

**December Sermon Series—Because of Bethlehem, by Max Lucado**

A remarkable gift can arrive in an unremarkable package. One did...in Bethlehem.

No one expected God to come the way he did. Yet the way he came was every bit as important as the coming itself. The manger is the message. The One who made everything made himself nothing. Christ made himself small. He made himself dependent upon lungs, larynx, and legs. He experienced hunger and thirst. He went through all the normal stages of human development. He was taught to walk, stand, wash his face, and dress himself. His muscles grew stronger; his hair grew longer. His voice cracked when he passed through puberty. He was genuinely human.

- 12/3—Advent Week #1—Sermon: "Gift giving: what's on your list?"
- 12/10—Advent Week #2—Sermon: "Getting to see the face of God"
- 12/17—Advent Week #3—Sermon: "I love Christmas!" W.O.W. Christmas program @ 10:30 worship time
- 12/24—Advent Week #4—Sermon: "It's never too late"
- 12/18—Blue Christmas @ 5:30
- 12/24—Christmas Eve—"Christmas: the season of interruptions"  
7:00 & 9:00pm Candlelighting services

Hope to see you somewhere during this special month of Advent and Christmas. Let's grow in our faith together.

I love being your pastor! ☺ *Pastor Jeff*



**The "Church Lady" at the monthly WIC clinic**

Once a month, Lucinda Schwenker gets to be the "church lady" and meet parents and children who come to the WIC clinic that our church hosts for Jackson County. God is doing some new things among us as she shares the good news of Jesus and gives items to families that have been donated for this purpose. Each child receives a book, and each family is blessed with a set of diapers, warm hats/gloves/winter coats if needed and a \$10 gas card. All intended to communicate how much God loves them this Christmas.



Over the past ten years, it seems that "Blue Christmas" services have been increasing in number as part of Advent and Christmas schedules of Christian congregations in the United States.

Often scheduled on or around December 21<sup>st</sup> to correspond with the shortest day of the year; which also produces the "Longest Night" of the year. Blue Christmas services offer a gentle respite from cultural and perhaps even religious expectations of a "Merry Christmas."

Blue Christmas services offer comfort and hope, especially for those who have experienced significant loss dealing with difficult situations in their lives.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time we have offered a time of worship with this theme. If you or someone you know is struggling with the holidays this year, please consider coming. There will be communion as well as symbolic ways of remembering those we miss at this time. This night is open to anyone in our community that would like an alternative to the cheerful expectations that often accompany the Christmas season.

**Bring a Friend to worship**

Christmas is the perfect time to be inviting others to worship. This season is one time of the year in which hearts are more open to God and faith. Who will you invite? Some people are just waiting for a friendly face to make the invitation.

**Christmas Eve worship**

Sunday, December 24:  
7:00pm (with Joyful Noise) and  
9:00pm (with Chancel Choir)

Carols & Candle lighting at all services  
(Pastor Jeff will be preaching at both)

**Special offering Christmas Eve**

In the spirit of Christmas giving, each year we give away what is donated in the Christmas envelope. At this time each year the need at the **Community Cupboard** is great. We will give half of our offering on that night to purchase food for the cupboard. The other half will be directed towards the ministry of **Women at the Well**. Please give generously as you plan your year-end giving.