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Surprised By Christmas: Stories Told Through Advent & Christmas

Rich Reifsnyder

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" In these stories of Christmas we will discover new meaning and experience God's presence. In short, these stories are not only about incarnation; they become an exercise in the truth that God is with us in Jesus Christ."

Will Willimon

Author, United Methodist Bishop, and Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry

Duke Divinity School, Durham, North Carolina

So often the good news of the Gospel is communicated best through story. Throughout life, it is in the interruptions and the surprises of life that God most often makes his goodness and grace known. In this season of Advent and Christmas, when expectations are high, these stories are an invitation to be open to the ever surprising ways in which the incarnate Lord may become present to us. ***Surprised by Christmas: Stories Through Advent and Christmas*** consists of twelve heart-warming short stories, using vignettes of Christmastime experience of ordinary people to illustrate the spiritual meaning of Christ's birth for today. These are stories which seek to connect the meaning of the incarnation to people's everyday experiences surrounding the Christmas season, especially in regard to family life.

Surprised by Christmas is an excellent resource for clergy and their congregations, as well as other interested readers of Christmas stories. They may also be used in community organizations and workshops. Author Richard Reifsnyder wrote these stories with the intention to provoke thought about the meaning of the incarnation in an accessible, non-theological way. Readers will be able to identify with many of the situations in these stories and find encouragement in their own celebration of Christmas, even with all the messiness of life.

Chapters Included:

Homecoming

The Gift

Receiving at Christmas

The Christmas Peace

Pondering Christmas

Richard W. Reifsnyder is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Winchester, Virginia. He grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and studied at Duke University, earning his M.Div. from Yale Divinity School and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has pastored at churches in Schaghticoke, New York, Hopewell, New Jersey, and Oyster Bay, New York. Reifsnyder has served as President of the Board of the Free Medical Clinic, and on the boards of *The United Way* and *Faith in Action*. He has also been very involved in mission experiences with his church having partnerships in Ethiopia and Guatemala. Golf, music, gardening and hiking are some of his hobbies.

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