

## **THE SERVANT**

The monthly newsletter of Servants of Christ Lutheran Church, a congregation of The North American Lutheran Church serving the Cedar Rapids area

Meeting at Robins City Hall Community Room, 265 South Second St., Robins, Iowa 52328  
Worship: 9:00 am; Fellowship & Coffee: 10:00;  
Bible Class and Sunday School: 10:15  
Ron Voss, Pastor

\*\*\*\*\***December 2018**\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Servants of Christ,

The word “advent” means “coming.” It is a good word with which to begin the Church Year, when we are tempted to ask, “What’s coming?” A more correct question would be “Who’s coming?” The answer is “Jesus!”

The entire Old Testament points to Jesus as the One who was coming, when God’s time was right. For many centuries, prophets had foretold the coming of God’s Messiah, the one whom God had promised to save God’s people from their sins and teach us God’s will. Some of the Scripture readings in our Advent season quote those ancient promises. As the four weeks of Advent move ahead, the coming gets more specific. We learn who Jesus’ mother will be, for example, and how God’s angel told her so. We learn about other members of the family as well, the family of John the Baptist.

All of this happened in history, of course, about 2000 years ago. Another message of the Advent season is that the One who has come is coming again. How does the Creed put it? “To judge the living and the dead.” How did Jesus Himself put it? “To take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” So the Advent season actually deals with two comings of Christ, one when Jesus was born hundreds of years ago, and one when He comes again in the future to reveal Himself as our Savior.

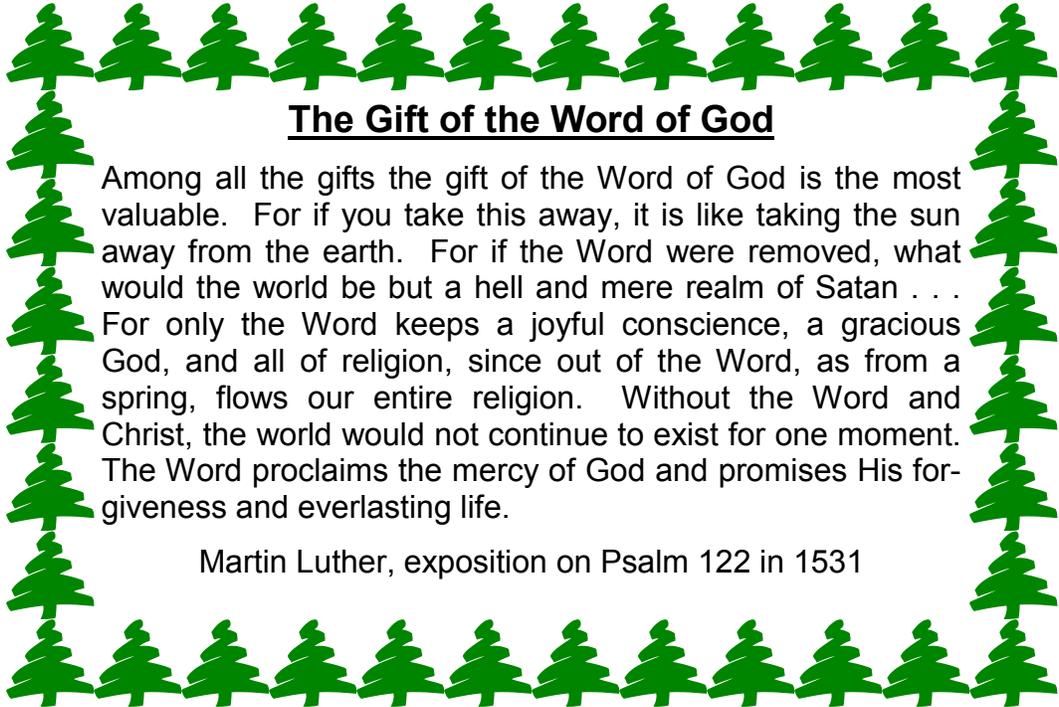
But there is a third coming of Christ, the Advent season announces. That is when Jesus comes into our hearts and lives right now by His Word so that we may believe in Him. All three of these comings show up in the Church’s Advent readings, almost stumbling over one another to make sure we get the point.

Many will light the candles on their Advent wreaths to mark the four weeks. As Christmas gets closer, the light gets brighter, and the Church prays, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” May God bless your Advent journey and deepen your faith in the Lord Jesus.

Expectantly waiting with you,

Ron

**STAY INFORMED**



**The Gift of the Word of God**

Among all the gifts the gift of the Word of God is the most valuable. For if you take this away, it is like taking the sun away from the earth. For if the Word were removed, what would the world be but a hell and mere realm of Satan . . . For only the Word keeps a joyful conscience, a gracious God, and all of religion, since out of the Word, as from a spring, flows our entire religion. Without the Word and Christ, the world would not continue to exist for one moment. The Word proclaims the mercy of God and promises His forgiveness and everlasting life.

Martin Luther, exposition on Psalm 122 in 1531

**December Servants**

Called to Serve

Greeter/Usher: Lyle Gerdemann  
 Communion Assistant: Aaron Opperman  
 Snacks:  
 \*\*December 2: Mary Collins  
 \*\*December 9: LaDonna Retzlaff  
 \*\*December 16: Judy Waugh  
 \*\*December 23: Lenore Heckart  
 \*\*December 30: Brunch



**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship will be at 4:30 on December 24 at the Robins City Hall. Invite family and friends to join us as we celebrate the birth of Christ!**

***December Outreach/Mission Support***

\$333 will be sent to the North American Lutheran Church General Fund.

Your faithful giving makes outreach a reality. Thank you.

*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...*



# Advent Images and Words

**Prepare the Way:** This is the message of the Old Testament Prophets who called God's people to repentance and of John the Baptizer who announced Jesus' arrival. We hear this message in the Scripture readings during Advent.

**Messiah:** This is the Hebrew word meaning "anointed one," that is, the "chosen one." The Greek name "Christ" means the same thing.

**Son of David:** This is the title of a descendent of the great Old Testament King David. From David's family and town the Lord God raised up the Messiah, Jesus.

**The Advent Colors:** Purple is the ancient color of royalty (as well as penitence), signaling the coming of our King. The more recent use of blue among Protestants symbolizes the hope of God's people who trust in their unfailing Lord and King.

**The Angel Gabriel:** He announced to Zechariah and Elizabeth and to Mary and Joseph that each couple would experience the miraculous birth of a child. One child would be born to elderly parents, the other born of the Spirit of the Lord. John would become the prophet and forerunner. Jesus would be God-with-us, who would save God's people from their sin. (Luke 1:18-38)

**Emmanuel** (or Immanuel) is the prophet promised that people. As a sign of this was called, "God is with us."



Hebrew for "God is with us." Isaiah the Lord would come to be with His promise, the baby in Isaiah 7:14

**Stir Up:** These words resonate throughout Advent. We pray that God would "stir up His power, and come," come to save His people from sin, death, and the power of Satan.

**Oh, holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels, the great, glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**



Our study of the book of **Romans** continues and concludes in December.

Do you long for a Christian life which is characterized by more joy and victory? Do you sometimes feel that the struggle with sin is hopeless? Are you plagued with feelings of guilt? Do you wonder sometimes whether or not you really are a Christian? Do you long for a deeper and more meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ?

Romans shows clearly how we can escape the bondage to sin into a life of growing freedom and joy. Jesus promised this freedom: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." "If the Son sets you free," He says, "then you will be *really free*" (John 8:32, 36 TEV). In Romans Paul explains the basis for this freedom and shows how it may become ours.

Even if you have not been able to attend previous weeks, join us in December as we continue our study of this enriching book of the Bible.

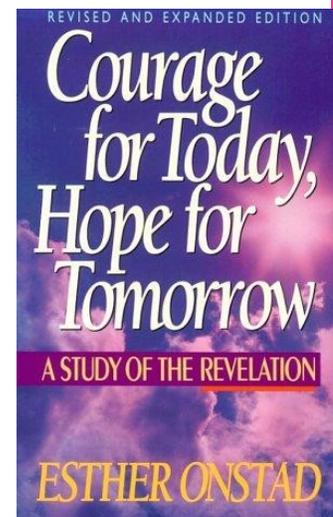
and beginning January 6....

Is the *Book of the Revelation* a mystery to you? Have you wished you could understand it? Perhaps you have hesitated to delve into it because you could not grasp the meaning of its strange language and symbols. The Revelation to John, the last book in the Bible, abounds with symbols: trumpets, scrolls, beasts, wings, plagues, white robes, and crowns. Can this book really speak to US?

Esther Onstad's book, "Courage for Today, Hope for Tomorrow," is an excellent Bible study on the Revelation. The author explains the symbolism that depicts the conflict between God and Satan and the victory of God's people. The focus of the Revelation is the **victorious Jesus Christ who vanquishes every enemy and who will bring a new heaven and a new earth**. Reread that bold type again because that *IS* the bottom line for all believers.

We look at the world, we read the news, and shake our heads and become discouraged. So, what better way to begin a new year than with hope and courage . . . both of which are found only in a risen, ascended, victorious Savior.

See you on January 6!!!



**Consider a Year-end Financial Gift to:**

North American Lutheran Church Seminary  
311 Eleventh St.  
Ambridge, PA 15003

**Consider a Year-end Financial Gift to:**

Water Mission  
P.O. Box 71489  
N. Charleston, SC 29415



**Consider a Year-end Financial Gift to:**

Friends of Madagascar Mission  
P.O. Box 46381  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

**Faith + Sharing = Evangelism**

**PRAY**—for friends who do not believe in Jesus that the Holy Spirit will open their hearts to the saving truth of the Gospel.

**INVITE**—friends and neighbors to worship with you or at a Christian church of their choice.

**BECOME**—outreach-oriented. Become an outreach visitor in your community.

**WITNESS**—to Christ in your daily life. Outreach explanatory brochures are available to help you in this endeavor.

**TALK**—with your family members about your personal faith in Christ. Your witness will be a blessing to all who hear.

