

mm Christmas Blue Sheet Advent Season 3 — 2015

ADVENT SEASON SCENES



Winter Solstice 2015 Rainswept Field



Repertory Singers Christmas Concert
With Newport Orchestra



At our Front door...and Inside Too

Christmas Baby Henry with Dad Pete
And Humble Great-Grandparents



And...This Year's *Christmas Baby..is....*
Henry!

(with Mother Lauren)

Well, That IS A Baby!

I doubt that many on my list will know who John Paul Pack was. He was my pastor and mentor who helped marry us, was my first church employer, and the one who ordained me. Ours was a big church at the time with well over 1,000 members.

It was the time of the post-WWII baby boom so we had lots of babies. Of course everyone wanted to show off their precious ones. It was hard to say something special about each one. John Paul always beamed at the baby and said to the parents, *“Well, that IS a baby!”* The parents always beamed back.

I think he beamed at each of our three in due time.

There seem to be a lot of babies recently. Maybe I just notice more because our lives are lasting into the great-grandparent age where we are once again amazed by fresh appearances of wondrous little ones.

When I skim through Facebook posts I can't help but look at baby pictures. Darn cute kids are being born these days. We are lucky to have good samples in our family.

At Christmas time I think of all the babies who have been “baby Jesus” over the 55 plus years we did such services. For most of those years we had impromptu pageants where we called forth the characters of the “story” out of the crowd. We had someone's baby every year. Our daughter, Linda, chose the baby almost at the last minute for many of those years. Sometimes she couldn't choose just one, so we had two and, at least one time, three!

You may have noted a few sentences back the quotes around “story.” Like most people do, we combined the only two birth stories, one from Matthew, the other from Luke. We are aware of scholarship on these texts.

This is a “story” that didn't happen exactly like this, but that's OK. No matter. At Christmas people focus on the baby. When that mother and baby would come down the darkened aisle to be seated at the manger-side, all eyes, little children to old grandparents, were focused on the baby.

I stood in the hall as people poured out of the crowded building into the dark. I saw smiles and I saw tears. I saw wonder and I saw joy. I wonder whether Luke had that in mind when he wrote that story.

Anyway, I'm an old dude these days. I don't do those Christmas Eve services in the Deli and Pub anymore. I don't have to worry about whether a Christmas baby will show up. I don't have to worry about whether all those candles will burn safely.

But I do miss the wonder of the special moment when we sing *“How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the wonders of his heaven...”* The mother enters carrying the Christmas baby of that day. Everyone present is looking at the baby. Every birth is a miracle and a wonder. Every child is stardust born from the heavens ages ago. Every child has potential beyond knowing. I look in wonder. What can one say?

“Well, that IS a baby!”

— Art Morgan, Christmas 2015