

## Thoughts From Keith

### *He Will Be Called*

BY KEITH JOHNSON



Imagine if we all really understood who God wants to be in our lives—if we had this crystal-clear grasp of God's role in the day-to-day activities of a follower of Jesus Christ. Imagine how that would change us as a church and as individuals.

Some think that God isn't very forthcoming with who he wants to be in our lives. I don't believe that to be the case. A good example is the introduction of Jesus to our world. Centuries ago, God couldn't wait to tell us. He couldn't wait to write it down.

God was going to send his Son and began announcing it some seven hundred years before Jesus arrived. We find this announcement in the ninth chapter of Isaiah. Instead of just announcing it a day or two before his birth, seven hundred years before Jesus was born, God chose a prophet. This was a man near and dear to him, Isaiah, and God told him to write this prophecy down and tell people about it. And he told Isaiah that His Son would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

Because so many people needed clarity and courage and understanding and hope, God began announcing the news very early.

It's Christmas time again, a time of year we in the church call Advent, in which we remember the coming of Jesus. This year it began on November 25 & 26 and runs through Christmas. This year I've chosen our Advent series around this theme: He Will Be Called. We'll be examining those four biblical titles from Isaiah 9, one each week.

During this series, I hope you'll discover again who God wants to be in your life. And I hope that realization will add clarity, courage, understanding, and hope, not just to this Christmas season, but to the rest of your life.

**"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

**Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end."**

Isaiah 9:6-7



**He Will Be Called**

**December 2 & 3**  
*Mighty God*

**December 9 & 10**  
*Everlasting Father*

**December 16 & 17**  
*Prince Of Peace*

**December 24th** (NO services Sat. Dec. 23)  
*Family Christmas Eve Services*

Service Times | 9am, 11am, 3pm, 4:30pm  
Nursery provided at 3pm & 4:30pm services

**December 30 & 31**  
*New Year's Sermon*

# Free Range Devotions

## *Obstructed View*

BY SEAN CONNOLLY



I couldn't see the action. I could hear the crowd cheering so I knew something was happening on the court, but because I could not see what was happening, there was a disconnect. I was not engaged like my fellow spectators, because my seat was directly behind a structural concrete column in the old Boston Garden. Nice view of the yellowish painted concrete; the basketball game, not so much.

This was back in the Larry Bird days of the Celtics in the early- to mid-1980s, and getting tickets was tough, if not impossible. So when my grandfather pulled some strings to get me a ticket, I was beyond excited. "There's one catch," he cautioned me. "They're obstructed view seats." Meaning, I'd get into the Garden for the game, but this column of concrete would block my line of sight to the court. On game day, I dutifully went to my seat, but the column prevented me from seeing anything. The only way to be engaged with the action was to step away from the seat, and stand up somewhere else in the Garden during the



entire game.

Many obstacles keep us from being engaged with Jesus, like pride, comfort, control, fear, doubt, busyness, power and so much more. And overcoming those obstacles requires a step of faith, a demonstration that we truly believe in Him; a step away from what we are used to or our preconceived notions of what we think an outcome will be. Overcoming those obstacles so we can see and experience what God is doing, and can do, requires us to move.

Christ rewards steps of faith we take so we can engage with Him. Pride could have kept a Roman centurion from asking Jesus to heal his servant (Matthew 8:5-13). Money and power could have prevented Matthew from becoming a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 9:9-13). Fear could have stopped Peter from stepping out of the boat (Matthew 14:22-33). Doubt actually did prevent Thomas from believing in the risen Lord (John 20:24-30).

Hebrews 11:6 says, "It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." (Hebrews 11:6, NLT). Pleasing and believing in and seeking Him requires us to overcome our own obstacles to fully connect with Him.

What obstacles are preventing you from engaging with Jesus?

For a clearer view of what obstacles Sean is sidestepping, visit [www.seanconnwriter.com](http://www.seanconnwriter.com)

The 2024 Missions Calendar is now available. You can pick one up in the church foyer or office.

## 55 and Better Christmas Luncheon and White Elephant

Join us on Friday December 8th at 12pm to celebrate the Swedish roots of Life Covenant Church and indulge in Swedish meatballs, lingonberries, lefse, and more! You'll hear from Rose Berg about what having Swedish roots means to her, and Ole and Lena (or maybe just Lena) may make an appearance! If you want to participate in our gift exchange, bring a wrapped white elephant or other small gift to put under the tree. It's a wonderful time to just enjoy a meal in the company of friends! We hope to see you there! Let Mary in the church office know if you'll be joining us!

## LCC Women's Retreat

On January 25-28, 2024 join wonderful ladies from LCC for a relaxing weekend at Mountain View Retreat in Deer Lodge! There is no agenda - just plenty of time to talk, cook and eat together, craft (only if you want to!), and enjoy a few walks by the river nearby. The retreat home is set up for sewing if you'd like to bring your sewing machine and projects! The cost is \$90 / person but if cost is a challenge, please reach out. RSVP by contacting Stephanie Metzger at (406) 459-9292.

## Condolences

We would like to extend our condolences to the family and friends of Joyce Mahana's mother, Jean Guiot, who passed away on November 24th. We also extend condolences to the family and friends of Ernie Nettik who passed away on November 27th.



## THE TBR SHELF

KATHY BISCHOFF (TO BE READ)

### Christmas Books - Various

Hello Readers! As someone who places a high value on reading you would assume my children were exposed to books A LOT...and you'd be right. I wanted to share my joy of reading with them and assumed that joy would be passed down. Well, out of our 5 children, only 1 of them would consider herself a "reader". When I recently checked with them to find out which Christmas books were their favorites, my "reader" replied, "Klaus"! (Yes, that's an animated movie, NOT a book. Sigh.)

On the plus side, I did get other responses as well. In no particular order these are the books my kiddos most enjoyed during the holidays. Ruth Bell Graham's book, *One Wintry Night*, was read every year as a devotional. The book is beautifully illustrated and uses a

story within a story format to teach the Bible's plan of redemption. Barbara Robinson's, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, is much less serious. A real "page-turner", this one had us laughing out loud. My personal favorite was (and is) Rebecca Caudill's, *A Certain Small Shepherd*. It's truly a gem and becoming increasingly hard to find.

As for my own reading no list is complete without Dickens', *A Christmas Carol* or O. Henry's, *The Gift of the Magi*. I've also enjoyed Jan Karon's, *Shepherds Abiding*. Finally, the gospel of Luke is usually read as well.

What about you? I'd love to hear from you and what your favorite Christmas books or stories are! A plate of cookies, a hot drink and a good book in front of the Christmas tree is a guaranteed formula for making Christmas memories.

Until next time, "Happy reading and Merry Christmas!"

# SERVE THE LCC STUDENTS IN A BIG WAY

We are looking for more people to rotate into preparing and serving the weekly meals and washing dishes for En Fuego and Voltage. There are opportunities on Monday and Wednesday nights. Recipes, shopping lists and instructions are provided. Food costs are reimbursed by LCC. If you are interested, please contact Neil at 401-585-8517 or [neil@lifecchelena.org](mailto:neil@lifecchelena.org).



## AWANA Christmas Store Gift Wrappers

On December 12 from 6-7:15pm. We need lots of people to help kids wrap and label gifts for their loved ones. Be filled with joy by helping these children be cheerful givers!

Let Deanna know if you would like to take part at [deanna@lifecchelena.org](mailto:deanna@lifecchelena.org) or (406)442-6813.

## PARENTS AFTERNOON OUT

SAT. DECEMBER 16TH

3:00PM-5:00PM

enjoy an afternoon out while our team hosts a **FREE, fun-filled afternoon for your Kids!** (Pre-K through 5th grade must be potty trained)

Kids will watch a movie, make a craft, and have a pizza dinner. You have 2 hours to do super-secret Christmas stuff, go on a date with your spouse, or just sit and do nothing! Online registration is required and closes December 10th. Scan the QR Code or contact Deanna at to sign up.

SIGN UP >>>



## PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Christmas Step-by-Step

Sunday, Dec. 17th @ 4 pm at LCC

The LCC Preschool is excited to share the gift of Jesus by telling his story through songs and movement.







**For ages 2yrs to 5th grade.**

Tuesdays 6pm to 7:15pm  
Family dinner at 5:15pm.  
More information: [lifecchelena.org](http://lifecchelena.org)



**9th - 12th Grade**

Weekly | Wednesdays at 6:30pm  
Doors open at 5:30pm  
*Dec. 20 & 27 NO Voltage*

Date	Dinner	Theme	Bring
Dec. 5	Chicken & Rice	Sports Night	Wear your favorite team's colors
Dec. 12	Mac & Cheese	Store Night	Christmas shopping list
Dec. 19	NO AWANA	N/A	Merry Christmas!
Dec. 26	NO AWANA	N/A	Happy New Year!

# EN FUEGO

**6th - 8th Grade**

Weekly | Mondays at 6:30pm  
Doors open at 5:45  
*Dec. 25 & Jan. 1 NO En Fuego*

## CONFIRMATION

**6th - 8th Grade**

Weekly | Mondays at 6:00pm  
Doors open at 5:45  
*Dec. 25 & Jan. 1 NO Confirmation*



Scan to find more information about our kids and student ministries on our website!



In Kids Church this month we are getting ready for Christmas. Each week we will explore a part of the Christmas story: "A New Baby and a New Beginning," "The Shepherds," and "Wise Men, Smart Move." At each service, following the offering, we'll dismiss children to one of the pods listed below:

- Seedlings / Sprouts pod: ages 3 and 4 through 2nd grade (Rm 104)
- Roots pod: 3rd - 5th grade (Rm 202/204)

Our Christmas Eve services are made for families to worship and celebrate together. Services are at 9am, 11am, 3pm or 4:30pm. Nursery care is provided at the 3pm & 4:30pm services only.

Pastor of Children's Ministry: Deanna Carlson (406) 442-6813 [deanna@lifecchelena.org](mailto:deanna@lifecchelena.org)

### LCC Preschool Happenings

We are starting the month learning how to keep our bodies strong. We will practice trying good growing food and exercising. Community members will be visiting our classroom to check our eyes and teach us how to stay healthy. The kiddos will also be counting down to Jesus' Birthday! Each day, we will discuss someone who is part of Jesus' birth and create a piece to add to our nativity scene. We are also busy practicing for our Christmas Program Christmas Step-by-Step. We hope you can join us on Sunday, December 17th at 4 pm. Have a wonderful and joy-filled Christmas!!



Harmony Letang,  
Preschool Teacher



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Periodicals  
US Postage Pd.  
002231  
Helena, MT

**POSTMASTER**

Send address change to

Life Covenant Church

800 N. Hoback, Helena, MT 59601

Return Service Requested



# Christmas Eve

*with Life Covenant*

**SUNDAY, 24TH DECEMBER 2023**

**9.00AM | 11.00AM | 3.00PM | 4.30PM**