



## Wednesday Prayer

### Nativity of Our Lord – A Place for All to Belong

**And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.**

**Luke 2:7**

There was no place for them. As the temperatures drop to the brutal cold of double-digit negative numbers here in Minnesota, my mind goes to all those who have no place to call home. Shelters will be full, people may be turned away, community leaders are doing all they can to find a place of shelter and warmth for all. Churches and community spaces are working towards becoming pop-up shelters for the coldest nights of this winter, and yet many aren't ready yet during this stretch. Please pray with me for those who need a safe and warm space.

Jesus comes to us, born in a stable, a family in need of a safe and warm space to deliver the king who will serve the broken and outcast. As we sing "Silent Night" and other favorite Christmas hymns, we can envision the beauty of God's gift of the Christ child along with the reality of what that first night might have truly looked like. Jesus' humble birth is the first sign of his ministry on behalf of the poor and the oppressed.

In my worship service the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, our pastor asked us to see how Jesus shows up in our lives throughout the week. Specifically, to recognize Jesus in the *people* that we encounter. I just completed coordinating the Youth Holiday Gifts drive for Metro Homeless Youth Services within LSS. Jesus showed up repeatedly in the people who gave of their time and resources to provide just what the youth had requested on their holiday wish list – to give a sign of hope, respect, and love in this time of year that can be difficult for so many. And I saw Jesus showing up in the staff who support these youth who may be suffering from addictions, mental health issues, breaking away from experiences of exploitation and working towards safe and healthy lives.

Jesus is present in each one of us as we partner to keep children and youth safe in our homes, churches and communities. May we create a place for all to belong.

**Jesus, humble king, you came among us after being turned away from the safety and warmth of shelter. You were given an animal's feeding trough as your first bed, coming to show God's love for all – especially the poor and the oppressed. Help us to see you in those we encounter and guide us to live out your example for others. Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, and member of Christ Lutheran Church on Capitol Hill, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

*\*Consider a gift to a local homeless shelter this season or visit [lssmn.org/services/youth-homelessness](https://lssmn.org/services/youth-homelessness) to designate a donation to Metro Homeless Youth Services.*