



## Immanuel by Carol Landis

What does Christmas mean to you? Twinkle lights, cookies, family meals, special food, gifts, Christmas cards, picture cards, letters, decorated wreaths, trees...or has it become synonymous with high expectations and exhaustion?!

A few years back I was asked to speak at a Christmas tea, and the preparing challenged me to consider what Christmas meant to me. As I sorted through all those trimmings listed above (which can be precious and meaningful), and pondered the biblical meaning and traditions of celebrating Jesus' birth, I discovered what has since become the heart of Christmas for me. It is to celebrate God's desire to live with us: Immanuel. *"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel – which means God with us"* (Matthew 1:23).

*God with us!*

I recall a visual I received as a young mom, at an earlier Christmas tea, when Eva Kratz held up a large manila envelope. She asked us to picture being in that envelope with Jesus. Jesus – the Omnipotent (Almighty God), Omnipresent (present in everything Heavenly Father), Omniscient (all knowing Counselor) – so strongly desired to reside within me that He left the glory of heaven. This boggled my mind! Yet begged to be pondered. He came to envelop me in Him so I would never be alone. Jesus' longing to be with me resulted in His death and was then fulfilled with His resurrection.

So, when Christmas to do's zap energy and joy, return to what remains long after the trimmings have faded: Immanuel. Invite Him and remain connected (as Heidi shares in our "Making Connections"). *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me"* (Rev. 3:20). *"God with us"* (Matt. 1:23). Let's invite Him in to be present in everything we do.

# December 2020 |



WOMEN'S MINISTRY MISSION STATEMENT: Encouraging women to connect in deeper, genuine relationships both with each other and with Jesus Christ.



# Making Connections

Hi, my name is Heidi Yoder, and I am a wife to Ben and a mother to three lovely little children; Clayton, Anna and Garrett. I will begin my story with a little background on who I am, and then some of the defining moments in my life.

I grew up in a conservative Mennonite family in Sugarcreek Ohio. I accepted Christ at a young age, and I made the decision to be baptized my senior year of high school. I was really able to make my faith my own when I started attending college that next fall. College was a huge defining moment for me. It was my first time living away from my family and the friends I knew. I learned so much about who I was, and about making my faith my own. Finding my identity in Christ gave me confidence and joy which led to finding lifelong friendships.

I met Ben after graduating college, (it's a long and sweet story) and we were married August of 2011. In the fall of 2013 we felt called to go live and serve in Argentina. We served at a Christian park there alongside 4 Argentine families. Our job was to help them take care of the park and create a space for groups to come and enjoy the outdoors, and meet with God in a different way. I was stretched, because I didn't know Spanish like Ben did, I relied on him to help me communicate with others until I began to learn the language. (My Spanish is still very limited) This helped us grow in our marriage, and our ability to communicate with each other. I spent the beginning of this journey sanding and refinishing the camps wooden signs. It was a very lonely job, and I really wanted to work alongside the other ladies who seemed to be having a good time cleaning the cabins and facilities where camps took place. I wanted to get to know them better and learn the language. After all, building relationships and sharing Christ was the reason we had gone in the first place. They were happy to have me join, and I learned so much about showing Christ's love through service. We served at the park for 9 months and then returned to the States to start our next adventure of becoming parents. I was 19 weeks pregnant when we flew home.

Motherhood has been my most challenging and rewarding season yet. God continues to show me mercy and grace in the moments and days when I feel that I am not enough. My favorite scripture is John 15, and I am reminded especially during this time how important it is to stay connected to and cultivate my relationship with God.





# Christmas Craft Photos



Everyone had a good time making Rag Balls and Ribbon Trees!



*Have a Merry Christmas!*

## Get Involved

### Church-wide Activities:

- Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> – God's Treasure House Benefit Concert (Contact GTH at 215-723-7499 for a ticket)
- Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> – Help deliver Gift Bags to those in our congregation who we would normally carol to (Contact the Church Office to sign up)
- Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> – Live Nativity (Sign up to help if you are able to)
- Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve service

Save the Date

**BINGO**

Thursday,  
January 21<sup>st</sup>  
7pm

**MCC Project of the Month:**  
Bar soap (Dove for infant kits)

# December 2020

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5 God's Treasure House benefit concert 7pm
6	7	8 Sewing Circle 8am-4pm	9 Sewing Circle 8am-4pm	10	11	12
13 Handing out Gift Bags	14	15	16	17	18 Live Nativity 6:30-8:30pm	19
20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 6:30pm	25 Merry Christmas!	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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