



Acts of Faith

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Kewanee, Illinois



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Did Baby Jesus Cry in Church?

The familiar Christmas hymn, “Away in a Manger,” is sometimes (especially among Lutherans) attributed to Martin Luther. However, the hymn wasn’t known until the late 19th century; and isn’t found in any of Luther’s writings. The hymn is beautiful in its simplicity, but is overly sentimental in saying, “*The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.*”

Better theologians may dispute this, but I’m fairly confident that Jesus *did* cry as an infant. Jesus—True God—took on human flesh and became also True Man; capable of having all the emotions common to mankind. This is shown when he wept at the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:35).

Also, the writer of Hebrews tell us that, “*In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence*” (Hebrews 5:7). This is a reference to the tearful prayers Jesus offered in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest and crucifixion: “*Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done... And being in great agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground*” (Luke 22:42,44). Jesus, in his human nature, dreaded the thought of carrying the weight of the sins of the world upon himself; and prayed that those sins wouldn’t eternally separate Him from His Heavenly Father (eternal death). And, while carrying the sins of the world on the cross, Jesus said, “*I thirst*” (John 19:28).



These are just some of the many examples which show the deep human emotions of Jesus—emotions which no doubt went back to his infancy when He would cry when hungry, when thirsty, or when in pain. There was certainly pain involved when Jesus was eight days old, and was formally given His name at the rite of circumcision (Luke 2:21). And, the forty-day-old Jesus was taken to church (the Temple) for the rite of purification, and to be presented to the Lord (Luke 2:22).

In the New Testament Church, the Sacrament of Baptism is the fulfillment of the Old Testament rite of circumcision (Col. 2:11-12), and we rejoice when an infant is brought forward in church for Baptism. It’s quite common for a baby to cry when handed to a stranger who pours water on his or her head three times, and we think nothing of it. We then pray that the parents would be faithful in bringing their child up in the church. But, somehow, after that cry at Baptism, some people don’t want to hear another sound out of the child in church again—until perhaps, the child is old enough to come to the front of the church again to speak vows at Confirmation.

Even some of Jesus’ disciples seemed to object to the presence of children, probably because of the potential for distraction that children have. St. Mark records, “*And the people were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.’ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them*” (Mark 10:13-16).

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We quote these words at a Baptism, emphasizing the importance of children to Jesus. But, were children somehow different at the time of Jesus? Didn't they wiggle and squirm and cry at times—even in the presence of Jesus—and even as *Jesus* did when He was a child? I'm sure they did.

But, the words of Jesus didn't put an end to the controversy regarding children in church. The Dec. 21, 1894 (yes, **1894**) issue of The Lutheran Witness reprinted the following note from another publication, The Young Lutheran:

“A correspondent sends us a long communication on ‘Babies in Church.’ The subject is handled exhaustively and exhaustingly. Our experience is that the chief trouble in church is with *adult* babies—those whose bodies have out-grown their souls—who get cross, whine and cry and complain unless constantly petted, soothed and coaxed. With regard to such we would sum up all wisdom in two words, ‘Spank them.’”

Certainly, the adult babies can be even *more* distracting in church—arriving skimpily dressed, talking/gossiping during the worship service, leaving the church before the end of the service, and many more actions which cause more distraction than a small child.

A member of a congregation complained to a pastor about the noise of a particular child. The pastor told this person not to worry, saying “That noise is what your prayers sound like to God.” Indeed, we're all as infants compared to our Almighty God and Lord, yet He *desires us* to come to His house—the church.

How much more should *we* desire that children of all ages be brought to church so that they might receive the blessings Jesus desires to give them.

“*And the Child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him.*”

Luke 2:40

Blessings,

Pastor Fischer

December's Calendar

- Dec. 02 Advent Supper, 5:30-6:30 PM
1st Midweek Advent Service, 7 PM
- Dec. 03 Evangelism Meeting, 6:30 PM
- Dec. 06 2nd Sunday in Advent.**
- Dec. 07 Board of Education, 7:00 PM
- Dec. 09 Advent Supper, 5:30-6:30 PM
2nd Midweek Advent Service, 7 PM
- Dec. 13 3rd Sunday in Advent**
- Dec. 14 Circuit Pastors' Meeting, 9 AM,
Rock Island
- Dec. 15 Women of Faith, Noon
- Dec. 16 Advent Supper, 5:30-6:30 PM
3rd Midweek Advent Service, 7 PM
- Dec. 17 Elders' Meeting, 6:30 PM
Church Council Meeting, 7:30 PM
- Dec. 20 4th Sunday in Advent**
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Worship, 7:00 PM**
- Dec. 25 The Nativity of Our Lord**
- Dec. 27 1st Sunday after Christmas**
- Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Worship, 7:00 PM**

“*She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*”
Matthew 1:21



**Sunday School
Children Singing**
Sunday, Dec. 20th,
9:00 AM

Christmas Eve Worship
Thursday, Dec. 24th, 7:00 PM

New Year's Eve Worship
Thursday, Dec. 31st, 7:00 PM



New E-Mail Addresses

Otto & Carol Schwefel: ottocarol@comcast.net

Glen & Betty Godke: Egodke@aol.com

We appreciate all those who keep the church office notified of any changes to their mailing address, phone number, or E-mail address.


Serve the Lord with Gladness...Psalm 100:2

Women of Faith

The December meeting of Women of Faith will be a Christmas party at noon on the 15th, at Pastor & Vary's home (12 Pine Tree Rd.) The hostess will be Vary Fischer. The program will be "Celebrate the Nativity."

Lunch will be served.

All women of the congregation are invited to attend.



Christmas Flowers

Please contact Lois Novotny if you would like to purchase a poinsettia plant to be used to decorate the worship services during the Christmas season.



Abilities Plus Holiday Open House

Our good neighbor, Abilities Plus, is having a Holiday Open House on Sunday, Dec. 6th, from 2:00-4:00 pm. Baked goods and Abilities Plus Staff Cookbooks will be on sale. Resale Shop items available will include Christmas décor, collectibles, jewelry, etc. Please attend and help support this worthy organization.



Advent Worship Services and Suppers

Midweek Advent worship services will be held at 7:00 PM on the Wednesday evenings of Dec. 2nd, 9th, and 16th.

This year's midweek Advent and Christmas worship services will be based on the

theme "The Stories of Advent."

- Dec. 2, "Advent Silence"**
The Story of Zechariah
- Dec. 9, "Advent Expectation"**
The Story of Elizabeth
- Dec. 17, "Advent Faith"**
The Story of Mary

Again this year, light suppers will be served in the Fellowship Hall prior to the Advent services. Teams of congregation members are taking turns hosting the suppers.

You may arrive any time between 5:30—6:30 for food and fellowship, followed by worship.



Giving to the Lord

Christmas is the gift-giving season. Even though the stores are super-stocked, it's often difficult to find just the right gift for every person on our lists. God had no such problems. He knew exactly what each person needed. In fact, He knows our needs better than we know them, and He knew them before we were ever born. The timing of His most indescribable gift was perfect. "When the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (Galatians 4:4). Now, that's a gift that can't be topped! And it's the gift that truly keeps on giving! How do we respond to what God has given us? Shouldn't we be asking, "What have I given to Him?"



2010 offering envelopes will soon be available. Please do not use them until January. An initial offering envelope is also included to help defray the cost of providing the convenience of the envelope packets.



How can you find financial security today and touch lives with the Lord's work tomorrow?

Through an LCMS Foundation Gift Annuity, you can receive regular, fixed payments for life, make a gift for future ministry and save on taxes.

Your age at the time you establish your Gift Annuity determines your annuity rate and tax savings. The older you are, the higher your rate, income tax deduction and tax-free portion of your cash payment.

This information is provided to help you create a Lifetime Plan for Giving™ that provides for the people you love and ministries you care about.

David H. Rohe, Gift Planning Counselor

Central Illinois District

1850 N. Grand Ave. West

Springfield, IL 62702-1626

Phone: 217-793-1802

Email: drohe@cidlcms.org

For more information on Gift Annuities, please call, email or send in this coupon

Name:

Address:

City, State ZIP

Phone: ()

Email:

Please feel free to contact David Rohe to learn more about Gift Annuities.



HELP WANTED: One big BEE-LIEVER to coordinate the 2010 VBS Program.

Qualifications: Must love people enough to tell them what to do and withstand the grumbles, as well as enjoy God's blessings!

Pay: Joy in helping the young become BEE-LIEVERS too!

If interested, please contact Pastor Fischer.



Baptism

On Thanksgiving Eve, Nov. 25th, we rejoiced to receive Kamdyn Michael Hicks into the family of God through Holy Baptism.

Kamdyn was born June 8, 2009; and is the son of Lee & Tara Hicks.

The sponsor was Corey Tavares, and the witness was Ashley Mason.

"We were buried therefore with Christ by baptism into death, in order that, just as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

Romans 6:4



Flower Stands

We give thanks for the memorial gift of brass flower stands from Margaret Gamble in memory of her late husband, Gaylord.

The flower stands match our brass candelabras, and are a great enhancement to our sanctuary.





Steve Becker Returns from Home-Building Trip to El Salvador

Hello Everyone:

Many of you know I recently went on a *Thrivent Builds* trip to El Salvador. I thank all of you for your support and prayers. Below is a post-trip news release:

KEWANEE, Ill. (Nov. 3, 2009) — Steve Becker views life from a different perspective after working side-by-side with Salvadoran families during an October *Thrivent Builds Worldwide* trip. Steve fully expected to work hard building

homes and change the lives of Salvadoran families for the better. While these expectations were met, it came as a surprise that he was also strongly impacted by the experience.

“I went on this international volunteer trip to help others, but I, too, was blessed,” Steve said. “Service brings out the best in us—that’s the beauty in volunteering. You get the focus off yourself.”

Steve, a Thrivent Financial Consultant serving Lutherans and their family members in Kewanee, Princeton, and the Quad Cities, traveled to El Salvador with 27 other Thrivent Financial representatives from across the United States. Steve was selected to represent his colleagues from the St. Louis Heartland Region on this team because he demonstrated notable sales performance, passion for volunteering with members, and drive to help people become financially secure. Unlike regular days at the office helping people with their financial security, the Thrivent Financial representatives put a new twist on their role in El Salvador carrying bricks, mixing cement, and moving dirt to help enable families to afford to buy a safe new home.

From Oct. 16-25, the team helped construct homes in a new community called “Villa Esperanza” or “Village of Hope.” This holistic neighborhood will offer families in need access to land, a house, basic services and social infrastructure such as green areas and a community center. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans committed \$1.3 million to Habitat for Humanity El Salvador and has encouraged hundreds of Thrivent members to volunteer in El Salvador in 2009 to help make “Villa Esperanza” a reality. As of this fall, 26 of the 75 planned new decent, affordable homes have been constructed. As a fraternal benefit society, a unique type of not-for-profit membership organization, Thrivent Financial focuses on both financial security as well as caring for others. This program is one example of how Thrivent Financial and its members work together to help people.

As the homes were built, relationships grew with the local Salvadorans. The team enjoyed building with volunteers from a local Lutheran church, as well as with the Habitat El Salvador partner families who will live in this community. These Salvadoran families have to apply for and purchase the Habitat houses, just like in the United States, and put in sweat equity before they can move in.

Steve said, “One-third of the population of El Salvador lives in substandard housing, and by our American standards, the Salvadorans have very little. Despite having few worldly possessions, the Salvadorans I met displayed a wealth of spirit, love and generosity.”

This team of volunteers also had the opportunity to put down their work gloves and enjoy some free time attending a Lutheran church service, going on a boat ride, touring Mayan ruins, learning how to make Salvadoran foods, and touring a coffee mill.

To learn more, visit www.thriventbuilds.com/worldwide and read the team blog at <http://www.travelpod.com/travel-blog/thriventbuilds/1/tpod.html>.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Joy Hernandez	12/02
Carol Cook	12/03
Sandra Phillips	12/05
Madison Carpenter	12/07
Mathew Peed	12/08
Lisa Huseby	12/08
Mary Ozburn	12/10
Amy Vincent	12/10
Corey Tavares	12/13
Cheryl Snyder	12/13
Ashley Phillips	12/15
Ernst Heinrich	12/16
Nicholas Leezer	12/16
Kaitlin Phillips	12/22
Florence Statz	12/26
Alyssa Croegaert	12/31

ANNIVERSARIES

Joan & Steve Becker	12/11
Lorie & Brian Elgin	12/13
Melissa & Joshua Newman	12/16
Darlene & Rev. Robert Yount	12/18
Mary & Merideth Duncan	12/30

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship Service, 9:00 AM
Sunday School & Adult Bible Class, 10:30 AM

Wednesday Worship Service, 7:00 PM

Rev. Robert Fischer, Pastor

309-852-2787 (Church Phone)

309-714-1181 (Cell Phone)

309-853-5394 (Home Phone)

E-mail: pastor@faithkewanee.org

Web Site: www.faithkewanee.org

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Address Correction Requested



“O’ Come let us adore Him”

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