

# Christmas Confessions

2023

Advent Devotional



# Christmas Confessions

Throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons, many confessions may come up. I ate too many cookies. I spent too much on presents. But at the same time, we as Christians, have confessions as well. I am excited to share the joy that I have about Jesus' birth with others! The Son of God, Jesus, came to this earth, born in a manger, to ultimately die for my sins and grant me eternal life. While we can confess things that we struggle with this Advent, may our true confession be about the true reason for the season, Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The four Christmas Confessions that we will look at this year, are *waiting, gifts, joy, and safety*.

## The Four Christmas Confessions

### Waiting - Week 1

We don't like to wait. Waiting is difficult. But in Advent, we wait to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and we await his second coming.

### Gifts - Week 2

We love gifts. God gives great gifts. Too often we can focus Christmas on the gifts under the tree, rather than the gift in the manger.

### Joy - Week 3

Joy can be hard to find. The holidays for many reasons can be filled with every emotion but joy. But the joy we have is found in the True Reason for the season.

### Safety - Week 4

Sometimes we want to keep baby Jesus in the manger. We like Him there, and we like that He's safe there. But Jesus came for a reason, giving up His safety for our eternal salvation.



# November 26

Malachi 3:1

**“I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty.**

We wait constantly. We wait for funny cat videos to download. We sit in the car with the engine running waiting for our children to put on their dress shoes instead of play shoes while desperate to get to church on time. During Advent, we wait for Christmas's time off of work, presents, sweets, and family we've missed. But Advent isn't waiting for a value meal at McDonald's and only time standing between us and a quarter-pounder with cheese. Advent is about preparation. When new parents await the birth of a child, they buy cribs, strollers, and onesies and paint the walls of their nursery. New parents don't wait for their new child; they prepare for them. They complete a list of tasks but must also reflect on what kind of parent they aspire to be and the values they hope their children to possess and do so because to raise their child well, there must be change in themselves. During Advent, our scripture will again announce the good news of Christ's birth, but will we be prepared? Or, are we simply waiting? During this Advent, let's not simply wait. Let's grow in our faith, change for the better, and, like the dutiful parent, let's be prepared to greet the birth of our Lord.

*Dear Lord, guide our preparation for the birth of Jesus. Amen.*

Hymn – “Prepare the Royal Highway” (LSB 343 – Stanza 1)

Prepare the royal highway;  
The King of kings is near!  
Let ev'ry hill and valley  
A level road appear!  
Then greet the King of Glory  
Foretold in sacred story:  
Hosanna to the Lord,  
For He fulfills God's Word!

Devotion by: Chris Manning

# November 27

Micah 5:4

**He will stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will live securely, for then His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.**

Man fell into sin in the Garden of Eden and God promised a Savior. There was going to be Christmas. God's people waited for the Savior. When Micah prophesied that the Savior was coming, people had waited for over 3,000 years, and it was going to be 700 more years before the angel would proclaim to shepherds "To you this day in the City of David is born the Savior". Such a long wait! But God keeps His promises. When the right time came, God sent his Son (Galatians 4:4). While God's people waited for the Savior, they were waiting for the end of other difficulties. They were waiting for an end to slavery in Egypt, to enter the promised land, and the end of the Babylonian captivity.

It's Advent, and we're waiting for Christmas. Our joy over the anticipation of Christmas is clouded by other things. Sometimes we are waiting for healing, for a job offer, for the end to financial uncertainty, family discord, loneliness or grief. Sometimes it's a long wait. God kept his promise to send a Savior. He promises us that there are no more tears, no more pain, no more death coming. We are waiting for that day with assurance knowing God always keeps His promises. We know because of Christmas.

*Lord, great is Your faithfulness. All Your words are amen and amen. Thank You that You are my Rock, my firm foundation. Thank You that I can always trust You. Amen.*

Hymn – "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" (LSB 711 – Stanza 1)

Savior, like a shepherd lead us;  
Much we need Your tender care.  
In Your pleasant pastures feed us,  
For our use Your fold prepare.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
You have bought us; we are Yours.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
You have bought us; we are Yours.

Devotion by: Jean Walter

# November 28

Micah 5:2

**But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.**

When I started my freshman year of high school, I was a shorter kid. I was what they call, “a late-bloomer.” And I couldn’t stand waiting to be taller. I prayed about it a lot. I even ate all my vegetables. My family had one of those doors in our basement where you keep track of how much you’ve grown, and I would wander down to check my height and leave unsatisfied. Waiting can be painful. Especially when it seems like everyone else has what you want. And yet, we often experience growth in the painful waiting, and God’s timing remains perfect.

Micah prophecies about a small town of Bethlehem that would wait for something great. This small group of people would have to trust in a promise of growth for 700 years before this great ruler would come. That’s a long wait! But this Jesus would be worth the wait. While we wait for the coming of Jesus, we cling to this same promise. A promise fulfilled in a King who is reigning over everything now; and a promise we still cling to as we wait for the return of this King in glory!

*Prayer: Gracious Father, be near to us in the waiting. Give us courage to cling to Your promises, that we might share Your love this Advent. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Hymn – “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (LSB 361 – Stanza 1)

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

Devotion by: Vicar Noah Pieper

# November 29

Mark 1:4

**And so John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.**

Thousands of years after promising to send a Savior, God's people were still waiting for that promise to be fulfilled. And, because they hadn't heard from God for over 300 years, His people had started to wonder and worry that He might have promised more than He could deliver or, maybe, God simply had forgotten how much they needed Him and His blessing.

Then, suddenly, the troublesome silence was broken by the sound of a single voice - John the Baptizer crying out in the wilderness. "Don't worry," he declared, "God hasn't forgotten either you or His promise." "It won't be long before all your worries, doubts and fears are gone and you're only left with reason to rejoice and celebrate."

"But first, while you're waiting, there's work to be done. Repent! Take your sin seriously. Recognize how it has left our world and life disfigured, bent and broken. And confess you have no hope without the Savior who is coming soon."

So just be patient. Don't worry. It won't be long before we celebrate the birth of our Savior and rejoice in the hope He gives as we watch and wait for Him to come again.

*Lord, bless us with patience as we await the Savior's birth. May we find joy in His coming, and hope in His promise to come again. Amen.*

Hymn – "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry" (LSB 344 – Stanza 2)

Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;  
Make straight the way for God within,  
And let us all our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.

Devotion by: Glenn Kopper

# November 30

Psalms 27:14

## **Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.**

Waiting, having patience is hard. Virtually every year shopping was done, gifts were wrapped, decorations were all in place and now we had to wait for the “Big Day”. I’m not sure who was more impatient, the kids or us as the parents.

Tradition called for traveling to my wife's family in West Michigan, on Christmas Eve. That was fine until our children got old enough that we needed to start our own traditions. Do we wait until we return home or push our family Christmas celebration earlier? Do I even need to answer? Of course it was done the weekend before Christmas, where it resides to this day.

As we mature, maybe we become more aware of the importance of time and waiting. There is something about the anticipation of a special event that increases its value. A wedding engagement, pregnancy announcement for a new grandchild, the birth of a Savior. The excitement during the waiting builds to a climax.

*Lord help us to appreciate the journey, the waiting, as we walk through the Advent season, preparing for the baby, Jesus. Amen.*

Hymn – “Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come” (LSB 350 – Stanza 1)

Come, Thou precious Ransom, come,  
Only hope for sinful mortals!  
Come, O Savior of the world!  
Open are to Thee all portals.  
Come, Thy beauty let us see;  
Anxiously we wait for Thee.

# December 1

Isaiah 40:31

**But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.**

I'm getting old. I knew it was coming I just thought it would take longer. But it sure came on fast. I wish I had had more time to prepare for it. I find myself not being able to do the things I used to do or encountering situations that I am not prepared for such as an illness or death of a family member or friend. Many times we just can't prepare ourselves for what life throws at us. And many times it seems we just don't have the strength to deal with those situations.

Strength. What is it and where does it come from? "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Familiar words from the One who gives us strength. The Israelites who first received this promise were worn out from their hardships (based on recent events, some things never change) and we encounter many hardships in our own lives. But take heart, God is an endless source of strength and He gives it generously to those who ask for it. Just ask Him.

*Dear God, Give me strength not just when I ask for it, but during those times when You feel I need it. Amen.*

Hymn – "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (LSB 790 – Stanza 2)

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is wondrously reigning  
And, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.  
Have you not seen  
All that is needful has been  
Sent by His gracious ordaining!

Devotion by: Tim Mulvaney



## December 2

Psalms 130:5-6

**I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in His word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.**

Waiting can be difficult and frustrating. How often we would like to skip waiting--waiting in line, waiting in slow traffic, waiting for vacation to start, waiting for test results, etc. We might not even want to wait through Advent season for the day we celebrate Jesus' birth.

Psalms 130 is one of the penitential psalms which begins with the author crying out to God for mercy for sins committed and reverently realizing God's forgiveness. In verses 5 & 6, the author seems to pivot to being determined to patiently wait on God and His powerful word which confers hope. Christian hope is not something we wish to happen, but something we know will happen. God's word conveys His promises which will certainly come to pass. His forgiveness will come just as surely as the daylight of dawn arrives for watchmen. The author proclaims his waiting for the Lord is more profound than that of a night watchman waiting for daylight. This Advent let's wait patiently for the coming of Jesus. His coming was the beginning of God's incredible plan to save us from our sins.

*Dear Heavenly Father, we confess that it's often agonizing to wait, but we know that Your promise of our Savior came true. Help us wait patiently for the celebration of Jesus' birth. Amen.*

Hymn – "From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee" (LSB 607 – Stanza 3)

Therefore my hope is in the lord  
And not in mine own merit;  
It rests upon His faithful Word  
To them of contrite spirit  
That He is merciful and just;  
That is my comfort and my trust.  
His help I wait with patience.

Devotion by: Stacy Boyd

## December 3

Isaiah 40:1

### **Comfort, comfort My people, says your God.**

God told Isaiah to “Comfort, comfort my people...” The repetition of “comfort” is important, as it reveals an emphasis on that word. (Earlier in the book, Isaiah relays to us the image of the seraphim calling to one other “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord...” emphasizing the holiness of God.) By repeating the word comfort, God expressed the importance he gives to providing comfort to his people. Today he still desires to comfort us through the power of the Holy Spirit, “the Comforter”.

God not only provides comfort directly to us through the Holy Spirit, but he asks his people to continue to comfort one another. And to help us develop in this area, he provides a training ground – our own sufferings. “...the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1: 4

In these difficult and tumultuous times, we are not called to explain the reasons for every tragedy that occurs in the lives of friends and families. We are called to comfort those going through trials, to provide encouragement, and to alleviate grief.

Who is God asking you to comfort this season?

*Lord, Proverbs 18:14 states, “The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?” May those who attend OSL’s Blue Christmas Service be touched by your comfort and love through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Hymn – “Comfort, Comfort Ye My People” (LSB 347 – Stanza 1)

“Comfort, comfort ye My people,  
Speak ye peace,” thus saith our God;  
“Comfort those who sit in darkness,  
Mourning ‘neath their sorrows load.  
Speak ye to Jerusalem  
Of the peace that waits for them;  
Tell her that her sins I cover  
And her warfare now is over.”

Devotion by: Wayne Joubert

# December 4

Luke 1:31

**You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.**

Gifts can mean many things to many people; obligation, stress, guilt, maybe some joy. For most of us, Christmas can make us feel pressure to get it all right, from presents to the perfect Christmas dinner. We tell ourselves if we fail, we will ruin Christmas, right?

When Mary got her instructions from Angel Gabriel I'm sure she wondered and worried about the child growing inside her. She was responsible to carry the Savior for the whole world, what's to worry about? Despite it all she trusted God and gracefully obeyed.

God gave us the gift of perfect love straight from His heart when He gave us Jesus. This gift was not an act of obligation but was selfless and because we needed a Savior. Don't let the perfect gift from God get overshadowed by our own need to give.

*Dear God, Thank You for Your perfect gift of Jesus. Help us to reflect the perfect love which You gave us, to others this Christmas season. Amen.*

Hymn – “Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love” (LSB 900 – Stanza 2)

Jesus, name decreed of old,  
To the maiden mother told,  
Kneeling in her lowly cell,  
By the angel Gabriel.

# December 5

Isaiah 40:8

**The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”**

There was a time when each year the nation's largest retailer sent a Christmas toy catalog to every home. My brothers and sisters and I would look through that catalog for hours. Knowing that money was tight we tried to make the best choices for our dream list. Mom and dad did their best to please and we received many wonderful gifts. The years and gifts came and went. All that remains are the memories.

As the years passed I became the gift giver first to my girl friend, who became my wife and then to our children. Every once in awhile I would find a gift that I knew was just right. Nothing is more satisfying than giving that perfect gift. Again the years and gifts came and went. Memories were made but slowly faded into the next year.

How amazing it is that God knows exactly what we need. We struggle year after year trying to quench our own desires when everything we need has been given to us. In His great wisdom God sent the gift that would endure forever. This year start your Christmas list with sharing the greatest gift that God has already given.

*Dear Lord, thank You for the everlasting gift that we have received through Your Son Jesus. Please bless our Christmas list with sharing Your gift. Amen.*

Hymn – “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (LSB 656 – Stanza 4)

The Word they still shall let remain  
Nor any thanks have for it;  
He's by our side upon the plain  
With His good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life,  
Goods, fame, child, and wife,  
Though these all be gone,  
Our vict'ry has been won;  
The kingdom ours remaineth.

Devotion by: Bill Hall

# December 6

Romans 6:23

**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Here is my confession: I don't want to shop for Christmas gifts, and I don't want to get Christmas gifts. Is this sad? Sort of. I LOVE giving gifts throughout the year, but I don't love the pressure of finding the perfect thing for so many people at Christmas time.

I'm not Mrs. Scrooge! I love the gift of being together with our whole family in a beautiful candlelit church on Christmas Eve. But even that experience (a blessing!) can take my eyes off the One True Gift we are celebrating. The One who was born to die. Who, out of unfathomable love, came to rescue us from our sin debt, paid it in full, and invites us to trust in Him for eternal life.

Our Lord's Christmas Gift is one for the ages, and for all. Thank You, Father, for Your merciful, gracious, Priceless and Perfect Gift.

*Dear Jesus, please help me keep my focus on You this Christmas Season. Thank You for loving me so much that You came down from heaven to live a sinless life, showing me The Way, and then died in my place because You want me to be with You forever one day. Amen.*

Hymn – "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" (LSB 366 – Stanza 3)

All you beneath your heavy load,  
By care and guilt bent low,  
Who toil along a dreary way  
With painful steps and slow:  
Look up, for golden is the hour,  
Come swiftly on the wing,  
The Prince was born to bring you peace;  
Of Him the angels sing.

# December 7

Luke 1:35

**The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”**

We commonly think of confessions in relation to something that has been done wrong. Confession may be viewed as a gift. It relieves us of the burden of carrying the wrong, and is the first step toward reconciliation. God promises to forgive our sins. Through confession of our sins, we receive the gift of forgiveness from God. Confession can also be viewed as the telling of the truth. In this section of scripture about the conception of our Savior, Jesus the Christ, Luke records two significant truths. Mary reveals that she is a virgin. The angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will be with child through the Holy Spirit, and the child will thereby be the Son of God. By confessing (telling) this truth to Mary the angel Gabriel is revealing God's most precious gift (Jesus) to us. Confession can also be a statement of what we believe, as when we confess our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Scriptures recorded in the Bible are a gift from God and give us the confidence to make this confession.

*Lord God, we thank You for the blessings and gifts You give to us each day. We especially thank You for Your greatest gift, Jesus, through whom we have forgiveness of our sins and the gift of eternal life with You in heaven. Amen.*

Hymn – “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came” (LSB 356 – Stanza 2)

“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
All generations laud and honor thee;  
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

# December 8

James 1:17

**Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.**

If you do an internet search for “the perfect gift” you will be overwhelmed by thousands of items to choose from. They will range in price from ten dollars to a thousand dollars and can be delivered the next day. The perfect gift James is referring to is the light from God. When we encounter hardships in our lives that cast shadows on our faith, we turn from God and ask how these bad things can happen to us. In these times we need to turn to God’s light and replace the blame with thanksgiving to everything He has given us. No darkness can be found with God.

*Dear Heavenly Father. Thank You so much for giving and for being the light of the world. We ask that You center our hearts and our minds to who You are. Where we fall short, correct us in our ways and where we need Your truth, shine Your light upon us. I love You Lord and thank You for Your Holy word. In Jesus name, we pray all these things. Amen.*

Hymn – “From God Can Nothing Move Me” (LSB 713 – Stanza 4)

Each day at His good pleasure  
God's gracious will is done.  
He sent His greatest treasure  
In Jesus Christ, His Son.  
He ev'ry gift imparts.  
The bread of earth and heaven  
Are by His kindness given.  
Praise Him with thankful hearts!

## December 9

Ephesians 2:8-9

**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.**

In our family room, we have a sign that says "Grace changes everything". For our family, this means that the grace we give one another out of love and compassion allows us to be fully human and caring within our family. We also recognize that God's grace is transformational and changes how we view our lives. If it wasn't for God's grace, our lives would be meaningless. However, because of His grace, we are compelled to live in honor of the almighty God.

This sign, "Grace changes everything" goes well with today's scripture verse because Paul reminds us that God's grace is not from our works, but from God through our faith. God's grace is indeed the greatest gift we can get. We do not have the right to claim this gift as our own or caused by our good works. Instead, this unbelievable gift came to earth for our salvation. All we can do is bow down and worship the newborn King.

*Father God, Thank You for Your gift of grace. We do not deserve this gift. Throughout this advent season, help us to remember this gift truly changes everything. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Hymn – "Salvation unto Us Has Come" (LSB 555 – Stanza 1)

Salvation unto us has come  
By God's free grace and favor;  
Good works cannot avert our doom,  
They help and save us never.  
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,  
Who did for all the world atone;  
He is our one Redeemer.

Devotion by: Jake Kasper



# December 10

Isaiah 35:1-2a

**Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.**

There are times in our lives when we feel we live in a barren or parched land, filled with darkness and despair. Perhaps we have lost a loved one, face debilitating physical or mental problems for ourselves or loved ones, have financial difficulties, or are dealing with family problems. The state of the world around us may also be depressing us. At times like this, it is difficult to find the joy of Christmas. Yet, this is why the season of Advent is so wonderful. During our time of preparation for the coming of Christ, we are focused upon the light and hope Jesus brings to our lives. Just as the glorious sight of the desert bursting forth in bloom when the rains come puts us in awe, so the coming of Jesus brings so much joy in our lives. Following Jesus and sharing Jesus with others, allows us to bloom with God's glory and splendor. We rejoice in the anticipation of Jesus coming, not just at Christmas, but that He will come again. During this season of Advent, we need to allow ourselves to be filled with abundant joy and life.

*Dear Lord, during this season of Advent, we ask You to keep us from dwelling on the sadness in our lives. Instead, allow us to focus on the joy You bring us with your coming. Amen.*

Hymn – “What Hope! An Eden Prophesied” (LSB 342 – Stanza 2)

A shoot will sprout from Jesse's stem,  
A branch from David's line,  
A Prince of Peace in Bethlehem:  
The fruit of God's design.

Devotion by: Wendy Greve

# December 11

Isaiah 35:6

**Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.**

This is a busy time of the year. The hustle-bustle of the holiday season often puts demands upon us that we feel we cannot meet. We may be experiencing troubles in our lives that make it impossible for us to feel any joy, so we put on the “mask” of cheerfulness to try to make it through the holidays. Isaiah 35:6 reminds us that we have a God whose power has no limits. He can take the most desolate situations of our lives, turn them around, and make them beautiful. We turn to Him in our times of need and pray, and He gives us more than we can possibly ask for. He made “the lame leap like a deer” – not just “walk”, but “leap” – which is far more than they dared hope for! In the same way, our God sent His Son, Jesus to save us from our sins so that we can spend our lives in Heaven with Him where we will experience pure joy. This is so much more than we could have ever imagined!

*Father, thank You for sending Jesus – Your perfect gift – to mankind. He brings us more hope and joy than we could have ever imagined! Amen!*

Hymn – “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”

My heart for very joy must leap;  
My lips no more can silence keep.  
I, too must sing with joyful tongue  
That sweetest ancient cradle song.

# December 12

Isaiah 35:10

**And those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.**

Sometimes the anxieties caused by social expectations during the Christmas season cause our hearts to wander from the Joy in Jesus we have been given. We find our minds filled with thoughts of budgets for gifts, what presents to give, food to prepare, get-togethers to plan. It can overtake our minds in opposition to what we read about in this Bible verse, namely, that the Lord has rescued us and we will have everlasting joy to crown our heads!

The Christ-child's coming is our pathway to salvation and a heaven where sorrow and sighing will flee away. So, turn off the path of anxiety and walk on the Jesus road to salvation and everlasting life. Dance and sing along the way for we have much to celebrate!

*Lord, Forgive us when we let the world take the true joy out of our preparations for Christmas. Help us to remember to sing, laugh, and dance with joy-filled lives of gratitude for Your love and our Savior-King. Amen.*

Hymn – “Joy to the World” (LSB 387 – Stanza 2)

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Devotion by: Scott Davenport

# December 13

Luke 1:41

## **When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

We often find ourselves feeling overwhelmed this time of the year. Our minds are distracted by all of the things we think we have to get done for the holidays, and we are not thinking about the REASON for the season – Jesus. We are not feeling the joy we should be feeling as we prepare to celebrate His birth. What must Mary have felt? She was a teenager preparing to marry Joseph when suddenly, her life took a strange turn.

The Angel Gabriel appeared out of nowhere to tell her she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and bear God's Son, Jesus – the promised Messiah. What a huge responsibility! How overwhelming is THAT!? After the Angel left, she must have wondered, "Did that REALLY happen?" She needed to talk to someone – but who? Gabriel had told her that her relative, Elizabeth, had also conceived, so Mary went to see her. The moment Mary greeted her, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and immediately worshipped Jesus – confirming the message that Mary had received from the Angel. What pure joy Mary must have felt at that moment as she began preparing for His birth!

*Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with pure joy this Christmas season as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Amen.*

Hymn – "When All the World Was Cursed" (LSB 346 – Stanza 2)

Before he yet was born,  
He leaped in joyful meeting,  
Confessing Him as Lord  
Whose mother he was greeting.  
By Jordan's rolling stream,  
A new Elijah bold,  
He testified of Him  
Of whom the prophets told.

Devotion by: Myrna Tate

# December 14

Luke 1:46-47

**And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”**

Angel Gabriel had visited Mary and announced her upcoming pregnancy and the importance of the Child she'd deliver. Exciting news, right?! Not for an unmarried young Jewish girl engaged to be married!

Scripture tells us Mary was “greatly troubled at his words” (vs.29). And, she questioned, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” (vs.34). She expressed her discomfort and wondering at this news. God planned to assure her. She learned of Elizabeth's pregnancy and was reminded of her faith in the God of possibility and promise. The baby leaped for joy in Elizabeth's womb at Mary's greeting, Elizabeth rejoicingly said, “Blessed is she who has believed...” (vs.45).

Today, God chooses us to participate in His plan for telling the story of salvation to the world. Do we feel discomfort and unsure of sharing the “Christ” in Christmas with coworkers, family, and neighbors? We question the Lord asking, “But what do I say and how will they react?” We can believe and rejoice in His making all things possible. With Mary we respond, “for the Mighty One has done great things for me.” (vs. 49).

*Our Mighty King, Help us glorify You with bold witness and joy!  
Amen.*

Hymn – “My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord” (LSB 934 – Stanza 1)

My soul now magnifies the Lord;  
My spirit leaps for joy in Him.  
He keeps me in His kind regard,  
And I am blest for time to come.

# December 15

Romans 15:13

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Have you ever been distracted with thoughts of angst in moments that you are sharing with your loved ones, which should bring you happiness and joy? Maybe it's a work deadline, an upcoming test in school, or a personal conflict? Whatever it may be, we all lose ourselves in our struggles and challenges – even to the point that we lose out on opportunities to share precious moments with those we love. Sometimes we even get stressed out during the Christmas season – rushing to get everything done, trying to make the perfect meal, or finding that perfect present for everyone on your list.

It is in these moments that we can call on the Holy Spirit to help refocus ourselves to trusting in the Lord. It is through Him that we find true peace and joy, which allows us to be in the moment with our loved ones and share in the joy and peace that the promise of eternal life brings because of our faith in Jesus Christ.

If you ever catch yourself being distracted by thoughts of worry, remember that our God is the God of hope and trust in Him delivers the truest joy and peace.

*Dear Lord, please help me remember to trust in You so that I may feel the joy and peace that only You can bring. Amen.*

Hymn – “Once He Came in Blessing” (LSB 333 – Stanza 1)

Once He came in blessing,  
All our sins redressing;  
Came in likeness lowly,  
Son of God most holy;  
Bore the cross to save us;  
Hope and freedom gave us.

Devotion by: Tom and Nikki Judd

# December 16

Philippians 4:4

## **Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**

We've been writing lists since Easter; each family member has their own list of things upon things upon things. We've been coordinating and re-coordinating holiday plans with loved ones near and far. We've been dreading gatherings and traditions that will look different this year, where one loved one once was might now be empty. Tired of the financial strain and rush and pain of losses and changes, great and small. Where's the joy in all that? Joy to the World? How can I rejoice when every Christmas song I hear on the radio just sounds like jolly junk rattling in my cluttered brain?

Another Christmas and we're still recovering from the last one. So often, we confuse joy with happiness. Happiness is here and gone in a moment but joy is so much greater! It is a deeper, richer everlasting gift that comes from our Heavenly Father. A gift that we get to have and share not only at Christmas, but every single day. Why? Because Christ is our Joy! So rejoice! Always! Again, I say rejoice!

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of joy. Remind us every single day that joy comes from You and only You. Put songs on our lips, make us rejoice always! Amen.*

Hymn – "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (LSB 357 – Stanza 1)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

# December 17

Isaiah 53:5

**But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed.**

The coming of a baby. It brings feelings of happiness, joy, warmth, and love. New parents find themselves crying tears of joy as their little bundle is placed in their arms. They have an overwhelming feeling of protectiveness and wanting to keep their baby safe.

Jesus came to earth as a baby. An adorable, cute little bundle of joy, whose parents wanted to keep him safe. And every year, we relive those feelings. We feel comfortable keeping baby Jesus safely swaddled in his cloths, lying in a manger.

But all too soon, we remember the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah. This Savior would be pierced for our sins, His bones would be crushed for our iniquities, His punishment would bring us peace, and His wounds will heal us. Quite the anomaly. The baby would grow up to suffer horrible things for us, so we could safely look forward to spending eternity with our Father in heaven.

*Dear Crucified Savior, Forgive us for wanting to keep You safely tucked in Your little bed, even though we have heard from ages past that Your suffering would bring us peace and a restored relationship with God. Amen.*

Hymn – “What Child Is This” (LSB 370 – Stanza 2)

Why lies He in such mean estate  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,  
The cross, be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The babe, the son of Mary!

Devotion by: Beth Krause



# December 18

Isaiah 53:12

**Therefore I will give Him a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong, because He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**

Many people and products keep us safe on a daily basis. Our military, police, cybersecurity specialists, doctors, research specialists, vehicles, buildings...and the list goes on. But is there any one thing that can keep us safe in every situation?

It is amazing that 700 years before our Savior was born, Isaiah portrayed Christ's birth through his death! It is truly Holy Spirit-inspired scripture. Isaiah says our servant, Christ, will pour out his soul into death, bearing the sins of the world. Christ is the ultimate provider of safety because without Him, we would be doomed for eternity. Instead, with the faithful servant Christ, Satan and his angels are defeated. This is our ultimate safety and security and allows us to join our Heavenly Father for eternity.

*Father God, thank You for the gift of salvation in Your son, Jesus, who provides us the safety we need from Satan. Help us to look to Your word and lift our needs to You in all circumstances. We thank You for being true to Your promises. Help us to teach others about the promised salvation through Jesus. Amen.*

Hymn – “Jesus Came the Heavens Adoring” (LSB 333 – Stanza 1)

Jesus came, the heav'ns adoring,  
Came with peace from realms on high;  
Jesus came to win redemption,  
Lowly came on earth to die;  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Came in deep humility.

Devotion by: Brett Kaschinske

# December 19

Matthew 1:19

**Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.**

God has given each of us remarkable, personal gifts. Sometimes in search of safety—emotional and social—we put ourselves in labeled boxes “I am the quiet one”, “I am the cerebral one”, “I am the hot head”, “I am the class clown”. We react accordingly when confronted with a problem. Perhaps Joseph had put himself in the “I am the righteous, law abiding, kind one” box. If so, quietly divorcing Mary was the safe thing to do for himself. God had another plan. He took Joseph out of that self-imposed, safe box and changed his life into something glorious and truly righteous. Maybe God has another plan for us. Maybe His gifts to us include something we haven't thought of and don't think we want. An angel had to come to Joseph with a better response to Mary's news. We just need to pray.

*Dear God, our powerful Lord and Savior, help us to always bring our problems to You. Please don't let our love of safety limit our lives of service. Drive us to be open to all the gifts we have and use them to honor, obey and follow Your fabulous plan. Amen.*

Hymn – “By All Your Saints in Warfare” (LSB 517 – Stanza 14)

We sing our thanks for Joseph,  
The guardian of our Lord,  
Who faithfully taught Jesus  
Through craft and deed and word.  
Grant wisdom, Lord, and patience  
To parents ev'rywhere  
Who guide and teach the children  
Entrusted to their care.

# December 20

Matthew 1:21-22

**“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet.**

God with us. What a safe feeling we get when we read these words. The Christmas image of Jesus in the manger along with the advent of the Gospel gives us comfort, safety, and peace.

Yet for baby Jesus this safety would not remain. Out of jealousy for his kingdom King Herod ordered the slaughter of all boys in Bethlehem two years old and younger. Jesus was in danger. By the prompting of an angel in his dream, Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt for safety. The manger's comfort, safety, and peace had passed. God provided. It is no different for His disciples. On this side of heaven there is danger. But God still provides:

-When He calls on you to take up your cross in His name He will always be with you. (Matt 16:24-25)

-When on the day evil comes He provides His full armor so you may be able to stand your ground. (Eph 6:13).

-When sin takes its' toll on your soul He will be there to give you comfort. (Matt 5:4)

-When God calls on you to “GO” and make disciples He promises to be with you always. (Matt 28:18-20).

*Lord Jesus, please help me to trust in Your safety. In this Advent season please help me to say “yes” when You say “Go!”. Amen.*

Hymn – “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You” (LSB 334 – Stanza 5)

Sin's debt, that fearful burden,  
Cannot His love erase;  
Your guilt the Lord will pardon  
And cover by His grace.  
He comes, for you procuring  
The peace of sin forgiv'n,  
His children thus securing  
Eternal life in heav'n.

Devotion by: John Hernandez

# December 21

Psalms 46:1

## **God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.**

It is in our relationship with God that we find our strength regardless of the troubles that are currently taking place in the world today or those that are ahead. God is with us, He is present, He is our helper and protector. "For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in Your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of Your wings." Psalms 61:3-4

If we allow ourselves to think about all that is taking place in the world today, worry and concern start to creep in. Rather than thinking about such things, we can find rest in Him and be comforted knowing that He is always there to see us through.

God strengthens us not only to defy evil and get through troubling times, but He strengthens us to be content in every circumstance. When we have a deep and confident joy in Him, regardless of our troubles, we have peace. Peace that can only be found in our Heavenly Father.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us unconditionally and being our strength and shelter. Help us to always remember that You are near no matter what we may be facing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Hymn – "Jesus, Refuge of the Weary"

Jesus, refuge of the weary,  
Blest Redeemer, whom we love,  
Fountain in life's desert dreary,  
Savior from the world above:  
Often have Your eyes offended,  
Gazed upon the sinner's fall;  
Yet upon the cross extended,  
You have borne the pain of all.

Devotion by: Tina Ferris

# December 22

Psalms 91:1-2

**Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."**

A baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, dwelling in a lowly manger with straw for a bed is as mighty as a fortress. He may be tiny, but He is almighty. In our sinful lives, our dwelling place is cold, broken-down, and seemingly beyond repair. But when we call upon Jesus and confess Him as our Lord and Savior, He shelters us. He is our protector from the predators, our shield from the devil's snares, our refuge from the wicked, our light in the darkness, our provider in the depression. He answers our calls for help and rescues us from our troubles. He takes us in, cleans us up, and promises to never leave our side. This loving embrace provides a refuge of peace and safety. It can be found in the simplest of things: His Holy Word spoken to us in the forgiveness of sins and the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. As we eagerly await the birth of our Savior, let us dwell in the presence of the Almighty one instead of the evils of this world.

*Dear Lord, thank You for giving us peace and comfort when we dwell in your presence. Amen.*

Hymn – "The Night Will Soon Be Ending" (LSB 337 – Stanza 2)

The One whom angels tended  
Comes near, a child, to serve;  
Thus God, the judge offended,  
Bears all our sins deserve.  
The guilty need not cower,  
For God has reconciled  
Through His redemptive power  
All those who trust this child.

Devotion by: Meghan Sternemann

# December 23

Luke 2:13-14

**Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”**

Christmas – It's the most wonderful time of the year, as the Andy Williams song goes. Sometimes as we hear this song playing on the radio and throughout the stores, it is tempting to wish that every day was Christmas. Gatherings with family, friends and coworkers, Christmas music playing wherever we go, the joy experienced in the giving and receiving of gifts and hearing the words of Luke 2 tell the wonderful story of Jesus' birth. Why can't every day be Christmas? But if we only focus on Jesus as the baby in the manger, then we miss out on the purpose of that wonderful gift we received. Jesus did not come to earth to stay in the manger. He came to go to that cross on Calvary to die for the sins of all mankind so that we would have life eternal with Him.

This Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, may we, like the multitude of the heavenly host that joined the angel, boldly share the good news of the Messiah who came to earth to suffer and die for our sins and be raised to life again so that we too would have life everlasting.

*Heavenly Father, help us to share the news of the Savior with those around us, not just at Christmas, but each and every day. Amen.*

Hymn – “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” (LSB 380 – Stanza 1)

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn king;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Devotion by: Carla Kaschinske

# December 24

Luke 2:16

**So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.**

What's Your Hurry?

There is a lot of talk during the Advent season about waiting and being patient. Meanwhile, the weeks prior to Christmas can be some of the busiest of the year, with decorations to set out, gifts to buy, goodies to bake, and with various gatherings and events to attend. The shepherds didn't have that same perspective, did they? They had been waiting along with everyone else for the Savior to come. Then, all of a sudden, what began as an ordinary night changed the course of history. The angels appeared, made their announcement, and left. But that was only the beginning for the shepherds. They knew it was time to go, right away, and they didn't wait. They hurried into town to find the Savior, and they did not stop there. Once they saw Him, they were compelled to tell everyone they saw what had happened. Then they went back to work, praising God for what they had heard and seen. They didn't know the part they would play in God's plan of salvation, they just knew that it was time to go.

*Dear Lord Jesus, show us when it's time to wait, and when it's time to hurry. Amen.*

Hymn – “Angels We Have Heard on High” (LSB 368 – Stanza 3)

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

# December 25

Luke 2:12

**This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”**

A generation doesn't seem to pass before the baby crib you used for all your children is deemed "unsafe". Even in the first century, a feeding trough couldn't have been considered the safest place to lay a newborn. Nevertheless, God used this odd placement for a child to confirm the promise he originally made to Adam and Eve when the angels told the nearby shepherds about the birth of the Savior. There was no way the shepherds could be uncertain of whom the angels were referring to! And yet, when no one would expect the all-powerful God to have such a humble start on this earth, all the company of heaven couldn't help but come near and shout their praises to Him singing "Glory to God in the highest!"

Our Lord came to this dirty, smelly, unsafe world to ultimately give His life as a sacrifice on the cross: not a very safe way to live one's life. But He did this so that we could be cleansed from our sin, live our lives as pleasing sacrifices to others, and have confidence in the hope of our salvation. Glory be to God on high!

*Most gracious Lord, we thank You for sacrificing Your safety to come in the flesh to give Your life for us fallen creatures. Amen.*

Hymn – "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child" (LSB 374 – Stanza 1)

Gentle Mary laid her child  
Lowly in a manger;  
There He lay the Undefined,  
To the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place,  
Can He be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race  
Who have found His favor.



# December 26

Lamentations 3:23

## **They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

Think about the best Christmas present you ever received. Where is it now? Broken? Lost? In the trash? This world has a way of taking earthly treasures and reducing them to rubble.

When I was a teenager, I visited Pizza Hut with my family at a time of year that was well outside of the Christmas season. Back then, all Pizza Hut restaurants had a Jukebox, and someone happened to play a Christmas song. In the midst of me and my siblings wondering aloud why someone would play a Christmas song when it wasn't Christmas, my dad profoundly remarked, "For Christians, every day is like Christmas!"

I have always remembered those words: "For Christians, every day is like Christmas!"

Isn't it the truth?

Each night we go to bed, having fallen short of the Glory of God, and in the morning we rise, still heirs of eternal life. His mercies "are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:23).

*Dear Heavenly Father, The birth of Your son, Jesus, is the greatest gift we could ever receive. Help us to keep our eyes and our hearts set on You, not just during this season of Advent, but every day. Your love is the only gift that endures forever. Amen.*

Hymn – "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (LSB 809 – Stanza 3)

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;  
Great is Thy faithfulness Lord unto me!

Devotion by: Sarah Felsing

# December 27

Philippians 4:13

## **I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.**

It's easy to get discouraged by the struggles in life. Sometimes it's hard to see beyond the giant standing right in front of you. In today's verse, we see what's possible when we focus on what, or better yet who, is behind that giant staring you in the face. We see joy! Despite Paul being imprisoned and deprived of everything we take for granted, he had joy because he didn't take his eyes off his mission to proclaim salvation through Christ crucified! He had seen the best of times but was in the thick of it and proclaims that nothing will break him because of God's providence. As changing seasons bring different struggles, we ought to try to keep our eyes where they belong, on the One who gives us joy, joy that is the light of Christ to be shared.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for this day and every blessing and protection You provide. Help us to keep our eyes on You and turn to You at all times. Overflow our hearts with Your joy and help us to see the opportunity to share You, in whatever way we can. Amen.*

Hymn – “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” (LSB 338 – Stanza 1)

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us;  
Let us find our rest in Thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art,  
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,  
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

# December 28

Joshua 24:15b

**“But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”**

Making choices can be difficult. Gathering all the information, examining options, making pro and con lists. All of these things can help in making the most informed decision. But what if the decision you need to make requires a lifelong commitment you must choose every day? Would the choice be obvious? To Joshua, when talking to the Israelites it was. When speaking with the elders of the twelve tribes he gives them three choices.

1. Serve the Lord
2. Serve the false gods their fathers served in Egypt
3. Serve the gods of the land and the people that dwelled there

Joshua made his choice known: As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15b). When we choose to follow the Lord, it is not as a one-time declaration. The choice to follow the Lord is the most important decision one needs to make every day. Jesus told us to take up our cross daily and follow him (Luke 9:23). As we approach the new year, work within your household to choosing daily to serve the Lord.

*Dear Lord, You gave us the choice and free will to serve You daily. Help and guide us to You and Your word in the new year and every day. Amen.*

Hymn – “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright” (LSB 395 – Stanza 1)

O Morning Star, how fair and bright!  
You shine with God's own truth and light,  
Aglow with grace and mercy!  
Of Jacob's race, King David's son,  
Our Lord and master, You have won  
Our hearts to serve You only!  
Lowly, holy!  
Great and glorious, All victorious,  
Rich in blessing!  
Rule and might o'er all possessing!

Devotion by: Natalie Clark

# December 29

Romans 8:18

**I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.**

Your heart might be feeling sad and emotionally disconnected from the Christmas season this year due to some of life's difficult circumstances. If this is you, listen to these words from Jesus: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). We often think of blessings only in terms of seeing God's favor based on good things happening. Isn't it great knowing that as a Christian, God has even tucked blessings into our sad times? In times of suffering, not only does God walk beside us, but He has also given us hope through Jesus, that someday He will take away all our sadness and give us a new life even more wonderful than we can ever imagine. The Advent and Christmas seasons are especially important during our emotionally difficult times – this is why Jesus wanted to come to earth as a baby – to set our eyes not on our present sufferings, but to focus on the glorious life to come!

*Lord Jesus, thank You for blessing us with the hope of salvation, even and especially when our hearts are downcast. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Hymn – "O Bride of Christ, Rejoice" (LSB 335 – Stanza 1)

O bride of Christ, rejoice;  
Exultant raise thy voice  
To hail the day of glory  
Foretold in sacred story.  
Hosanna, praise, and glory!  
Our King, we bow before Thee.

# December 30

Psalms 98:1

**Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things;  
His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.**

Maybe your song to the Lord as you enter the new year is not one of joy and thankfulness. Maybe you have a lot weighing on your mind and heart as you enter into the new year. This Psalm calls us to “sing a NEW song” to the Lord for the marvelous things he has done. Maybe our song—our thankfulness—to the Lord has been lacking and we need the Lord to help us change our song. God’s salvation for us is marvelous; His salvation gives us victory and freedom over our earthly lives and situations. This new year maybe God is calling you to change your song to him into one filled with more gratefulness. Come into this new year seeking renewal in your faith of God’s salvation accomplished through the birth of His Son Jesus.

*Dear Jesus, help me to have a change in my song and praise to You this new year. Renew my faith in Your salvation for me. Help me accept the gifts You give me, be filled with Your joy, and take the light of Jesus’ birth into my life and to all people. Amen.*

Hymn – “Hark the Glad Sound” (LSB 349 – Stanza 1)

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,  
The Savior promised long;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne  
And ev'ry voice a song.

# December 31

II Corinthians 5:17

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!**

With the new year we contemplate how we can better ourselves. We make goals and plans usually for our physical well-being, but as believers, we may focus on our spiritual well-being and devotion toward growing in Christ. A rededication to habits such as prayer and Bible reading. The verse for today brings us back to the very beginning when we were spiritually made new in Christ, saved from sin, death, and the devil. Let us praise and thank the Creator for the New Year and the new creation we are in Christ.

*Dear Lord, with each new year I am reminded of how far You have brought me. I thank You for salvation and the work You do in my heart. Amen.*

Hymn – “The Night Will Soon Be Ending” (LSB 337 – Stanza 3)

The earth in sure rotation  
Will soon bring morning bright,  
So run where God's salvation  
Glow in a stable's light.  
As old as sin's perversion  
Is mercy's vast design:  
God brings a new creation  
This child is seal and sign.

# Advent at Our Savior Lutheran

## Sunday Worship Services

**Sunday, November 26 - 8:30 & 10:30am**

"Christmas Confessions: Waiting"

**Sunday, December 3 - 8:30 & 10:30am (Communion)**

"Christmas Confessions: Gifts"

**Sunday, December 10 - 8:30 & 10:30am**

"Christmas Confessions: Joy"

**Sunday, December 17 - 8:30 & 10:30am (Communion)**

"Christmas Confessions: Safety"

### Sunday, December 24

9:30am: Traditional service with communion

10:00am: Christmas Eve Connect Service.

4:00pm Contemporary Christmas Eve service

7:00pm: Organ led Christmas Eve service

10:00pm: Organ with string quartet Christmas Eve service

*All evening services will include candlelight ceremony and communion.*

## Events & Midweek Services

### Faith On Display Midweek Service

Wednesday, November 29th, 7pm

### Advent by Candlelight: "Herbs of Advent"

Saturday, December 2, 2-5pm

### Early Childhood & Kindergarten Christmas Program

Sunday, December 3, 4pm

### Hymn Festival: "Holy Light"

Wednesday, December 6, 7pm

### Advent by Bonfire

Saturday, December 9, 5-8pm

### Grades 1-4 Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 13, 7pm

### Grades 5-8 Christmas Concert

Thursday, December 14, 7pm

### Living Nativity

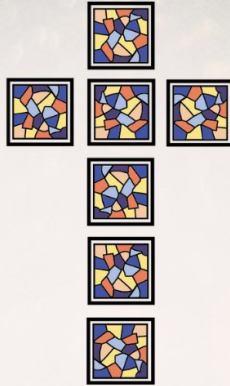
Saturday, December 16, 5-7pm

### Blue Christmas Midweek Service

Wednesday, December 20, 7pm

[oursaviorlansing.org](http://oursaviorlansing.org)





**OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN**  
Church and School



**Learn, Live, Share...Christ**

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