

Interfaith Voices Column, December 23, 2023

by Kellie Weber

Christmas, doing it better

Like many of you, I have been busy shopping and baking and wrapping and decorating during the present and past Christmas seasons.

With family members, we read the story of the Savior's birth in the Bible, listen to sacred Christmas carols and try to donate some of our resources to individuals with needs.

We decorate our home with a Christmas tree, green and red stockings over the fireplace, and nativity scenes from around the world. Every year we try to celebrate Christmas by centering the holiday on the birth of Jesus Christ.

Some years we feel like we succeed in focusing on the true meaning of this sacred holiday. And some years, we feel like our December came and went in a flurry of busyness, and Santa played a much more prominent role in our holiday than the Savior.

As a mother and grandmother, I want to do better. I want to lead our family in celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

Gary E. Stevenson, an Apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said, "Christmastime is the perfect opportunity to focus our hearts and minds on the Christ child born so long ago, and on the peace and hope that the message of His gospel brings into each of our hearts as we willingly follow Him."

As I think about willingly and joyfully following the example of the Savior, I remember a beautiful song that our young children learn in church, written by Janice Kapp Perry. It is called "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus." Some of the words are as follows:

"I'm trying to be like Jesus; I'm following in his ways.

I'm trying to love as he did, in all that I do and say.

At times I am tempted to make a wrong choice,

But I try to listen as the still, small voice whispers,

‘Love one another as Jesus loves you.

Try to show kindness in all that you do.

Be gentle and loving in deed and in thought,

For these are the things Jesus taught.”

As I go about the preparations necessary for a large family to celebrate this holiday, I am going to try to focus on not only the birth of Jesus but on his life and example.

I’m going to try to love as Jesus loves, show more kindness and be gentler in what I do and especially in how I think. The most important gift I can give to my family and my community will be my effort to become more like Him.

Elder Stevenson also reminds us, “As we celebrate His birth, however, let us not forget that without His Resurrection and Atonement, we would not have Christmas. Through the Savior’s gift of mercy and redeeming grace, we can repent of our sins and be forgiven. Because of His miraculous resurrection, we know that He broke the bands of death and that He lives today. What a gift.”

The final paragraph of “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles” reads, “We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles — that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.”

Kellie Weber is a wife, mother, grandmother, friend, volunteer, unpublished children's book author, enthusiastic but inexpert gardener and chicken keeper, and avid reader. She and her husband, Lee, raised seven sons just outside Lebanon. They attend The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Sweet Home.

ABOUT INTERFAITH VOICES

The weekly "Interfaith Voices" column includes a regular rotation of writers representing the broad spectrum of spiritual voices throughout the mid-valley. The column is coordinated by the Reverend Barbara Nixon, who can be emailed at revbabs2000@gmail.com.