

# Holy Crossings

Our Mission... to seek, share, and serve our Savior

December 2020

## REJOICE

**God's Love Never Ends!**  
**Rejoicing with you in this New Church Year of  
Advent & the Coming Christmas Season.**

A blessed New Church Year to you and your family as well as a blessed Christmas season this coming month! Yes, the New Year for Christians starts always sooner with the season of Advent than our country's designated date of January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Our last Sunday of the Church year was Nov. 22 with the official date ending the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Then Sunday Nov. 29 is our first Sunday of Advent where we reflect four weeks on the wonderful promises fulfilled of the Messiah's (or the Christ's) first coming. The Old Testament prophecies tell of the Christ to be humble, yet wonderful in bringing God's love to suffer and bear all our sins.

Advent is a time for us to see God's revelation in the promises of the Bible, especially Isaiah giving us many pictures of who and what the Messiah will be and do. The one verse from the Gospel of John summarizes all the Bible with these words of what God has done in Christ; He has loved us! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (*John 3:16*).

Rejoice with me and our church that God has given us another year to celebrate His first coming and, to look forward to His Second coming as we do both during Advent where we learn God is always with us and wants us to be with Him forever in heaven. This month we will sing "O Come, O Come, Immanuel." Immanuel means, "God with us." What comfort to know God is always with us even in difficult times.

Here is a little more about Advent and how we can rejoice also in our homes during this season. The season of Advent offers time to prepare to celebrate Christmas. Though our preparation may be putting up Christmas decorations and buying Christmas presents in anticipation of the birth of Christ; we also prepare for Christmas by recalling all the many Old Testament promises—prophecies—God made about His Son's First Advent.

*cont. on pg. 6*



### Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 AM

**Traditional Worship**

**At Church &**

**On Zoom**

10:15 AM

**Christian Education Hour**

**Drive Up Communion**



### *Holiday Services*

ADVENT

December 2, December 9,  
December 16 and December 23  
at 7:00pm

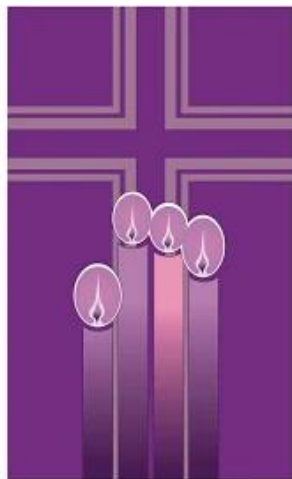
CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24 at 4:00pm & 7:00pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

December 25 at 9:00 am

# December Sermons



## December 2 Midweek 1

**Theme:** Jesus the Son of David  
**Text:** *Matthew 1: 1,6:*

## December 6 Second Sunday in Advent

**Theme:** Jesus comes into the middle of our lives to stir up our hearts to the life that only he can give.  
**Text:** *Mark 1:1-8*

## December 9, 2020 Midweek Advent 2

**Theme:** Jesus: The Son of Abraham  
**Text:** *Matthew 1:1-2*

## December 13, 2020 Third Sunday in Advent

**Theme:** Rejoice! For God is faithful to make and keep you holy in Christ!  
**Text:** *1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

## December 16, 2020 Midweek 3

**Theme:** Jesus: The Son of Scandal,  
**Text:** *Matthew 1:1, 3, 5-6*

## December 20, 2020 Fourth Sunday in Advent

**Theme:** God establishes and strengthens you by revealing to you the mystery of the Gospel.  
**Text:** *Romans 16:25-27*

## December 23, 2020 Midweek 4

**Theme:** Jesus: The Son of Joseph  
**Text:** *Matthew 1:16*

## December 24, 2020 Christmas Eve 4 pm & 7 pm

**Christmas Eve:** Jesus: The Son of Mary  
**Text:** *Matthew 1:16*

## December 25, 2020 Christmas Day – 9AM

**Christmas Day:** The Who, What, and Why of Christmas  
**Text:** *Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)*

## December 27, 2020 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas

**Theme:** Christ was born to deliver us from slavery for sonship.  
**Text:** *Galatians 4:4-7*

# THE ADVENT WREATH



Do you remember the names for the candles on the Advent wreath?

- 1st Candle: The Prophecy Candle
- 2nd Candle: The Bethlehem Candle
- 3rd Candle: The Shepherd Candle
- 4th Candle: The Angel Candle
- 5th Candle: The Christ Candle

## CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Our Confirmands will be confirmed at a Special Service December 6 at 1:00 pm. Please remember all our Confirmands in your prayers. Megan Anderson, Blake Dobberstein, Colin Kruse, Jonas Petrie, Morgan Schulze, and Allie Wagner. This service will be for the Confirmands and their families and sponsors only due to Co-vid protocol. If you would like to give cards to the Confirmands, please bring them to the 9:00am service that morning.

God bless our youth as they share their faith!



## The Lutheran Hour

**The Lutheran Hour** can be heard each Sunday on WCCO (830 AM) at 6:05 am. And it can be streamed online too, [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org). Check-out LHM's daily devotions too.

December 6

### "Seek My Face"

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

We sometimes hear the voice before we see the face that goes with it. Seek God's face where you hear God's Word.

(Daniel)

December 13

### "The Prophet's Paradox "

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

The prophet Daniel illustrates how to face the facts while never losing faith in how the story ends.

(Daniel: 10, 11 and 12)

December 20

### "Experience God "

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

We will never fully grasp the idea of God, but that doesn't keep us from experiencing God's love for us in Christ.

(John 1:1-18)

December 27

### "Welcome to the Family!"

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Anthony (Tony) Cook

The book of Galatians gives us a glimpse inside the family of God. It describes the Christian family as one that stands firm in Christ's freedom, walks united in the Spirit, and bears one another's burdens in love.

(Galatians 4:4-7)



### THE ADVENT SEASON

This year's Advent season, the countdown to Christmas, begins Sunday, Nov. 29, which is the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. What do you do during Advent? Families often enter a faith-filled journey that helps them focus on God's gift to humanity, a Savior, wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger.

Jesus' unselfish act demonstrated that people are important to God. His birth, life, death and resurrection completed God's plan, set in motion in the Garden of Eden, to save humankind from its own sin.

The Advent calendar you can download at [FocusOnTheFamily.com/advent](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com/advent) celebrates our relationships with people and provides a simple way to be the hands and feet of Jesus to neighbors, friends and relatives. Reach out to those around you with a homemade Christmas card (with both easy and advanced versions) that you and your children make together as you commemorate Christ's birth and encourage others in God's hope.

Each day also includes a devotion that your family can read together at meals to remember the messengers, prophets, obedient servants and celebrants that God used to prepare the way for His Son's moment on earth.

If you'd like to add an Advent wreath to your preparations for Christmas, the directions can be found at [FocusOnTheFamily.com/wreath](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com/wreath). Then light an additional candle at dinner every Sunday. Advent ends Dec. 24, the day before we celebrate Jesus' birth. But you don't have to wait for Advent to begin making special cards to give to people in December. Find directions for the cards at the beginning of each week of the Advent booklet download. May God bless the time you spend together during this holiday season!

### Operation Christmas Child

THANK YOU to our brothers and sisters in Christ at Holy Cross! God is a loving and giving God and you have poured out His blessings in your gifts to children around the world. Our goal was 20 boxes... we delivered 35 boxes and had 11 boxes completed online for 46 total! WOW! Give God an ovation of thanksgiving!



## LCMS Stewardship Ministry December 2020

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14)! We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God's people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deuteronomy 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas but throughout all the year. We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us. Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.

### WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Ladies please join us on the church Zoom Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 7:30pm for a casual women's only night of fellowship and faith. Get out your Bible, download the study or pick one up today at church and plan to be strengthened by the Word and renewed by the fellowship of those in the faith. This is a one-time study so there is nothing to prepare, just login on Zoom as you do for church and enjoy. No masks required!

Download the study.

[https://uniteproduction.s3.amazonaws.com/tenants/lwml/attachments/95202/2016-12-we-await-his-coming\\_bible-study.pdf](https://uniteproduction.s3.amazonaws.com/tenants/lwml/attachments/95202/2016-12-we-await-his-coming_bible-study.pdf)

Zoom login information <https://zoom.us/j/9646957677...> If you are prompted for a password, use: 398612

Phone only for the live services: call 1-312-626-6799. When prompted, enter meeting number: 964 695 7677 then hit #

If it asks you for a participant code, just hit #

## GRATITUDE

### WHEN GRATEFULNESS WON'T COME

This time of year, you don't have to walk too far into a store to find a plaque or pillow for sale with one of these words on it:

- grateful
- thankful
- thanksgiving
- gratitude

I can't argue with the fact that these are good words. Our Bibles contain English translations of Hebrew and Greek words for each of these concepts and other related words.

Yet I have a visceral reaction when I see a pillow or plaque with a call to gratitude painted across it. When I'm honest, I kind of want to punch the pillow of gratefulness into oblivion. When I'm honest, those signs calling me to thanksgiving bring up a wellspring of irritation from deep inside of me. I'm usually tempted to push that irritation back down inside with positivity: "Count your blessings, Heidi!" "#blessed" and "thankfulgratefulblessed!" roll off my tongue and knock on my heart to try to convince myself of where I'd like to be.

But when I sit with my irritation for just a second, rather than pushing it back down, I recognize that I want to take a permanent marker and write a note on every single sign in every single store I've ever walked into:

#### "WHAT IF GRATEFULNESS IS HARD?"

Gratefulness is both an unconscious feeling and a conscious emotion. It is a good gift from God. It feels warm and cozy. I think we're tempted to manufacture it by bringing more warm and cozy into our lives, like pillows and plaques. And while reminders of all the warm and cozy can be good, we will always also see the hard things of life in a broken world pressing in. Those realities bring their own unconscious feelings or conscious emotions as well. God, in His kindness, invites us to lay both before Him.

#### GOD INVITES US TO GRATITUDE WHEN GRATEFULNESS WON'T COME

In the middle of life, where we live, feelings come and go, trouble and blessings come and go. Gratitude isn't a temporary feeling but the spiritual practice of recognizing that God is real and active every day *in the middle*. In the Bible and in life today, gratitude and the act of bringing thanksgiving are often surrounded just as much by the difficult things of life—

cancer, COVID, national and international turmoil, injustice—as by the good gifts we receive from God. Read Isaiah 51; Philippians 4; or Hebrews 12 to see good evidence of this.

Biblical gratitude is best defined as the practice of presenting ourselves to God and honoring Him with both where He has been in the feel-good things of our life as well as the yuck. This gratitude practice brings a stronger sense of God's presence into our lives, rather than that momentary sense of gratefulness. This gives our mind, our heart, and our body a foundation to stand on that feels sturdy—is sturdy—when the world is rocky.

#### PRACTICING GRATITUDE WITH PSALM 118

If you are having a hard time "feeling" grateful, it's okay, because gratitude doesn't need your feelings and God doesn't judge you *by* your feelings but by Christ Jesus' mercy, love, and sacrifice. Psalm 118 is a perfect place to turn to for practicing gratitude, no matter how grateful or ungrateful, thankful or unthankful, we feel. It starts and ends with a chorus of thankfulness,

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;  
for His steadfast love endures forever!*

And in the middle, we find enemies pouncing, people hating, discipline, and rejection—but also strength, hope, and life:

*Out of my distress I called on the LORD;  
the LORD answered me and set me free. (v. 5)*

*I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,  
but the LORD helped me. (v. 13)*

*I shall not die, but I shall live,  
and recount the deeds of the LORD. (v. 17)*

What middle would you put into your psalm for God? What trouble and brokenness do you see inside of you, around you? Where do you see God's presence in the middle of all that mess?

Couple the answers to those questions with this:

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;  
for His steadfast love endures forever!*

Now you've found the middle: recognizing God, being thankful to God in all of it—honest, broken, mundane, and hurting, alongside warm and cozy and cared for. This is the practice of gratitude: thanking God for what He's doing in the middle.

Written by  
**Heidi Goehmann**

*cont. from pg. 1*

Through His Word (God's prophecies and promises), He makes us ready to rightly rejoice in our Lord's Nativity (birth). Another part of Advent is not as obvious. Advent highlights how God fulfills His promises to us in the here and now. Because Jesus was born as God promised, we can be certain of the promises God fulfills, but our eyes cannot see. For example, every time two or three gather in Jesus' name, as God promised, Jesus is present with them (Matthew 18:20). So too, each time the Gospel and Sacraments are used, God is keeping His promises. Our faith and belief creates love to see these gifts of grace thus creating and strengthening faith. We see God also promising the gift of Christ by sending His Spirit of incarnation of His son to a virgin. He also sends His Spirit to us since Pentecost and His Spirit's gifts of hope, love, joy, and peace that we name for each week with our advent candles.



The season of Advent, God is also making us ready for the Day Jesus returns and all His promises stand fulfilled! It is going to be a Christmas in sorts that does not end! Wow! Christmas forever! Christ with us forever! It is hard to comprehend being in Christ's presence without the sin of our lives and of this world. But the last day is not too far away! Take time this Advent and Christmas seasons to live the significance of the days of each season. In the Bible, important events—like weddings—lasted many days. This fact is reflected in the calendar Christians have used for more than a thousand years. Christmas is the first of twelve days that make up the Season of Christmas. Christmas is far too significant an event to celebrate for one day only. We celebrate it for nearly two weeks! The world seems to celebrate for only one day and it's over. But it's just the beginning of a time to reflect the Savior has come to usher in life forever without end. The 12 days of Christmas many times in other Christian cultures give gifts for 12 days. That's a lot of gifts. It is so we can understand God's gift of His love in Christ is forever!

Below are some suggestions for you to do as a family to remember God's love never ends during Advent and Christmas. 1. Make use of Advent wreath. This is a great way to connect your home devotions to the worship life of our congregation. On the First Sunday in Advent you will see an Advent wreath up in front of the chancel. Use one at home. Gather as a family, perhaps after dinner, and take turns lighting the candles on the outside ring. Follow what we do in Church. And finally, on Christmas Eve you get to light the inside candle. Around the advent wreath of candles read the Advent or Portal's of Prayer devotion and then prayer together. 2. Sing or speak the words of the great Advent hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel". Our hymnbook also offers prayers that follow the theme presented in each verse. 3. If your family has small children, make use of a Nativity Set. This can be a great way to keep your focus on Christ. Read and teach your children the Christmas narrative and help build up their anticipation for the celebration of Christ's birth. Put the stable and the manger on one side of the room and the Holy Family on the other side. Each Sunday in Advent move Mary and Joseph little closer to the stable and talk about all that happened before and after Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. 4. Attend the Wednesday services in person or on our internet link to prepare our hearts with God's prophecies of His love in Christ.

The Lord bless your Advent and Christmas seasons. *Pastor Jim*

**Merry Christmas**

*Pastor Jim, Mui, Meg,  
Becca & Dorene*

*May God Bless your holiday season!*