

“For You”

Luke 2:1-21

Westside Fellowship CRC; 7 January 2018

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Luke 2 is, in some ways a birth announcement. Birth announcements used to be sent in the mail, but more and more, now, we read birth announcements on social media. Here are some Westside babies’ birth announcements...



Kayley Karremans



Gemma Ryan



Hailey Kiesltra



Landon Shaver

One of the first things we want to know after a baby is born is what name the parents have given it... Sometimes it takes a while to land on a name... And sometimes babies are named the most interesting things... strangest names of 2017:

https://www.babycenter.com/0_unusual-and-surprising-baby-names_10388919.bc

A few parents made bold power plays for their babies,



Choosing **Pharaoh**, **Emperor**, **Dynasty**, and **Queenie**,



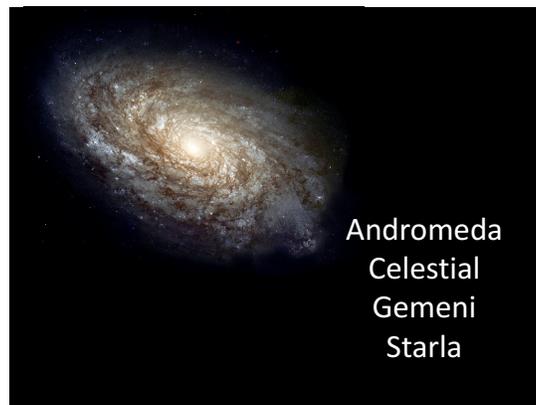
Foodies added some flavor (**Ginger**, **Saffron**, **Miso**),



Harry Potter fans paid homage (**Severus**, **Albus**, **Minerva**),



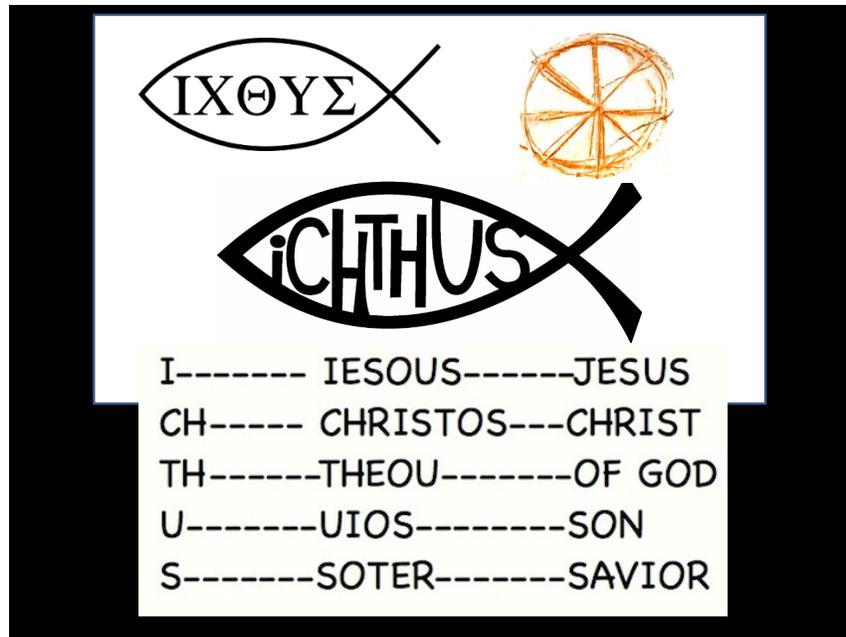
There were virtues and values to strive for ([Freedom](#), [Truth](#), [Wisdom](#)),



And some cosmic names ([Andromeda](#), [Celestial](#), [Gemini](#), [Starla](#)).

Now, interestingly, there are lots of names in the text we read... Some of us have Grade 1 students who had to memorize Luke 2:1-7... Caesar Augustus, Quirinius, Syria, Joseph, Nazareth, Galilee, Judea, Bethlehem, David, Mary... All proper names – situating this story in time and space – the name of the child doesn't surface until verse 21: "On the eighth day when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus."

Of course, before we read his name, we knew his name. Gabriel told Mary before he was conceived. There *are*, however, several *titles* given to this baby in this text... One way to show many of Jesus' names in one go is to use the Greek acronym, ICHTHUS (*ichthys* is the Greek word for 'fish').



So one of the first questions we ask is, what is the baby's name... And then, one of the next questions we ask... How much did he weigh? Obviously, we don't know how much Jesus weighed, but in one sense, this tiny baby Jesus was the heaviest being in the universe. John 1:14 – "The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us and we have seen his GLORY – the glory of the one and only son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." One of the meanings of the word GLORY, as you will remember if you were here on Christmas Eve, is heaviness.. The Greek word for glory, *doxa*, means 'the **heaviness of God's self-manifestation.**' Wherever God manifests God's self, the place shines with God's weighty character. This little baby – with skin as soft as air and who was small enough to fit in the palm of his Daddy's hand... was GLORIOUS... which means that in some ways, he was heavier than the whole universe.

There is something gloriously weighty about children, as light as they are. After church several weeks ago, I was in the Little Lambs room with Sarah Walker and Elsie-Mae. We were talking about the baptism of the daughter of a mutual friend that they had attended at the other CRC in Kingston a couple of weeks before... which led to us talking about E-M's baptism. "You don't remember it, because you were a little baby, but I got to baptize you, Elsie-Mae!" But we have a picture of it, don't we? said Sarah. And then Elsie-Mae burst into the story from the top of the plastic play structure, "Oh, yes! I know all about it! It was when you put water on my head and invited me into the church! It was GLORIOUS!" She slid down the slide and started

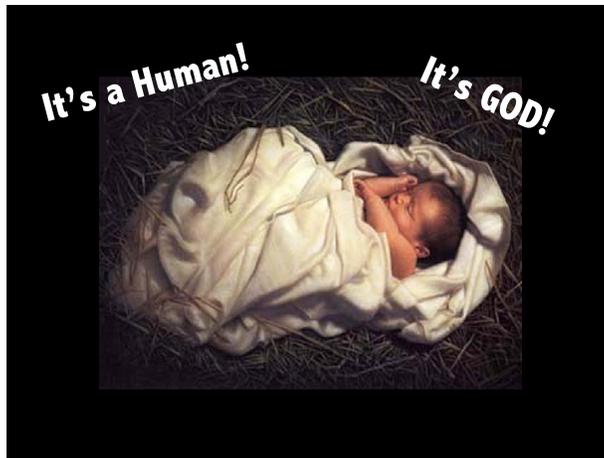
dancing around the room adding adjectives all along the way, "It was STUPENDOUS!" Light and heavy at the same time...

What's the baby's name? How much does the baby weigh? But, I skipped over a question. Really the *first* question we ask, if we didn't already know the answer, is "Is it a boy or a girl?!" Right? And I get that. Our sex as male or female does tend to be a thing that defines us pretty significantly throughout life. In some contexts, that designation – of boy or girl – might carry with it serious ramifications for their future. We all know places where the birth of a girl is not the cause for celebration that the birth of a boy causes. We have all heard of countries where female babies are aborted at a much higher rate than males... In 2012, a documentary came out called, "It's a girl: the three deadliest words in the world." And even for us – the boyiness or girliness of a baby – well, we put boys in certain boxes in our heads, and girls in certain other boxes in our heads that may or not be helpful in helping us to understand the person.

Part of the idea of this message came from a colleague who mentioned that they thought they were going to do an advent series with the theme, "It's a boy!"



I don't think they actually ended up doing that, and I remember not having the best internal reaction to that series title... Because, you see, yes, Jesus was a boy, but the most important thing was not that Jesus was a boy... but that Jesus was *human*. And that Jesus was *God*!



One of the theological heavy-weight words that we use in the church is 'atonement'. Atonement has many meanings and there are many ways to talk about it – but by and large it has to do with us and our relationship with God becoming restored and whole. At-One-Ment. Usually, we talk about this happening on the cross... But this atonement is rooted in the incarnation of God – in God becoming a human.

Q. 33. What does it mean that he
"was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary"?

A. That the eternal Son of God,
who is and remains
true and eternal God,
took to himself,
through the working of the Holy Spirit,
from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,
a truly human nature
so that he might also become David's true descendant,
like his brothers and sisters in every way
except for sin.

Scot McKnight: "In the incarnation, God identifies with humans—all humans in all the dimensions of human life—to bring humans grace. He becomes what we are so we can become what he is" (*A Community Called Atonement*, p. 56).

He becomes what we are... and now we come to the title of this message... to the thing that the birth announcement of Jesus that no other birth announcement has... This birth announcement of Luke 2 has Jesus' name, the weight of his glory, and the situation of the time

and place of his arrival. But when the angels announced Jesus' birth, they included two little words – one word in the Greek – that make all the difference. "Today in the town of David, A Saviour has been born TO YOU." This is not what we say when a couple has a baby. Gemma was born to Hilary and Tyler, but Gemma wasn't born to us. Jesus was born to you – and to me! This word, of course, follows on the broad words of Jesus' relevance... "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." This good news was as narrow as that tiny group of shepherds and as broad as all the peoples of all the world.

(video of the sheep and Mary fighting over the Baby Jesus.)

<https://www.facebook.com/newschannel5/videos/10155132402157548/>

Sometimes it's hard to share Jesus... Sometimes those of us gathered closest around the nativity have the hardest time sharing Jesus with each other, let alone sharing Jesus with those who are in some ways far off...

But... Jesus came for you – and for me – and for all the peoples. Not just to Mary and Joseph... not just to the people of First Century Palestine... not just to the Jews... but also to us... and not just to us... but to all peoples.

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed

Behold, a virgin shall conceive
And bear a son
And shall call his name, Emmanuel
God, with us

For unto us, a child is born
Unto us, a son, is given
And his name, shall be called Wonderful
Counselor
The Mighty God
The Prince, of Peace

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them
Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy
For unto you

Is born this day, in the city of David
A savior
A savior
A savior, which is Christ the Lord

Jesus Christ
God's only begotten son
The only one who could save us
From our sins, from our sadness

He was born
So we can be born again
If we love Him
Remember Him
Follow Him

Rejoice!
Rejoice!
Rejoice greatly!
For unto you
And unto me
And unto all of us

A Savior is born