

**Mark Wallace**, *Executive Director of Org Culture and International Partnerships*

The Christmas season is a special time. It is a time of increased volunteerism and increased charitable giving. It is a time of eating together and a time when we can tolerate sappy endings in the movies and shows we watch. It is a time for miracles. The Christmas story in the Christian Bible is full of miracles. It has Angels appearing, a Virgin Birth, signs in the stars, prophetic dreams and a King born in a stable – to name a few. That last one is the miracle that strikes me each year. Not just that the King would be born where animals dwell, but that He would come to be with us humans to begin with. In the book of Philippians (5-8, NIV), we find these words:

... Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own  
advantage;  
rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!

Not only was Jesus willing to be born in a stable rather than a palace but He left heaven and equality with His Father to take the form of a servant. He lived among us and washed His disciples' feet. Then he died at our (humanity's) hands. As someone who has the privilege of visiting our global partners, I am constantly aware of the travel advisories issued due to dangers in other countries. I can only imagine the "travel advisory" for Jesus leaving heaven and travelling to earth. He did it anyway! He came not just to rule us but to serve.

From this example, our organization has embraced the core value of "Serving Others." We look to follow Jesus' example. This core value is closely connected to our other values, including "Valuing People." Jesus came to serve us because He values us: We are precious to Him (Matthew 10:29-3).

If you work for Karis Disability services, I know you believe that serving others is important. Not just as we serve others, though that is why we exist, but also to help those we support use their gifts to serve others!

For help in a church context, we have helped develop a resource with partners called *Everybody Belongs, Serving Together* ([everybody-belongs.com](http://everybody-belongs.com)). It is about first *welcoming* people with disabilities and then *servicing with* folks with disabilities.

Christmas is a time of year when emotions can run high, whether these are the joyful and/or stressful emotions of gathering, the stressed emotions of running errands, or the sad emotions of loneliness. I pray that you are surrounded with loved ones this holiday season and that we reach out to those who need it. I hope you will all be looking for opportunities to serve and support others to use their gifts and serve as well. May you have a great holiday season, whatever your traditions may be!

*Merry Christmas!*

### **Making the Connection**

What is an example of a way you have been meaningfully served by someone else?

What do you like about serving others? What skills/gifts do you enjoy using to help other people out?