

# Christmas Pageant 2020

Thanks to Laura and all the parents and of course the kids (and Casey for also providing tech help) in putting this year's Zoom pageant together! Here are some snapshots. It will be posted on our YouTube page.

Once again, we had to find a new way to do worship and education. Our Sunday School has continued to do an amazing job and to remain faithful while also staying safe by doing most things via video conferencing. It is not as personal and not always an easy way to learn but a lot of Sunday School, like worship, is about fellowship and this keeps us connected in a time when we really need that.



It was great to see a pageant with kids from 4 to 20 years of age. We have many families with kids in college right now and we keep them and all our families in or prayers during this difficult time for teachers and students and parents. We show our kids love when we support them in their education and spiritual growth and also when we introduce them to



good self-care. Emotional and mental health are extra important in these days and should always be our first priority.

Our Sunday School is a way for our kids to support each other in prayer and fellowship. We are blessed to have great diversity from different schools and families from many parts of the world. Our families come in many different configurations and that richness is another kind of education for our children too.



We'd like to have a Christmas that can go just according to our plan with no complications. We would like a Christmas that is festive and that brings us together. This year Christmas, like everything else, has to be simpler. It's a chance to

remember the central things of Christmas. The story of Christmas is its own reminder about just why Jesus was born where and how he was. Too often we think of Jesus' birth as a sweet tableau of a child who doesn't cry and a mom and dad who look completely composed and serene. That belies a story about being dislocated from their home because of an imperial decree, having all the lodgings already overbooked when they arrive and having a message that tells them to run for their lives by fleeing to Egypt before a massacre arrives. On the eighth day Simeon meets the family in the Temple. He is overjoyed at seeing Jesus but he also tells Mary that there will be a traumatic moment for her as a mother for this son.



We now are at the ninth month of our quarantine. A quarantine is supposed to be forty days but ours has been forty weeks and more yet to come. We have now reached a duration like that of a pregnancy. Now the vaccinations have begun. It's not the end but the beginning of the end. We are not done with our masks and our distancing and won't be anytime soon. Many offices are still closed, Broadway is still closed. Many schools, open for a time are now closed again. About half of the Lutheran churches I'm in contact with in Westchester started in-person worship but are now back to being online only, even for Christmas.

The seclusion gets harder with each passing week. The cold weather has restricted some of the activities that were helping us cope. Restaurants in some places were open and now closed again. The household finances of many families and individuals has gone from bad to worse. This pandemic is harder to endure the longer it goes on. If you have been trying to keep a routine in order to stay emotionally and physically healthy you may find that we can't sustain those anymore. It's just been too long.

If your COVID routine has broken down let it end and give yourself and/or others the time and space and rest we need. Consider switching up the routine to see if there's a new way to cope with this crisis. We are dealing with grief for the life we once had, and many of us have grief on top of this for various reasons, layers of grief and loss.

Remember that our God blesses us with grace upon grace. In times when prayer is difficult try a new way of praying such as meditation or walking mindfully or reading. Some of us have tried these and need new options.



If we think of the Holy Family as serene and joyful they were but it was not because they had no problems. They faced problems as great as any we face.

Christians over the centuries have faced plagues and wars. The last fifty years Christians have faced an increasingly secular and diverse society and adjusting has not been easy for all of us. The Bible is full of people who walked difficult roads. The peace and blessing we seek is not the absence of trials and difficulties

but peace that comes to us in those great disruptions and any anxious uncertainty. Let that message from the Christmas story be our strength and hope.

In Christ's peace

Pastor Jim

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