

**Christmas Day 2011**  
**John 1:1-14**  
*Who are you?*  
**The Rev. Dr. R. K. Miller**

Christmas 2011 in the Miller household will be forever known as the year baby Jesus went MIA – missing in action!

It happened like this: We have a beautiful Italian made manger scene that was given to Amber and me early in our marriage. We put it on display every Christmas. The figurines stand around three inches tall and look very life-like including: Mary and Joseph, shepherds and wise men, cattle and sheep, an angel and wooden barn like structure that stands about 15” high and 20” wide. Baby Jesus rests comfortably in an elevated feeding trough with his arms outstretched and a glow about him that draws your attention. It is a beautiful manger scene.

We love to play hide and seek in our family. So during the first week of Advent our children were playing hide and seek with baby Jesus. One would hide Jesus and the other one would go search for him. Well... one of our children hid Jesus and forgot where she hid him. And so baby Jesus has been MIA in our household ever since. The manger is empty of Jesus.

That caused me to wonder as I wandered through our house this year – where is Jesus? We often find him in the most unusual places. Then I wondered as I wandered through Advent this year – how many homes will find Jesus MIA this Christmas?

For example:

There was a little girl watching her mom and dad get ready for Christmas. It seemed that dad was preoccupied with burdens and bundles, and mom was concerned about parties and presents. They just didn't have time for her. The child felt that she was being shoved aside. In fact, it seemed that she was always being told, “Would you please get out of the way?” So the night before Christmas, she knelt beside her bed and prayed this prayer, “Our Father who art in heaven, please forgive us our Christmases as we forgive those who Christmas against us.”

I wonder how many homes are like that, where Jesus is truly MIA?

During our worship here this morning we've been asking a series of questions... Who are these angels? Who are these shepherds? Who is this Child? Who is this King? Who is this God? And now we ponder the question: Who are you?

Who are you? Answer – you are the focus of God's love which makes you a child of God which makes you a Christian. One definition of a Christian is – “Christ bearer.”

Who are we? We are the ones to carry Christ and his message of love and life into a hurting and hostile world. As Luther said, "We are to be little Christs to others." We don't deserve this but by God's grace that's who we are. Christ bearers in the world. If that is the case then Jesus can't possibly be MIA. He lives in us and through us as we live in him and through him.

My Christmas prayer is that others will see Christ in us this day and everyday. Yes the manger is empty and so too is the cross because Jesus has taken up residence in the manger of our hearts.

May Jesus, the Prince of Peace, never be found MIA in this household called Friedens – in this house of peace. May we rejoice on this Christmas day and every day for to us was born in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ, our Lord. Amen.