DECEMBER 2024

GOOD NEWS from Christ Lutheran Church

Christ Lutheran Church
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Member: Issues, Etc., 300
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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 our partners at Lutheran Family Service

Point 1: Lutheran Family Service (LFS) is New in South Dakota with an office here in Sioux Falls and is here for YOU

Background: They hire LCMS professional people who share our faith and values, who are trained/licensed, experienced to provide support for you in times of:

- grief and loss
- suffering from depression, anxiety, or any form of distress
- marriage or family relationship challenges
- sorting through challenges faced by so many in our culture related to sexual orientation, gender identity confusion, or general life challenges and choices
- unplanned pregnancy
- family building through adoption

Point 2: LFS is here for YOUR FRIENDS, Co-WORKERS, NEIGHBORS, and RELATIVES

Background: For all the reasons already stated, but not JUST for you and your family – think of those God puts on your path who are suffering, to whom you might say, "We support an organization that can help with this challenge…." Refer them to Lutheran Family Service!

Point 3: LFS needs our PARTNERSHIP to help people here in our community.
Background: This organization provides professional services but has chosen NOT to accept government funds so as not to limit their Christ-witness in the world. LFS is officially recognized by our synod as a Service Organization of the LCMS church. They work with LCMS partners like us – not the government - to bring this help to people. NOT using government funds allows LFS to:

- be free from EEO/AA hiring laws so they can ask about faith in hiring, and hire only counselors who are Christian and are able to include their faith in their work;
- approve and place infants with CHRISTIAN parents, MALE and FEMALE married partners, who will bring their child to God's family through baptism and raise him or her in the faith.

To encourage new partnerships here in South Dakota, each NEW PARTNER joining LFS through a gift of ANY size between now and the end of December will have their gift matched – dollar for dollar – up to $42,000.
Take this booklet home, READ the stories of people helped through their many ministry areas, VIEW their stories through the QR codes on each page, and consider these three challenges today:

1: Be familiar with and use services yourself when needed
2: Tell someone you know who is struggling where to find LFS for help; and
3: Prayerfully support this needed, professional, uniquely LCMS ministry in our community before the end of the year.

THANK YOU and GOD BLESS YOU!

Voters Meeting, Dec 8, 2024 after Divine Service

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

DECEMBER BAPTISMS

01 Ruthie Wetzel
04 Susan Powell
12 Daniel Monson
15 Mildred Corey
26 Melanie Hericks
26 Ellis Robison
29 Carl Deardoff
31 Constance Bartlett





IN OUR PRAYERS

Terri Stangeland, mother of Michael, cancer
Bonnie Ellis recovering from a hip replacement
Lisa Johnson, health and healing
Mildred Corey, at home
Susan Powell, at home
Elva Clauson, at home

Life Quotes

December 1 ~ 1st Sunday in Advent, "Do you ever doubt the love of God? Perhaps you are just 'looking for love in all the wrong places,' if you'll pardon the expression. Don't look to your own feelings and emotions which can change with the wind, but look to Bethlehem and the manger. See God's love in this that His only begotten Son was sent to be humbled and to die for you. Understand that at Christmas 'God so loved the world that He gave ...'" *Daily Devotion, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sister Lakes, Michigan – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 8 ~ 2nd Sunday in Advent, "If heaven had been our home, would we have wanted to enter a world of grief and pain, of evil and death? Yet enter it Jesus did to give us His home to be ours forever. So, He loved us in undeserved grace. And so will we sing in the heavenly Jerusalem a refrain like that of our choirs: Hail, thou ever blessed morn, Hail redemption's happy dawn, Sing through all Jerusalem: 'Christ is born in Bethlehem.' Alleluia." *Richard Gurgel, President, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 15 ~ 3rd Sunday in Advent, "Who is going to be king? Christ or Herod? Christ or I? Every day we make dozens of decisions which either acknowledge Christ's lordship or which assert our own. The star of the Magi reminds the Christian that he has a gracious King to whom he can, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, submit his will and live. By His word Christ desires to reign in our hearts through faith!" *Rev. Darren Green, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 22 ~ 4th Sunday in Advent, "Merry Christmas! And may the certainty of God's love for you in Jesus Christ give you strength, comfort, and confidence this day to face whatever comes tomorrow. For, nothing can overpower the persevering power and blessing of Christmas." *Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

December 29 ~ 5th Sunday in Advent, "We long to hear those words from the master, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! Come! Share your master's happiness!' Someday you will hear them as He welcomes you into eternal dwellings. But for now, there is much to do for Jesus. So, as you go to live for Him, let those words echo in your mind and spur you on to be faithful and fruitful servants in His kingdom." *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LCMS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY
Newsletter article – December 2024

Repenting of "Yours" and "Mine"

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won't be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn't ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, "Forgive Us Lord for Shallow Thankfulness" (*LSB* 788) highlights both this gift and our response.

> *Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,*
> *that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost*

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

But there is no way that we deserve anything we get from our Lord. We need that ongoing lesson from God Himself. Thankfulness toward God is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. God's Word works this thanksgiving in us. We need this weekly reminder that Jesus didn't consider "equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself" for us, to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:6). He didn't bat an eye. He paid the price! Our life of stewardship is one of daily and weekly thanksgiving inspired by the Lord Himself.

> *That knows no barrier of "yours" and "mine,"*
> *assured that only what's withheld is lost.*

Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is "mine!" But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." There isn't anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the "yours" and "mine" and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord's house.



DECORATING THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Everyone is invited to come help decorate the Christmas tree and Church for Christmas. We will meet here at Church on Saturday, December 7th at 10am. We could use some men to help with the ladders and helping to set up the manger in front of the church. Lunch will be provided afterwards. We hope to see you then! If you have any ques-



CHRISTMAS CAROLING TO THE SHUT-INS

Please join us in Christmas caroling to our shut-ins. We will go out to sing Christmas Carols to our shut-in members on December 7th after we decorated the tree and after eating our lunch. We will begin to head out after lunch, approximately at 12:45pm. Everyone is welcome.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The Sunday School Children's Christmas Service will be Sunday December 15th at 4pm. Practice will be during the Sunday school hour. Please come and listen to the Children tell about the birth of our Savior.

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
TREASURER'S REPORT
November 22, 2024

	09/2024	10/2024	11/2024
Deposits:	$ 29,489.50	$ 13,907.25	$ 10,945.12
Disbursements:	$ 14,345.71	$ 19,163.85	$ 14,761.42
,			
Deposit Breakdown:			
General Fund:	$ 26,985.50	$ 13,700.25	$ 8,363.12
Designated Funds:	$ 2,504.00	$ 207.00	$ 2,582.00
Monthly Budget Requirement:	$ 21,234.00	$ 16,987.20	$ 16,987.20
Mortgage Balance as of 11/22			$ 51,786.96

Advent Service Sermon Series
The Bible, Our Book of Adventures
Presented by Dale A Meyer, Concordia Seminary St. Louis

In the introduction, Dr. Meyer wrote after forty-eight Advent services from graduating from the Seminary, traditional Advent themes seemed trite. There was no question about the themes of Christ's incarnation, the means of grace and Christ's second coming are the essence of our Christian faith, but their presentation has become well worn. One factor is the omnipresent media and commerce that focus on Christmas and gift giving, that Advent gets reduced to getting ready to celebrate the birth of baby Jesus. Faithful people remind us that "Jesus is the reason for the season," but Jesus has other seasons, now and coming which easily get drowned out by societal noise. Another reason wearing down the impact of Advent preaching: the compartmentalization of Western Culture, where church and the empirical world of senses (science) are kept separate.

In an attempt to reenergize the traditional of true themes of Advent and to try to raise awareness of God's coming and saving presence in every day life, He turned to four familiar Old Testament texts as prefigurations of the advents of Christ. Martin Luther wrote: Moses wrote concerning the patriarchs was not primarily for their sake, Mose wrote in order that the churches might be instructed and strengthened up to the end of the World.

Finally, Advent is about anticipation, less of the manger and more about the final revelation of Christ when He leads His ransomed to the inheritance reserved in heaven. Perhaps some parishioner might ask, "Where else in the Old Testament can we find Christ?" Wouldn't that be great?

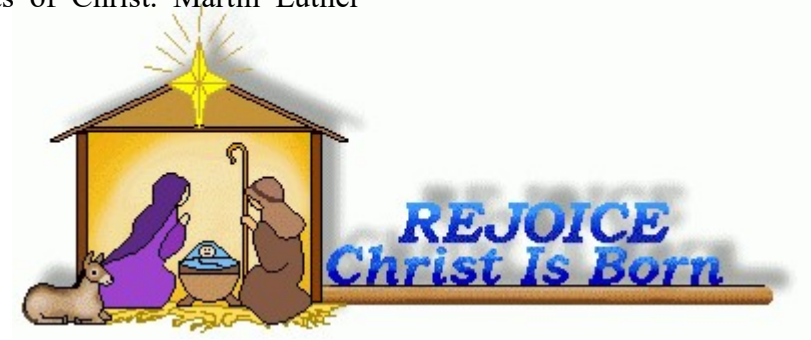
The Advent Sermon Series:

Week One: "Born, Born, Born, to Living Hope!"
Gen 12:1-3, 18:1-15, John 8:48-58

Week Two: "Surely the Lord Is in This Place"
Gen. 28:10-17, John 1:43-51

Week Three: "I AM Has Sent Me to You"
Exodus 3:1-5, Deut. 18-15

Week Four: "The Goodly Land I See"
Joshua 1:1-6, 1 Peter 1:3-9, Heb. 4:1-11



On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

LSB 344 | Second Sunday in Advent (YEARS A, B, C) | study by Bruce E. Keseman

Introduction

Plenty of false prophets have spilt ink predicting the exact date of Christ's return. In Martin Luther's day, Thomas Müntzer (c. 1489–1525) was sure it would happen in 1525. More recently, Harold Camping (1921–2013) insisted the end would come on a succession of different dates — including in May 2011 — before admitting that Scripture says we cannot know the time. Several years ago, a billboard near Scott Air Force Base in Illinois gave the exact date of Jesus' coming (and was taken down after the date passed). While it is useless to try to predict the precise time, it is certainly true that Christ will descend "with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God" (1 Thess. 4:16). Perhaps it will happen today.

Today's hymn reflects on — and prays about — the coming of our Lord.

- Should the imminent return of our Lord change the way Christians live? Or should confidence that the day is coming mean that we are constantly ready without altering our daily lives? Discuss your answers.

Exploring the Scriptures

The story of John the Baptizer's preaching is told in all four Gospels. Read the account in Matt. 3:1–12.

- Where is the most unusual place you have heard a preacher proclaim God's Word? Why might John preach way out in the wilderness, far from the homes of his hearers, many of whom had to trek all the way from Jerusalem (vv. 1 and 5)?
- Heaven's kingdom arrives when heaven's King arrives. In what sense, then, is the kingdom of heaven at hand for the people in John's day? For us?
- The people confessed their sins when they were baptized (v. 6). Why is confession still essential as we remember our Baptisms and await the coming of the King of kings?
- What part of John's message is Law (exposing sin)? What part is Gospel (forgiving sin)? Why are both still vital in preaching?

Now read Is. 40:1–5, part of which is quoted in the passage we read from Matthew.

- What "warfare is ended" (v. 2) with the arrival of the Messiah? In what ways did our warfare end with the work our King did at His first coming? In what ways will it not end until His final arrival?
- How does it change the lives of us guilty people when we hear that our "iniquity is pardoned" (v. 2)?
- List some ways "the glory of the Lord" (v. 5) was revealed at the King's first coming. Are there any additional ways it will be revealed when He returns?

Exploring the Hymn Background

"On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry" was penned in Latin by Charles Coffin (1676–1749). While many hymns were translated from Latin, "On Jordan's Bank" is unusual because it wasn't written until 1736, long after Latin ceased to be used (except in ecclesiastical and academic settings). The first English translation of the hymn appeared in Hymns of the Primitive Church (1837). The title of that hymnal along with the fact that the hymn originated in Latin probably led many to assume — incorrectly — that the (then) one-hundred-year-old song was at least one thousand years old.

- Why do you think Coffin might have chosen to write "On Jordan's Bank" in a "dead" language? Can you think of any advantages?

Text

Read stanza 1. Notice how it simply recounts the events of Matthew 3 but uses the present tense to retell those historical events from the first century. For example, the hymn says John "announces" rather than "announced."

- In what ways may the present tense be useful when recalling past events?
- What makes the coming of the King of kings "glad tidings"? For whom might His arrival be bad tidings?

Read stanza 2. The words could repeat John's message to people in the first century. On the other hand, they could be addressed to us today. The ambiguity helps us both to understand the original context and to apply John's words to ourselves.

- How can we cleanse our lives from sin — or can we?

- What should Christians do to prepare "For Christ to come and enter"?

Read stanza 3, which is our response to John's message, as the very first word — "We" — indicates. We address our soon-to-arrive King as "Savior," "refuge," and "reward," realizing that without His intervention our future will be like that of fading flowers. The imagery of stanza 3 comes primarily from Isaiah 40, which, as we saw at the beginning of this study, anticipates the ministry of John the Baptizer. Read Is. 40:6–11.

- Without Christ's coming, why would we "waste away" like fading flowers? When does that happen?
- What is John's message according to the verses you read in Isaiah 40? To what extent should the church's message be the same today? Why?
- In Is. 40:10, what brings comfort to the people? Who does the verse suggest that Jesus is? What does verse 11 say that Jesus will do?
- From what specific threats does our "Savior" save us?
- What might it mean for Jesus to be our "refuge"? Our "reward"? See Ps. 91:4–6 and Gen. 15:1–6.

Read stanza 4. It continues our prayer, now begging our King to come and help with the difficulties in our lives.

- What specific troubles in your life make you feel like you are sick, falling, or in need of help? What struggles face some of the people you love? In a sense, this hymn is your prayer, pleading with Christ to come to your aid.

When our Lord knows it to be best, He grants our requests for relief already on earth. When our King returns, He will provide permanent healing for our bodies that now struggle.

- The hymn says the King's arrival "is nigh" (st. 1) and prays for it to happen (sts. 3–4). Are we talking about His first coming (to offer His life for us), His current comings (to deliver His forgiveness in Word and Sacrament), or His final coming (to judge and restore creation)? Explain your answer.

Read stanza 5. Most doxological stanzas begin with praise to the Father and then add the Son and the Holy Spirit. This hymn begins with praise to the Son.

- Why might Coffin begin with praise to Christ here?

Making the Connection

- What specific things will you do this Advent so the Lord can cleanse your life from sin in preparation for His arrival?
- What problems in this world lead you to beg the King to come and restore creation so that neither we nor flowers will ever again "wither and decay"?
- Why was the first coming of Christ necessary before the current and final comings of Christ could be of any benefit to you?

In Closing

False prophets wrongly predict the end of the world. But Jesus says, "Concerning that hour, no one knows" (Matt. 24:36), so we do not concern ourselves about precisely when our King is coming. Instead, we live our lives with repentance and with faith that Jesus already arrived once to remove the sins that would cause us to fear His final coming. We plead for the King to come into our lives now, and we plead for Him to return in glory. His imminent arrival is not a reason for fear. It is a reason for anticipation.

- Sing or read aloud together LSB 344, "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry."

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 the Second Sunday in Advent).



KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

The Advent of Christ

As you may remember, the word Advent means "coming." During the season of Advent, we prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. But that is not the only coming of Jesus that we hear about in the Advent story.



What is the rest of the Advent story?

The Advent of Christ has three parts. God's Word tells us that Jesus not only came to earth as a man at Christmas, but that He comes to be with His church through His Word and Sacraments. Finally, God's Word reminds us that He will return in judgement on the Last Day. If you think about it, there sure are a lot of great things to remember and look forward to during the season of Advent!

Parents:
When Holy Communion is offered, allow your children to attend the altar with you. Remind them that Jesus is truly present here in the Sacrament, and that we will see Him face to face on the Last Day!

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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. Bell choir practice will begin December 4th at 6:15pm before Wednesday Advent Services. More ringers are needed for this group!

If you are interested in being a part of either the Vocal choir or the Handbell choir please see Lynette Wedeking at 605-351-3245..

UPCOMING EVENTS

2024

- Dec 4 Advent Service, 7pm
- Dec 11, 18, Advent Services, 7pm
- Dec 08: Voters Meeting, after Divine Service
- Dec 15th Children's Christmas Service, 4pm
- December 24 Christmas Eve service, 5pm
- December 25 Christmas Day Service 9:30 am
- No New Year's Eve/Day Service

2025

- Jan 06, Epiphany Divine Service 7pm
- Mar 05 Ash Wednesday Divine Service, 7pm
- Mar 09 Daylight Savings Time Begins, 2am
- Mar 09 Voters' Meeting
- Mar 12, 19, 26 April 02, 09 Midweek Lenten service, 7pm (Dinner prior)
- April 17 Maundy Thursday Divine Service, 7pm
- April 18 Good Friday Tenebrae Service, 7pm
- April 20 Easter Sunrise Matins Service, 7am
- April 20 Easter Breakfast, 8am
- April 20 Easter Festival Divine Service, 9:30am
- May 11 Mothers' Day Breakfast
- May 29 Ascension Day Divine Service 7pm
- June 08 Voters Meeting
- July 20-24 VBS
- Sept 07 Voters Meeting
- Nov 02 Daylight Saving Time Ends, 2am
- Nov 27 Thanksgiving Day Divine Service, 9:30 am
- Dec 3 Advent Service, 7pm
- Dec 6 decorating Tree 10am & Caroling to shut-ins to follow
- Dec 07: Voters Meeting, after Divine Service
- Dec 10, 17 Advent Services, 7pm
- Dec 15 Children's Christmas Service, 4pm
- 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 1st	***"The First"***	**St. Luke 19:35**
	Hymn of the Day: ***" Savior of the Nations Come"***	**LSB 332**
	Jeremiah 33:14-16	
	Psalm 25:1-10	
	1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	
	St Luke 19:28-40 5:1-12	
December 8th	***"Hearts of Stone"***	**St. Luke 3:8**
	Hymn of the Day: ***" On Jordan's Bank the Baptist Cry"***	**LSB 344**
	Malachi 3:1-7b	
	Psalm 66:1-12	
	Philippians 1:2-11	
	St Luke 3:1-20	
December 15th	***"This is He!"***	**St. Luke 7:20**
	Hymn of the Day: ***" Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding"***	**LSB 345**
	Zephaniah 3:14-20	
	Psalm 85	
	Philippians 4:4-7	
	St Luke 7:18-35	
December 22nd	***"Why is it Granted to Me?"***	**St. Luke 1:43**
	Hymn of the Day: ***" O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"***	**LSB 357**
	Micah 5:2-5a	
	Psalm 80:1-7	
	Hebrews 10:5-10	
	St Luke 1:39-56	
December 24h	***"Took Place this Way"***	**St. Matthew 1:18**
		Isaiah 7:10-14
	Psalm 110:1-4	
	1 John 4:7-16	
	St Matthew 1:18-25	
December 25h	***"In Those Days"***	**St. Luke 2:1**
	Hymn of the Day: ***" Of the Father's Love Begotten"***	**LSB 384**
	Isaiah 9:2-7	
	Psalm 96	
	Titus 2:11-14	
	St Luke 2:1-14	
December 29h	***"Nothing New"***	**St. Luke 2:22**
	Hymn of the Day: ***" Let All Together Praise Our God"***	**LSB 389**
	Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15	
	Psalm 111	
	Colossians 3:12-17	
	St Luke 2:22-40	

