

“The Baby Can’t Wait”

Luke 2:1-20

Part V of VI in the sermon series “What Can’t Wait”

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December 24, 2019, 7:30 p.m. service

From the Pulpit

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A Christmas Meditation delivered by The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, Sr. Minister, The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, December 24, 2019, Christmas Eve, 7:30pm service, dedicated to Jon Favreau and the creators of “The Mandalorian,” and to all the men, women, teens and children of First Church who work behind the scenes to bring Christmas alive for all of us and always to the glory of God!

“The Baby Can’t Wait”

Luke 2:1-20

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*Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of each one of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our salvation.
Amen.*

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The world is waiting for a baby to come and save us tonight.

There is one who has been chosen for such an overwhelming calling. He has been appearing everywhere in recent weeks. And the first time you lay eyes upon him, your heart melts. He is precious and oh, so cute. He is tiny and his big eyes seem to look

deep into your soul. When he reaches his little fingers toward you, you feel like you are about to be touched by an angel. With just a little bit of hair, he looks like so many newborn babies. But what strikes you most when you first see him are his big pointed ears that go straight out from each side of his head and his rough lime-green skin. That's right, I am talking about - Baby Yoda.

The Jedi Master has come back as a 50-year-old baby (remember, when we first met him in Star Wars, he 900 years old – or in his words, *“When 900 years old you reach, look as good, you will not!”*) But this Baby version of Yoda is called “the child” by those who love him and “it” by the empirical forces. His protector and defender, the Mandalorian, simply calls him “the kid.”

In the new Disney + series, “The Mandalorian,” Baby Yoda is the centerpiece of this weekly 30-minute drama. He is hunted and pursued by the forces of evil. They fear his power and even though he is tiny, he clearly has the ability and the agility to save lives and heal. “The Force” is definitely with this one.

Some of you might wonder (as I wander) how Baby Yoda, from a galaxy far, far away, has made it to the pulpit of First Church this Christmas Eve.

Good question.

First, like baby Jesus, Baby Yoda is very popular and beloved. Unlike Baby Jesus, he is the retail superstar for Christmas 2019.

He has surpassed Santa and Baby Jesus in sales this yuletide season as the most sought-after Christmas “Star” presence.

Second, (and MORE IMPORTANT), Baby Yoda contains all the amazing gifts, powers and characteristics that we have come to love and adore in Baby Jesus. Like Baby Jesus, he draws all people to him. Some are drawn to the power of good in him. Others seek to destroy him and do “evil” to him because they are frightened by power and positive force. Like Jesus, he saves lives. Like Jesus, he heals and binds up those who are hurt and dying. Like Jesus, he is present to those who come to him in need. Like Jesus, he is able to convert the hardest hearts of all – even the tough bounty-hunting Mandalorian is drawn to him and changed by his love. Like Jesus, he needs the protection of all those who care for him. And like Jesus, the more good he does, the more people are drawn to him.

Since this night of his birth close to 2000 years ago, people have been drawn to the pure goodness and light of Jesus. We are forever drawn to the characteristics and spiritual gifts of Jesus. He embodies all that is good and perfect in this Universe. Is it any wonder that people gather each year to remember him and be blessed by the force within him?

Move over Baby Yoda. Jesus, the original Jedi Knight, is in the town of Bethlehem.

Although Jesus’ retail numbers haven’t topped Baby Yoda this Christmas, he is still #1 in my heart and mind, in our hearts and minds and in the hearts and minds of billions of Christians. He

draws us together tonight all across the globe. He inspires us every single day to be kind, to be good and do good, to walk humbly with God, to do justice in this world, to be peacemakers, to care for our planet and care for others who are bullied or beaten, lost or unloved, or forsaken or forgotten.

He is God's real presence in this world. He is truly "God with skin on." Healing, teaching, laying down our lives for our neighbors and friends are all shown to us in Jesus Christ. He is as close to us as our breath and heartbeat. He is one with us in our living and inspires us to be giving to others.

Our Baby can't wait to be born in our hearts this night. Let us give thanks to God for him. And let us turn our attention to our 2000-year-old baby and remember in the paraphrased words of younger Jedi, *"When 2000 years old you reach... look as good, you will not!"*

Our baby can't wait to be born! Thanks be to God for our newborn Savior! Amen.