

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas



"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

Jay Leno, former host of "The Tonight Show," joked that atheists are planning their own re-make of the classic Christmas movie "Miracle on 34th Street." He said the atheists' version would be called "Coincidence on 34th Street."

But, these days, it seems it doesn't take an atheist to deny the miracles of the first Christmas:

- The late Marcus J. Borg was a professor of theology at Oregon State University. His roots were Lutheran (but a different church body than The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), several of his books were published by Fortress Press, a publishing house of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and he served as a visiting professor at the ELCA's

Pacific Lutheran College. In an article in *Bible Review*, Borg wrote: *"To put it boldly, I am one of those Christians who does not believe in the virgin birth, nor in the star of Bethlehem, nor in the journey of the wisemen, nor in the shepherds coming to the manger, as facts of history."*

- John Shelby Spong is the retired Episcopal bishop of Newark, New Jersey. In his book, *Born of a Woman: A Bishop Rethinks the Birth of Jesus*, Spong concludes that Mary probably became pregnant

when she was raped by a Roman soldier. Mary then fabricated the story of the angel's visit and the miraculous conception of Jesus as a way of explaining her pregnancy.

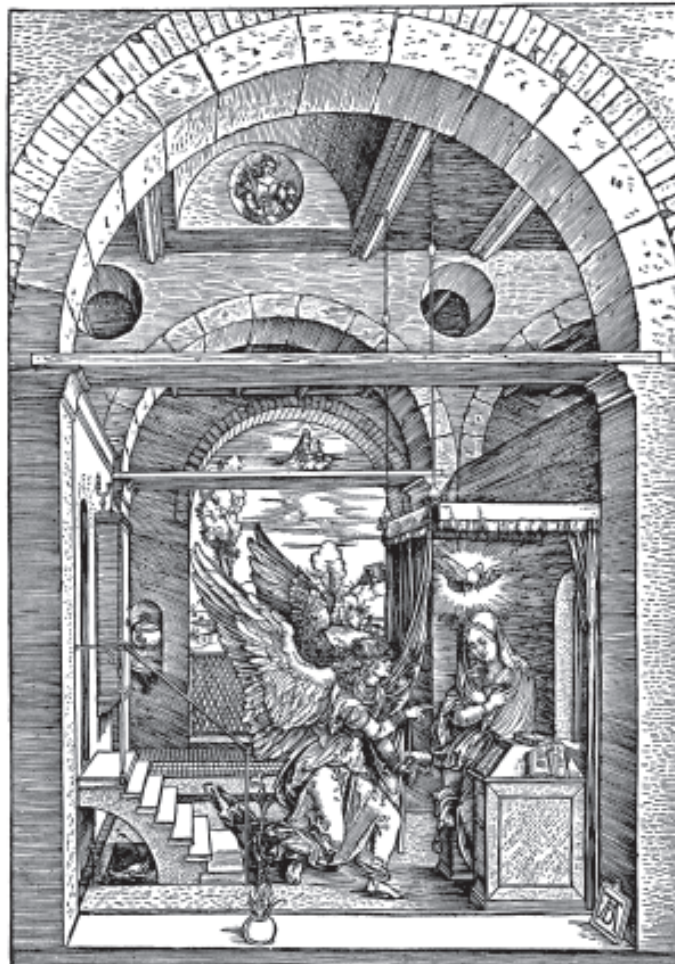
St. Paul himself passes judgment on so-called "scholars" such as Borg and Spong, who reject the teachings of the Bible: *"They do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm"* (1 Timothy 1:7).

The truth is, all the details of Christ's birth as reported in the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke fit perfectly with both the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's coming, and what we know about the historical situation at that time. All the objections of so-called "scholars" are entirely bogus.

For example, liberal "scholars" claim that the Hebrew word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 does not mean "virgin" but simply "a young woman of marriageable age," supposedly with no indication one way or the other as to her virginity. (Unfortunately, the translation "young woman" has worked its way into several Bible versions, including the Revised Standard Version and New Revised Standard Version.)

The contention that "a young woman of marriageable age" does not indicate physical virginity ignores that the punishment for adultery in Old Testament times was being stoned to death (Deuteronomy 22:20-21). In that culture, "a young woman of marriageable age" was a virgin—or else she was dead!

Besides Isaiah 7:14, *almah* is found six other times in the Hebrew Old Testament



Renown Lutheran artist Albrecht Dürer depicted the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary as recorded in Luke 1:26-38 in this 1501 woodcut.

(Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8; Psalm 68:25; Proverbs 30:19; Song of Songs 1:3, 6:8). None of these occurrences in any way indicates a young woman who is not a virgin, and the fact of physical virginity is obvious in the first two instances.

Also, in two places, one of them being Isaiah 7:14, the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, translated *almah* with *parthenos*, the Greek word for a virgin in the technical sense. (The famous Parthenon in Athens was named after Athena, a virgin false goddess in Greek mythology.) So, it seems the Septuagint translators understood *almah* to mean a physical virgin. And in Ugaritic the more common Semitic word for virgin, *bethuwlah*, is used in poetic parallelism with *almah*. In short, the linguistic evidence is conclusive that the Hebrew words for “virgin” and “a young woman of marriageable age” are synonyms, both indicating physical virginity.

The ultimate objective of this campaign to replace “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 with “young woman” is to deny the validity of the New Testament’s application of this verse to the conception and birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:22-23). Liberal “scholars” claim that Isaiah 7:10ff was not originally intended to be a prophecy about Jesus’ conception and birth, but that it originally referred only to some unknown child, born immediately after the prophecy was given.

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December, 2019

The original context of Isaiah 7:10-14 was a confrontation between the great prophet Isaiah and King Ahaz, the most wicked of the Old Testament kings, who reigned from 735 B.C. to 715 B.C. (For an account of Ahaz’s reign, see 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28.) Foreign armies were threatening Judah, and Isaiah brings Ahaz the good news that Judah will not be conquered. The Lord bids Ahaz to seek a sign confirming this promise.

Because unbelieving Ahaz, who worshipped other gods, refuses to seek a sign from the Lord, Isaiah announces that God Himself will give an amazing sign: The coming Messiah will be born of a Virgin! *“Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel”* (Isaiah 7:13-14).

This was a devastating humiliation from the Lord for Ahaz and his descendants. For, the great glory of the Hebrew kings was that the ultimate King of Kings would come from their line. Now, however, the Lord announces through Isaiah that though the Messiah will indeed still be born of the house of David, because of the wickedness and unfaithfulness of Ahaz and the other Hebrew kings, He would be of *female* lineage only—miraculously born of a Virgin!

Just as Isaiah 7:14 indicates the deity of the coming Messiah with the title “Immanuel,” which is Hebrew for “God with Us,” Isaiah 7:15 indicates His humanity: *“He will eat curds and honey before He knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.”*

Like today’s mushy baby foods, “curds and honey” was the classic first solid food given to infants in ancient times. Isaiah predicts that, because He will be “Immanuel,” both God and man, the Messiah will eat typical human baby foods as an infant and toddler, before reaching the age for discerning right and wrong. Although miraculously conceived and born of a Virgin, He will nevertheless grow and develop in a normal human manner (Luke 2:52), and experience normal human sensations, such as hunger (Matthew 4:2).

Because this prophecy of Isaiah was given over six centuries before the birth of Christ, some contend it cannot apply to Him, because Isaiah 7:16ff supposedly ties the birth of Immanuel to the period immediately following the prophecy: *“But before the Boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right . . . The LORD will bring on you and on your people . . . the king of Assyria.”*

This prophecy was indeed fulfilled when Assyria conquered Judah within decades after this fate was foretold. However, Isaiah does *not* say the Messiah’s birth will take place *immediately* after these events, but simply pronounces, as an additional judgement upon Ahaz, that *sometime* before the Messiah comes Judah will be conquered and the house of Ahaz overthrown—exactly what happened.

Of course, the definitive interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 is found in the New Testament, where the Holy Spirit Himself interprets the meaning of this prophecy: *“An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, 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.’ All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The Virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and they will call Him Immanuel’—which means, ‘God with us’”* (Matthew 1:20-23).

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Devotional booklets for the Advent season from Lutheran Hour Ministries are available in the large literature rack in the South Lobby, in both regular and large print. Use these devotions to help you celebrate the real “*reason for the season!*”

Holy Days and Holidays

New Bible Study in December

Soon we begin another round of the traditional holiday season. But, how did our holidays get started? What do they all really *mean*?

On December 1 we are beginning a new study in Adult Bible Class on *Holy Days and Holidays*. We'll look at the background of the holidays we celebrate, and what, if any, Biblical basis and Christian significance they have. You may be surprised how many of the holidays that we now consider "secular" actually started as Christian holy days—even Groundhog Day and Halloween!

Come join in on Sunday mornings at 9:00am in the Heritage Room beginning December 1 for a fascinating look at *Holy Days and Holidays*!



WORSHIP FOR SHUT-INS

Beginning Thursday, December 12, we will have the first of a new a quarterly special Communion service held at Trinity called "Worship for Shut-Ins." It will be held on the second Thursdays of December, March, June, and September.

The idea is to give our shut-ins an opportunity to attend a shorter, less crowded service, and a chance to see both one another as well as other fellow church members. Though called

Seven Scenes

from the
Advent-Christmas
Story



Advent-Christmas Sermon Series

December 1
1st Sunday in Advent
"John Preaching"
Mark 1:1-8

December 8
2nd Sunday in Advent
"Mary Praising"
Luke 1:26-56

December 15
3rd Sunday in Advent
"Joseph Dreaming"
Matthew 1:18-25

December 22
4th Sunday in Advent
"Angels Singing"
Luke 2:8-14

December 25
Christmas Day
"Shepherds Watching"
Luke 2:8

December 29
First Sunday after Christmas
"Herod Fearing"
Matthew 2:12-21

January 5
Epiphany (Transferred from January 6)
"Wise Men Worshipping"
Matthew 2:1-11

"Worship for Shut-Ins" it is hoped many more will come, in order to welcome the shut-ins back to their church, assist them getting around, and visit with them.

The Communion service will be at 11:00am, somewhat abbreviated, using familiar liturgy and hymns from *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

Following the service at about noon we will have a light lunch for everyone in attendance. If you can provide soup or

sandwiches or help serve please sign up in the Gathering Room. After lunch some may like to stay and visit or even play cards.

Many of the shut-ins have not seen our church since our remodeling and addition, including our new covered drive and elevator that will help facilitate their attendance. Also, since this first event is in mid-December it will give them a chance to see the church decorated for Christmas.



After Church Snacks

Thanks to all those providing snacks for our Coffee Hour after worship!

December 1
Sally Wood

December 8
Potluck Dinner

December 15
Jan Minden

December 22
Phyllis Trickett

December 29
Gayle Plummer

December 16 Joyce Johns
 December 16 Jake Prothe
 December 19 Samantha Honn
 December 21 Carole Brandt
 December 21 Nancy Green
 December 22 Jack Smith
 December 25 Shawn Brandt
 December 25 April Bruce
 December 25 Darleen Medlin
 December 25 Harold Peckman
 December 26 Brandon Prothe
 December 28 Shemene Peckman
 December 28 Royal Prothe
 December 29 Dan Minden
 December 29 Brian Meyer
 December 31 Randy Shannon
 Dec 2 Leland & Slina Prothe (64)
 Dec 3 Henry & JoAnn Vaughn (31)
 Dec 6 Darrell & Sandra Schultz (28)
 Dec 16 Mike & Trish Armstrong (24)
 Dec 17 .. Steve & Kristie McMullin (25)
 Dec 28 Richard & Mary Ann Green (44)
 Dec 29 Kevin & Terese Vogts (29)



Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not be complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elinton at trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.

December 1 Kristie Gatlin
 December 1 Brianna Chapman
 December 5 Tyler Barnett
 December 6 Susan Schmitt
 December 6 Linda Oberheide
 December 8 Anita Koopman
 December 9 Marsha Windish
 December 10 Betty Crome
 December 10 Don Prothe
 December 11 Pam Holtz
 December 11 Nancy Honn
 December 13 Justin Prothe
 December 13 Dillon Reyelts
 December 15 Chris Jones
 December 15 Linda Prothe



Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

December 1
Rev. Daniel & Kathy Conrad
Mexico

December 8
Rev. Ronald & Mary Anne Rall
Papua New Guinea

December 15
Rev. Eric & Johanna Stinnett
Ethiopia

December 22
Rev. Hans & Gretchen Trinklein
South Korea

December 29
Alyssa Anders
Russia

“Brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it is among you.”
(2 Thessalonians 3:1)



Christmas Potluck Dinner & Talent Show December 8

Everyone is invited to our fifth annual Christmas Talent Show on Sunday, December 8. This year we will have a Christmas Potluck Dinner right after worship, followed by the talent show.

Please bring a dish (or more) of your choice to contribute to the potluck, main dish, side dish, salad, or bread, and your favorite Christmas treat for dessert—yum!

Everyone—individuals, groups, families—is invited to share your talent! All types of performances are welcome and do not have to be Christmas related, and if Christmas related do not have to be strictly religious—“Jingle Bells” and Santa are welcome!

To get on the program email Pastor Vogts with the talent you will be sharing at pastorvogts@gmail.com. The fun will conclude with a Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long. Come celebrate the holiday season with festive fun!



Poinsettia Donations

Donating poinsettias to beautify our sanctuary is a great way to remember loved ones at Christmas!

There is a signup sheet on the cabinet by the west door of the Gathering Room to order plants from Price Chopper at a cost of \$8 each. Place your payment in the offering marked "Poinsettias." When signing up please indicate how many plants you wish to donate and for whom they are in memory or honor.

You are also *welcome* to bring your own poinsettias, which you purchase elsewhere or receive as gifts. Just drop them by the church sometime before Christmas Eve and leave them on the tables in the Gathering Room. Please still sign up on the sheet, indicating that you are providing your own plants, and for whom they are in memory or honor, so that this information may be included in the church newsletter.



We will celebrate Communion in December on the first and third Sundays, December 1 and 15. We will also have a special "Shut-In Communion" to which everyone is invited—not just shut-ins—on Thursday, December 12 at 11:00am.

On January 5 we will observe the Epiphany of Our Lord (one day early) with a "Christmas Carol Communion Service" that uses favorite carols in place of the various parts of the Liturgy.



Festival of Readings & Carols December 22

Our worship on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 22, will be a "Festival of Readings and Carols." This special order of service includes a series of Scripture readings related to the Christmas story, each followed by a Christmas carol.



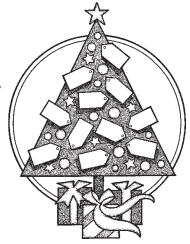
Christmas Eve CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Bring your family and holiday guests to celebrate our Savior's birth with our Christmas Eve Children's Program and Candlelight Service on Tuesday, December 24 at 7:00pm. This special service will include all your favorite Christmas carols, including "Silent Night" sung by candlelight.

This year's delightful children's program is based on the poem "Twas the Night Before Jesus," which was specially written by the renowned Lutheran poet, the late Rev. Dr. Herbert Brokering, for a children's book that was originally published by Concordia Publishing House in 1977 and recently reissued. Pastor Vogts' message will be "Good Tidings of Great Joy!" based on Luke 2:8-14.

**O come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!**

Trinity's Christmas Angel Tree



Our Sunday School children have put together an Angel Tree this year! It is located in the Gathering Room. We would love your help in purchasing gifts for these needy children in our community.

After choosing a green heart off of the tree please make sure you let Michelle Haley know which one you took. Please plan on purchasing and wrapping the gifts making sure the heart is taped to the bottom of the package. If you purchase extra gifts, such as toys, please wrap them as well.

Please place gifts back under the tree in the Gathering Room by December 11, when they will be picked up and delivered to the Sheriff's Department. Thank you all for helping children in our community!

Nursing Home Services



The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays can be an especially lonely time for those living in care centers. Because there are five Sundays in December we have nursing home services twice, on December 1, at North Point and Medical Lodge, and on December 29, at County Club Estates and Vintage Park.

You are invited to help provide brief worship services for these nursing home residents. The simple services are approximately 20 minutes in length, beginning at 1:30pm at North Point or County Club Estates, and then going to Medical Lodge or Vintage Park for the second service.



We will observe both the national holiday of New Year's Day and the church festival of the Circumcision of Our Lord with a special service on New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1, 2019 at 10:00am. This service also includes the installation of church officers and board members for 2020. Pastor Vogts' message will conclude the *Seven Scenes from the Advent-Christmas Story* sermon series with "Wise Men Worshipping" based on Matthew 2:1-11.

MISSION NEWS

Chinese Lutheran Service Book Dedicated

"This hymnal is vital to the life of our church," said Rev. Andrew Miao, President of the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) during the recent dedication ceremony at the CELC headquarters in Chiayi, Taiwan of the new *Chinese Lutheran Service Book* (CLSB).

This new Chinese hymnal is written in Mandarin and contains the setting of Divine Service I from *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB), Matins, Vespers, Luther's Small Catechism, selected psalms, prayers, services for Holy Baptism and Confirmation, as well as hymns.

The CELC was assisted in this project by LCMS Deaconess Sandra Rhein, who serves as a hymnal translation consultant for the LCMS Office of International Mission, and LCMS missionary Rev. Michael Paul, who served as primary translator and editor. This



Christmas Services

Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate the Real "Reason for the Season"

Christmas Eve Service, Tuesday, December 24, 7:00pm
Featuring the Delightful 2019 Children's Christmas Program
"Twas the Night Before Jesus" with All Your Favorite
Christmas Carols Including "Silent Night" Sung by Candlelight

Christmas Day Service, Wednesday, December 25, 10:00am
A Festival of Readings and Carols

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!

follows successful completion of a Swahili Lutheran hymnal for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya in 2012. The entire LSB has also been translated into French, for use in Canada, France, and the many French-speaking nations in Africa.



The latest translation of *Lutheran Service Book* is in Mandarin, joining translations in Swahili and French.

Rhein explained the difficulty of hymnal translation. Wooden translations and simple musical notations do not make a usable hymnal. Instead, the words need to be translated with the poetry of the hymn and the meter of the

music in mind. In addition to all that, Paul added that a prime concern is that, "The theology has to be correct."

Developing a hymnal in a foreign language involves far more than just translating words. Even musical notation differs between cultures. So, Rhein consulted with the manufacturer of the leading musical notation software to make the appropriate adjustments. After helping with this project, they decided this is something they want to market for others who may also be creating Mandarin hymnals—so this Lutheran project will impact other Christians too.

"The Lutheran church does not survive well if we do not teach our hymns to our children," said LCMS President Matthew Harrison at the dedication ceremony. Miao is overjoyed to see the new hymnal for his church body. Reflecting the unity of these partner church bodies, even in the midst of different languages, everyone sang "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" (CLSB 203, LSB 395) in English and Chinese simultaneously.