

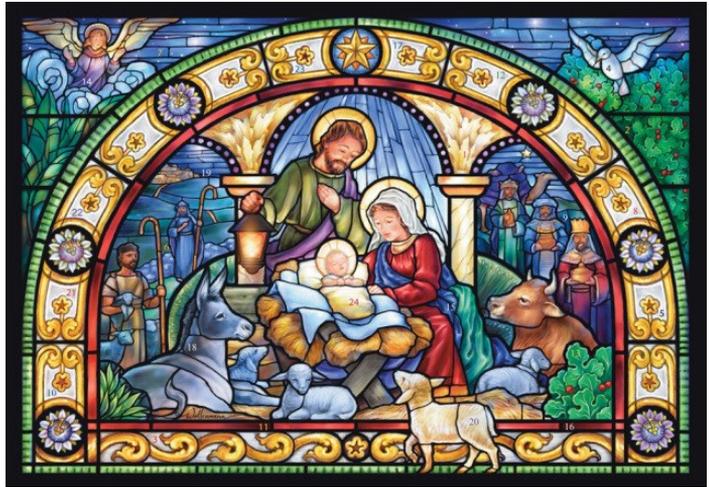
THE
CRESTVIEW LUTHERAN
NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2022



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“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was very perplexed at this statement, and was pondering what kind of greeting this was. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for that reason also the holy Child will be called the Son of God. “ Luke 1:26-35

FROM THE PASTOR

Dearly Beloved,

I am posting the sermon from this past Wednesday evening's Vespers service (Ad Te Levavi) for those of you who were not able to attend. I pray you find it helpful in your being prepared for the celebration of the nativity season and the birth of our Lord. Unfortunately, the newsletter comes but once a month, so you will have to attend the remaining midweek Advent services to hear the remaining sermons. I look forward to seeing you and sharing with you our Lord's blessings.

Pax Christi,

Pastor Parent

--- Jesu Juva ---

Midweek Advent 1 – Ad Te Levavi

Text: Genesis 3; St. Matthew 21:1-9; TLH 58:1-3

In the Name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Advent is a time of prayerful, penitential, contemplation, and waiting. So, too, it is a time of watchfulness, for our Lord has promised His return at an hour when He is least expected. Indeed, all of Advent may be summarized in the message of the Prophet Zechariah, *“Behold, your King is coming to you.”*

How is it, then, that we prepare for the coming of our Lord? How shall we welcome Him aright as our hymn inquires? The author of our hymn, Pastor Paul Gerhardt, provides the answer:

“Oh, kindle, Lord most holy,
Thy lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly
All that may please Thee best.”

Did you catch the subtly within Pastor Gerhardt's request? It is not our preparation at all; it is God's. The sainted Dr. Martin Luther put the answer another way.

“This is what is meant by ‘Thy King cometh.’ You do not seek Him, but He seeks you. You do not find Him, He finds you. For preachers come from Him, not from you; their sermons come from Him, not from you; And where He does not come, you remain outside; and where there is no Gospel there is no God, but only sin and damnation... Therefore, you should not ask, where to begin to be godly; there is no beginning, except where the King enters and is proclaimed.” (Lenker, N. Sermons of Martin Luther I:27)

In other words, thank God that He does not wait until we come to Him. Thank God that He breaks into our world and our lives even though we may find His presence a bit of an inconvenience. I say again, thank God, for if He did not come to us, we would and could never come to Him.

Therefore, we do not prepare ourselves for His coming. We are made prepared. If we could prepare ourselves then why would Jesus bother coming at all? In fact, why should you bother coming at all? If we

can do it all ourselves, that is, if we can prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord, then, the paradox is, that we have no need of the Lord—and it follows then, that there is no need of the Cross. We can all go home and forget what the world believes is nothing more than silly superstition. We can relax and enjoy life as much as our unbelieving family members and neighbors seem to enjoy life.

It is much like raising our infant children as we prepare them to go out to the store or to attend Divine Worship. If they could prepare themselves, we would be far better served taking care of something else that needs to be done. But infants cannot prepare themselves for anything and if we do not care for them, they would be left to lay in their own filth all day long.

So then, how are we prepared? We are prepared simply by the coming of our Lord. What do I mean? As I implied earlier, Advent is not really about our preparation, but about our Lord Jesus' coming. Indeed, the name of the season is derived from Latin; "ad"-meaning "to," and "venio"-meaning "come." Thus, Advent or "to come."

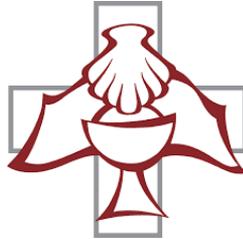
The season of Advent weaves together three "comings" of our Lord.

[First,] "Jesus has come! The One whom God promised to His people actually appeared in history and has permanently united Himself to our human nature. [Second,] Jesus is coming! Even today He continues to come unto us with all of His

grace and favor through His Word and Sacraments. [And third,] Jesus shall come! His tremendous majesty shall be revealed at the end of time. He whom the world nailed to the Cross shall confront His rebellious creatures as their Savior and Judge." (Gehrke, Ralph, Planning the Service, A workbook for Pastors, Organists, and Choirmasters, 21)

It is that "Jesus is coming" part that does the preparation. He is already now secretly and invisibly present in the world, ever since His resurrection from the dead and His exaltation to the right hand of God's power. He is present with and in His gifts of Word and Sacrament to prepare you for His second coming by creating faith in you, in all that He has done for you in His first advent.

Jesus is present now through preaching and the Word, in the waters of Holy Baptism, and with His Body and Blood in the Holy Supper. He comes now, in time, with and under these lowly means, to bestow the forgiveness of sins that He won for you on Calvary. It is this same Jesus, who comes to us today, hidden beneath the covering of Word, water, bread, and wine, who will come uncovered on the Last Day in the full splendor of His glory to be our Judge, even as we confess, "And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, Whose Kingdom will have no end." His coming to you today prepares you to meet Him by grace through faith when He appears again on that Last Day.



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Jesus prepares you so that you will have nothing to fear when He comes again. You once “lay in fetters, groaning,” but Jesus has come to set you free. When you see your Lord on that great and glorious Day, you will not moan nor hang your head in shame. Jesus will honor you as a brother or sister for you are a child of the same heavenly Father. He will take His royal garments and place them on you. He will feed you the finest feast that money cannot buy. He will put a ring on your finger and sandals on your feet. He will give you a crown of gold and place you on a throne.

How shall we meet Jesus? How shall we welcome Him aright? We will receive Him by grace through faith, trusting in His merciful Words as He comes to us with His Body and Blood given and shed so that we will enjoy the gift of eternal life with Him in heaven. He comes to restore you to the joy of His salvation. He will come, and we shall sing, “Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!”

In the Name of the Father, and of the @ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

@ @ @ Soli Deo Gloria @ @ @

Rev. Raymond D. Parent II

Sunday’s Readings

(Lectionary)

Date	Old Testament	Epistle	Gospel
Dec. 4	Mal. 4:1-6	Rom. 15:4-13	Luke 21:25-36
Dec. 7 (Wed.)	—	Rom. 5:1-11	1 John 4:9-10
Dec. 11	Is. 40:1-11	1 Cor. 4:1-5	Matt. 11:2-11
Dec. 14 (Wed.)	—	2 Tim 4:7-8	—
Dec. 18	Deut. 18:15-19	Phil. 4:4-7	John 1:19-28
Dec. 24	Is. 7:10-14	1 John 4:7-16	Matt. 1:18-25
Dec. 25	Ex. 40:17-21, 34-38	Titus 3:4-7	John 1:1-14 (15-18)
Jan. 1	Is. 11:1-5	Gal. 4:1-7	Luke 2:(22-32) 33-40

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In secular circles, there is considerable effort to manage risk in terms of safety, money, etc.. Catchy phrases like “Is the benefit worth the risk?” are common. But many times a more honest rendition is, “Is the benefit for me worth the risk to me?” This quickly degenerates into being all about me.

Christian “risk management” is different. It asks, “Is the benefit for my neighbor worth the risk to me?” When answering, we keep in mind God’s providence and protection, remembering that we trust Him above all things. Don’t misunderstand: we shouldn’t test the Lord with reckless behavior, but it seems to me that we should have a higher tolerance for risk if it benefits our neighbor.

For example, during a tropical storm, a parishioner got a knock at the door from a dirty, ill-dressed, and very wet young man wanting to use the phone because his truck broke down (he has no cell

phone). He’s let into the house and calls his nearby parents, but there’s no answer. So, the parishioner suited up and drove him the 15 minutes to his parent’s house...during the storm. Was it worth it? Yes! The benefit to the young man (and his parents) was obvious; the risk was from the storm and from his wife’s very vocal concerns for his safety and security (because of the stranger). I suppose even Abraham got an earful from Sarah now and then when he welcomed sojourning strangers, but that didn’t stop him.

So, our faith grasps the risk our Father was willing to take as He sacrificed His Son for our eternal benefit. He has set us free to love and serve our neighbor, even in the face of risk. See you Sunday!

Blessings,

Alex



From the Board of Security

Reminder!

Remember to lock the door as you enter one of our buildings if the door is not actively being used. Please see me if you need access to the church building and/or fellowship (parish) hall other than at the usual times the buildings are open. If you are the last to leave the premises, please check all doors to assure they are closed securely and locked.

Thank you! Julie Blaylok, OSELC security Director

COFFEE WITH



Coffee with Pastor
begins with
Matins at 9:00 a.m.

followed by time with Pastor to get to
know him and for him to get to know his
flock!

Birthdays:

- Mary Quarrier 12/11
- Brad Bien 12/15
- Mahlon Haunschild 12/26
- Brittany Quarrier 12/27
- Alzada Sparks 12/30

Women's Bible Study

Thursdays at 10:00

Study of

Psalms

Come join us for a good
time of learning and
fellowship!

Men's Group

There will be no Men's Group this month.
We will resume in January

Mid-Week Advent

Services

Wednesday Evenings

6:00 Soup & Sandwich
Dinner*

7:00 Evening Prayer

(*The sign up sheet for volun-
teers to provide the meal is post-
ed in the Fellowship Hall)

Nov. 30 Dec. 7

Dec.14 Dec. 21

Christmas Divine Services

Christmas Eve—Saturday, Dec.
24th, 7:00p.m

Christmas Day—Sunday, Dec.
25th, 10:00 a.m.

SUNDAY

8:00-8:45—Private Confession

9:00 Sunday School

10:00 Divine Service

*Christmas Pizza
Party*

Friday, December 9

6:30 pm

Fellowship Hall

Pizza, Games, and Fun!

*Bring an unwrapped toy
for Crestview Police
Dept.'s*

Young at Heart Day

Friday, Dec. 16

11 a.m.- 1 p.m.

All are invited for a time of fun
and fellowship

Games · Food · Dirty Santa*

*Bring a gift of \$5 or less if you
wish to participate in Dirty Santa

Please see Dcs. Heather for
details



Youth Field Trip



Saturday, Jan. 14

10:00 a.m.

Tickets for the youth of OSELC will be
provided.

Congregation members are welcome to

FROM THE LCMS PRESIDENT

A Meditation for Christmas

The Bible has many stunning, life-giving and life-changing passages about Christ taking on our human flesh to fulfill the Law, suffer in our stead, open heaven and give us eternal life. How I love Paul's comments in Philippians 2!

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped [as did Satan!] but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 2:5-8)

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus ...

You want to be a Christian? You believe in Jesus? Then be His disciple! So often I fail. I have negative thoughts when I am harassed by the world, or slandered and even lied about. It's hard to forgive and overlook even minor mistakes or perceived slights. Yet Jesus prayed from the cross over those who had crucified Him, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:24). All the wrong I've suffered is not but a speck on a speck compared to what Jesus suffered for me. Too often I sin against others in thought, word and deed and regard it as nothing. How shall I "have this mind?" Paul says, it "is yours in Christ Jesus." O Lord, slay me! O Lord, bring me to nothing! O Lord, look not upon my plethora of sins! The "mind" that I

need is "yours in Christ Jesus." "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). I plunge my sins into the depths of Your wounds!

... who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped [as did Satan!] ...

Christ did not say, "I'm the Son of God! Why should I take on the flesh of sinners! I'm co-eternal God, why should I be born to suffer? Why must I be placed in a lowly manger? Why should I be pursued by murderous Herod? Why must the Son of Man have no place to lay His head? Why the beatings? Why the crown of thorns? Why the ridicule? Why the nails? Why death?" He asked none of that.

... but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Jesus "for the joy set before him, endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2). While I have wasted so much effort to "be something," to "be someone," to "be recognized," my Savior made Himself nothing. He was born in my likeness, taking on the weakness of an embryo in the womb, born like any peasant — no, worse than a peasant. I want to "be something." Christ willed for my sake to "make himself nothing." I so like to be served. But Jesus took on the "form of a servant." I don't want to be anyone's servant. He is the servant incarnate.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Cradle to cross, Jesus “humbled himself.” I find it hard to serve merely to the point of inconvenience. He serves me to the “point of death.” “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Forgive me, gracious babe of Bethlehem! Give me a heart of service after Your own! Help me overlook all sins against me, for I know I am such a sinner. Give me Your heart, O Jesus! I cling to Your cradle. I cling to Your Word. I cling to Your Baptism. I cling to Your Absolution. I cling to Your body and blood in the Sacrament. Give me your Christmas heart!

Luther preached:

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior.” ... Now, even though we are unable fully to grasp and comprehend this joy, we should at least partake of its fruit by becoming kinder, gentler people who bear our neighbor no grudge, yes, do good even to our enemies, remembering the role model that God himself became man ...

Unto you is born a Savior. Whoever is not changed for the better by this word and made more godly, praising and thanking God; whoever does not relish this heavenly wine, nor have his heart warmed by this fire, to become kinder and gentler to his neighbor, him will the judge and hangman make more pious, for he’s beyond re-

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OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED AT OSELC

Serve on a Board - See Alex Franco, Pres.

Sign up for Flowers—See sign up list in the Parish Hall

Sign up for Refreshments—See sign up list in Parish Hall

Serve on the Altar Guild—See Dcs. Heather Bien

Ongoing Project on Campus—See Brian Hull, Trustee

Soup Kitchen—See Becky Williams, Director

Serve as an Usher—See Julie Blaylock

Sunday School—9:00 a.m. Sunday, Parish Hall

Coffee with Pastor and Women’s Study—10:00 a.m. Thursday

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prieve. The fact that he's not set ablaze by this fire nor drawn by this heavenly wine — that Christ is our brother, yes, has become flesh and blood with us — plainly shows that he is a lost and condemned man. (Sermons of Martin Luther: House Postils [Baker, 1996], vol. 1, 118–19)

You have forgiven me, Jesus! Help me forgive! Change me for the better by Your Word! Make me to have Your mind! I praise and thank You! Make me kinder and gentler! I trust in You alone!

— Pastor Matthew Harrison, Dec. 3, 2018

FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

I love the color purple. It reminds me of the beautiful pansies my grandfather, a professional gardener, used to grow in the small village of Eye, England. At one point in my life, I decorated my kitchen in a pansy theme: wallpaper, plates, tea pot, mugs, glasses, rugs, towels. Upon reflection, I guess I went a bit overboard.

Today, the color purple still reminds me of my grandfather, but more importantly, it reminds me of my Savior and

Lord's sacrifice to provide salvation for all who would believe. During Jesus' time, the color purple was very expensive dye derived from a shell fish. Only the rich and mainly royalty could afford cloth dyed in purple ink. However, when the soldiers who scourged our Lord unmercifully placed a purple robe on Him, they

were not honoring Him as royalty, they were ridiculing Him and belittling Him. They taunted Him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews."

During the Advent season the purple

paraments around the church remind us of what Jesus endured and what He sacrificed for us. Advent is a reminder that we should daily live a life of repentance and thankfulness. Advent reminds us to pause during this season leading up to Christmas, to focus on Him, to

prepare our hearts for His coming through penitence and prayer. Even though it marks the beginning of the church year, the beginning of Jesus' earthly life, it points us to the end of that earthly life, it points us to The Cross.

Blessings, Jennifer Currid

"Advent reminds us to pause during this season leading up to Christmas, to focus on Him, to prepare our hearts for His coming through penitence and prayer."

FROM LWML

Serve the Lord with Gladness! Psalm 100:2

Poinsettias to glorify the sanctuary for Christmas will go on sale for \$10.00 from November 27-December 18. If you are paying by check please make it payable to Our Savior LWML.

October mites totaled \$34.31. Mite Box Sunday is always the first Sunday of the month and are sent to the LWML Gulf States District to pay for District and National mission grants. The mite collection box will remain in the sanctuary from now on so those who either miss attending the first Sunday or forget to bring it can drop it off any Sunday.

The 2021-2023 LWML Mission Goal is \$2,150,00.00. As of September 30, 2022

The mite donations are \$1,835,123.52.

Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow!

Websites:

www.lwml.org

www.lwml.gulfstates.org

Start your day in the Word by signing up to have a daily Mustard Seed Devotion sent to your email. It's available on the LWML Website homepage.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

LWML Emerald Coast Zone Christian Growth Workshop, Spring 2023, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Pensacola

LWML National Convention, June 22-25, 2023, Milwaukee, WI

Celebrate the Lord of the Nations

(Psalm 33:12-13)

LWML Gulf States District Convention, April 26-27, 2024, Prattville, AL



Council President: Alex Franco

Council Vice-President: Brad Bien

Council Secretary: Trish Hull

Treasurer: Brian Hull

Financial Secretary: Jeannie Harrison

Board of Elders: Alan Widener

Board of Christian Life: Jennifer Currid

Board of Trustees: Brian Hull

Board of Ed./Youth: Gervase Anthony

Board of Evangelism: Alex Franco

Board of Social Ministry: Becky Williams

Board of Security: Julie Blaylock

LWML: Linda Urda

Library: Jennifer Currid

Soup Kitchen Director: Becky Williams

Usher Director: Julie Blaylock

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