

Faith Connections

United in Faith Helping People In Need

Volume 3, Issue 12
December 2020

Our Mission: Serve this community † Revitalize the Church † Celebrate Christian Unity

The Meaning of the Incarnation: A Healthy Cry from the Manger

"The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes." Real newborns cry. Real newborns mess their diapers. Real newborns wail at the top of their lungs. That's why God created nursing mothers.

If we are to understand what happened in Bethlehem, we must believe that when the Baby awakes, he bawls--at least that he sobs a little. Because that is what Christmas means at its very core. Let me explain.

When I was a boy, I grew up on a diet of Superman comics. You know the story. The baby born on the disintegrating planet, Krypton, is sent by his parents in a space capsule to earth. The boy grows up to be Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter for the Daily Planet. And no one can tell that Kent isn't Superman until you get him around a phone booth.

Then there are reruns of Star Trek. At least once or twice a season, an alien masquerading as a human finds his way aboard with the evil intent of commandeering the Starship "Enterprise." He looks like a human, but don't be fooled.

Now you must understand that what happened in the stable in Bethlehem was not pretend. That night, God took on humanness and became human. No, he didn't lose any of his divinity--the angels' grand proclamation on the hillside sheep fields is testimony to that. The virgin birth, rather than being at the periphery of the Christian faith as some would claim, is right at its core. It explains who Jesus is. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," Gabriel explained to Mary, "and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

The key is found in the angel's words to Joseph. "Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." "His people" -- did you catch it? The only way God could deal with the mess made by the First Adam was through a Second Adam.

"For this reason," explains the writer of Hebrews, "he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

God could not wink at our sin forever and be just. Nor could he just whisk it away in a momentary act of divine disregard. There was no sterile way to deal with the ugliness of sin, and we humans were powerless to erase sin's stain, much less understand its devastation.

So, like a parent who risks his life to protect his children, God Himself came to rescue us. No play-act. The divine Son of God was no hologram or apparition. He became flesh because there was no other way.

In the early church, there were heretics who claimed that Jesus just pretended to be human. Spirit (good) could never mix with flesh (bad), they taught. The Apostle John jumped on that with both feet. "Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This the spirit of the antichrist...."

You see if "no crying he makes," is Jesus just a convincing humanoid, then what was that on the cross? Did it really die? Moreover, if Jesus did not live as a real human, filled with the Holy Spirit, what makes us think God can give us power to live for Him in this world?

There is a universe of difference between Star Trek's Mr. Spock lifting his hand in the Vulcan greeting of "Live long and prosper," and Jesus lifting his nail-scarred hands to bless his disciples. When Spock says, "Human emotions make no sense whatsoever," we chuckle. After all, those pointy ears are a giveaway; how could he understand? When Jesus says, "I care," we realize how true that is and drop to our knees in worship.

It wouldn't bother me a bit to hear good healthy screaming from the stable to break the eerie stillness of that Christmas night. After all, a newborn with healthy lungs is a very good sign.

Blessings!

Mel

Rev. Dr. Melvin L. Grimes

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Thank You | 2 |
| Harvest Party | 2 |
| Holiday Train At Home | 3 |
| Christmas Basket Giveaway | 3 |
| Volunteers Needed | 3 |
| Needs List | 4 |



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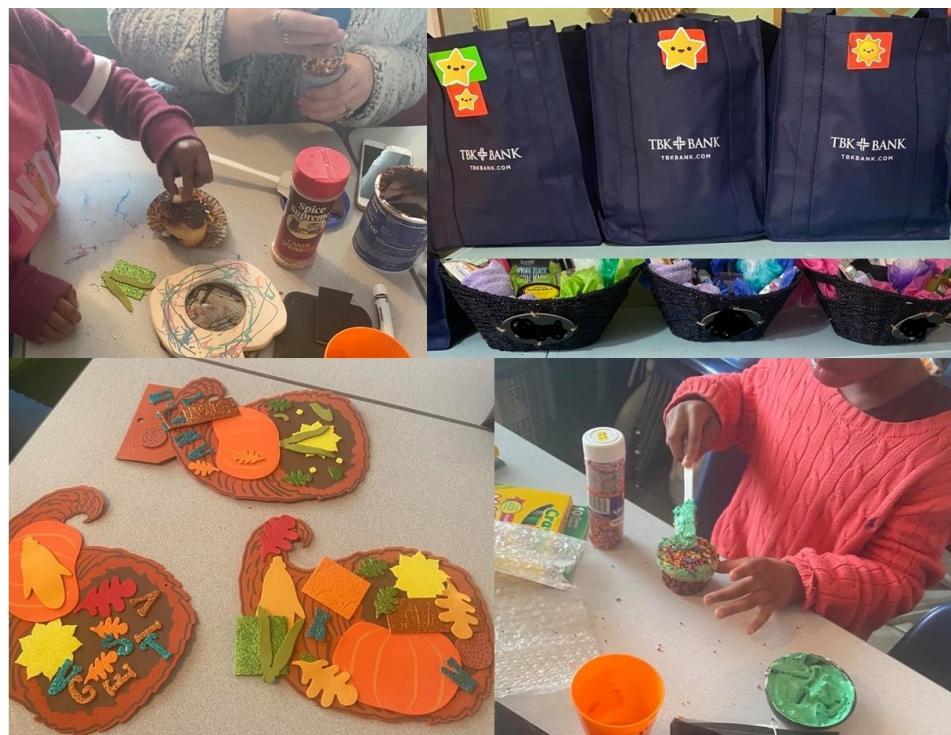
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Thank you, Crossroads Assembly of God in East Moline for collecting several boxes of food for our pantries.



On October 31st, Kimberly Reese (administrative assistant and shelter coordinator) and Blair Bullock (CareLINK intern and shelter coordinator) hosted an awesome Harvest Party for the families at residing at Winnie's Place Shelter.



Due to Covid-19, we are unable to have the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train come to the Quad Cities. Canadian Pacific Railway is continuing to support our organization and many others. One of the ways they're helping is by putting on a virtual concert called Holiday Train at Home. We encourage you to watch the concert on the Canadian Pacific website or on their Facebook page.



Christmas Basket Giveaway (Drive-Up)

Saturday, December 12th & Saturday, December 19th
9am—11am

Tabernacle Baptist Church
2601 15th St
Moline, IL 61265

For anyone in need, we will be providing baskets of non-perishable food items.

For more information, contact Betsy Vanausdelt at 563-332-5002 or by email at bvanausdelt@cuqca.org
Volunteers are needed to help at the event.

Volunteers Needed

We are in need of volunteers to help with our Christmas Basket Giveaway and to assist with our ministries. If you have a heart that is leading you to serve, please contact our associate director, Betsy Vanausdelt at 563-332-5002 or by email at bvanausdelt@cuqca.org.



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THANKYOU!

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Support CUQCA by designating us as your charity and by purchasing items from our Wish List.

https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/I9QO2R6L5908/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_4?_encoding=UTF8&type=wishlist



Merry Christmas from the Board of Directors of Churches United of the Quad City Area and from our staff. We have been blessed by your support in 2020.

Donations are needed for to serve meals to those staying in emergency shelters this winter.



Needs
List



We will once again be coordinating with local organizations to provide meals for those in need in our community.

Thank you,
Smokinpyro_BBQ for making those meals for us. Smokinpyro_BBQ has put together a list of items that are needed:
<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/BWBQD5HUJLWJ...>

| | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| Tomato Paste | Unsalted Beef Stock | Black Pepper |
| Garlic Powder | Chili Seasoning | Ground Cumin Seed |
| Garlic Salt | Elbow Pasta | White Rice |
| Bouillon Cubes—Beef and Chicken | | Dark Brown Sugar |
| Low Sodium Cream of Mushroom Soup | Canned Sweet Corn | Canned Tomatoe |
| Canned Green Beans | | Spaghetti Pasta |
| Glad Food Storage and Freezer 2 in 1 Zipper Bags—Gallon Size | | |

For more information, go to: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/BWBQD5HUJLWJ?ref=cm_sw_em_r_wl_ip_vUTK6ivCeyUbQ

You may buy the items and drop them off at our office or when you get to the ship to address, click on our address and have the items shipped directly to our office. We're also accepting cash donations that will go toward this effort.