

The Messenger

December 2015



**The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church
Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey**

The Church: Proudly Proclaiming Christ since A.D. 33

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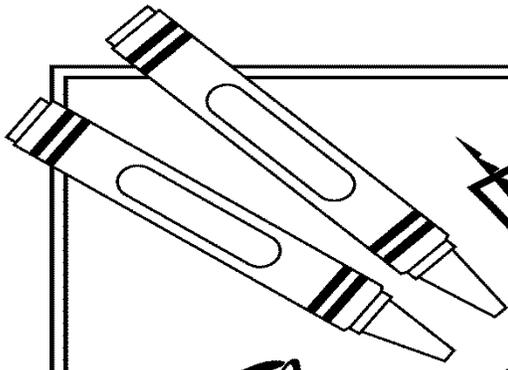
Pastor: The Rev. Marc Stutzel

Director of Music: Argine Safari

Director of Youth Choirs: David Scance

Musician: Fred Messner

Administrative Assistant: Doris Crouse



PUZZLE

The star of Christmas

When Jesus was born, a star led the wise men to him.

Directions: Place the words in order, by their numbers, on the blanks below to complete Matthew 2:10, NIV.

1 When

they 2

were 7

the 4

saw 3

10
2:10

5
star

9
Matthew

they 6

8
overjoyed

“ _____ , _____ ”
 _____ , _____
 _____ : _____ , NIV

Answer: "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed." Matthew 2:10, NIV



What do you expect this December?

December is a month full of expectation. I expect to wake up Christmas morning and to find at least one present under the tree for me. I expect to find myself shoveling snow. I expect to wear sweaters inside my drafty house. And I expect to be stressed out trying to negotiate gift buying, holiday parties, and trying to hold everything together during a very busy time at church. I expect a lot from December and I think December expects a lot out of us.

For the four weeks before Christmas, starting November 29, we'll be in the season of Advent. Advent is a time of expectation, but it's more than just expecting large crowds at the mall. Advent is a march towards Christmas when we celebrate the coming of God in the incarnation (birth) of Jesus. God chose to live a human life, to walk, talk, cry and celebrate like we do. God came to bring us life, but this life isn't limited to a past event 2000 years ago. Christ didn't just come on one Christmas morning. Christ comes, over and over again, into our present life, transforming us to live into God's unfolding future. During Advent we expect that Christmas will come, and we expect that Jesus is coming to us right now in the church and throughout our lives to bring life to our world. Advent is about celebrating that God will do what God promises by loving us and the entire world.

This December I invite you to look for the God we expect to come. Discover how God is working at Christ Lutheran Church and in your life. Notice God at your workplaces, school, in your families and even while you're waiting in line at Old Navy. Look for God because God is there, with you, loving the world and showing you how to love the world too.

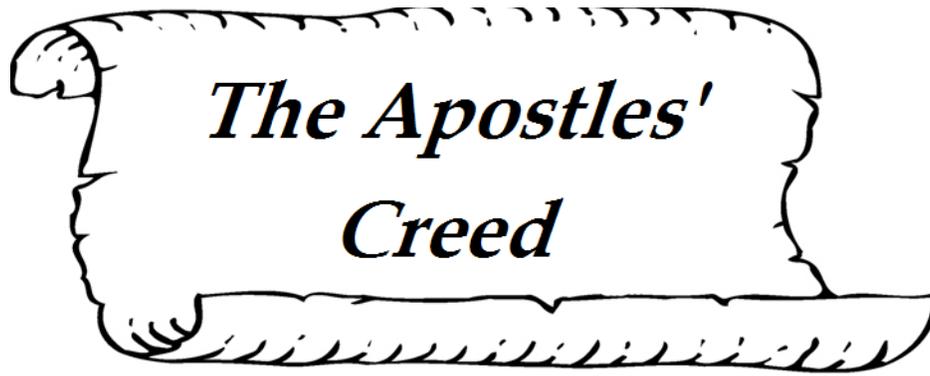
See you in church! Pastor Marc

New Jersey Synod is Walking to Bethlehem this Advent!



Let us walk to Bethlehem together as the New Jersey Synod! In the midst of a sometimes stressful Advent season, we will strive for wellness by collectively walking the 5763 miles during these 4 weeks. Pastor

Marc and other pastors from Northern New Jersey will participate. Would you like to participate? Speak to Pastor Marc marc.stutzel@gmail.com, and we'll find fun ways to hold each other accountable, share our stories, and see how we can discover God discover God in Bergen County.



The Apostles' Creed

Ask Pastor Marc

When the confirmation students (i.e. confirmands) first dissect the Apostles' Creed, the first question I ask them is just what a creed is anyways. Each Sunday, we recite one of three creeds. I usually introduce our recitation with the words "Let us confess our faith in the words of..." But creed (besides being a rock band from the 90s) is a word we don't usually use. So what's a creed? A creed is simply a group's statement about who God is and how God acts. In other words, a creed is what we teach, preach and teach. It is a condensed explanation of the mystery of faith and who God is.

It wasn't long before creeds started to show up in the early church. Some creeds appear in Scripture. Deuteronomy 6:4 ("Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone") is a creed. It is a statement about God and who God is. "God is love" is another one. Creeds are everywhere and help us explore just who God is.

Our Apostles' Creed started to take shape in 215 AD/CE. During the 100s, the church was struggling with the mystery of God. Different views took shape, and different kinds of Christianities developed. As the groups engaged, argued and talked with each other, there arose a desire to lay a foundation on what our faith says. A Roman named Hippolytus wrote a creed that looks a bit like our Apostles' Creed. Overtime it was refined and reshaped as new experiences, conversations and controversies arose. A legend developed that each clause in the apostles' creed was composed by one of the original apostles. Our current version of the creed was mostly formalized by the year 800. The English translation we use in worship today was translated and composed in 1988 by "English Language Liturgical Consultation," a group representing English-speaking churches and denominations Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic and more) from all over the world.

I was asked recently about why the current translation dropped the word "again," in line 12 of the creed ("and he [Jesus] will come to judge the living and the dead.") The word again was included in the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW - the Green Book) from 1978. I wasn't able to discover the notes behind the

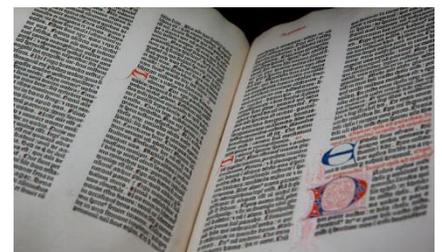
translation choices, but I believe the word "again" was dropped because of the flow of the text. That paragraph of the creed describes Jesus: where he came from, what happened to him, where he is now, and where he will be tomorrow. At the end of the paragraph, we hear how Jesus ascended to heaven (after Easter) and is sitting at the right hand of the Father. That is where Jesus sits, at the point of God's power, able to pierce into our lives, transforming us, so we can live into God's future. And that's what the last line of the paragraph is about: God's future. Jesus will come, from God's hand, to judge the living and the dead. An older translation of the Apostles' Creed, from 1941, highlights this point: "From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." From Jesus' present location, God's future and Will will be done.

Of course, we know and experience Jesus in our lives right now. In holy communion, holy fellowship, and in the holy moments of our lives, we discover a Jesus who comes over and over again. And, through us, God blesses the world. Creeds aren't designed to wipe away God's mystery, making faith a set of thoughts we just agree to. Creeds highlight the mystery because God loves us, Christ walks with us, and the Spirit works through us, even when we're doubt and struggle to believe. That's an amazing mystery that can never be reduced. It can only be pointed to, celebrated and leave us in awe.



Reading the Bible in a Year!

A new year is almost here. We're about to set resolutions, finish our great American novel, join a gym and try to be healthier both physically and emotionally. But have you thought about strengthening your relationship with God? In 2016, we're going to read the entire bible as a congregation. We'll have bible studies, reflections, and discover how God's story and our story intersect. Contact Pastor Marc (marc.stutzel@gmail.com or 201-391-4224) if you would like to participate. Let us know if you'd like to join a bible study, lead a study, read weekly reflections or join discussions via social media. Lesson plans and resources are in development and will be released soon.





It's hard to believe that the Advent season is upon us. Where did the year go? We have already had so many exciting events this past year, and there are more to come! Make sure you read the entire Messenger and the bulletins every Sunday to hear what is being planned, when they will happen and how you can help.

Our Stewardship drive is winding down . . . If you have made your pledge, I thank you. If you haven't done it yet, there is still time. We use our pledges as the basis for our annual budget, just as you would at your own home. The more information we have the more accurate the budget becomes. Now is also a great time to ensure that your pledge is up to date and perhaps think about some additional year end giving. We have so many good things happening here, and we welcome additional support to make sure we can balance our budget. We build our budget on faith. Now is the time for us all to consider how we can help us continue to do God's Work.

Just a bit about our Church's budget process . . . All 2016 committee budgets are due to Finance by December 1st. Finance will then build and propose a budget and bring it to Council. Once approved, we will bring it to the Congregation for a vote at our Annual Meeting. Stay tuned!

Last but not least, in late October Tom Kearns and I were pleased to attend a meeting with Bishop Tracie Bartholomew and other northern NJ Church Council officers. It was the first I had ever attended (and been invited to). The Bishop was interested in talking to us and introducing us to our counterparts in other local churches. It was a nice first step . . . we hope she will have more meetings and that we will be able to collaborate with our fellow Lutherans on more worthwhile programs. (Some of these folks had participated in our GWOH mac & cheese event in September.)

Thank you again for your participation and support this past year. I'm looking forward to an inspiring Advent season, led by Pastor Marc and our wonderful musicians and singers.

Yours In Christ,
Carla Hoenigmann

carlah716@cs.com--201-391-7843

“Youth has no age.”

Pablo Picasso

Matthew 18

⁴ Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

⁵ And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.



Christ Lutheran Church Youth Ministry kicked off another year with Bible Study sessions on October 1st and November 1st. Bible Study will take place on the first Sunday of each month from 10 AM until 11:30 AM. In addition, we will also be planning occasional fellowship gatherings where we get together to sing, have fun or just talk. (See our website at <http://jcarb1.wix.com/clc-youth> for more information).

Of course, when you mention Bible Study to some folks, well... let's just say it doesn't generate a lot of excitement. But the goal of our sessions is not to bury our heads in the good book – our theme for this year is “Relationships”, and what God has to say to us about them. We'll be looking at and discussing relationships from all different perspectives – family, friends, colleagues, classmates – and the importance of approaching these relationships from a Christian perspective.

Bottom line – we all need to love and forgive others because God loves and forgives us.

There are also other events on the horizon such as “Among the Wolves” (junior high retreat), and for our senior high group, the Winter Youth Assembly at Harvey Cedars in LBI, (February 5-7). In addition, we are planning to have a spring retreat in LBI. If you are interested in having your son or daughter attend one of the youth retreats, please contact the church office.

We welcome all students from 8th grade thru 12th, all college bound students, as well as interested adults. As Pablo implies above, youth is a state of mind, not an age. And in Matthew 18, Jesus is demonstrating to his disciples that it is not about being great, but about learning from and teaching each other, and that our children can not only learn from us. We can learn from them.

Come and join us and hear what God has to say to you.

John Carbaugh

Pastor Marc on the New Sunday School Singers

Have you noticed our new opening during Sunday School? Each week, our students join our Youth Choir director David Scance to learn and sing a few songs. The great thing about singing is that anyone can do it. I know that my Sundays are more worshipful when I am able to join them.

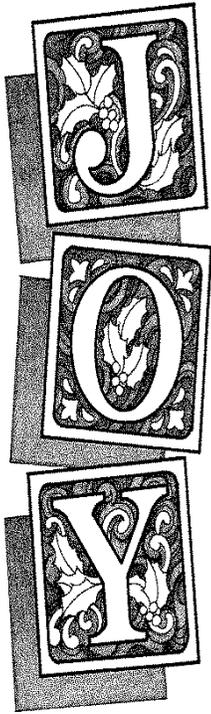
It's a little sad to admit this but, growing up, I didn't sing. I didn't like my voice and figured singing was just something else other people did. I didn't actually find my voice until I became a regular church goer, worshipping weekly, and singing with the rest of the congregation. Singing in church didn't just help me gain the confidence to chant communion every week or sing karaoke (even when I'm off key). Singing in church helped me discover God's care for me even when I didn't care much for God.

David Scance is proposing a new type of children's choir here at CLC. We're tentatively calling it the "Sunday School Singers." The kids, who are already learning these songs during Sunday School, will be invited to sing at the 10:30 am worship service once a month. They'll be able to share their experience with other members of the congregation and experience worship in a new and different way. They'll gain confidence being in front of a crowd full of people who love and care for them. They'll also participate in Christ's mission in the world by sharing the gospel and God's love with everyone.

We're hoping your child can sing with us! Please contact David, [201-666-8414](tel:201-666-8414) or at david.scance@verizon.net if you can be there or if you have questions.



Thank You for the Christmas Presents



A special **thank you** to those who have picked a name of one of the needy kids from DYFS or the Mentoring Moms program. By now they have all been selected, and you are finishing up your shopping. Once again we have brought the names of 65 kids from the Bergen Volunteer Center to the congregation, and you have responded generously. For the kids from DYFS, you may be providing their only gifts. The Mentoring Moms list (\$25 max. value gift) and the gifts for the kids from DYFS (\$50-60 value) are due no later than November 22nd.

Please remember to wrap your gifts, tag them with the recipient's name and Family # and bring them back to the Narthex. If you still want to donate cash or Target gift cards, please see Christine Badame (201-505-1909). The Volunteer Center uses them to buy gifts for people who were not matched with donors. A final report will be available in the January Messenger.

Save the Date! CLCW Annual Meeting—Sunday, January 17, 2016

The meeting will begin after the second service. We invite all confirmed female members of the church to come and enjoy lunch and fellowship. Once again, a delicious buffet of soups and desserts will be our lunch. Come join us as we review Trash & Treasure 2015, the recipients of our donations and discuss plans for 2016!

Christine Badame

You Did It!

Thanks to all for the school supplies you donated. Thanks to our Sunday School for assembling the kits. We completed 60 kits this year—six more than last year. Yay!

These school kits will first go to a collection site in River Edge and from there they will travel to the Lutheran World Relief warehouse in Maryland. From Maryland they will be distributed, when needed, to areas in the United States.

Thank you again – a job well done!

Health kits to be assembled for Lutheran World Relief

You can clean hands and brighten smiles in far off places by donating the following items:

- *Hand towels (16' x 28"
- *Toothbrushes (in original packaging)
- *Bath-sized soap
- *Sturdy wide-toothed combs
- *Wash cloths
- *Metal nail clippers

Please place your donations into the basket in the Narthex. Thank you! Questions?

JoAnn Sallo

Follow the Guiding Star This Advent

During Advent we anticipate, prepare and celebrate the presence of God in Jesus Christ. Come and worship each Advent Sunday.

Experience Him in Word and Sacrament

Advent Sundays – 9:00 am and 10:30 am worship services

The Work of Christmas Begins Now . . .

. . . **Feed the flock**—Participate in the Grocery Bag Project for The Center For Action. Shoppers needed. Contact Doris Crouse.

. . . **Order your poinsettias** beginning November 29th for decorating the altar on Christmas Eve. Complete an envelope from the table in the Narthex. Your purchased poinsettia may be picked up following the 11:00 pm Christmas Eve service. Help will be needed to deliver remaining poinsettias to those of our congregation who are sick or shut-in. Call the church office to volunteer to help.

. . . **Sign up on the altar flower chart** beginning December 6th to purchase altar flowers during 2016. For those who sign up, further information will be mailed to you. The flowers are \$40. per Sunday.

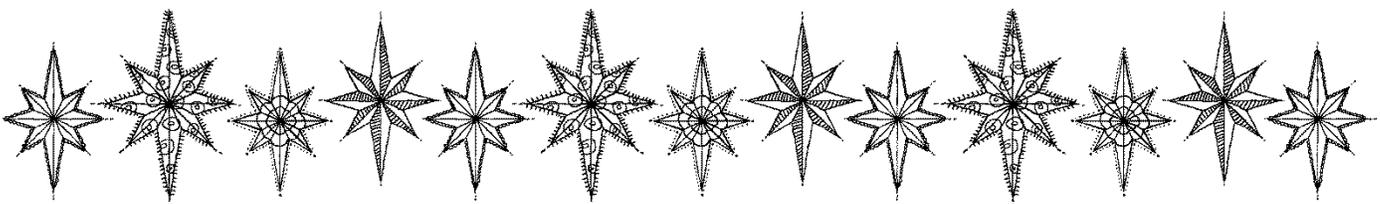
. . . **Come to the Advent Dinner** on Sunday, December 6th, 5:00 pm – roast pork and all the trimmings! Call the church office to reserve or complete an RSVP form available on Sundays.

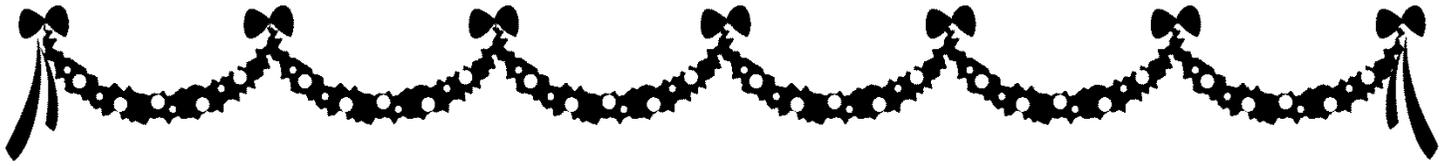
. . . **Hanging of the greens**—Help decorate our sanctuary Sunday, December 13th, 3:00 pm. Come and we will feed you with pizza supper at 5:00 pm.

. . . **Train Station Caroling**--Monday, December 14th we will go Christmas caroling at the local train stations! Watch Sunday bulletins for more information.

. . . **Come and Sing with Chancel Choir**—If you are interested in singing but can't commit to every week, you are invited to sing with the choir for the 11:00 pm Christmas Eve worship. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm. Consider joining us.

. . . **Handchime Choir rehearsals** for Christmas Eve begin Sunday, December 6th following 10:30 service. New members are welcome. See our Music Director, Argine.



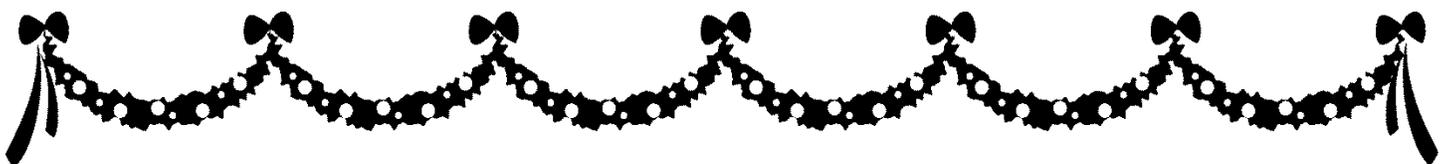


Come and Worship the New Born King!

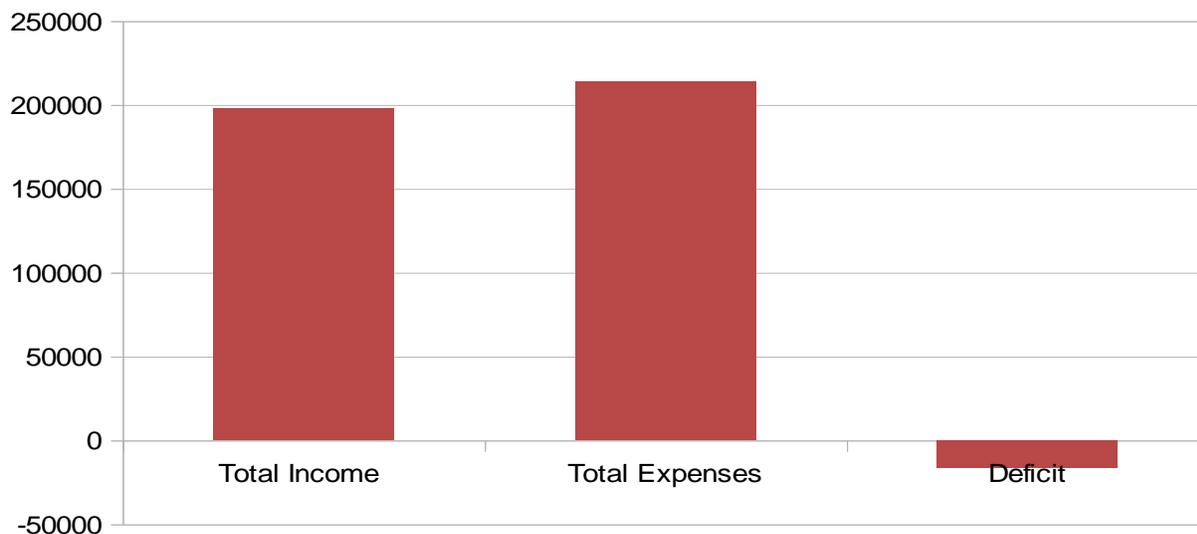
***Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th
Candlelight and Music***

***5:00 p.m. Worship for Families and Kids!
Holy Communion and Youth Choirs***

***11:00 p.m. Holy Communion, Orchestra,
Handchime and Adult choir***



News from the Finance Committee



Through October, our total income was \$197,666 while our total expenses were \$213,976 leaving us with a current deficit of \$16,310. The church counts on your donations to meet its operating expenses and continue our amazing work here. We prayerfully ask you to continue to keep up your pledges and giving. Thank you!

Martin Thalmann, for
The Finance Committee



Relax. Renew. Reconnect.

On January 29-31, 2016 our annual Congregational Retreat to Camp Koinonia is happening. Ten rooms in the Conference Center and space in the Family Cabin have been reserved. We'll spend time in the hills of New York, connecting with God's creation and with each other. Experience Christ's community in a new place while exploring how God is working in our lives. We'll have time devoted to Bible studies, snow tubing, cross country skiing, fellowship and more. Sign-up sheets are located in the narthex (entrance) of the church.

Make a Year-End Gift

During the season of Advent, we are reminded that the greatest gift that we have received is the gift of new life in Christ. In our baptism, we are claimed as part of Christ's body in the world. Our hands and our hearts are linked to what God is doing in the here and now. One of the amazing things about God isn't that God is being active in the world. God is amazing because God chooses to do God's work through imperfect people like us. We have gifts, and we are called to be a gift too.

We are grateful for your generosity through pledges and gifts throughout the year. You are a gift. Each year, many of you send your final pledge payments or other year-end gifts during the month of December. As you are contemplating year-end giving, please consider an additional gift out of your financial resources. Your end of the year gift doesn't just affect your tax bill from the US Government (all 2015 gifts need to be in the office or postmarked no later than December 31, 2015). Your gift helps Christ Lutheran be a gift to northern Bergen County through our work feeding our neighbors and being faithful Christians in our world. So let's keep being a gift here at CLC and Woodcliff Lake.



A Reminder: When You Shop, Amazon.com Gives. Are you a regular user of Amazon.com? Do you know that your regular shopping could help support Christ Lutheran Church? The Amazon Smile program is a simple way you can help support the ministries here at CLC beyond your pledging and weekly (or monthly) giving. Through your regular shopping, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your order to CLC. Simply

visit smile.amazon.com and select Christ Lutheran Church Woodcliff Lake, NJ as your charity to support. Please note that there are many Christ Lutheran Churches using this program,fp and you might have to scroll to the 7th or 10th page to find Woodcliff Lake. Once you select us, everything is done. Every time you shop on Amazon, start by typing smile.amazon.com and you'll help CLC be Christ's body in the world.

Have news to share? Do you have a special announcement to share? Is there an organization you support that is having a special event? We'd love to share it in *The Messenger*. Send your announcement to the church office at clc4u2@verizon.net.



I set [the Precious Moments Mary] there beside the sleeping Jesus, knowing that we have it all wrong. It isn't in the sweet pastels of life that we find Jesus, that we encounter him in a new way. He isn't born in our sterile birthing rooms. He isn't wrapped in soft, sweet-smelling fleece. He isn't in the carefully structured, pleasantly perfect places we like to create for him.

Instead, we find him in the noise, in the out-of-the-way, hard, sticky, smelly places of life. No, Jesus is not born in our palaces, or even in our guest rooms. He's born in our life-barns. He's born in the place where nothing seems right, where nothing is as we think it should be.

That's the real Jesus.

—Marlo Schalesky, *Wrestling With Wonder*