DECEMBER 2023

GOOD NEWS from Christ Lutheran Church

Christ Lutheran Church
4801 E. 6th St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57110
Phone: 605-338-3769
Web: christsiouxfalls.org
Member: Issues, Etc., 300
Pastor: Matthew Nix

INSIDE

Birthdays	2
Life Quotes	2
In Our Prayers	2
LCMS Stewardship	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Kids in Worship	4
Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending	5-6
Handbell Choir	7
Higher Things	7
Upcoming	7
Sermon Text & Titles	8

Inserts:
Calendars

Issues, Etc.
Talk Radio for the Thinking Christian
www.issuesetc.org

Sacred Music 24/7
lutheranpublicradio.org

Lutheran Doctrine: Christ-Centered, Cross-Focused

From the Pastor

Jeremiah 1:4–10

Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

> "Before I formed you in the womb
> I knew you,
> and before you were born I consecrated you;
> I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." But the LORD said to me,

> "Do not say, 'I am only a youth';
> for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
> and whatever I command you, you shall speak.
> Do not be afraid of them,
> for I am with you to deliver you,
> declares the LORD."

Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me,

> "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.
> See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms,
> to pluck up and to break down,
> to destroy and to overthrow,
> to build and to plant."

The theme for our Advent and Christmas services this year is going to be Children of the Heavenly Father. In the above text we see specifically that God had known, and appointed Jeremiah before he was born. Even with Jeremiah's excuses, God says do not be afraid, I will be with and help you in your work.

Each of our Wednesdays we will look at another child that God knew and appointed before they were born. These were children that should not have been born or should not have lived long enough to serve God. Yet, God uses each of them to make His plan for salvation work.

These are far from the only people God has or will know before they are born. These are far from the only people that should not have been born or lived long enough to be used by God in achieving or sharing His plan of salvation. When we look at our nation and our world there are many people that would prevent or shorten the lives of many. With the recent ruling of the supreme court, we would think most children would be protected. Instead we have seen states increase the ease of ending life. States that we would have thought would have easily defeated attempts to change the laws so as to protect those ending the lives of those unable to defend themselves, have fallen to the will of the devil, the world and man's sinful nature.

When such attempts are made, what is the roll of the Christian? How are we to respond to attempts in our state to make the killing of the unborn, the aged and the infirmed legal?

Know that Just as with Jeremiah, God knows all people before they are born, and He has a plan for them. So, when Satan shows his face and says, "did God really say", be prepared to defend those who cannot defend themselves. Love your neighbor as yourself.

In Christ, Pastor Nix

Voters Meeting, Dec 10, 2023 after Divine Service

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

04 Tamara Hartwig
04 Melanie Hericks
08 Norma Miller
15 Carl Deardoff
16 Carol Brack
20 Ellis Robinson





IN OUR PRAYERS

Mildred Corey, at home
Helen Kriz, Bethany Lutheran Home, Brandon
Lisa Johnson, health issues/ wellness
Susan Powell, at home
Elva Clauson at home



Life Quotes

December 3 ~First Sunday in Advent, "In view of God's display of love in Advent and Christmas, we gladly unite to praise Him. Christmas brings out that unity as we join with Mary and Joseph and shepherds and angels to glorify our Savior as one united family. For this reason, we pray as Paul did, 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.'" *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 10 ~Second Sunday in Advent, "You might not be impressive by the world's standards. You might be a third-shift worker, a nameless neighbor, or a sinner who messed up in very public ways. But the angel declared good news for all people, which logically must include you. So, rejoice today! A Savior was born to you!" *Pastor Mike Novotny, Time of Grace – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 17 ~Third Sunday in Advent, "I don't know what exactly you expect this Christmas. But I can tell you to set your expectations high as you listen to God's Advent call. Listen to His promises. Look in the manger. And you'll find hope and unity now and into eternity." *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 24 ~Fourth Sunday in Advent, "This time of the year always fills us with cheer | But the reason we celebrate is not always clear | The cookies, the lights, the presents, the tree | The carols, the decorations, the family parties | But all of the delight and all of the fun | Does not mean a thing if we don't know God's Son | The tiny baby that was born to die | Can sometimes cause us to stop and ask why | Do we really deserve the sacrifice He made? | Are we worth the offering and the price that was paid? | In His eyes, we are, because He made us His own | And on the cross, the ultimate love was shown | So take joy in the season and spread His true love | But always remember the gift from above!" *Jerrod Nelson – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 31 ~First Sunday After Christmas, "While it is true that we need to be good stewards of God's earthly gifts, it is sinful to think that we are in full control of preserving this world. It is sinful to fret about the destruction of this world before the Last Day. This world will not run out of natural resources. We will not be wiped out by climate change, a worldwide pandemic, or a meteor shower if and when those things happen. God says that as long as this earth endures—until Judgment Day—seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. God is in control. God will protect, provide, and preserve this world. Trust in God and see His grace and mercy, especially when sin affects this world. Trust that He gives you what you don't deserve and more than you could imagine." *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LCMS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY
Newsletter article – December 2023

The Measure of Our Generosity

If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

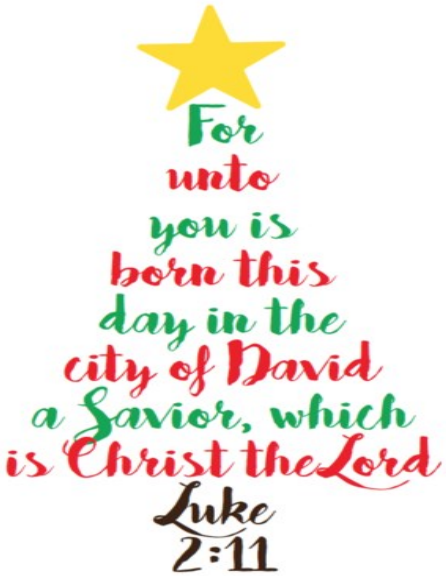
> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8–11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?





CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
TREASURER'S REPORT
November 30, 2023

	09/2023	10/2023	11/2023
Deposits:	$ 9,796.40	$ 23,276.55	$ 21,094.48
Disbursements:	$-13,685.62	$ 19,740.27	$ 42,420.60
,			
Deposit Breakdown:			
General Fund:	$ 9,727.40	$ 18,200.55	$ 21,082.48
Designated Funds:	$ 69.00	$ 5,076.00	$ 12.00
Monthly Budget Requirement:	$ 15,929.72	$ 19,912.15	$ 15,929.72
Mortgage Balance as of 11/30			$ 75,126.04





Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

Lutheran Service Book 336 | study by Kim L. Scharff

Introduction

Every now and then we hear of someone who claims to know when our Lord Jesus Christ is going to return. Though Jesus Himself says that the day and hour of His return is known only to the Father (Matt. 24:36), still there are those who, from time to time, insist that they know the unknowable. Of course, they are inevitably proven wrong.

An interest on the part of the Christian in the return of Christ is, however, a healthy thing. Jesus encourages us to give attention to the "signs of the times," that is, to pay heed to the things going on around us in our world, for they are indicators and reminders that He will return "to judge the living and the dead" (Apostles' Creed).

- Would you like to know the precise day and hour of Jesus' return? Why, or why not? Would knowing that day and time be beneficial for your faith, or might it actually be harmful?

Exploring the Scriptures

The Readings for Advent 2 are all focused, more or less, on the return of Christ at the end of the age, and help us better appreciate the text of our hymn. Read Mal. 4:1–6.

- How does the prophet describe the judgment that will come?

- What hope, however, does he hold out, in verse 2, for those who fear the Lord?

In the Epistle Reading, St. Paul speaks of a particular use of Holy Scripture, which, at that point in time, would have been the Old Testament. Read Rom. 15:4–7.

- According to the apostle, how are we now to use the Holy Scriptures? What is the nature of this encouragement, especially as we await the return of Christ?

- Note Paul's emphasis on the harmony that is God's gift to His waiting people. How does the remainder of the Epistle Reading, Rom. 15:8–13, illustrate that harmony? What role is played by the creeds of the Church in building and illustrating that harmony, and why is that important as we await the Lord's return?

In the Gospel Reading, Jesus clearly describes the days that precede His return. Read Luke 21:25–36.

- There is both warning and promise in this reading from Luke. Describe each. Where do you see examples, especially of the warnings and dangers, in our world today?

- What is the clear hope given to Christians in these words?

Exploring the Hymn

Background

The text of this hymn, as it finally reaches us in LSB, has a somewhat complex history. The author, Charles Wesley (1707–1788), began with a hymn text by John Cennick (1718–1755), but then all but rewrote Cennick's hymn. After Wesley's publication of his text in 1758, Martin Madan (1726–1790), a London hospital founder and chaplain, further edited Wesley's text, restoring some of Cennick's original work. However, the text, as we have it in LSB, is largely that of Wesley, with a few important alterations.

Wesley was a prolific author of hymn texts, producing over 6,000 of them. The majority of those texts are no longer heard, but some have become among the most popular hymn texts ever written, being used in hymnals of many Christian traditions. Wesley's best hymns are rich in theology and warm in evangelical character.

- LSB contains several Wesley texts. Take a quick look at a few of them: 338, 380, 457 and 469. Ask the following questions about each: (1) How is the Gospel explicitly portrayed? and (2) How is Christian hope illustrated?

Text

In keeping with the theme of Advent 2 in the One-Year Lectionary, the entire focus of the hymn is on the return of Christ at the end of the age.

- While the Advent season, as well as the close of the Church Year, is the time when the return of Christ is in focus, why is this theme important to us each day of our lives?

- In the Lord's Prayer we pray, "Thy kingdom come." In the Large Catechism, Luther says about the Second Petition, "From this you see that we do not pray here for a crust of bread or a temporal, perishable good. Instead, we pray for an eternal inesti-

mable treasure and everything that God Himself possesses" (LC III 55). What do you think God has in store for us on that day when Jesus returns?

Stanzas 1 and 2 draw on references, fittingly, from the Book of Revelation. Read Rev. 1:7 and 11:15.

- Is Christ's return going to be isolated to a particular place or group of people? How is the answer to this question a confirmation of what the hymn states in stanza 2? While this fact may fill the heart of the unbeliever with terror, what do these words say to you as a Christian, especially in light of Rev. 11:15?

- Read 1 Peter 3:18. What comfort does this verse give you? What is your hope when Christ when returns?

Stanza 3 describes what our Savior endured that we might be His redeemed, beloved children, who look forward, with great anticipation, to His return.

- What are the "tokens of His passion?" The disciple Thomas often gets a "bad rap" for wanting to see and touch the Savior's holy wounds. But what will we see upon our Savior's return? What is the significance of the fact that, even in eternity, Jesus will still bear "those glorious scars"?

Stanza 4 tells us that, when Jesus returns, we will worship like we have never worshiped before! Again, allusions to Revelation are prominent in the hymn text. Read Rev. 5:6–14 and 7:9–12.

- Describe the worship of heaven that is revealed to St. John. Do you notice any elements of the church's liturgy with which you are familiar? Note the prominence of "Amen." Recall Luther's explanation of the "Amen" in the Small Catechism. Why is "Amen" so fitting in describing the worship that will take place on the day of our Savior's glorious return?

- Read St. Paul's perspective on that great day in Phil. 2:9–11. As we prepare for Jesus' return in glory, what do the apostle's words in verses 9 and 10 teach us about what the Church's worship on earth now is to be like?

Making the Connection

With all the trouble our world faces at present, this hymn speaks of that day when all trouble will cease, and the glorious, eternal reign of Christ will begin. And so, the message of this hymn really transcends its use in the season of Advent.

- How might this hymn serve, especially, the mission effort of the Church, its reach into the world of unbelief? What other times during the Church Year, or events in the Christian life, would this hymn well serve?

- In a world that offers little real peace, how does this hymn help give us the peaceful confidence that the Collect for Peace in the Office of Vespers (LSB, 233) describes?

In Closing

Contrary to those who wish to look into the mind of the Lord and find the day and hour of Christ's return, Christians have no such need. We have the sure and certain promise of God that, when the appointed day and hour arrives, our Lord Jesus Christ will return. He will return visibly, and He will return to redeem His faithful children, once and for all, from this world of sin and sorrow. This great hymn of the Church, "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending," helps us both to confess and to be ready for that day!

- Sing or read together LSB 336, "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending."

Prayer

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (Collect for Advent 2).





HANDBELL CHOIR

New ringers are always welcome. We are looking for ringers from high school age through adult. Previous experience nor the ability to read music and not required, but helpful. We will be meeting on Wednesdays at 6pm. If you have questions, please see Lynette Wedeking or Cynthia Schilf.

HIGHER THINGS

EYES TO SEE Retreat

Jan 14-15 at Faith Lutheran Church in Pierre, SD

Have you ever wished to see more clearly and know more confidently what is of God and what is not? If so, then this *Eyes to See* retreat is for you! The devil makes nothing new yet remarkets his old deceptive ways to new generations. This presentation will give you *Eyes to See* both the works of the devil to avoid, and the works of God to cling to that you may abide in His peace and safety.

Rev. Matthew Wurm was born in August of 1981 in Wisconsin. He has been a pastor for 15 years and is the Senior Pastor at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Brookings, SD. In 2014 he was inducted as a Fellow of DOXOLOGY. He and his wife, Kyra have been blessed with six children. In his free time, he likes to build things and resurrect dead vehicles and equipment.

WHO AM I Conference

June 25-28, 2024 at Concordia University Wisconsin, in Mequon, WI based on (ISAIAH 49:16A)

Identity. More than what you want to be when you grow up. More than what's expected of you. What do you see when you look in the mirror? What gives you value? What makes you … "you"? Dealing with insecurity, anxiety, and self-hate is hard enough before the pressures of the world, the pressures of your family, your own hopes and wants and dreams, and even the pressures of the church make this question debilitating.

So Jesus baptizes you. Your identity is here. A child of God. It gives shape to the rest. It gives shape to your role as a man, a woman. It gives promise to your vocation. It even gives answer to your sin. You don't identify by that anymore. Not by what you've done, but by what's been done for you.

Who am I? A Christian. You're found in the wounds of the savior. Your identity starts there.

Join us in the summer of 2024 to learn about how your identity is rooted in Christ at Who Am I.

CONTACT PASTOR IF INTERESTED IN EITHER EVENT.

UPCOMING

2023

- Dec 06, 13, 20 Advent Services, 7pm
- Dec 10: Voters Meeting, after Divine Service
- Dec 20 Children's Christmas Service 7pm
- December 24 Christmas Eve service, 5pm
- December 25 Christmas Day Service 9:30 am
- No New Year's Eve/Day Service

2024

- Feb 14 Ash Wednesday Divine Service, 7pm
- Feb 21, 28, Mar 01, 08, 15, 22, 29 Midweek Lenten service, 7pm (Dinner prior)
- Mar 10 Daylight Savings Time Begins, 2am
- Mar 10 Voters Meeting
- Mar 28 Maundy Thursday Divine Service, 7pm
- Mar 29 Good Friday Tenebrae Service, 7pm
- Mar 31 Easter Sunrise Matins Service, 7am
- Mar 31 Easter Breakfast, 8am
- Mar 31 Easter Festival Divine Service, 9:30am
- May 09 Ascension Day Divine Service 7pm
- May 12 Mothers' Day Breakfast
- June 09 Voters Meeting
- July 21-25 VBS
- Sept 08 Voters Meeting
- Nov 03 Daylight Saving Time Ends, 2am
- Nov 28 Thanksgiving Day Divine Service, 9:30 am
- Dec 1 Advent Service, 7pm
- Dec 08, 15, 22 Advent Services, 7pm
- Dec 08: Voters Meeting, after Divine Service
- Dec TBA Children's Christmas Service
- December 24 Christmas Eve service, 5pm
- December 25 Christmas Day Service 9:30 am
- No New Year's Eve/Day Service

Sermon Text and Titles for December

December 3rd	***"Do You Do as Jesus Directs*** Jeremiah 23:5-8 Psalm 24 Romans 13:8-14 St Mathew 21:1-9	St. Matthew 21:6
December 10th	***"What Signs are You Watching"*** Malachi 4:1-6 Psalm 50:1-15 Romans 15:4-13 St Luke 21:25-36	St. Luke: 21:25
December 17th	**Not Available at time of Printing** Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 St Matthew 11:2-11	**?**
December 24th (am)	**Not Available at time of Printing** Deuteronomy 18:15-19 Psalm 111 Philippians 4:4-7 St. John 1:19-28	**?**
December 24th (pm)	***"Conceived For Sin, Not in Sin!!!"*** Isaiah 7:10-14 Psalm 110:1-4 1 John 4:7-16 St. Matthew 1:18-25	**St. Matthew 1:20-21**
December 25th	***"A Lowly Place For the Son*** Micah 5:2-5a Psalm 80:1-7 Titus 3:4-7 St Luke 2:1-20	**St Luke 2:7**
December 31st	***"A Son Lifted High"*** 2 Samuel 7:1-16 Psalm 89:1-8 Galatians 4:1-7 St Luke 2:22-40	**St Luke 2:28**

