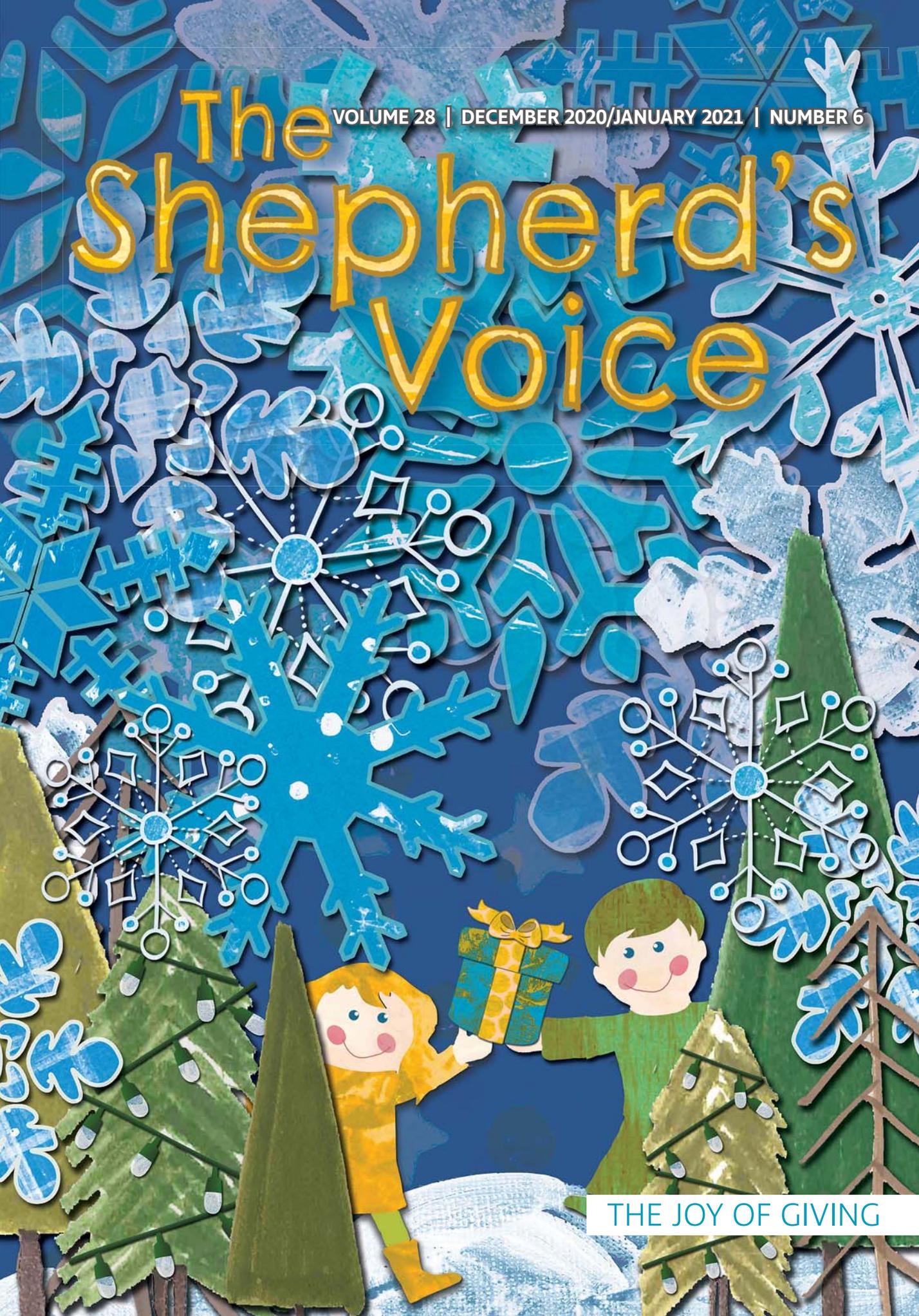


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The Shepherd's Voice



THE JOY OF GIVING

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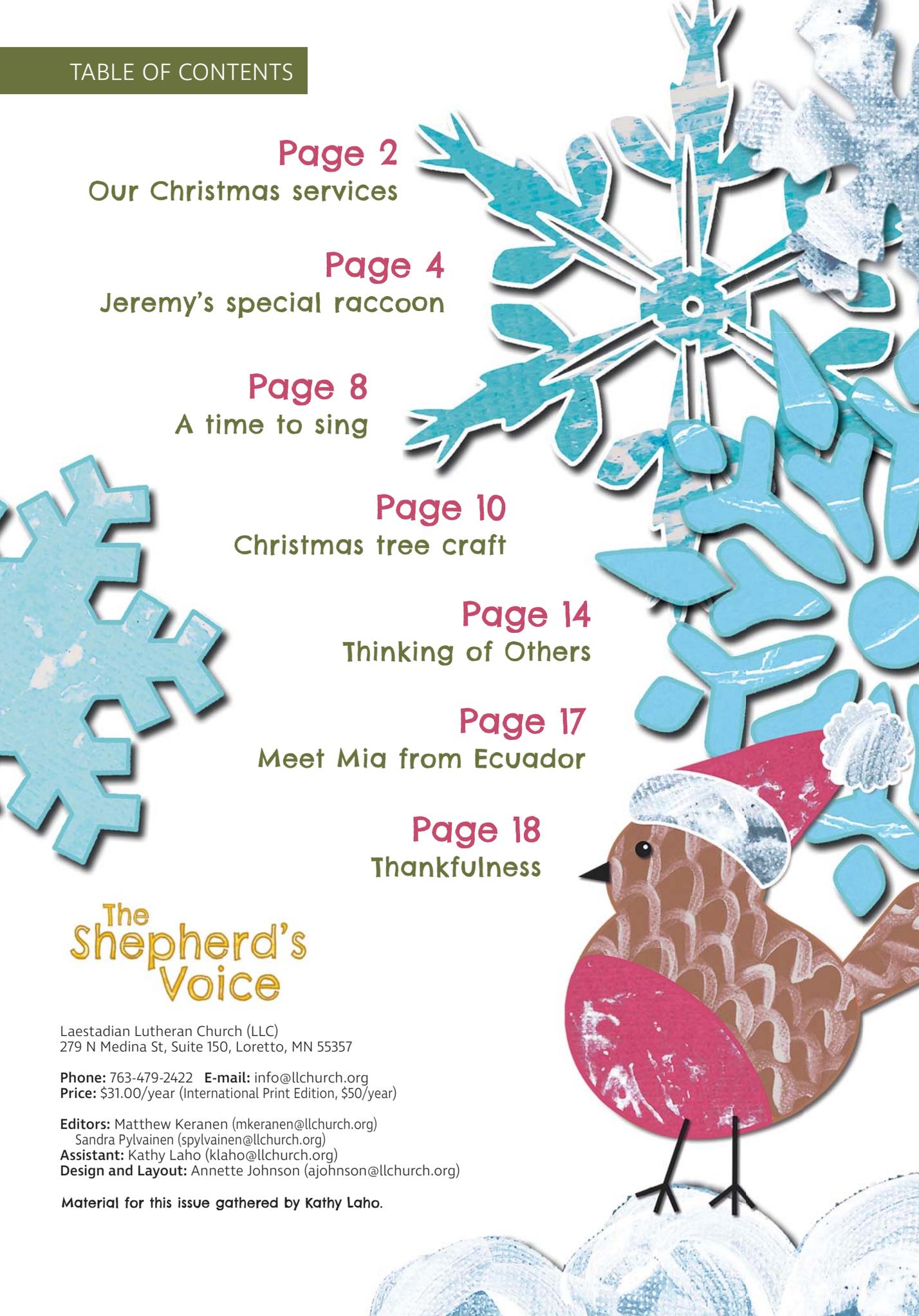
The
Shepherd's
Voice

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Material for this issue gathered by Kathy Laho.



Why is it better to give than to receive?



When I was a little girl, I was happy to get gifts, so happy that I can even remember some of those gifts. I recall getting a stuffed toy, a puppy, from my cousin who was a lot older than me. He said that his stuffed puppy's name was Sleepy Sandy and therefore, since I was Sandra, I should have it.

That gift made me so happy. I kept that stuffed puppy, even long after stuffing began to fall out of it.

Now, I look back and think about how an older cousin gave his own toy to a younger cousin. Was that hard for him? As I think about it, I am beginning to think it made him happy to see me so excited about that stuffed animal.

Giving makes us happy. We look at another person's face and feel the emotion within them. Their emotion comes to us, bigger. Maybe, many times throughout the day we think back to the big smile on the face of the person we made happy. Sometimes, all we gave was a hug or a smile.

The Bible tells us that it is blessed to give to others. It makes us happy to make others happy. Many have experienced that. In this issue of the *Shepherd's Voice*, you can read about giving forgiveness to another and how happy it makes that person. Forgiveness is the best gift to give.

We remember how the wisemen from the east came to visit the newborn Jesus. Even though Jesus was born in a stable to people who were traveling, the wisemen still wanted to honor Him and they gave Him special gifts. We remember the wisemen on a day called Epiphany, which you can read about in this issue.

You can read lots of other things in this issue too. You can read about the Creed, the final excerpt of a serial story, and you can read a recipe – and make it, too!

And remember there is another thing you can give – you can give thanks to the heavenly Father, every day in prayer. This is what I wish for you: may 2021 be a year of thankfulness to God for all the blessings He gives every day. Happy New Year! ◆

Sandra Pylvainen

Our Christmas services

Heidi Hendrickson

Christmas season is an important time to be together. Waylon, age 6, loves to be able to listen to Christmas music and be with believing friends during the Christmas season.

Waylon says, "When I am able to be a part of the Sunday School Program, it makes me feel happy. I like being with my friends and singing." Each year, Waylon has been able to be a part of the Christmas program in Monticello, Minn.

This is very special to him because our family spends Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at home in Duluth, Minn. Since our dad, Steve works Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, we plan our Christmas festivities around his schedule.

We listen to online services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It is nice to attend virtually. We have the special opportunity to be together as a family and enjoy the quiet peace of Christmas. ♦



Waylon and his friends Johann and Vera Muhonen are ready for the 2019 Christmas Program in Monticello.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HEIDI HENDRICKSON
Heidi and Steven Hendrickson with their children Waylon (6), Wyatt (3) and Warren (1).

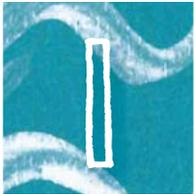
What does righteousness mean?

Arvin Pirness

Righteousness is a big word we hear at church or at home. We can also read it in the Bible. The clue to learning this big word is inside the word: **Right**. God is **right**. He is so **right** that there is

Epiphany

Phil Jurmu



In the Biblical time before Jesus was born, prophets often spoke how Jesus would be born. They told what His birth would mean to all people. King David wrote in Psalm 72, verse 13, "He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." Here he refers to Jesus, who wasn't even born yet.

Shortly after the first Christmas, when Jesus was born, wisemen from the East saw a star rise in the western sky. That star was a sign that a king had been born. They had learned from the prophets' writings about these signs. They followed the star to Bethlehem to see the newborn Jesus. Nowadays we remember

this event on **Epiphany**. This word means "to suddenly understand" or "to realize."

When the wisemen came to the manger and saw baby Jesus, they realized and understood that Jesus was the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Matthew writes in chapter 2 how the wisemen followed the star until it stopped over Bethlehem. They were overjoyed. They went into the stable and saw Mary, and they bowed and worshipped the baby Boy. They opened their treasure chests and gave the Child gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh (verses 10 and 11).

Every year on **Epiphany**, which comes twelve days after Christmas, we remember the arrival of the wisemen to the manger where Jesus lay. We

too rejoice over the birth of Jesus in the same way the wisemen did! Jesus was visited in the stable by poor shepherds and mighty kings. Even today He is the light of the world unto all kinds of people. Jesus Himself said, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness" (John 12:46).

Jesus was born a human. He suffered temptations like we do, but He did not fall into sin. He was nailed to the cross and died for the sins of the whole world, including yours and mine.

The greatest gift we can own this **Epiphany** and always is that our sins are forgiven. When we believe the gospel of forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name and blood, we can keep our faith and be God's children. ◆

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

no darkness or wrong in Him at all (1 John 1:5). With a **righteous** God there is no space for sin.

But no matter how hard we try to do **right** in daily life, we cannot completely succeed because we have inherited sin from Adam and Eve. It is a part of us. It causes human beings to do wrong (Romans 7:17–21). But dear child, we have been given a gift – the gift of faith! By this faith believers truly and fully believe in Jesus' **righteousness** as payment for our inability to do **right** (Roman 5:21).

This means we believe that Jesus did **right** on our behalf and paid for our sins with His blood on the cross. Jesus died for our sins so we don't have to! We never could pay our own debt of sin. Jesus doing **right** for us makes us **righteous**.

We can own forgiveness when we believe Jesus paid for our sins, namely that we have permission to believe our sins and wrongdoings forgiven in Jesus' name and blood. ◆

Jeremy's special raccoon

Heidi Aho

Heidi interviewed her son Jeremy about his special treasure.

Do you have something that is special to you?

Yes, I have a raccoon.

What is his name?

I call him Rocky the Raccoon.

What do you do with it?

I play with him and cuddle with him.

Where do you keep him?

I keep him in my bed or on my shelf. I also take him with me when we go on trips. Then he is often in my backpack.

How do you take care of him?

When he's hungry I let him suck on my finger or from a toy baby bottle, and I feed him toy food. Sometimes he gets dirty and smelly, and then mommy needs to wash him. ♦



PHOTO: HEIDI AHO



It is more blessed to give than to receive

Jouko Haapsaari

When I was a little boy, I had the habit of going to my believing mother every evening to hear the gospel. She preached to me the happy message of the forgiveness of my sins. I used to preach the same gospel to her.

Solution to the puzzles on page 11.

			S	S	
		M	A	S	
	Y	E	M	T	A
	J	H	T	U	S
6	J	E	S	U	S
		L	I	G	
		H	R	A	
		T	C		
		B			
		E			
	1	2	3	4	5

My mother was a believer, but my father wasn't believing at that time. I didn't understand it then, but I have thought about it later. When my mother and I preached the gospel to each other, it must have been an important moment to her, since her husband didn't own the living gospel. It may have also been a deep reminder to my father about the gift of the forgiveness of the sins.

It was Jesus who said the words of our theme, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It was likely a memorable lesson for the disciples, because they spoke about it. Even Paul, who never saw Jesus himself, knew about it. These words are not recorded in the Bible as words of Jesus, but apostle Paul said them to the elders of a certain congregation. He specifically mentioned that they were the words of Jesus.

You may wonder what you can give since you are little and perhaps don't have much money to buy things. As a parent and grandpa, I'd say: give what you have! What could that be? You have much love and forgiveness, and you can share joy by being forgiving and helpful to your parents and

siblings. Maybe you could open the door for an elder who is entering a building? That kind of act of kindness may brighten someone's day.

Our children once brought fresh baked goods to an elderly minister and his wife, Einari and Kerttu Lepisto. They lived near us in Finland. Our children were so pleased when they came back. They had had a wonderful experience in that believing home. Einari and Kerttu were surprised and happy for the goodies. They asked the kids to come in and served them the treats they'd just baked. Their thankfulness and joy warmed our children's hearts and they had a long-lasting learning experience. Love makes us willing to help and serve! ♦

Things to visit about:

1. How does it feel when someone gives you something?
2. How do you feel when you have made another person happy?
3. What might prevent you from serving someone else?

Across

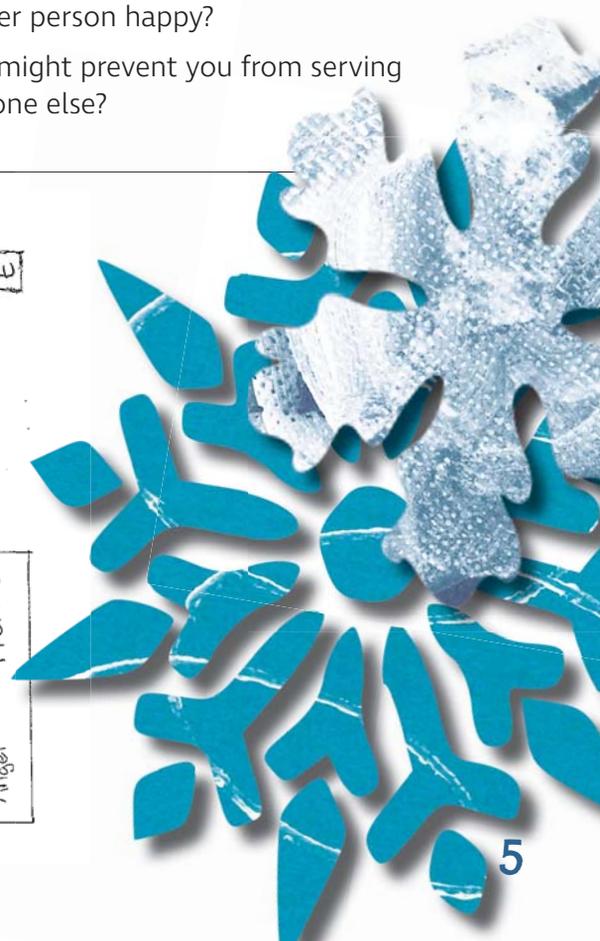
2. The _____ said, "I be not afraid."
4. Our Lord and _____
5. "Oh, sing, we now send a _____
7. A _____ keeps sheep
10. Jesus' Father

Down

1. The town Jesus was born in.
3. Jesus' Mother
6. God made a _____ to _____
9. Mary had Jesus in a _____
10. _____ was born on Christmas day

WORD BANK

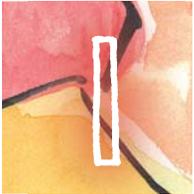
- Bethlehem
- Jesus
- Joseph
- Mary
- Angel
- Manger
- Shepherd
- Savior
- Rejoice
- Promise





A small girl's important duty

Text: Pauliina Isopahkala | Illustrations: Tytti Mäenpää



I read a fairy tale about a strong-willed princess. If the princess wanted fresh strawberries in the middle of winter, the king sent his servants to look for them. In the fairy tale, the princess wanted a birthday cake so large that she herself would fit inside it. The servants had to work all night to have the cake ready in the morning.

Many fairy tales tell of servants. The Bible is not a book of fairy tales, but it also tells about servants. The things in the Bible are true because they are the Word of God. Now I'm going to tell you about a servant girl from Israel that I read about in the Bible.

The Syrians had gone on raids to Israel. There they stole valuable goods and cattle, and also workers to take back to their own country. I think they might have even taken whole families with them.

The little girl from Israel was also caught by the Syrians. The heavenly Father took care of her in a foreign land. The girl became a servant to the wife of the commander of the king's army. The commander's name was Naaman. I don't know the name of his wife or the servant girl.

Naaman was a mighty soldier, but he had a serious illness. He was ill with leprosy. The servant girl said to her mistress, "If only my master would visit the prophet who is in Samaria! That man would cure his leprosy." The small girl knew that there was a believing man named Elisha who could cure one of that difficult illness. She also knew that the believing man could forgive one's sins.

Naaman believed the little servant girl and went to talk to the king. He told the king what the girl from Israel had said. The king gave Naaman permission to go to Samaria. Naaman set out on his journey, and he eventually did what the prophet Elisha told him to do. His sins were forgiven and he was healed. For all of this he wanted to thank God (2 Kings 5:1–17). ♦



*Translated and adapted from SRK's Siionin kevät, no. 10, 2017
Translation: Matthew Keranen*

A time to sing

Text: Joni Vaatainen | Illustrations: Ruth Roiko



Sam puts on his snowsuit and boots. He puts on his hat and mittens. It is cold outside, but Sam will be warm.

Sam's family dresses warmly too. Uncle Bob and Aunt Jen come over. Sam's cousins come too. They are all dressed for the cold weather.

Now they are ready to go. They take song books. They take a lantern. They all walk to Grandma Anna's house. They stop by her front door.

"Christmas, Christmas now is here..." they all sing. Grandma Anna opens the door. She looks very happy!

They sing another song. "Merry Christmas, Grandma Anna!" says Sam. Sam is Christmas caroling!



The carolers walk to an old uncle's house. They sing "Unto Thy Manger, Lord, we come..." The uncle does not come to the door. Sam sees him looking out a window.

"Why does he stay by the window?" Sam asks Dad.

"He is old," Dad says. "He has been very sick. He cannot come to the door. He will get too cold."

The uncle waves. Sam waves back. Sam sees that the uncle is crying.

"Why is he crying?" Sam asks.

"He likes to hear us sing. I think he has happy tears!" says Aunt Jen.



They walk to more houses. They sing more songs. Sam feels happy. He likes to sing!

Then they all go to Sam's house. They have a warm snack. They sit around the Christmas tree. Dad reads the Christmas gospel. Sam wants to sing "Away in a Manger." They all sing!



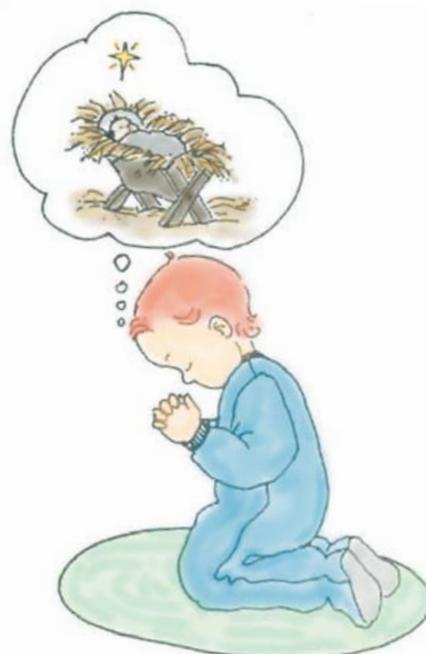
It is time for Uncle Bob and Aunt Jen to go home. It is time for Sam to go to sleep.

Sam says the Lord's Prayer. Then he says, "Thank you, God, for Baby Jesus."

"I like Christmas!" Sam says to his sister Lori. "I like baking. I like singing. I like presents. I like Santa."

Sam closes his eyes. "I love Baby Jesus. Christmas is His birthday."

Sam is sleeping. He has a smile on his face. ◆



Christmas tree craft

Heidi Aho

What you need:

- Construction paper: black, green, brown, red and other Christmas colors.
- Kid-friendly craft glue.



Adelie and Jeremy work hard on their craft.

PHOTOS: HEIDI AHO



Directions:

1 Take a sheet of black paper and use it as your background.

2 Tear small pieces of green paper and glue them on the black paper in the shape of a Christmas tree.

3 Tear or cut a rectangular piece of the brown paper and glue it below the green tree to be the trunk.

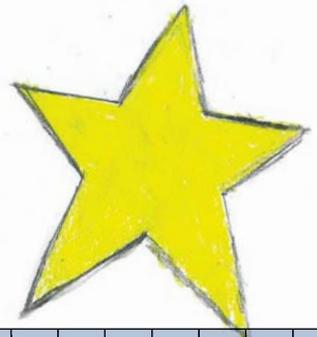
4 Tear smaller pieces of different color papers and glue them on the tree as ornaments and garland. Remember to add a star or an angel to the top of the tree!

5 Tear or cut different-colored shapes and glue them under the tree as gifts.



Christmas words

Heidi Aho



Fill in the word puzzle according to the following clues.

Across:

- The angels brought the shepherds tidings of great ____.
- The town where Jesus was born.
- Another name for Jesus' birthday.
- The name of the Caesar who was ruler of the Roman empire when Jesus was born.
- The signal in the sky that told the wisemen to search for a newborn king.

Down:

- Our Savior and Redeemer.

						6			
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									

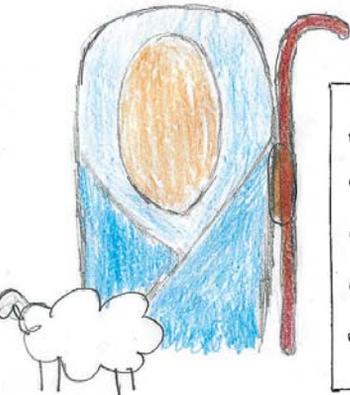
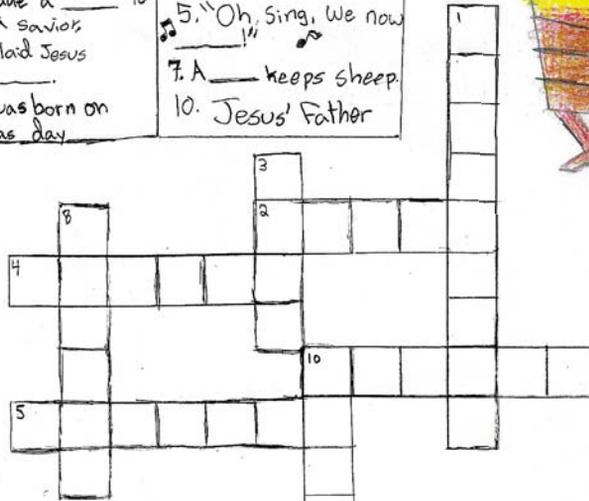
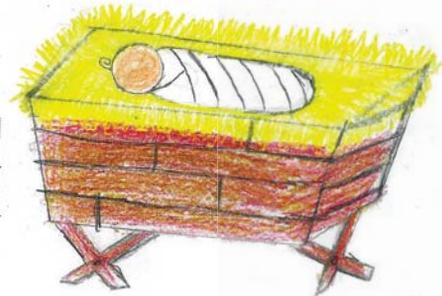


Malina

PHOTO: KARLA JUUSOLA

Malina Juusola

Down	Across
1. The town Jesus was born in.	2. "The ____ said, 'be not afraid.'"
3. Jesus' Mother	4. Our Lord and ____.
6. God made a ____ to send a savior	5. "Oh, sing, we now ____!"
8. Mary laid Jesus in a ____.	7. A ____ keeps sheep.
10. ____ was born on Christmas day	10. Jesus' Father



WORD BANK

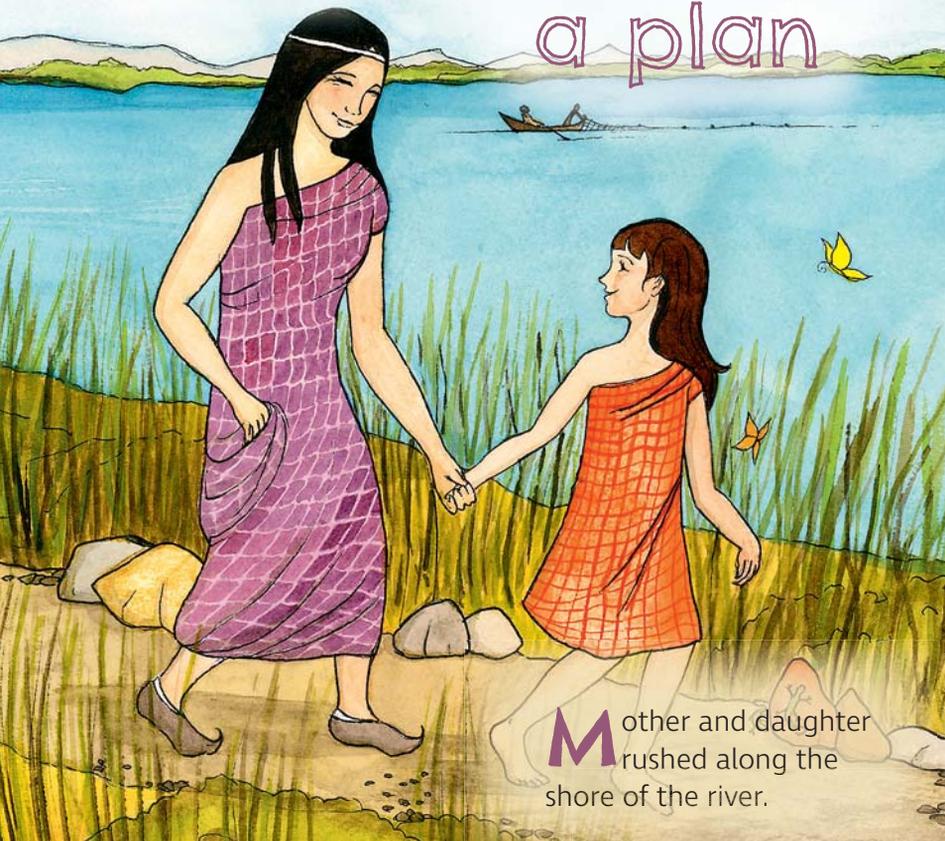
• Bethlehem	• Manger
• Jesus	• Shepherd
• Joseph	• Savior
• Mary	• Rejoice
• Angel	• Promise



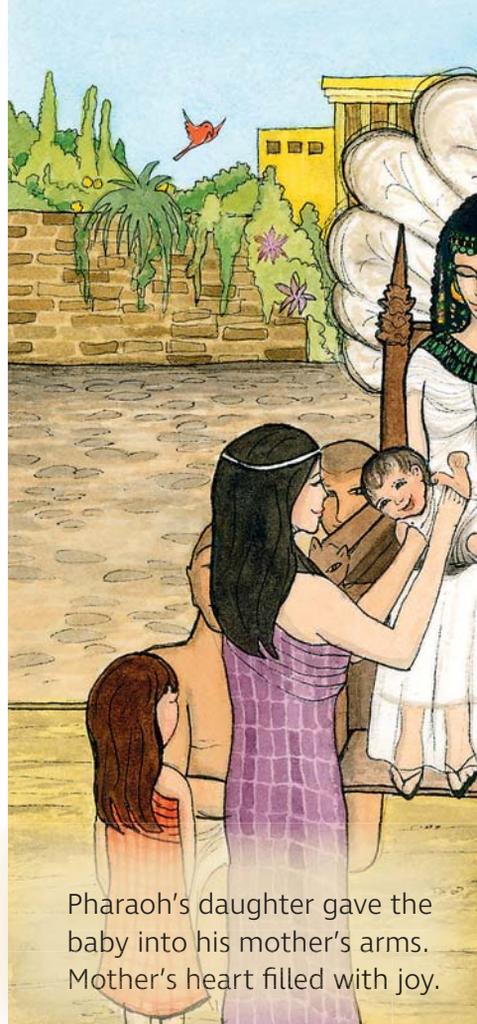
ARTWORK: MALINA JUUSOLA

The solution to these puzzles can be found on pages 4 and 5.

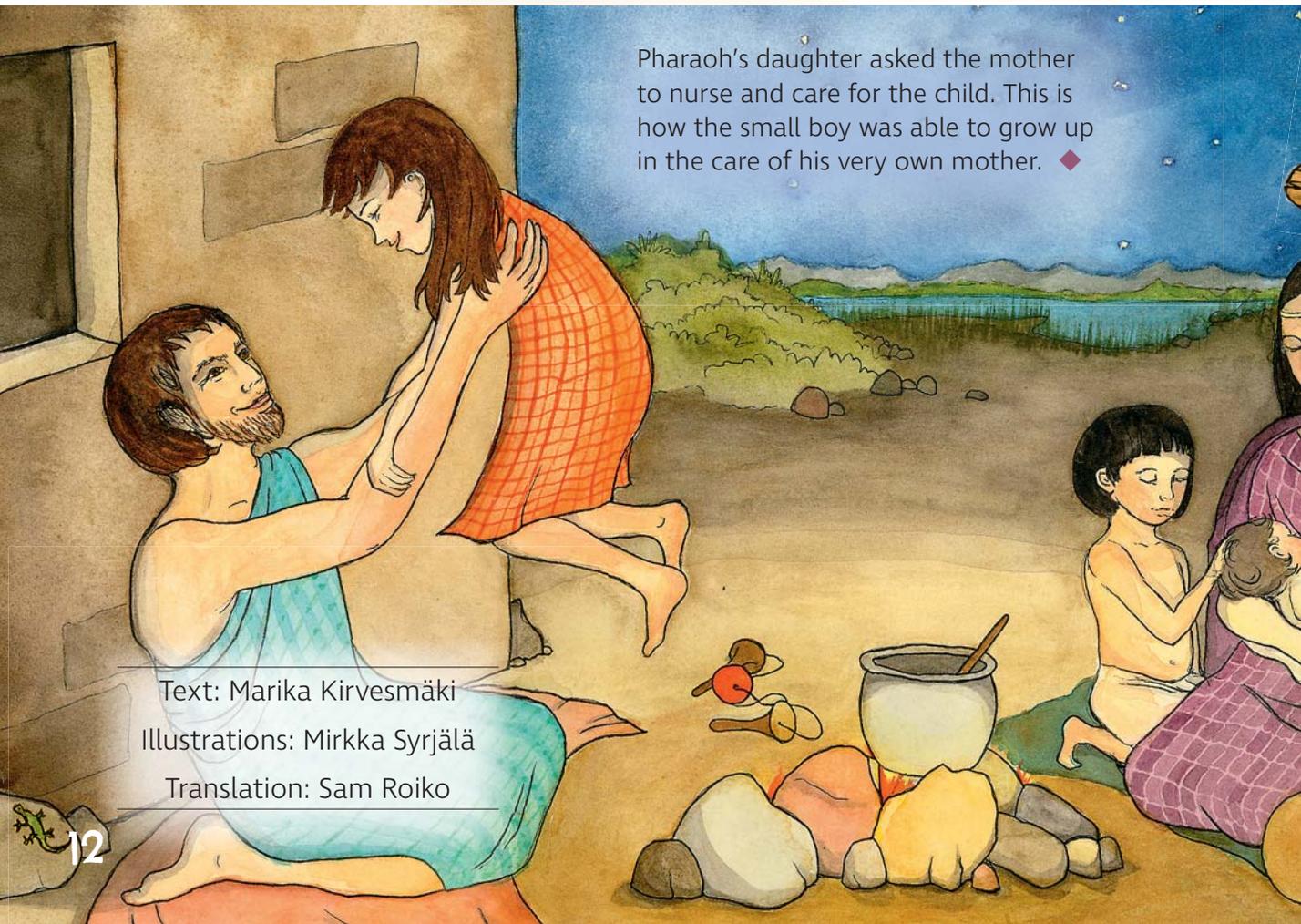
God had a plan



Mother and daughter
rushed along the
shore of the river.



Pharaoh's daughter gave the
baby into his mother's arms.
Mother's heart filled with joy.



Pharaoh's daughter asked the mother
to nurse and care for the child. This is
how the small boy was able to grow up
in the care of his very own mother. ◆

Text: Marika Kirvesmäki
Illustrations: Mirikka Syrjälä
Translation: Sam Roiko

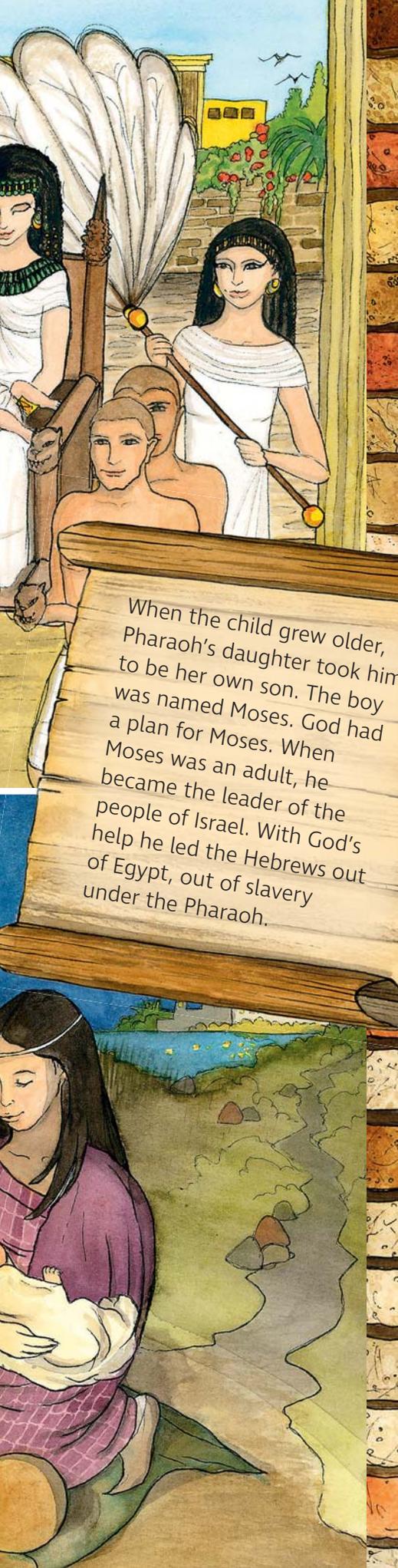
Paulus (right) with his brother Hannes at the train station.



Paulus plays the piano in his free time.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JON JURMU



When the child grew older, Pharaoh's daughter took him to be her own son. The boy was named Moses. God had a plan for Moses. When Moses was an adult, he became the leader of the people of Israel. With God's help he led the Hebrews out of Egypt, out of slavery under the Pharaoh.

I study steam locomotives

Paulus Jurmu

My name is Paulus Jurmu. I live in Fair Oaks, Calif., with my brother Hannes, sister Ingrid, and my Mom and Dad. I turned ten in October. In my free time, I play the piano, create designs with Legos and play board games with my brother. After evening prayers, I like to read or listen to audio books before going to sleep.

I like to research old-time steam locomotives. I identify them based on their wheel arrangement (number of wheels) and by the way a locomotive works from steam going into the pistons, driving the wheels through the piston rods. In my spare time I can spend many hours studying how mechanical systems work. I like to design locomotives using Legos and building a train that works.

I can't wait to go to my favorite museum when the coronavirus pandemic is over: the California State Railroad Museum. ◆

Paulus and his family moved to Finland in November.

Thinking of Others

Text: Janelle Huhta
Illustrations: Leanne Ojala

“Oh, Beatrice, look at this one!” Katherine points at a page in the Christmas toy catalog that sits open on the table between them. “This doll comes with a horse!”

“Let me see that catalog,” Simon pulls it away from his sisters.

“Hey! We were looking at it!” the girls protest in unison.

Simon,” admonishes Mom, “aren’t you getting a little old for toys?”

“Aw, Mom, but this catalog has some awesome stuff, like the PlayStation 5. Why can’t you get me a PlayStation? All my friends have them.”

“Simon, give the catalog back to the girls. We’ve discussed video games before.”

“Yeah, Simon,” says Margaret, his adult sister, from across the room. “Video games are so lame. And they rot your brain.”

“Well, not every game rots your brain,” adds Mom. “But you know, Simon, Rachel, Beatrice, Katherine, listen,” Mom continues. “This has been a tough year for so many with the pandemic – death, sickness, money hardships, personal sacrifices to keep others healthy, as you all know from your new school routines. Even so, God has blessed us in abundance, and we’ve not gone hungry. Nor have we been unhappy – although we spent less because stores were closed. It has made me wonder why we buy so many Christmas gifts. So many things break these days and end up in the landfill.”

“Do you remember when Aunt Becky travelled to Africa last year and brought soccer balls for the kids she met?” Margaret asks her siblings. “When I came into the house, I saw one of your soccer balls sitting sadly out in the yard. I couldn’t help thinking about the picture she posted of 5 happy kids receiving one soccer ball.”

“But that’s Luke’s ball in the yard. And I don’t even want a soccer ball, I just want...well if you won’t give me a PlayStation, how about a mini iPad?” Simon bargains hopefully.

“I think,” Mom says, “Margaret is reminding you of two things: first, taking care of what you have been given. Can you think of the other thing?”



“Don’t be greedy?” says Rachel.

“Don’t be selfish?” Katherine suggests.

“My Sunday school teacher says the best Christmas gift is baby Jesus,” remembers Beatrice.

Margaret smiles. “All of the above! And how about: Christmas is a time for giving, and thinking of others before yourself?”

“Lora helped us make a present for M...”

“Shhhh! Beatrice, it’s a secret!” Katherine puts her hand over Beatrice’s mouth.

“Well, I don’t have any money to give anybody anything,” says Simon sadly. “If I did, I could send a gift to those kids who are sharing the soccer ball.” A lightbulb flashes in his head. “Mom, can I have a big envelope?”

Simon brings his envelope to church the next few Sundays and Wednesdays. It seems like he doesn’t miss anyone in asking for a donation to put into the envelope to give to the Humanitarian Aid Committee for Christmas packages. Aunt Becky agrees to deliver the envelope to the right place.

“Aunt Becky?” asks Simon, “can I send a letter with this to those kids you brought soccer balls to? I have already written it out, see?” ◆



Gods Peace! My name is Simon and I am 12 years old. I want to have a penpal from your country. I am excited to celebrate christmas. My family comes over on christmas Eve and we read the chistmas Gospel and sing christmas songs. On christmas day we go to church and eat ham and go play hockey at the ice rink. How do you spend christmas? I want to come visit you when I am older. Pleise write me a letter. Merry christmas! from simon

When He Cometh

From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Martin Pylvainen

I remember reciting this part of the Creed as a young boy. I also recall that I did not understand what it meant. What did thence mean? Who were the quick?

The Second Article of the Creed speaks about Jesus. The last sentence tells how Jesus will come to earth a second time. We sing about this time in song of Zion 460, "When He Cometh." You can read or sing this song in your songbook! The song uses the words of prophet Malachi.

In an earlier phrase of the Creed, we say that

Jesus has ascended into – or gone to – heaven. When we say Jesus is coming *thence*, we mean that Jesus is coming "from there," from heaven.

He Will Gather

Malachi said, "In that day when I make up my jewels" (3:17). These words mean Jesus will come on Judgment Day to gather young children and all believers and bring them to heaven! This judgment may seem scary for those who don't believe. We hope and pray that everyone would hear God's Word and believe.

His Loved and His Own

Jesus loves His children. All those who believe their sins forgiven in childlike faith are like precious jewels to Him.

When Jesus comes, He will gather the quick, which means "living." He will also gather all those who have died in faith. Do you know someone who died in faith?

The Bible tells us that no one knows, not even the angels, when this day of Judgment will be. That is why it is important that we wait and watch, believing our sins forgiven in Jesus' name and blood.

The following is adapted from SRK's I Believe in God, written by Erkki Piri.

From thence He shall come

After Jesus rose from the dead, He was with His own for forty days. Then Jesus rose into heaven, and the angels said that He will come back one day the same way He had gone into heaven.

Jesus has also promised that He will return to earth one day to take His children home to heaven.

When the world ends, Jesus will appear in His glory. Only God knows when this will happen. When that moment comes, Jesus Christ and all His angels will descend to earth.

To judge the quick and the dead

When Jesus and His angels return, graves will open. Jesus will awaken the dead. All people will be given a new body. They will all gather before the throne of Jesus Christ. He will perform the final judgment. Jesus will send the ungodly people to perdition, which means eternal punishment. They will be separated from God forever. Jesus will call all the righteous ones – His children – into eternal life. ♦

Meet Mia from Ecuador

Jessica Ylioja



Mia Mite

PHOTOS: JESSICA YLIOJA

Mia Mite Pena is a six-year-old girl who lives with her family in Guayaquil, Ecuador. She is the youngest of four children, the only girl. She describes her family as energetic and happy. "My family loves me, and I love my family so much!" she says. She likes spending time with them.

A typical day starts when Mia wakes up, eats breakfast and gets ready for the day. Mia likes school. She hopes to be a doctor or a math teacher when she's older. After school, Mia does homework and plays. She often plays house. Each night, she looks forward to

hearing her sins forgiven and praying with her mom before she goes to bed.

Before the pandemic, services were held in Mia's home. Now services are held on video teleconference. Mia is happy to attend services online. "I love the songs," she says, "and I feel so good when my sins are forgiven!"

Mia looks forward to Christmas. She is thankful that Jesus came to earth for us. Her family decorates their tree each year. She looks forward to receiving Christmas gifts, but her favorite part of the season is spending time with her whole family. ♦



Here's Mia with her mother and her friend Jessica Ylioja.



Jess and Mia

Thankfulness

When I share my feelings, I don't need to be alone with them.

This is what I might look like when I feel thankful.



Sometimes I feel thankful when I am alone and sometimes I feel it when I am with others. Both are great.

Other words to help describe thankfulness:

- Grateful
- Thrilled
- Appreciative
- Glad

You can join in my thankfulness.

- Ask me what I'm thankful for
- Tell me what you're thankful for
- Tell me you like to see me thankful
- Hug me

What things are you thankful for?

Thank You, Lord

Shepherd's Voice Editors

Do you know what a hymnal is? It is our songbook, *Songs and Hymns of Zion*. It contains over 600 songs!

In our hymnal, there are many songs that tell of thankfulness. Can you think of songs where we sing our thanks?

In these songs, we give thanks to God for all the blessings He gives us. Do you know what blessings are? Blessings are good things that God allows to happen in our lives. The best blessing is the gift of living faith.

One song that tells of thanks is number 351. Find that song in your songbook. How many times do you see the word *Thank* or *Thanks*?

Here are things that we are thankful for in song 351. As you color these words, ponder what they mean and why we are thankful for each of these things. If you're not sure what all these things mean, you can ask your dad or mom or another adult. ♦

BLESSINGS

TEARS ESCORTS

ALL WHO SHARE
OUR LIVES

HOME FAMILY

VINEYARD WORKERS

FRIENDS JOY

LIVING SEED

HEAVEN REST

FESTIVE MOMENTS

Gum drop cookies

Rylee made this recipe from the *Christmas in the Country* cookbook published by Cokato Laestadian Lutheran Church in 2002.



When I am Bored I like to Bake. I used Gluten Free Flour so that my dad and I can eat it, My Mom made gum drop cookies when she was a kid!
Rylee Juusola

You will need:

- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup coconut
- 2 cups oats
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup gumdrops

1 Cream shortening and sugars.

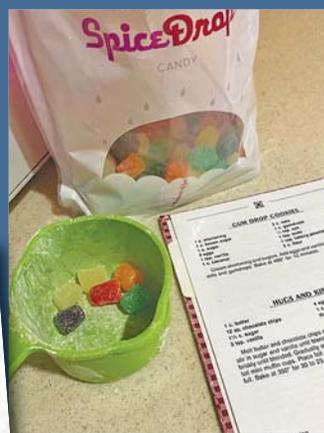
2 Add eggs and vanilla. Mix well.

3 Add remaining dry ingredients. Mix until combined.

4 Stir in gum drops.

5 Scoop dough onto pans.

6 Bake at 400° for 12 minutes. Enjoy!



PHOTOS: KARLA JUUSOLA

Rylee shares the cookies she made with her siblings Malina and Markus.

Letters from Kids



PHOTO: CHERIE BELGARDE

Hi! My name is **Lydia Belgarde**. I am 6 years old and I live in Rolla, ND. In the wintertime I like to go ice skating and sledding. At Christmas I love to help decorate the tree. I enjoy gathering and listening to online church services with my family every week. I also like that I get to do Sunday school lessons with my believing cousins.



Hello! My name is **Camree Hanson** and I am 4 years old. I like church because it is really fun, and we get to listen to God's Word.

My name is **Cael Lavallie** and I am 5 years old. I like winter because I like to play in the snow and throw snowballs. Christmas is my favorite holiday because we get to celebrate Jesus' birthday. I like when I can believe my sins forgiven because it makes me feel better inside.



PHOTO: CHRISSY LAVALLIE

Hello! My name is **Tex Hanson** and I am 2 years old. I am a happy boy and love being around my family.



Hello! My name is **Andee Hanson** and I am 7 years old. I love to celebrate Jesus' birthday. I like to go sledding in the winter. I also like sitting by the Christmas tree with my family when all the lights are off and the tree is bright.



PHOTOS: TERRI HANSON

An Evening Prayer

Johnee and Andee Hanson

Andee, Johnee, Tex and Camree Hanson by the Christmas tree.



Dear Lord,
Thank You for our family,
thank You for our faith.
Please keep us safe.

Thank You for the moon and sun,
thank You for the stars.
Thank You for our world and
everything You do for us.

We love You, Lord.
Good night, sweet dreams.



Hi! God's Peace. My name is Markie. My full name is **Markus Juusola**. I am 6 years old. I love animals and swimming. My favorite cats are named Emma the Cat and Kate the Cat. My favorite game is ring toss. We live in Charlotte, North Carolina. I like to go to the ocean and jump in the waves. I miss playing with my friends at church.

Hello! My name is **Johnee Hanson** and I am 8 years old. I like celebrating Jesus at Christmas time. I like to spend time with my cousins. I love going to the Peace Gardens for church services every year. My sister Andee loves the food there, too. I think it is fun to build snowmen during the winter. I enjoy getting to listen to church services online with my family.



PHOTO: KARLA JUUSOLA

Bible Matters



WHAT GIFTS DID THE WISEMEN BRING JESUS?

IF I REMEMBER RIGHT, THEY BROUGHT GOLD, INCENSE AND MYRRH. MYRRH WAS A TYPE OF OINTMENT. THEY WERE ALL VERY VALUABLE GIFTS IN THOSE TIMES!



I HAVE A GOLD NECKLACE.

THE CANDLE IS ALMOST LIKE INCENSE.



IT'S NOT EASY TO RIDE A CAMEL!

DOES MOM HAVE SOME MYRRH IN A TUBE SOMEWHERE?



THE STAR DOES SEEM TO BE RIGHT ABOVE BETHLEHEM.

I HAVE A FEELING WE HAVE TO GO BACK A DIFFERENT ROUTE.

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ANNE LEPPÄNEN