

**Devotions – December 14-20, 2014**  
**By the Confirmation Students and Teachers**  
**of Bethel Lutheran, Cedarville and Zion Lutheran, Allenville**

**Sunday, December 14**

**By Dan Litzner**

Text: John 1:6-8, 19-28

*6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.*

*19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, ‘I am not the Messiah.’ <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ <sup>23</sup>He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord”’, as the prophet Isaiah said.*

*24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’ <sup>26</sup>John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’ <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.*

As John came as a witness, testifying concerning the light, we, too, are light bearers of Christ, carrying His light and the word of God to the people of this world, disciples called to show others the love, the forgiveness and the salvation of Christ. We make disciples of nations and spread the love of Christ.

Let us pray: O Lord, I pray that we always hear your call to spread your Good News and that your light and love burn like a fire in our hearts for all to see, the beacon of your word to carry to all we meet. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.



**Monday, December 15**

**By Pastor Bre Johnson**

Text: Isaiah 9:1-7

*But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.*

*2 The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.*

*3 You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.*

*4 For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.*

*5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.*

*6 For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;*

*authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named*

*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*7 His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.*

*He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onwards and for evermore.*

*The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

We didn't have to wait for the snow. It's here, like it or not. But it isn't Christmas just yet. We still wait for that, and that too may arrive just as quickly as the snow arrived for us this fall. It will be done just as quickly, but the snow won't leave us so abruptly. Neither will Jesus. This Advent season we are invited into a patient, still waiting – yet a waiting that invites us to stay awake and keep our eyes open to what's around us. Not only the landscape, but our lives, and when we've been given grace to take care of ourselves, to the lives of others, too.

It's hard to stay awake and to wait patiently, and doing them both at the same time may be doubly as hard. Not just staying awake in that we don't sleep, but keeping a look out to what's happening around us without getting so far ahead of ourselves or spending too much time thinking about what was or what might have been. Some call this mindfulness, I think; mindfulness meditation. Advent invites us to be mindful of what's around us, yet with that anticipation as a child on Christmas morning, so excited about what's to come that day.

Gifts...Family...Not sure I was so excited about Jesus on Christmas morning. But it was Jesus who gave me that spirit of excitement.

The moments are fleeting and yet wonderful. Jesus is not fleeting. He stays with us far beyond Christmas morning. He is wonderful: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). He came to be with us, and he stays with us. He stays after the holidays and their excitement have passed. Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, really is with us. I'm grateful for that.

Let us pray: Jesus, help us to feel ever more deeply your presence and love in our lives this Advent and forevermore. Amen.



**Tuesday, December 16**

**By Alicia Kasper and Julia Smith**

Text: Luke 1:46b-55

*46 And Mary said,  
‘My soul magnifies the Lord,  
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
48 for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
50 His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
51 He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.’*

In this passage, Mary speaks about God. She says that, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” She says this because He looked with favor at her humbleness and being His servant.

She goes on to say that He favors the lowly, poor, hungry, and His servants, and has mercy for those who fear Him. Mary also tells about His great power and strength, and that He turns aside and casts down the proud, rich and powerful.

Her message to us, in our opinion, is to not worry about the worldly things in our earthly lives – like money, power, reputation – but to trust in God that He will provide. If you are lowly, poor, or hungry, don't fret because God will favor you.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, help us to have peace. Help us to trust and put our faith in you; that you will provide. Amen.



**Wednesday, December 17**

**By Sienna Reichlin and Ashley Kasper**

Text: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

<sup>1</sup> *I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever;  
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.*

<sup>2</sup> *I declare that your steadfast love is established for ever;  
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.*

<sup>3</sup> *You said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one,  
I have sworn to my servant David:*

<sup>4</sup> *"I will establish your descendants forever,  
and build your throne for all generations." '*

*Selah*

<sup>19</sup> *Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said:  
'I have set the crown on one who is mighty,  
I have exalted one chosen from the people.*

<sup>20</sup> *I have found my servant David;  
with my holy oil I have anointed him;*

<sup>21</sup> *my hand shall always remain with him;  
my arm also shall strengthen him.*

<sup>22</sup> *The enemy shall not outwit him,  
the wicked shall not humble him.*

<sup>23</sup> *I will crush his foes before him  
and strike down those who hate him.*

<sup>24</sup> *My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him;  
and in my name his horn shall be exalted.*

<sup>25</sup> *I will set his hand on the sea  
and his right hand on the rivers.*

<sup>26</sup> *He shall cry to me, "You are my Father,  
my God, and the Rock of my salvation!"*

In this Psalm, it talked about how God chose David as his faithful one, and said, "I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations (Psalm 89:4). God picked David out, and gave him strength and power.

In life, we all go through struggles: whether somebody hurt you, you've gotten put down too much, or you just feel like you can't go on. Just remember that God will always be there if you ask him to be, because he lent his strength to his servant David and we are all servants of God.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, please help us to get through the tough days in life, help us to know you are and always will be there to help us. Amen.



**Thursday, December 18**

**By Tyler Brandt and Kevin Reichlin**

Text: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

*Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.'*

*<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup>I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. <sup>7</sup>Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' <sup>8</sup>Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup>and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.*

This is a story of King David and the prophet Nathan. David asked Nathan why God dwells in a tent, while David dwells in a cedar house. After telling David to do what is in his heart, the word of the Lord came to Nathan. God provided the words to Nathan to give to David.

He told Nathan that He has resided in a tent since the day He brought His people of Israel from Egypt. The Lord provided David with Nathan to help guide him and follow God.

In a way, this relates to friends. All throughout life, God provides you with people who will guide you in following Him. The passage ends by telling that the Lord will provide a home in heaven for all who follow him.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, thank you for providing the friends and family in my life to help guide me and follow you. Help me to follow you and remain faithful. Thank you for providing a home for me in heaven. Amen.



**Friday, December 19**

**By Lily Hart and Rosy Shimkovitz**

Text: Romans 16:25-27

*<sup>25</sup> Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.*

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

What does it mean to give glory to God? Praying? Thanking God? Giving God credit for all good things? All in all, God is the source of all good things.

Let us pray: We ask that you will lay your healing hands on the sick, and to have compassion for the suffering, to deliver them to a better place. In Jesus' name, Amen.



**Saturday, December 20**

**By Thomas Kinnunen**

Text: Luke 1:26-38

*26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' 34 Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 35 The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.' 38 Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.*

“Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.” (Luke 1:38)

In this passage, Mary is young. When I was young, my family was close and every week we tried to go to church.

In church and talking with family, I learned that God is good. God represents the good guys. I want to be on the good buy team. I also learned that God can help me get through tough times and that anything is possible.

Therefore, like Mary, I am happy to do whatever it is that God wants because God is good.

Let us pray: God, nothing is impossible with you. Help us to trust in this miracle. Amen.

