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With Advent now upon us and the busyness of the season in full swing, I am finding it even easier to get caught up in the temporal activities of life thereby ignoring the real reason for the season. I trust I am not alone in this seasonal lack of focus. Please tell me I’m not alone!

We have a few family gatherings coming up. Gifts are yet to be purchased for about half of those to whom we give. We are planning to go to a Light Parade. I suppose we should figure out exactly how to get there before we are in route. We would like to go to the Lite Show at Fifth Third Ballpark. We’ve always talked of going but have yet to make it there. There is also the North Pole Express Train experience in Ashley. One of my best friends lives there and invites us every year. Still haven’t made it there, either. Then we’ve got our own tree to get and put up, other decorating inside and out, gifts to purchase and wrap, lots of treats to make, bake, and deliver, and of course, Kristal, our elf on a shelf, returned this year. It is so easy to get caught up in all of the hubbub.

We do make efforts to realize the true meaning, though. Our kids participated in a Christmas program with our friends who are pastors at a church in Blanchard. We blessed our Advent wreath and are currently using it at each meal time. We will be putting up my Nativity scene collection this week. I am directing our parish Christmas Program again and, of course, the girls will be in that. We are really hoping to get to the live Nativity Event at Shiloh Community Church in Fenwick and the Nativity Walk at Rock Lake Bible Methodist Campground. Those types of events always help get me in the right frame of mind.

I hope that you, too, will enjoy all the festivities available during this season. I pray that you and your family will do your best to remember that we are really celebrating the nativity of Jesus. He was a small, fully human child yet also fully divine God. His human experience from humble beginning to horrific end is the climactic event in our salvation history. May we all hold it dear to our hearts as He has held us to His own.

Have a Blessed Advent,

 Julie Gould

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This Week:

* Sunday, Dec. 9, 4-6 pm at Fellowship Hall: **Faith Formation classes** for the whole family.
* Monday, Dec. 10, 7-8:30 pm at St. Francis de Sales, Lakeview: **Adult Enrichment class**
* Wednesday, Dec. 12, 5:30- 7 pm at Fellowship Hall: **A Family of Faith Potluck and Follow-Up Mtg** Please bring a dish to pass and your FOF books if you have them. All are welcome!
* **Plan ahead!!!** Next Sunday, Dec. 16, 4-6 pm at Fellowship Hall: **GIFT Faith Formation class**. Join us as we decorate cookies and assemble blessing bags for the less fortunate. We could use as many hands as possible! Can’t make it? Bring your donations of new socks and gloves, personal care items, individually wrapped, shelf stable food items, and/or cash to purchase these things to church. Gallon sized Ziplocs would be appreciated, too. Collection boxes will be in the back of each church for these donations. Thank you for your generosity!