



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

### **Blessing of the nativity scene**

#### **ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Weekly Video Message**

**Dec. 17, 2021**

Our family had several cherished traditions during Advent and Christmas each year. One was, and this will be familiar to anyone from northeastern Ohio, was to rush home after elementary school in order to catch Mr. Jingeling, who was the “Keeper of the Keys.” So every weekday we'd watch Mr. Jingeling.

Another one was Advent devotions that our family had. But maybe the most cherished for us was putting together the manger scene or the nativity set every year. That was a clear indication that Christmas was coming and we were celebrating the birth of the baby Jesus.

My big brother got to be kind of a literalist on this, so he would never allow the baby Jesus to be in the manger before Christmas. And one year, he insisted on putting the wise men far off because they didn't really show up on Christmas Eve. Nevertheless, it was a wonderful tradition. And my guess is that many of you also have a similar nativity scene, a crèche or a manger scene that can be a focus for devotion and contemplation during this season.

Here is a blessing that may be used as figures are added to the nativity scene and throughout the days of Christmas:

Bless us, O God, as we remember a humble birth. With each angel and shepherd we place here before you, show us the wonder found in a stable. In song and prayer, silence and awe, we adore your gift of love, Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.

Merry Christmas, dear church.