

'Hey, baby Jesus is gone'

Three churches have had Jesus statues taken from mangers. Is it an effort to 'correct' nativity scenes?

By Scott Cooper Williams

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CLINTONVILLE — Police investigating thefts from nativity scenes at three local churches believe the thief was delivering a message: The baby Jesus does not belong there until Christmas.

In all three incidents involving Lutheran churches in this Shawano County community, only the baby Jesus figurines were stolen, lifted right out of their mangers.

"I said, 'Hey, baby Jesus is gone,'" said Marvin Marotz, a parishioner who noticed the problem Sunday outside St.

Paul Lutheran Church. "I kind of shocked everybody."

When police responded and checked other churches, they found that baby Jesus figurines also had been taken from holiday nativity scenes outside Christus Lutheran Church and St. Martin Lutheran Church.

Police Chief Terry Lorge suspects the thief believes that such displays should be historically accurate — and should not include Jesus until the day Christians celebrate his birth.

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A nativity scene in Green Bay shows baby Jesus in his manger, but some Christians believe the baby should not be displayed before Christmas. FILE/PRESS-GAZETTE