from our neighborhood, and all claimed to have had a very enjoyable day.

October watched us say farewell to Pastor John Billow. We held a farewell dinner after church on September 26<sup>th</sup> where we had the opportunity to meet Pam Garber, the future Mrs. Billow. The couple were married in Indiana on October 9<sup>th</sup> and now reside in Indiana. The newlyweds visited us again December 5<sup>th</sup> and Pastor John preached the morning sermon.

Jewish evangelist Doug Carmel was our special speaker on October 10<sup>th</sup>, and we had a carry-in dinner in the Fellowship Hall after worship service. Then November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Circle of Sisters held a Women's Retreat with dinner and a video conference. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, former Navy Seal and Evangelist Mike Imhoff brought the message and again we had a delicious luncheon following the worship service.

November 14<sup>th</sup> was the LFCC Annual Business Meeting after Sunday worship service, where our members got an update on the business of the church, approved COL leaders for another term, and our members unanimously approved the 2022 church budget.

Now we are in Advent season. The ladies of LILAC ministry have done a beautiful job of decorating our sanctuary and the rest of the church for Christmas. A Christmas Candlelight Service is scheduled for December 18<sup>th</sup>, followed with a cookie social in the Fellowship Hall.

Looking forward, all church leaders are planning to meet on January 29<sup>th</sup> for a meal and 2022 planning session.

This is just a quick focus on some of the physical things overseen by your COL. More importantly, we pray regularly for our church and its ministry, for our pastor and leaders, and for each of our members and friends that attend.

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Hello Converge Family,

Over the weekend, a devastating string of tornadoes ripped through Kentucky and surrounding states. As of this morning, the death toll in Kentucky is at 74, and the total number of fatalities is 88 overall. The destruction is immense. Overwhelming. Crippling.

**We are stepping in to help, and we need you.**

Many have asked how they can help and for that, we are grateful. **Give today** towards our Tornado Relief Fund. This fund will benefit the victims of the recent tornado event in Kentucky and other neighboring states.

Pray for our friends and colleagues in Kentucky who will mobilize in the next few days and be the hands and feet of Jesus to people suffering loss and destruction from the weekend's storms. Please help Converge respond to these needs as we demonstrate the love of God in a tangible way. Go to

**[https://give.convergemidamerica.org/giving\\_campaign/90](https://give.convergemidamerica.org/giving_campaign/90)**

In Christ,  
Gary Rohmeyer, President  
Converge MidAmerica

New Mission to Support

**Blue Jeans for The Homeless**



**“A DAY IN A LIFE OF A HOMELESS MAN”**

Driving to Chicago I hummed to the sound of White Christmas. On this day I have more than a hundred big bags of Holiday Gifts for our homeless friends. In the bag were coats, blankets, sweaters, socks, food, hygiene products and essentials to live in a cold and waterless environment.

It was a quiet morning at the Lower Wacker Drive. Nate whose pad is near the entrance of the apartment high-rise woke up at once when he heard my van park in front of him. Nate has been living on the street for more than five years. He has a unique living condition. He never wears a shirt or jacket even during the coldest day in the city.

A few feet from Nate was Jerry who resides near the entrance of the parking garage. His beddings were organized and well kept. He is a runner and he frequents the library on Sundays. I suspect his profession was in the legal field before he became homeless.

Searching for the homeless at the Upper Wacker Drive I saw a man on my sideview mirror running and trying to catch up with me. He was John who lives near the Navy Pier in a hidden place. He is a veteran and a mentally challenged person. He talks to himself, maybe a schizophrenic.

Moving along to the North Side and passing by Weiss Memorial Hospital I saw a woman living inside the bus stop dome. Her name is Terry. According to her she used to live in the church. She was thankful for the hot soup and the Christmas Bag.

Under the Wilson Bridge there was Josh who was a very commanding fellow. He is 6’5” tall and has a booming voice. He wears size 38x34 blue jeans. Although he is homeless, his demeanor is well. I suspect he has an outside help, maybe from his family who visits him occasionally.

At the sidewalk under the Lawrence Bridge is a man name Tom. I’ve known Tom since I started visiting the homeless many years past. He has a capability to lead the homeless and they respect him. Many times, he protected me from aggressive people who lash out on me if they couldn’t have what they want. One day there was person charging towards me and Tom barricaded the man with his body and received the impact.

Sometime the people that we served are unpredictable but deep in their hearts they need us. It is very hard to live outside, exposed to everyday weather condition. Not to mention some passersby who ridicule and insult them. After our lunch break, we proceeded to Belmont Viaduct and only two people were around among fifteen tents located in this area. All tents received a Christmas Big Bag. In this site lives Maria and her husband who are working at Target Department Store.

At the Fullerton Viaduct two individuals distributed the bags to the doorstep of nine tents. At the Tent City I met a new residence Tamadia who needs a new tent in preparation

for the winter. Aside from the tent she also needs a portable heater.

At the Canalport Viaduct I saw a man who was staring at me. I think he is not well. He could barely stand and is lying on a makeshift bed with a thin blanket on a very cold day. He told me that he needs a tent. I gave him a cup of hot soup, food and jeans.

As one of our recipients said, "You made me a Christian". Many of our homeless friends think that being kind and respectful to them is religious. If you can't help, please pray for them. If you can help, please visit: [bluejeansforthehomeless.org](http://bluejeansforthehomeless.org) Have a wonderful day!



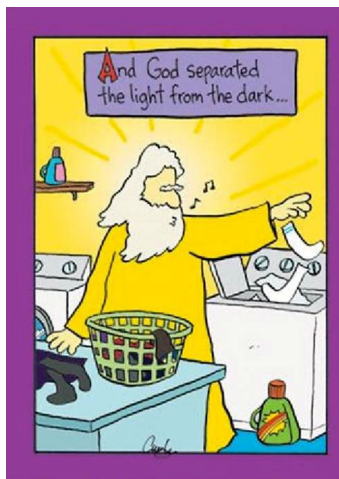
Ramon Joson Grande Park • 29 Nov 2021

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*Gary Larson*

Christian Far Side



## Thanksgiving Harvest Sunday School



Living Faith Community Church

380 High Road Lockport, IL 60441

Dated Material  
Address Change Requested

Stamp

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# Living Faith Community Church Messenger

The Quarterly Newsletter Of  
Living Faith Community Church

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