



*Away
in a manger*

It was a full house, upwards of 300 in attendance, when a Living Nativity was performed at the Hilbrands Cattle Co. barn on Dec. 22. The Living Nativity was an amazing showing of interfaith dialogue led by Amanda Hilbrands, not pictured. Her vision brought the community together to remind us all this is the season of hope. Many volunteers helped as actors, musicians, narrators and more to make the Living Nativity a success. Pictured above, Kara Dirksen plays The Virgin Mary and Emmy Beck as Jesus depicts the birth of Christ in a manger.



What is the Christmas pickle?

By Sam Peterson

The Christmas time of year brings many traditions along with it. From the Christmas tree to decorating the house with Christmas lights, there are a seemingly endless amount of holiday traditions. One such tradition is that of the Christmas pickle. While some may be unfamiliar with the tradition, others fully participate in this fun and goofy holiday tradition. The tradition of the Christmas pickle ornament involves a member of the household to sneak out of bed and place the Christmas pickle ornament among the other ornaments and lights on the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve. When the family wakes up on Christmas morning, they start the search for the Christmas pickle. The green color of the pickle often allows it to blend in well with the Christmas tree. The lucky finder of the Christmas pickle is traditionally blessed with an additional gift from Santa Claus or good fortune for a year. The origins of the Christmas pickle are something of a mystery. For many years, it

has been believed the tradition was passed down through generations from Germany. The product was marketed as a German tradition and even could be found with the name Weihnachtsgurke, or Christmas pickle. In reality, there are some flaws that poke holes in the German theory. The first problem is in Germany, St. Nick does not show up on Christmas Eve, he delivers his packages on the eve of Dec. 6. Also, children typically do not open presents on Christmas morning in Germany, they open the presents on Christmas Eve. If you were to ask native Germans about the tradition, they may have never heard of it. The tradition of the Christmas pickle was often taught in German classrooms in America and other parts of Europe. With more investigation, the American and European teachers have not been able to find a native German who is familiar with the tradition, other than the souvenirs German tourist shops sell. Another theory on the origins of the pickle ornament date

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Biblical meaning of Christmas?

By Billie Jo Rassat

What does Christmas mean? Upon recollection of my catholic background, it means the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ? However, what is that? What does the Bible say? What do our religious leaders believe? Today, it is easy to get lost in seeing family, eating a Christmas dinner and opening presents, but what is the meaning of Christmas based on what it tells in the Bible? From the New Testament the story of Jesus' birth is explained through the gospel of Luke: "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with Child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered" (Luke 2:1-6, Kings James Bible). "And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7, Kings James Bible). "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the LORD came upon them, and the glory of the LORD shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the LORD. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And

suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into Heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the LORD hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His Name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:8-21, Kings James Bible). The gospel from the Book of Matthew in the New Testament also tells the story of the birth of Christ: "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for

That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His Name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God With Us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the LORD had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn Son: and he called His Name JESUS" (Matthew 1:16-25, Kings James Bible). "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His Star in the east, and are come to worship Him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the Star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the Star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was" (Matthew 2:1-9, Kings James Bible). "When they saw the Star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they

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