

Joy To The World? Newtown? Really?

An Unspeakable Tragedy Amidst Our Religious Holidays Tests Our Spirits

BY WILLIAM MCKENZIE
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Here we are, only days past Hanukkah, a week until Christmas, and the spot on the yearly religious calendar when many of us proclaim peace on earth and goodwill to man.

Yet here we are watching from afar as 20 young students and six adults from their Connecticut school are buried, all because a young man who showed signs of mental illness went berserk with a deadly weapon, killing even his own mother, the woman who gave birth to him.

Mass slayings are nearly impossible to imagine, largely because they strike a discordant tone with the rest of American life. We turn on the news and hear about murders in, say, Aurora, Colorado and still must go about our routines of work, family and community.

But the slayings in Newtown are especially jarring because they occurred amidst these annual religious celebrations. What are we to make of this contrast? This is a period where we hear about transformation of the world, yet we are waking up to this inconceivable horror.

Two weeks ago, well before most of us had even heard of Newtown, I asked panelists of the *Dallas Morning News*' Texas Faith blog whether it was really possible to heal the world. The discussion centered on an essay this month by Rabbi Michael Lerner in the journal *Tikkun*. Lerner described Hanukkah as

"the holiday celebrating the triumph of hope over fear, light over darkness, the powerless over the powerful."

Only a week later, I was asking the same panel of theologians, academics and laypeople how they would draw upon their traditions to counsel those grieving in Newtown. The empirical evidence in those classrooms would lead you to conclude that fear won out over hope last Friday, that darkness triumphed over light there. At the very least, it leaves you wondering how to reconcile the deaths of young children with religious proclamations about remarking the world.

To the credit of the Texas Faith panelists, they each counseled listening to the unfathomable grief of the families caught up in this tragedy. Be with them. Sit still. Listen quietly.

Some of us, however, will wonder, where was God? I have no answer. But my theology does teach this, God is with us amid hell, amid carnage, amid suffering.

For Christians, that is why we trek to Christmas Eve services, year after year. We go because of the Word made flesh, as John declares.

The Word-in-the-flesh is about a child for whom there was no room at the inn. But after a life of identifying with the suffering, He rose to "bring life on the other side of death, employing a power beyond human capacity."

That's how my Presbyterian minister, Joe Clifford, put it on the Texas Faith blog after the slayings. And this is how he concluded it:

Some of us, however, will wonder, where was God? I have no answer. But my theology does teach this, God is with us amid hell, amid carnage, amid suffering.



Mourners comfort each other following the funeral service for 6-year-old Noah Pozner, one of the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings, on Monday, Dec. 17, in Fairfield, Conn.

"This story informs my understanding of God's presence and our comfort in the midst of inexplicable tragedy. I can't imagine the horror those children and teachers faced in the final moments of their lives, but God can. I can't imagine the grief of those whose loved ones were taken by the mania of a madman, but God can. I can't imagine the pain of losing a child, but God can. I can't imagine new life on the other side of such tragic death,

but God can. For people of faith, that is our only comfort in life and in death."

None of that leads to an instant healing of the world. Nor does it prevent us from working for a better tomorrow, including creating a safer world for our children, as the president implored us to do Sunday. But it does lead to this conclusion: God is the one who delivers us from evil.

So, yes, these twin events can occur

simultaneously. The deaths in Newtown actually make the proclamations of hope and renewal even more important.

William McKenzie is an editorial columnist for The Dallas Morning News. Readers may write to him at the Dallas Morning News, Communications Center, Dallas, Texas 75265; email: wmckenzie@dallasnews.com.

FCSLA Feast Set For Tabor Dec. 30

TABOR — FCSLA WO93/C.W. will celebrate "The Feast of the Holy Family" potluck brunch following mass at St. Wenceslaus in Tabor on Sunday, Dec. 30.

Members, families and all parishioners are invited to potluck in Beseda Hall. Just bring a dish to share. WO93 will furnish coffee and juice.

Charities

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- the St. Benedict Parish Poverty Relief Fund — \$2,500;
- the Human Services Center Patient Benefit Fund — \$2,500;
- the Human Services Center Clothing Closet — \$2,500;
- the Cedar Village Assisted Living haircut fund — \$1,000;
- the Yankton County Contact Center

Food Pantry — \$5,000;
• Southeast CASA — \$2,000; and
• the Yankton Sack Pack Program — \$2,000.

Representatives of most of the organizations were on hand for the check presentation.

Ric Compton, administrator of the Human Services Center, spoke on behalf of the patient benefit fund and expressed his gratitude.

"This money goes toward our patient benefit fund, which helps provide much-needed services," he said. "Many patients come into the Human Services Center

with nothing. We provide clothing, food and some means to get home or see a loved one."

The money for the Cedar Village Assisted Living haircut fund will help residents attend to their grooming needs. The facility houses those with severe, persistent mental illness.

"This community is so supportive of people who are challenged with a major mental illness," stated Betty Viau, the nurse manager at Cedar Village. "The residents truly do appreciate everything that Yankton has done for them and love to be out in the community."

McCaffrey, who moved to Yankton from Michigan about a month ago to work in the development office, said he is impressed with the parishes.

"It shows the dedication and support of the Catholic community in Yankton," he said of Thursday's donations. "We're mindful of the fact that as stewards we are not only responsible for taking care of our own plans but also helping the poor."

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage

CHURCH SCHEDULES

| Abundant Life | Baptist | Catholic | Church of Jesus Christ | Lutheran | Non-Denominational | United Methodist | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| ABUNDANT LIFE MINISTRIES , Pastors Butch and Barbara Hladky, 517 Burleigh, Yankton. 665-0889. Open for prayer daily. FRI Shabbat Service 6pm Youth Service 7pm. SUN. 10am Worship. | CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH , SUNDAY: 9:00 Sunday School for all ages, 10:30 Worship Service. MONDAY: Service broadcast 7:30pm Channels 3 & 98. WEDNESDAY 6:30pm AWANA, 7-8th Grade Youth Group: 7:00pm 9-12th Youth Group, Adult Bible Study. Pastor Jon Cooke, Associate Pastor Rick Slattery, Youth Pastor Jeremy Nelson. www.cbchurch.com 2407 Broadway, (605)665-5594. | ST. BONIFACE CHURCH , rural Freeman/Idylwilde. December WEEKEND Mass Sundays @ 9am. Christmas Eve Mass Dec. 24th @ 5pm. New Years Day January 1st @ 4:30pm. | CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST LATTER-DAY SAINTS , 2300 Douglas, Yankton. Michael Maxwell (402)586-2645 Family History Ctr 665-0901. SUN. 10am Sacrament meeting. | Martinus Lutheran Church , Ulica. Pastor Dean Schroeder Sunday Divine Service 10:30am (605)589-3195 www.MartinusLutheran.org | FAITH ALIVE , 501 Cedar St., Yankton. 665-4797. Contemporary Worship & Family Values. SUN: 10am service. WED. 7pm Care-Cells "Small Groups For Building Relationships" Various Locations. | FIRST UNITED METHODIST , Yankton. Rev. Ron Johnson Pastor. 665-2991. Sunday, Contemporary Worship 9:00; Trad. 10:30. Childcare 8:45-11:45. 8:30 AM Hour, KYNT. | |
| Alliance of Renewal Churches | YANKTON BAPTIST CHURCH , SBC, Pastor Matt Green, 607 East 15th St., Yankton, 665-7587. SUN. 9:30am Bible study, SS; 10:45am Worship. WED. 7pm Midweek service. | ST. COLUMBIA CHURCH , rural Irene/Mayfield. December WEEKEND Mass Time, Sundays @ 10:30 am. Christmas Eve Mass: Dec. 24 @ 7pm New Years Day Jan. 1st 6:15pm | CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH , 517 Douglas, Yankton. Rev. James Pearson, (605)665-2456. December 16 9:00am Serenity 10:15 Holy Eucharist and Children's Pageant with a visit by St. Nick. December 23 9:00 am Serenity 10:15 Holy Eucharist and Sunday School. December 24 5:00pm Candlelight Holy Eucharist 11:00 pm Candlelight Holy Eucharist. December 25 enjoy Christmas Day with your loved ones. | OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN , rural Irene. 263-3724. SUN. 9am Worship. | GLORY CHRISTIAN CENTER , 901 E 11th St. Yankton. Gail Ryken, pastor, 665-2369. SUN. 10am Service. WED. 6pm Prayer. GC School, call (605)665-1988. | GAYVILLE-VOLIN UNITED METHODODIST , Rick Pittenger, pastor. 624-2179. 9am Worship Service. 10:00am Sunday School. | |
| Assembly of God | GRACE BIBLE CHURCH , 10:30 am Sundays Call Pastor Joel Finck for more information. (605)760-4701. | ST. GEORGE CHURCH , Scotland, SD. December WEEKEND Mass Saturdays @ 5pm. Christmas Eve Mass Dec. 24th @ 8pm. Christmas Day Dec. 25th @ 9:30am. New Years Day January 1st @ 5pm. | Evangelical | OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN , LCMC/NALC, Menno. Pastor Theresa Jacobson Office 605-387-5241 Worship 9am, Brunch, SS 10:20am. | PEACE PRESBYTERIAN (PC/USA) , 206 E. 31st. 665-0448. Rev. Dr. Nelson Stone & Rev. Marilyn Stone. Sun-10am worship, Coffee to follow. SS for kids 10:30am. Aired at 8pm Fri. on Ch. 3 & 98. | KYNT 1450 AM Radio | |
| Baptist | HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Sacred Heart), Wynton, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen. (402)357-2400. Mass times, Sundays 11am. | ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC , Lesterville. SUN. 10:30am Mass. Father Daniel Moris. | Cornerstone Evangelical Church , Pastor Oliver Omanson, Stewart Elementary School; Morning Service 10 a.m. Wednesday College Bible Study 1306 Maple Street. Mike Stevens 665-8750. | OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN , LCMC, 12th and Elm, Springfield. Rev. Kenneth Johnson, pastor. SUN. 8am Worship. 9am SS. THUR. 7pm Adult Bible study. | Presbyterian | RIVERVIEW REFORMED , 17th St. & Burleigh, Rev. Rodney Veldhuizen, pastor. 665-9204. SUN. 9:30am Worship, 10:15am SS. WED. Youth group & adult choir. | WNAX 570 AM Radio |
| ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH , 100 E. 6th St, Kevin Caskey, pastor, 665-0066. SUN. 9:30am Sunday School, 10:45pm Preaching Service, 4pm Afternoon Service. THU. 7pm Preaching & Prayer Service. | HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Sts. Peter & Paul), Bow Valley, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen (402)357-2400. Mass: Saturdays 5pm | ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC , Fordyce, Neb. Rev. David Fulton. SUN. 10:30am Mass. | EMMANUEL CHURCH Contact Pastor Dan (605)760-2052. YMS, 2000 Mulberry, Worship Service, Sunday 9:30am www.emmanuel-yankton.com (605)665-0404. | South Dakota Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, MAIN STREET LIVING television program, 10a.m. (CST) on KDLT-NBC; and 11a.m. (CST) on KAUN-PAX; and 10a.m. (MST) on KKRA-PAX. | Reformed | MIX 106 FM Radio | |
| BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH , 303 Ohio St., Wakonda. Mike Lindsay, pastor, (605)759-5020. SUNDAY Worship. 11:00a.m. evening 6:00pm WEDNESDAY Bible Study 12Noon. | HOLY FAMILY CHURCH OF CEDAR COUNTY (Immaculate Conception), St. Helena, NE. Rev. Eric Olsen. (402)357-2400. Mass: Sundays 9am | ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC , Wakonda, Rev. Scott Trayner, 624-2697. SUN. 8:30am Mass. | Lutheran | St. John Lutheran Church , Tyndall. Pastor Dean Schroeder. Sunday Divine Service: 8:30am (605)589-3195. www.StJohnsTyndallCMS.org | Seventh-Day | CLASSIC HITS 106 KVHT FM Radio SUN.-THUR. 10:05PM "Family Radio Rosary" with Bishop Robert Carlson. | |
| HARVEST INDEPENDENT BAPTIST , 100 W. 3rd, Mission Hill. Pastor Nathan Martin, 668-0708 (ch.) 665-1481 (home). SUN. 9:30am SS. 10:30am Worship. 5:30pm Worship. WED. 7:00pm Worship. | SACRED HEART , 509 Capital, Yankton, Rev. Mark Lichter pastor. 665-3655 (office). SAT. 4:30pm Mass. SUN. 8am, 9:30am, 11am Mass. THUR. 12:30pm, 2:30pm and 7:30pm Confessions. | ST. ROSE OF LIMA , Crofton, Neb. Fr. Michael Schmitz. SAT. Mass: 8:00am & 5:30pm. SUN. Mass: 8:30am. WED/FRI Masses: 8:15am. Confessions: WED. 11am-11:30am, SAT. 5-5:20pm. | CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH NALC : 305 W. 25th, Yankton, 665-8848. Rev. Dani Jo Ninke. SUN: 8:30am & 10:45 Worship, 9:45 Sunday School. | St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS) , 1009 Jackson. David Gunderson, Pastor. SUN. 8am Worship, 9:15am Education Hour, 10:30am Worship. | United Church | ESPAN Radio 1570 | |
| Call Classifieds 665-7811 | ST. AGNES PARISH: SIGEL , rural Ulica. SAT. 4pm Mass, confessions 1/2 hour before Mass. Father Daniel Moris. | THE HOUSE OF MARY SHRINE , 6-mi. W. Yankton, Hwy.52. Masses: Monday 8:30 through October. Masses Saturday 9:00 every Saturday. Rosary Sunday 4:00. Rosary 4:00. Open 7 days a week for prayer. thehouseofmaryshrine.org | FAITH UNITED LUTHERAN , 44874 303rd St., Volin SD 57072, (605)267-2277. SUN. Worship Services 9:30am. Children's Education WED. Evening (WOW) 6:30-7:30pm. | TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH , 403 Broadway, Yankton, 665-7415. Worship: Saturday-5:30, Sunday-8:15/10:45 a.m.; SS, classes, Coffee fellowship-9:30a.m. | CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST , Newcastle, Neb., 303 Highway 12, Rev. Gary Kimm, pastor. SAT. 6PM Church school, 7PM Worship. Second THUR. 2PM Ladies Aid. | ESPAN Radio 1570 SUN. 10:30AM Trinity Lutheran Church, Vermillion, worship. | |
| Harry Lane Electrical Contractor 1600 E. 39th St., Yankton *Commercial *Residential *Farm Wiring *Prompt Service *Quality Work *Competitive Prices New Construction or Remodeling Home: 665-6612 * Mobile: 661-1040 | ST. ANDREW'S CATHOLIC CHURCH , Bloomfield. NE. Fr. Michael Schmitz SUN. Mass: 10:30am; TUE. Mass: 8am; THUR. Mass: 7pm. Confessions: THUR. 6:30-6:55pm. | Christian | FIRST AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, AFLC 300 S. Carpenter St., Tripp. (605)935-6941 9:30am Sunday School; SUN. 10:45 Worship firsthope@santel.net | TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH , Hartington/Crofton, NE, Amanda Jertson pastor; (402)254-6606. SUN. 9am Worship (Hartington), 10am SS (Hartington), 11am Worship (Crofton). | United Church of Christ | Call Classifieds 665-7811 | |
| Stevens Construction, Inc. (402) 388-2477 Crofton, NE | ST. BENEDICT CATHOLIC CHURCH , 1500 St. Benedict Drive, Yankton, Father Ken Lulf, 664-6214 (church). Masses: SAT. 5pm. SUN. 8:30am & 10:30am. | Church of Christ | GAYVILLE-BERGEN LUTHERAN Pastor Ralph Egbert. (605)267-4342 (church) Church: 9:00am-GLC Worship, 10:15-SS, 9:15am-BLC SS, 10:30am-BLC Worship. | TRONDHJEM LUTHERAN CHURCH (AFLC) , rural Volin. 263-3841. SUN. 9:15am; 10:30am Worship. | United Church of Christ | Read & Recycle! | |
| WINTZ & RAY FUNERAL HOME and Cremation Service, Inc. Garden of Memories Cemetery 2901 Douglas • Yankton • 605-665-3649 | ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH , Menominee, Neb., Rev. David Fulton, pastor. SUN. 8:30am Mass. | HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH , AFLC 200 South Wilson, Delmont. (605)935-6941. SUN 9am Worship. 10am Sunday school. firsthope@santel.net | VANGEN LUTHERAN CHURCH , Mission Hill. 665-5426. Worship 9:30am. | TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH , Hartington/Crofton, NE, Amanda Jertson pastor; (402)254-6606. SUN. 9am Worship (Hartington), 10am SS (Hartington), 11am Fellowship, 11:05am Church School. | United Church of Christ | Koranda Well Company, LLC Well Drilling & Repair Pure Water Distillers 605-463-2244 42719 307th St., Tabor | |
| LEADER CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION INC. Basements • Bunkers • Manure Pits Residential & Commercial Call Larry Leader Yankton • 665-2717 | Larry's Plumbing Service 703 Burleigh St. 665-4322 | YANKTON DAILY PRESS&DAKOTAN Yankton Printing Company 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD • 665-7811 | TOPKOTE, INC. Asphalt Maintenance 43439 SD Hwy 50 • Yankton (605) 665-8106 | Commercial & Residential HEATING KAISER COOLING Call Doug or Chris (605) 665-2895 | | | |