



# Christmas and the Ten Commandments

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)*

I want to take a break this month from my series on the ten commandments to focus on Christmas. It may be a surprise to many, but we do not have to venture far from the topic of the law to talk about the meaning of Christ’s conception and birth. The whole idea of Christmas today has been high-jacked by secularism. A common defense for public display of the nativity scene is that “Christmas is for the kids.” Do Christians really want to embrace such a wimpy defense by our “friends”? Would it not be better to suffer censorship of significant and dangerous speech than to acknowledge that our celebration is a harmless little kids’ festival? The devil knows very well that Christ’s incarnation is a

whole lot more than making our children happy through creation of a “magical day”. Christmas is our Normandy. Christ came into the world to conquer our tyrants, sin, death, and devil, and to set the prisoners free. This is the devil’s nightmare, and he would just love to turn it into a children’s fairy tale. We dare not let that happen just to win the world’s approval and permission to put up nativity scenes. It is better to have our scenes prohibited as a threat than to submit to their trivialization.

It is interesting to note that the other display prohibited in public places today is that of the Ten Commandments. The two (Commandments and Nativity) are closely connected as Paul reminds us

in the Galatians verse above. The law exposes our sin and holds us accountable before God. The law therefore condemns us to death. The proud world cannot and will not bear that message. Like the persecutors who stoned Stephen (Acts 7) the world stops its ears and gnashes its teeth against the light of God’s law. But if the law is rejected in impenitence, there can be no room for Jesus. God sent forth His Son to be born of a woman BECAUSE we have broken the law and fallen under its condemnation. The just condemnation of the law is death - not just temporal death, but eternal death (Rom 6:23). In order to justly remove the death penalty, the Son of God had to become a man so that He could take our place under the Ten Commandments. A just God cannot just suspend the law or overlook the law. The law MUST be fulfilled before anyone is counted worthy to enter His presence. Jesus came to fulfill the law as a true man (Matt 5:17). Because this man is also true God, His work of fulfillment is sufficient to count for the whole human race. And God HAS so counted it by

*(Continued on page 2)*



**Inside this issue:**

Advent/Christmas Services	2
An Unusual Newsletter	3
Some Children See Him	4
The End of Men?	6
Music Notes	7

*That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31*

declaring the human race justified through His resurrection (Rom 4:25). But what about our sin? Does not justice require our disobedience to the law to be punished? It certainly does! That is the second reason for the incarnation. After earning our righteousness by His active obedience, Jesus willingly offered His life as the substitute for our condemnation. The law's verdict of death was placed upon Him. He was wounded, bruised, rejected, and killed IN OUR PLACE (Isaiah 53:4-6). Every sin that we have committed in thought, word, and deed, even those we find utterly repugnant, was counted against Him. He felt it in His human conscience, and paid its price in His human body (Gal 3:13). He was obedient to death, even death on a cross. By His work of substitution Jesus has set us

free from the curse of the law. We call that REDEMPTION. And that's what Christmas is really all about. Is Christmas for kids? Absolutely! It is also for drunkards who have utterly wasted years of their lives and left a huge number of victims in their wake. It is also for adulterers who have broken the hearts of innocent spouses and destroyed lives of their children. It is also for idolaters who have left the important things of life to run after money or power or other false gods. It is also for people whose hearts have been filled with greed, lust, and envy, and for people who have ripped their neighbors to shreds through gossip, and for people who have harmed many through uncontrolled anger and for people who have made life miserable for all who ever exercised authority over them. In other words,

Christmas is for you and me and every other sinner who has trampled the holy law under foot and stands under its just condemnation. For you Christ was born, for you He lived, and for you He died. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them" (2 Cor 5:19). The devil doesn't want that message and hope to go out into the world, but Jesus wants it proclaimed from the housetops. **JOY TO THE WORLD, THE LORD HAS COME!**

*Unto you is born this day  
in the City of David  
a Savior who is Christ the Lord!*

Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Huebel

# Special Services for the Advent and Christmas Seasons



## **Midweek Advent Services: Wednesday evenings at 7:00pm**

December 5: Midweek 1—*O Come, Wisdom*

December 12: Midweek 2—*O Come, Adonai*

December 19: Midweek 3—*O Come, Branch of Jesse*

(These services are preceded by a supper sponsored by our youth group at 6:00 p.m. A free will offering will be taken.)

## **Advent Cantata Service: Sunday, December 16, 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.**

## **Christmas Eve: Monday, December 24**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: 5:00 & 7:00pm**

(Note: A half hour of special music will precede both of these services.)

**Christmas service with Communion: 11:30 p.m. *O Come, Key of David***

**New Year's Eve Worship: Monday, December 31, 7:00pm**

## *An Unusual Newsletter... by Pastor Huebel*

Most church newsletters are like city newsletters – they announce upcoming events or describe past activities with a few pictures and words. Nothing wrong with that! We have attempted to include news and reports also in our newsletter. We especially appreciate the work of Stephanie Gutierrez who introduces a new family in almost every issue of this publication, and Sangwah Park who served last year as the official youth group reporter. We urge all our Board and committee chairmen to continue submitting news articles to us because we want the whole congregation to be informed on all aspects of our ministry.

At Messiah we have also been blessed with a large number of thoughtful and articulate writers. We have appreciated the insightful theological articles of Paul Kohlmeier since he served as Elder Chairman several years ago. Stephen Inglehart has two Masters' degrees from our St. Louis seminary and has been writing articles for the newsletter since he served on the School Board. Stephen now teaches our third grade class at MLCA. Most recently Wayne Allensworth has contributed articles for this newsletter. Wayne is an analyst who monitors the Russian media for our government. He has also

authored a book on the subject. We have several other very informed and competent writers who have not yet submitted articles, but may do so in the future. In some months the Messiah Messenger looks more like a mini theological journal than a church newsletter. That wasn't planned. It just happened.

The nature of our little church newsletter makes it a bit controversial sometimes. That's what happens when Christians analyze and evaluate a rapidly changing culture from the perspective of Biblical and theological presuppositions. Christians do not always arrive at the same conclusions or agree on the specific solutions to the challenges and problems we face. We must not disagree on the basic morals clearly defined in the Ten Commandments, but we may legitimately and even vehemently disagree on various aspects of the Church's or government's response to the problems in society. That same kind of disagreement may surface through some of the articles in the Messenger. I don't think that is a bad thing. The changes we face today REQUIRE deep reflection and prayer on the part of Christians.

Some people believe that the Church is wise to just conform

to the changes we face rather than to risk becoming irrelevant. The Lord, however, calls His people to test and evaluate changes against the standard of His Word. That can be a long and difficult process that includes prayer, study, meditation, and discussion within the body. The writers in this newsletter (including me) must remain open to all reasonable questions, responses, and criticisms of fellow members. Members are strongly encouraged to address their questions, responses, or criticisms directly to the writers.

Civil and respectful discussion is a lost art in our culture, but it must remain the norm in the body of Christ. Whether we like it or not change is upon us. Rather than react emotionally (a natural response to any change), we need to THINK IT THROUGH . . . . and we need to do that TOGETHER.

Let's talk.

—Pastor Huebel

We are thinking about putting together a private, members-only Facebook page or blog to facilitate thoughtful discussion. Let me know if you would be interested.



## Christmas—Some Children See Him by Paul Kohlmeier

***“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 19:14).***

Christmas carols are the audio beauty we receive and participate in during the blessed season. My parents loved Christmas for all the right reasons and embellished the celebrations to my delight and that of my siblings. Through their Christmas albums I discovered Alfred S. Burt, one of my favorite carol composers. You may not know the name but likely have heard his work. Burt and his father, an Episcopal pastor, sent carols out each year to parishioners and friends as cards. There are several carols worth sharing but in 1957 the carol sent was “Some Children See Him”. If you do not know the tune you can hear various renditions on You Tube and similar sites.

Whether you visualize Christ as a picture you saw in a Bible story, family painting or a special memory; your visual adaptation is your personal identification of Christ. The specific form is not important to anyone but you, it is yours, He is yours, you are His.

We can see Christmas wonder through the eyes of children as they are amazed at the lights and glistening decorations and even the presents. You should never lose that amazement with Christmas as it evolves from tinsel to the anticipation of our gift of the baby Jesus. We should always view Christ as children. “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” (*Matthew 19:14*). We are all children of God and eagerly await the coming of our Lord to take us home. We should be even more excited because we have the foresight to understand that Jesus is our salvation. The tantamount gift for all is God’s love for you and the gift of his only Son for your benefit, it is yours, He is yours, you are His.

How do you see the baby Jesus on Christmas Eve? Burt’s carol lyrics say it this way:

*Some children see Him lily white,  
the baby Jesus born this night.  
Some children see Him lily white,  
with tresses soft and fair.  
Some children see Him bronzed and brown,  
The Lord of heav'n to earth come down.  
Some children see Him bronzed and brown,  
with dark and heavy hair.  
Some children see Him almond-eyed,  
this Savior whom we kneel beside.*

*Some children see Him almond-eyed,  
with skin of yellow hue.  
Some children see Him dark as they,  
sweet Mary's Son to whom we pray.  
Some children see him dark as they,  
and, ah! they love Him, too!  
The children in each different place  
will see the baby Jesus' face  
like theirs, but bright with heavenly grace,  
and filled with holy light.  
O lay aside each earthly thing  
and with thy heart as offering,  
Come worship now the infant King.  
'Tis love that's born tonight!*

Christians all over the world have their own image of Christ they pray to and their own image of the baby Jesus in the manger. Regardless of who celebrates, they are all excited for the gift, the coming of the Savior, they all love Him and use their unique image of the Christ child. He came for all of us. In every case, in every place, in all the people’s minds the vision has a heavenly glow. Whether it is skin of white, bronzed and brown, yellow or dark matters not, all love Jesus and Jesus loves all as well. Jesus’ love is yours, He is yours, you are His.

Set aside your earthly possessions, idols that distract your path, those worries and concerns of your earthly life, your holiday preparations and focus on your gift, the love sent incarnate, your King, your Savior. God’s gift is yours, He is yours, you are His.

### Please Pray A Christmas Prayer:

Lord God gracious Father, who in the fullness of time sent Your Son to become man, to assume human flesh like mine and become my Brother, I thank You for Your truth and your fatherly goodness in giving us this Savior. By His birth, death, and resurrection, we are delivered from sin, death, Satan, and hell. I beseech You, keep me until the end in true knowledge of my Redeemer, that with the holy angles, I may rejoice at His nativity, and on the Last Day, when He comes again, I may behold Him, together with You and the Holy Spirit, in glory and majesty, world without end. Amen.

Pax Christi - Paul Kohlmeier  
Hebrews 12:2

## Part II: Sexual Economics

My paternal grandfather was a boilermaker. When I was a boy, he made his living working with an oxy-acetylene gas torch, used to cut through steel plates, and an arc welder, used in fabricating the boilers, pipes, and other objects manufactured at the plant where he worked in Houston, Texas. He had learned his trade during the depression. After joining the exodus of Okies, Arkies, and Texans who headed for the West coast during the hardest times of the Dust bowl era, Granddad made his way back to Texas, landing a job at the Houston ship yards just as the work was beginning to pick up with World War II looming on the horizon. He bought war bonds, lost a son on D-day, and bought a modest home that sat on cinder blocks.

Granddad went to work for White's Metal and Boiler works sometime after the war. I remember riding with my grandmother to pick him up from work and waiting for the whistle to blow, watching for the parade of working men carrying their lunch pails, Granddad emerging from the plant wearing a cap like that of a railroad engineer. For a man with little in the way of formal education, he made a nice living and he finally bought that house my grandmother had always wanted, one with a foundation, a nice yard, and a dining room.

My father made his living as a cabinet maker and trim carpenter during "Space City's" boom years when the Astrodome was billed as "the Eighth Wonder of the World." He built a house in Spring Branch in the mid-1950's and bought a new car, a Ford sedan. My mother was a housewife or, better still, a

homemaker, because that is what she did: she made us a home. She and her friends in the neighborhood volunteered at schools and churches, took care of the old folks, handled household chores and raised their children. In terms of income and home ownership, my parents had succeeded in reaching the middle class. Neither had finished high school.

The people in our neighborhood looked after one another. All of those concerned, the husbands and fathers, the wives and mothers, and the sons and daughters knew what was expected of them and what their roles were. There was, I think, a sense of security and stability (divorce was not as common then) that's hard to overestimate in importance. And most of all, knowing who we were and what was expected, there was a sense of purpose in our lives, which was even more important.

I believe this little memoir is more than a bit of nostalgia. Millions of Americans probably have similar stories, belying the propaganda of the perverse *zeitgeist* of our time, which distorts and condemns pre-mid 1960's America as a repressive, misogynistic domain of male brutality. Radical feminists have taken aim at the family itself as a repressive institution representative of a dark age. The family, we are told, is an institution defined by the economic and physical subjugation of women, with conjugal relations between man and wife cast as a form of rape. The post-modern view is that bearing and raising children is simply a matter of choice, with no higher meaning. The underlying

assumptions of this subversive ethos include the primacy of the self defining and self creating individual; the "repressive" nature of social institutions, which inhibit the individual's complete autonomy; total equality of the sexes in all things (with gender itself a "social construct" that can be altered or redefined); and moral and spiritual nihilism (individuals cast into the void of a purposeless universe are responsible for creating their own meaning). As informed by the post-modern ethos, the autonomous individual lives perpetually in the present, with little sense of connections to past or future. With these kinds of assumptions, it's no surprise that the dominant ideologies of our time are blind to the sense of duty, obligation, and purpose of traditional societies: meaning is self generated, not sought through the mantle of religion, patriotism, and filial piety.

The story of my own family and of countless others suggests some guidelines for the quite practical purposes of marriage as it has been traditionally defined, providing a partial counterweight to the post-modern ethos. Unconsciously, but quite naturally, men and women bound by traditional marriage were playing roles that fulfilled their divinely-created natures in ways beneficial to the individuals bound in matrimony and to society at large. In traditional societies, the institution of marriage channeled the male's natural aggression toward headship in the family, with the father playing the role of provider and protector. The female's nurturing instincts augmented the biological function of childbearing

*(Continued on page 6)*

and rearing. The family, especially as bound by monogamous marriage, contained the sexual impulse—the husband/father would have access to sex sanctioned by the marriage vow (with that access guarded by chaste women). Monogamous marriage also gave most men a chance to marry, decreasing the potential for violent competition among young males, while the wife would ideally have a lifetime mate and father for her children. Female chastity not only channeled the sexual impulse into the civilizing confines of marriage, but ensured that the husband and father knew that he was providing for his own heirs. In the traditional arrangement, the husband gained status and respect as provider and protector, while the wife gained security and attained her own standing in society as a mother. A stable marriage served as a vessel for the socialization of children and the perpetuation of the family/clan/tribe/nation, with each person sharing in a larger sense of belonging, identity, purpose, and meaning bolstered by a sense of responsibility to ancestors and posterity, as well as by accountability before the Creator. Traditional morality discouraged divorce, promiscuity, and social anomie. And children were not so much viewed as a burden, but ideally as a blessing to the family economy.

So what happened to marriage and the family? The 2010 census told the tale: the median age for marriage of both men and women has increased yet again, a trend apparent since the 1950's; the percentage of married adults is dropping steadily as is the number of households with intact two parent families; and the number of single person households is double the figure of 1960. I examined the ideological antecedents to “the end of men,” the increasing indolence and lack of

interest in marriage and headship shown by our young men, in Part I. That's not the whole story: there are economic, political, and technological aspects to the “the end of men” to consider.

Economically, the United States no longer pursues policies providing a basis for the single breadwinner household. The “Mancession,” as some observers have labeled the disproportionate decline in jobs for men in our latest economic downturn, is not really new. For decades, our government has adopted policies that have encouraged the “outsourcing” of American manufacturing jobs, a bastion of both blue and white collar jobs substantially held by men (Since 2000, the United States has lost 6 million manufacturing jobs and closed 55,000 factories). Practically uncontrolled immigration has had the entirely predictable impact of pushing down wages by increasing competition for jobs. At the same time, the massive increase of women in the workforce since the 1960s, whether caused by feminist ideology, “anti-discrimination” laws (which practically work against men; I should add that the feminized atmosphere of our schools as mentioned in Part I is often duplicated in offices), or economic necessity as real incomes have stagnated, has contributed to further wage suppression. Economic incentives for traditional family household formation have been eroding for at least forty years.

We should not underestimate the impact of the “sexual revolution” on the decline of marriage and the family. Christians have long lamented the revolution in sexual morals supported ideologically and culturally by the current *zeitgeist*, but

the technological side of the revolution is as least as important: effective contraceptives, coupled with legalized abortion, have lent the ideology of sexual revolution a practical basis by sharply decreasing the most apparent cost of promiscuity. Sex is more readily available, even sanctioned, outside of marriage. Promiscuity is packaged and sold to our young women via deceptive portrayals of a glamorous “Sex in the City” lifestyle of “serial monogamy.”

The growth of the welfare state has aided and augmented the sexual revolution and the accompanying decline of marriage and status of men as fathers and husbands: a poor woman doesn't need a man to support a child when the state will do the job. Even a middle class woman doesn't necessarily need a husband to be accepted as a mother. A rich woman doesn't even need a man to have a baby—she can go to a sperm bank. And she doesn't need any man's agreement to get an abortion: the father has no say, no status, and is disregarded in the ideology of “choice.”

Finally, Christians have ignored the problem of pornography, especially of easily accessed internet pornography, for too long: internet pornography is apparently highly addictive, desensitizing our young men and damaging their ability or desire to form lasting relationships with real women.

As Christians, parents, and fathers, we face a deck that is stacked against us. We can't change all of this at once and we may not be able to change it at all, at least in the larger society. We have to start with ourselves. Some final thoughts on that will follow in Part III.



What a delightful time of year as we anxiously anticipate the birth of the Babe in Bethlehem. And what an incredible amount of music is available for this season as well. We are so blessed to have such an abundance of musical talent within our own congregation - and a willingness to share it. I especially urge you to take advantage of the music that will be presented on **Christmas Eve** starting one half

hour before the five and seven o'clock services. Plan to come early and spend that time listening, reflecting and preparing your heart to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Our annual Sunday of **Carols and Lessons** will be Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> at both services. It will be a glorious offering of music between special readings as we prepare for Jesus' coming. This is a musical gift to you from the Music Ministry of Messiah.

**Family Christmas Caroling** - Please come and make a joyful noise



as we go Christmas caroling on **Sunday, Dec. 23** to Whitley Place Assisted Living facilities and a few homes. We will leave the church promptly at 5:00 p.m. Songbooks will be provided. This is a wonderful opportunity for families of Messiah to share musically the wonderful Christmas message with some folks that may not otherwise hear it. If you have never done anything like this before, you will be deeply touched. It is a joyful experience for everyone - those singing and those being sung to. So bring mom, dad, and the kids and enjoy an evening of special ministry.

Blessings to you and yours as we worship together this Christmas season!

## School News: Playground Grant Contest

You can help build a playground for our older elementary kids! Dannon® is hosting a nationwide contest for five \$30,000 playground makeovers. Participating schools are divided into five leagues, by size. Schools collect "Rally for Recess codes and the school in each league with the most wins. We are currently in 6th place in the Badger League.

### To Get a Code:

1. Purchase specially marked cases of Danimals and Danonino products. Place the codes in the "Rally for Recess" envelopes near the MPC bulletin boards in the hallways. **OR**
2. Request a free code-without making a purchase. Handprint your date of birth, name, and valid email address on a 3 x 5 card. You can use [MLCAECC@gmail.com](mailto:MLCAECC@gmail.com) if you want. These must be handprinted and put in that order in three rows.

You can bring you cards into the school for mailing, or mail it yourself to:

DANNON Danimals Rally for Recess Free Code Request  
P.O. Box 760017  
El Paso, TX 88576-0017

The code will be emailed to the address you wrote down. If you submit your own, write the code down place it in the hallway envelopes.

There is no limit to the amount of cards you can send in, **but only one request per envelope.**

Please contact Cherri McKinstry at [cherri@procomputing.com](mailto:cherri@procomputing.com) if you're able to volunteer your time or donate postage to help MLCA win a new playground! Notecards have been donated for this project and can even be completed from home.

Please join us in this write-in campaign!

Visit [www.rallyforrecess.com](http://www.rallyforrecess.com) to learn more and check our progress.



## Messiah Lutheran Church & School

*The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Early Childhood Center: (817) 431-6139

Classical Academy (K—8): (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dennis Kitzmann, Assistant Pastor

Mrs. Ellen Malzahn, Principal, Academy

Mrs. Alison Smith, Principal, Early Childhood Center

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mr. Joseph Sustrik, Financial Director

[www.messiahkeller.org](http://www.messiahkeller.org)



# O Come, Let us Adore Him

*A Christmas Pageant presented by the Kindergarten and First Grade  
of Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy, Keller, Texas*

*Tuesday, December 18, 2012 7:00 p.m.*



The Second through Fourth Grade Students  
of Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy Present

# Vivaldi's Gloria for Young Voices

Friday, December 14th  
7:00 p.m.