




# **Out of Faith, Hope and Love Comes Christmas Miracles**

by Elizabeth Sindelar-Loy  
December 18 2019 2:47 PM





I am a tree up early; house decorated to perfection; ugly sweater-wearing; Netflix holiday movie connoisseur; unabashed singer of holiday tunes... lover of all things Christmas. I'm so cheery, I even volunteer myself to decorate friends' houses or wrap their gifts. Seriously, if there was a job to replace Buddy the Elf as North Pole Ambassador for Santa Claus, I would be candidate #1.

Trust me though, it's not easy keeping the Christmas spirit at elf level status when you are a single parent. There have been plenty of times when being the Grinch on a secluded mountain top has seemed far more alluring than hanging down with the Whos. But if Rudolph, Hermey and Yukon Cornelius didn't give up when faced with the Bumble, then I too can continue to remain optimistic like the misfit toys on the island.

My love of the season started long ago when I couldn't explain how every Christmas Eve my grandparents made Santa Claus magically appear at their house by making us kids reluctantly sing carols. Coupled with Polish traditions like waiting to see the North Star appear in the sky before we ate, Christmas seemed downright magical. Therefore, after my ex-husband and I got married, I was insanely impatient to start a family of our own to share these memories with.

Seven years ago, on December 14, 2012, hope, faith and love brought a Christmas miracle that I truly believe only the magic of the season could bring. On a day when the light of the world seemed awfully dim, I received a gift wrapped in a pink and blue striped blanket that outshined all the darkness happening miles away. For God had granted my wish to be a mother and no other Christmas present will ever come close to topping the day my baby girl was born.

Unfortunately, as my ex-husband and I were welcoming our miracle into the world, parents we didn't know were losing their little angels to the second biggest school shooting in our nation's history. Even though time has passed, it's still incredibly hard to find words to describe what was running through my mind that day. I remember feeling immense guilt anxiously awaiting the arrival of our daughter while images on television displayed the worst nightmare for any parent to endure. But neither my grandmother, mother, ex-husband nor I could turn it off and try to forget what was occurring. I'm not sure what they were thinking because we have never spoke of it, but I remember feeling sadness wondering if any of the parents who lost their children that day had gone through the same journey we had.

Before my daughter had been conceived, I had been told that due to the severity of my endometriosis it would be near impossible to have a child of my own. My ex-husband and I spent years on an emotional rollercoaster spending way more money than we had on operations and infertility medications. It was on the very last round of shots before having to decide on in-vitro that we were unexpectedly blessed with the news I was pregnant. Even to this day, Izybella loves hearing how determined she was to come into the world. The pregnancy and birth had its fair share of complications due to my health issues and out of fear, it felt like at any moment my ex could have lost both his girls.

Therefore, I feel our family will always have a connection to that fateful day even though we were half a country away. Although time has passed, there are still moments while we are celebrating Izybella's birthday or gathered around the holiday table that causes me to stop and wonder why God allowed us an amazing blessing during a time when our nation's heart was collectively breaking. To this day, I still kneel at the pew and ask, "What made us so lucky to be allowed to spend our first Christmas together as a family when at the same time that chance was taken from other families just as special as ours?"

The surreal contrast of life and death on that day seven years ago, will be forever etched in my memory but it has taught me the invaluable lesson to never let go of the magic we feel this time of year. The Muppets' Christmas Carol sings it perfectly, "Wherever you find love it feels like Christmas." That simple idea is how I'm able to continue to have elf level holiday spirit as a single parent even with our holidays split between two homes. Christmas may not look the way I thought it was going to but we still find a way to mix old traditions with new. Most importantly, when I feel overwhelmed, I light the darkness with a candle and pray for those parents who can't be with their children and for those who desperately want to be parents because I know from experience that faith, love and hope leads to Christmas miracles.

*Elizabeth Sindelar-Loy is the Wellness Coach for Main Street Chiropractic in Edwardsville. She has worked in traditional and holistic health care for over 8 years. Ms. Loy is a motivational wellness speaker and participates in multiple Madison County Coalitions. As a single mom to an ambitious little girl, she understands the importance of practicing self-care to achieve balance in personal and professional growth.*

***Opinions expressed in this section are solely those of the individual authors and do not represent the views of RiverBender.com or its affiliates. We provide a platform for community voices, but the responsibility for opinions rests with their authors.***