Kin Ministry

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 23, 2018

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

> ***THOUGHT: A Christmas candle is a lovely thing. It makes no noise at all, but softly gives itself away.*** —Eva Logue

A little more than a year ago, my wife and I spotted a small advertisement about nativity scenes. The website offered nativity figures hand-carved by a Chinese woodcarver. The pieces included animals, Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. The customer could choose how many pieces he or she wanted, and the price went up accordingly.

We wanted them all! So we made the order and in due time the package arrived.

The order included a stable that could be pieced together. After assembling the stable, we unwrapped the individually hand-carved pieces and placed them in the scene itself. The pieces were beautiful. We were quite happy with the craftsmanship and the uniqueness of the display.

Then we noticed something odd.

We could not find a baby Jesus.

We wrote to the woodcarver about this. The website said that baby Jesus was included.

He replied that he had discontinued the baby Jesus because customers invariably lost the little baby woodcarving.

I asked him if he would carve a baby Jesus for us. He said yes, but that he could not get it to us in time for Christmas, but that I would have it about February. I said that was fine.

Today, baby Jesus is in our nativity scene.

Is he in yours?

What I am asking is whether there is room for Jesus in your life right now?

Our nativity scene looked normal. But close inspection revealed that there was no Jesus. I thought about this and wondered if close inspection of my life would reveal that Jesus could scarcely be found. Perhaps, he could be found in a small, neglected corner of my life.

When I asked the woodcarver to make a baby Jesus for us, I resolved to make sure that Jesus would never go missing from my life!

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for leaving your home in glory to come to earth in human form. May I always have room for you in my life. In your name. Amen.