

# Reflection: Checked Boxes Are Not Enough

By Sarah Dixon Young

I'm a box checker. I love the feeling of checking to-dos off at the end of a busy day. It gives me a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. But, what if, for Valentine's Day, I simplified my relationship with my husband down to a list of checked boxes? Wash his clothes? Check. Cook his supper. Check. Talk to him for 30 minutes. Check. Make sure there are eggs for his breakfast. Check. I could write out the list and present it to him for Valentine's Day and then dust my hands off, go about my own agenda, and call



it good. If all the items on the list are checked off, isn't that enough? No one wants a relationship like that! A relationship based on checked boxes is wooden, robotic, manufactured, and hollow. It is one which is

doomed to fail. A real relationship, grounded in self-sacrificing love, forgiveness, humility, and steadfastness, lasts. Believers often make the mistake of thinking that Jesus only asks us to check all the boxes: Have a quiet time. Check. Go to church. Check. Give to missions. Check. Visit the sick or elderly. Check. Don't do bad stuff. Check. Then, we dust off our hands and go about our own agenda and life as if we've finished the list and there's nothing more to it. But Jesus never asked me to check all the boxes. He asked me to come, deny myself, take up my cross, follow Him, love Him

with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, abide in Him, and let Him live through me. Those are things you can't just cross off a list. They rely on relationship. A friend of mine shared that her daughter had been asking about being a follower of Jesus. "Do I have to like His posts?" the seven year old wanted to know. Her mother and I chuckled over the confusion, but what does it mean to follow Jesus? I puzzled about the answer long after my friend and her daughter had gone home. When Jesus said, "Follow Me," to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, He wasn't

inviting them to check a list of to-do boxes. He was inviting them to walk with Him, eat with Him, live with Him, stay with Him, minister with Him, know Him, and learn from Him. Every aspect of their lives would be changed because of the relationship they would have with Him. And to Jesus, we are not just lists to be checked either. He always lives to make intercession for us. He loved us while we were still His enemies. He is always with us, even to the end of the age. He offers us the gifts of His steadfast love, forgiveness, and eternal life. That's the sort of relationship that lasts, and He's

inviting you to come, get to know Him, grow closer to Him, and be fulfilled by Him- not some empty list of check marks that will just go in the trash at the end of the day. Won't you be His valentine? Sarah Dixon Young uses stories everyday to share the love of Jesus with her family, friends, and neighbors. She lives in Fort Totten, ND with her husband, Paul, and their four children. She is the author of five books, many articles and more Sunday School lessons than she can count. You can follow her adventures or get in touch at [www.SarahDixonYoung.com](http://www.SarahDixonYoung.com)

# Reflection: The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

“Jesus, the Light of the World!”

by Deacon Jeffrey Vaagen, St. Joseph Catholic Church

The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord, celebrated each year on February 2, often slips by us.\* Also celebrated this day in the secular world is Groundhog's Day! Like so much in our faith, there is more there than we might at first recognize. This feast

recalls Mary and Joseph presenting the infant Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem. As prescribed by Jewish law, what we celebrate on this day, is also the completion of the time of 'purification' of the mother of our Lord, 40 days after giving birth to Jesus at Christmas. Jewish law also called for the consecration of the firstborn male to God, a practice rooted in com-

memorating the Passover, the liberation of the Jewish people from Egypt when God spared the firstborn of Israel. This presentation in the Temple is a moment marked by humility, obedience, and the fulfillment of a divine promise. It is a moment of prophetic mystery as we hear Simeon who recognized the infant Jesus as the Messiah and the Light of World, offer his prayer to God in the presence of Mary and Joseph:

*“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” Luke 2:29-32* Bringing Jesus to the Temple was a simple act, yet it has profound meaning. Mary and Joseph were

obedient to God's law, even with Mary's unique holiness as the Mother of God and Jesus' divinity. Their willingness to submit to the law of Moses demonstrates how even they lived out their faith in humble, ordinary ways. In a small way this is similar for us. We too follow the Church's teachings by presenting our children for their sacraments, offering them to God, trusting in His grace, and doing our best to raise them in faith. We can rec-

ognize in this Feast of the Presentation a beautiful reminder that our children ultimately belong to God. Each of us too, through our own vocation, are called to participate in the life of the Church and in the celebration of the holy days. We all have a story to live out as individuals but also as a Church. The Church's liturgical calendar and the feast days offer us a path to order our lives. See REFLECTION | 5

# CHURCH DIRECTORY

## Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

<b>ASSEMBLY OF GOD</b> River of Life 1903 Hwy 20 Devils Lake 701-662-4582 <a href="http://www.riverlife.us">www.riverlife.us</a> Sunday: 10 a.m. worship	<b>CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS</b> 20th St. & Lincoln Ave. Devils Lake Sunday: 10 a.m. Sacrament at 11 a.m.	<b>LIGHTHOUSE ASSEMBLY OF GOD</b> Fort Totten, N.D. 701-766-4826 Sunday 10:30 a.m.	<b>ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> 515 Fourth St. Devils Lake 662-7558 Monday -Friday at 12:00pm Tuesday at 10:00am at Odd Fellows Wednesday at 10:00am at Eventide Friday at 9:30am at St. Joseph School Saturday at 8:30am & 5:00pm Sunday at 7:30am, 9:00am & 11:00am	<b>ST. WILLIAMS CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Maddock, N.D. 438-2668 Wednesday: 7 p.m. Mass. Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Mass. Mass at 5 p.m. on the first Friday of the month.
<b>ASSUMPTION OF MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Starkweather, N.D. 292-4301 Sunday: Mass: Rotating 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. with St. Mary's, Munich Call 682-5178 (Munich).	<b>DAKOTA BAPTIST CHURCH</b> West Highway 57 Fort Totten Church - 766-4516 Sunday: 11 a.m. worship.	<b>MORNING STAR PARISH</b> 701-262-4714 <a href="http://www.morningstarparish.com">www.morningstarparish.com</a> Worship services at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. rotating: American, Pekin, Warwick, Sigdal and Sheyenne Lutheran	<b>ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> St. Michael, ND 58370 766-4151 Sunday Mass: 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.	<b>SEVEN DOLORS CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Fort Totten 766-4314 Sunday: 11 a.m. Mass. Daily Mass: 7 a.m.
<b>BDECAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> Tokio, N.D. (2 miles south of Tokio, near Woodlake) 294-2283 <a href="http://www.bdecanpresbyterian-church.org">www.bdecanpresbyterian-church.org</a> Worship: at 11 a.m., Sunday school kids K - 5 grade during worship, potluck meal after	<b>EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ADVENT</b> Sixth Street and Fifth Avenue Devils Lake 11 a.m. Morning prayer 1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays Holy Eucharist- 4th Sunday	<b>NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP</b> North Junction of Hwy. 15 & 20 Rural Hamar 262-4470 Sunday: 10:30 a.m. worship service	<b>ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA</b> 601 6th St. NE Devils Lake, ND 662-4911 9:30 a.m. Worship (September - May) Summer: 8:30 a.m. at Retreat Center 11 a.m. at St. Olaf (June - August)	<b>TRINITY-BERGEN AFLC LUTHERAN CHURCH</b> PO Box 46 Starkweather Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion every Sunday
<b>BETHEL EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH</b> 1312 East Walnut St. Devils Lake 662-3758 <a href="http://www.bethelfree.com">www.bethelfree.com</a> Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.	<b>FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b> 601 Fifth St. NE Devils Lake Sunday 9:30 a.m. worship	<b>OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA</b> 612 14th Ave. NE Devils Lake, N.D. 662-5112 Sunday: 10 a.m. Service Wednesday: 6 p.m. Service	<b>ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH</b> 7th St. & 7th Ave. 662-2245 Devils Lake Missouri Synod Worship: 11 a.m. Dial-a-Devotion: 662-3158.	<b>WEBSTER CHAPEL</b> Webster, N.D. Worship is at 9 a.m. the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays.
<b>CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Tokio Saturday: 7 p.m. Mass all year round.	<b>GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH</b> 311 5th Ave. NE Devils Lake 701-230-1332 Sunday: 10:30am and 6 p.m.	<b>PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH (NALC)</b> 1700 Fifth Ave. NE PO Box 1041 Devils Lake, N.D. 662-3565 Sunday 9:30 a.m.	<b>ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Esmond, N.D. 249-8360 Tuesday-Saturday: Weekday Mass at 9 a.m. Saturday: 5 p.m. Mass. Sunday: 8:30 a.m. Mass.	<b>WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 501 Fifth St. NE Devils Lake, 662-3584 Sunday worship 11:00 a.m.
<b>CHURCH OF GOD (SEVENTH DAY)</b> 607 Fifth St. S.E. Devils Lake Saturday: 2 p.m.	<b>GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH</b> Lakota Missouri Synod Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.	<b>ST. JEROME'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Crow Hill District Hwy. #57, One mile N. Saturday: Mass 5 p.m.	<b>ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH</b> Fort Totten, N.D. 11 a.m. Holy Eucharist 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays, 4th Sunday - Morning Prayer	<b>ZOAR FREE LUTHERAN</b> Hampden, North Dakota Pastor Craig Wentzel May through August Worship Sundays 9 a.m.
If you would like to make changes or corrections to this ad, please contact Louise at <a href="mailto:loleson@cmpapers.com">loleson@cmpapers.com</a>				

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1001 7th St NE,662-2158

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323 5th St NE,662-4024