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Rev. Joseph and Deaconess Dr. Jennie Asher

## 19 in '19

We give thanks for our many supporters who make it possible for us to do this work. Through your partnership, we continue to bring the Gospel to the members of our armed forces and their families.

As 2019 has begun, we need more supporters. We would like to encourage those readers who are not currently supporting us regularly to consider giving just \$19.00 per month (or more) in 2019. By using the form online at [www.lcms.org/asher](http://www.lcms.org/asher), you can even set up regular withdrawals, so that you don't have to remember a thing (except to pray for us!). If you have questions, feel free to contact us or our friends at the LCMS (888-THE-LCMS) or Mission Central (712-882-1029).



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## The Word Made Flesh

As in most congregations, December brought a flurry of activity to Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC). This included some first-time events for this young congregation.

We prepared for the celebration of our Lord's birth with Advent services. These were held in members' homes with a light soup supper preceding them. Average attendance was 12 people. We also prepared by proclaiming the Good News of Christ's birth in music. We formed a choir and rehearsed each week in November and December. We then sang at the Kaiserslautern Christmas market on two consecutive Sunday afternoons. We even sang two songs with verses in German!

Our celebration began on December 22 with our now "annual" birthday party for Jesus. The children enjoyed playing "Pin the Baby in the Manger" and "Bible Bingo." They also tried their skills at games like a ring toss and bean-bag toss. Crafts, cake and a lesson from Joe on the greatest gift at Christmas rounded out the morning.

On Christmas Eve, the children again proclaimed the Good News by sharing both prophecies and the Luke account of Christ's birth. They also shared two songs and,

for the first time, many enhanced the service with instrumental offerings. All felt like they were at home, even though we're an ocean away, as we sang "Silent Night" (with a verse in German, of course!) by candlelight.

A first for the youth was this year's youth Christmas party. This included games, "white elephant" gifts and, of course, pizza.

Our celebration concluded with a first-ever Christmas morning worship service. What a joy it was to welcome again our newborn King!



One of the children prepares to "Pin the Baby in the Manger" while one of the youth assists.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Jennie's job application process, that she would find a new position soon.
- That Joe would be granted access to the day room at the prison.
- Our new youth group – that the youth will deepen their faith through fellowship and study.
- The Vicar's continued pastoral development.

## GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Gate access that has been granted to us for the local U.S. Air Force bases.
- Being granted new two-year German visas.
- Healing and relief for Jennie's foot pain.

## PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us.

## IN WITH THE Old... and OUT with the New!

Hmmm. Wait a minute. I think I said that wrong. Or did I?

We tend to always want the new and improved. The latest model. The items with all the advanced bells and whistles. But is this always better for us?

I remember family time around the supper table and church fellowship events where people actually **talked** to each other. Today, we have to have "electronics free zones" where rules have to be put in place so that a table full of people's complete attention isn't sucked into their cell phones. And when earbuds (head phones for the over 50 crowd!) block out all sound, and when our visual attention is riveted into the mobile phone screen, virtual reality trumps the people we are with just about every time.

What's a pastor to do?

Here at KELC, our youth know that if the cell phone becomes too important during Sunday School and fellowship events, the device may be confiscated. Why? Because it is hard to love your brothers and sisters in Christ when a person's attention is focused on the apps that make the cell phone work.

When you *really* love someone, it means that you will engage in their lives and care about the positive and negative things they are facing. It is hard to make the case that you *really* care about the people you are with if your focus is on your phone rather than the living, breathing human being across the table from you.

So, IN WITH THE OLD... and OUT with the New! For Romans 12:10 (NIV) says, "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves." And we can do this in the Holy Spirit's power! But it may mean that we will need to put those electronics away!

*We thank you for your prayers and financial support. It is an encouragement to us as we serve the Lord in this place. It is through the generous gifts of friends like you that we can continue to serve military families living abroad.*

*God bless you!*

*Joe and Jennie Asher*



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at [lcms.org/service](http://lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."

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