

St. Paul's Lutheran Church



Church Newsletter December 2025

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Dearly Beloved-

On November 30th, a new Church Year begins. And, on November 30th, we enter into the Season of Advent.

For many – me included – Advent is a frantic, frenzied, and sometimes forgotten season. Sure, there are Advent suppers and Midweek Services. Sure, there is the decorating of churches and houses.

However, for many – myself included – Advent gets the short end of the stick. After all, there are SO MANY ACTIVITIES! Programs and Pageants; Office Parties and White Elephant Gifts; Who is Hosting Who, and Who is Bringing What; “Did I get all the Presents Wrapped?”; “Will the Weather be Good?”

On and on it goes.

So, it might surprise some of you that Advent was originally (and in some sense, still is) a Penitential Season! Perhaps some of you might recall a church where for Advent, the Color was Purple, and not Blue. Or, maybe you’ve always wondered, “Why don’t we sing the *Gloria in excelsis* during Advent? I thought that was a Lenten thing!”

Well... you’re right. It is a **PENITENTIAL** thing. Advent, like Lent, serves as preparation. It is the Fast before the Feast. It prepares not only for the celebration of the **FIRST ADVENT**, when Jesus was Born, but for His **SECOND ADVENT**, when He shall come again: not as a Baby, meek and mild, but as the Mighty King and Righteous Judge.

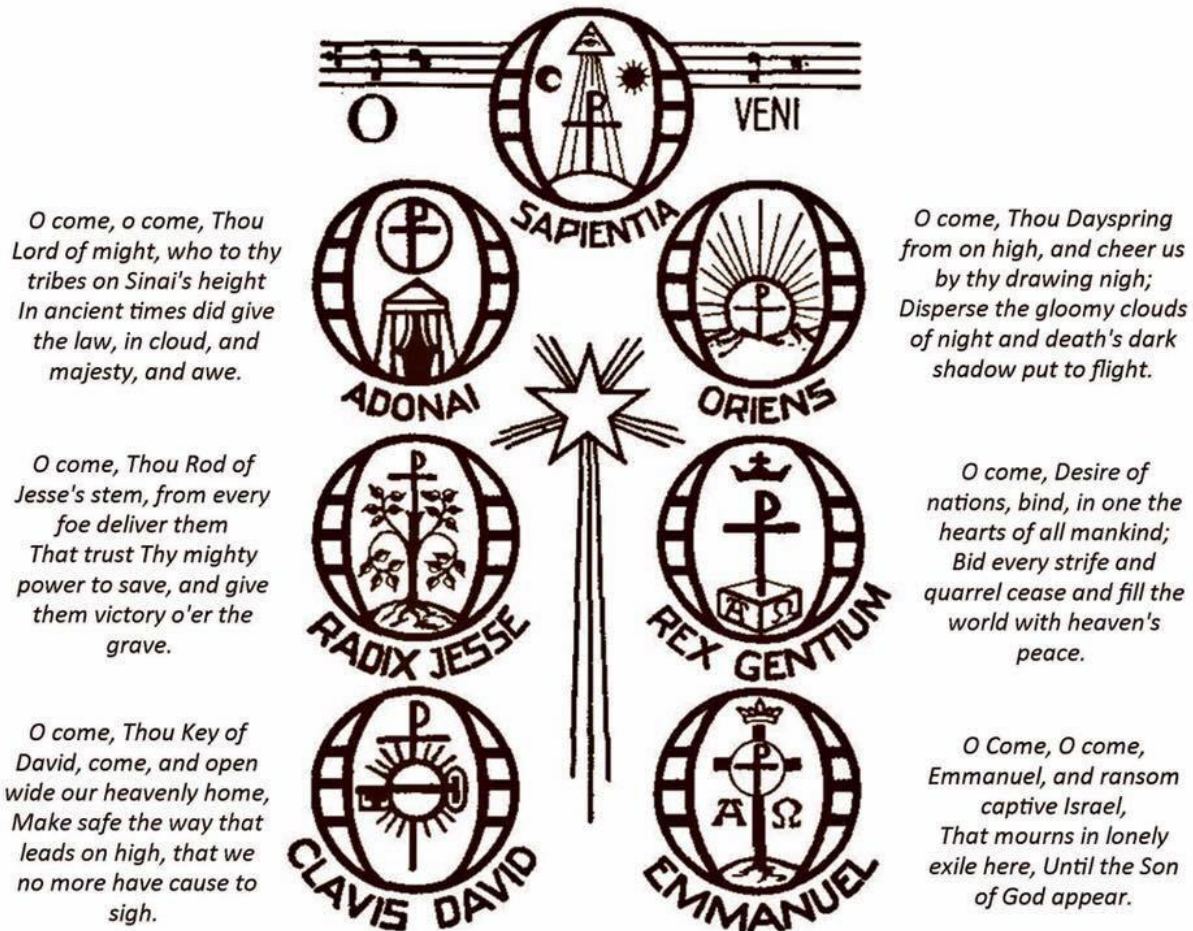
“Where are you going with this”, you might find yourself asking. “Are you telling me I should not eat all those delicious holiday cookies and treats, that are only made this time of year?!”

Well, no... and yes. You are certainly free to rein in your indulgences and cut back on the sweets.

But what I am really getting at is this: **SLOW DOWN!**

The World is in a mad rush to get to Christmas- to see what sells, to see what’s under the tree, and – frankly – to be done with the “holidays”. After all, we’ve been going since... October? Or is it August, when they put away the 4th of July, and bring out Halloween?

*O come, Thou Wisdom, from on high, and order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.*



Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, Shall come to thee, O Israel!

The point is that, for the World (and the Economy), it's a race to the "finish line". For them, Christmas starts right after Thanksgiving.

However, in the Church, we have a different way of doing things. A quieter way. A **SLOWER WAY.**

Eat your cookies or have no sweets. You're free in the Gospel.

Rather, don't give into the pressure to rush to Christmas. Instead, in repentance and faith, prepare your heart for Christ Jesus.

Here's an easy way to do so: Beginning on Dec. 1st, read one chapter of St. Luke's Gospel every day. By the time you hit Christmas, you'll have read the entire Gospel!

You know what is another good way? Come to Church! Not as another "Box to Check Off"; but, instead, as an act of discipline, of intentionally slowing down, and sanctifying your Season with God's Word. (See below for more information.)

Remember, Dearly Beloved: The Twelve Days of Christmas are for, well, **AFTER CHRISTMAS!** Let your Advent be blessed with Peace and Quietness that, with Gentleness, you may Gradually prepare yourselves for the Holy Nativity of Our Lord and Savior.

1 Arise, O Christian people!

Prepare yourselves today;
Prepare to greet the Savior,
Who takes your sins away.
To us by grace alone
The truth and light were given;
The promised Lord from heaven
To all the world is shown.

2 Prepare the way before Him;

Prepare for Him the best.
Cast out what would offend Him,
This great, this heav'nly guest.
Make straight, make plain the way:
The lowly valleys raising,
The heights of pride abasing,
His path all even lay.

3 The humble heart and lowly

God raises up on high;
Beneath His feet in terror
The haughty soul shall lie.
The heart sincere and right,
That heeds God's invitation
And makes true preparation—
It is the Lord's delight.

4 Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus;

Turn not from me aside,
And help me to receive You
This blessed Adventtide.
From stall and manger low
Come now to dwell within me;
I'll sing Your praises gladly
And forth Your glory show.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

- Pastor Steele



December



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		Tie the Knot 1pm	Chapel 8:15 am Confirmation 5:30 pm in the parlor Fellowship Meal 5:30 pm Advent Service 6:45 pm	Women's Bible Study 9:00 am	Early Dismissal 1:30	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Worship Ser- vice 8:30am Adult Bible Study, Sunday School, Teen Bible Study 9:30am	Ladies Circle Christmas Party 6:00 pm		Chapel 8:15 am Confirmation 5:30 pm in the parlor Fellowship Meal 5:30 pm Advent Service 6:45 pm School Board Meeting 7:00 pm	Women's Bible Study 9:00 am	Early Dismissal 1:30 Children's Christmas Service 6:00 pm	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Communion- Service 8:30am Adult Bible Study, Teen Bible Study 9:30am	BOARD MEETINGS	Tie the Knot 1pm	Chapel 8:15 am Confirmation 5:30 pm in the parlor Fellowship Meal 5:30 pm Advent Service 6:45 pm	Women's Bible Study 9:00 am	11:30 am Dismissal for Christmas Break	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Worship Ser- vice 8:30am Adult Bible Study, Teen Bible Study 9:30am			Christmas Eve Service 6:00 pm	Christmas Day Service 9:30 am		
	<div><-----NO SCHOOL-----></div>					
28	29	30	31			
Communion Service 8:30am Adult Bible Study, Teen Bible Study 9:30am			New Years Eve Service 6:00 pm			
	<div><-NO SCHOOL- resumes Jan. 5th --></div>					

The Bulletin Board

Advent Fellowship Meals & Worship

Join us on **Wednesday, December 3rd, 10th, and 17th** for Advent fellowship and worship.

Soup supper begins at **5:30 pm** in the **Fellowship Hall**.

Our Service of Vespers will follow at **6:45 pm, also in the Fellowship Hall.**

Soup will be provided.
Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.



SPLS Children's Christmas Service
December 12th, 6:00 pm
In the Fellowship Hall



Christmas Eve Service
December 24th
6:00 pm

No School

December 22nd – January 2nd

Have a fun Christmas Break!!

School will resume on January 5th.

Radio Broadcast for 2026

Get your date reserved for the coming year!

For available dates call the office.

If you're interested in purchasing SCRIP gift cards for Christmas gifts, please contact the church office. The final day to place orders is December 10th to ensure delivery before Christmas.

Board Meetings

December 15th

- ✓ Elders
- ✓ Council
- ✓ Trustees
- ✓ School Board – Dec. 10-7:00pm

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5:12-13).



Have you finished your Christmas shopping yet? Do you have a person or two on your list that you just don't know what to give them? While I know you are running short of ideas...dad doesn't really want another tie, and your kid's teacher doesn't need another coffee mug. It can be nothing short of maddening to try to figure things out in the middle of this busy season!

As stewards of all of life and life's resources, we know that life is more than giving gifts. We stewards never want to take anything the Lord provides for granted. During this season of Advent and Christmas, it is a great idea to do whatever you can to be a faithful steward of your pastor. Even more so than the rest of the year, the demands on their time, their presence and their stewardship of the Gospel in the congregation become heightened.

The demands on pastors can wear them down and wear them out. How does the steward in the congregation serve as a faithful steward of the treasure that is their pastor? Here are a few ideas:

- *Put them at the top of your prayer list. – Pray that the Lord guards them against the weariness that makes them susceptible to the work of the devil.*
- *Make worship a priority – St. Paul admonishes the Thessalonians and us to respect those who labor among us. There is no greater way to steward your pastor than to respect him enough to show up and receive what he has been sent to offer in the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the Holy Sacraments.*
- *Be receptive to his work – If your pastor is tasked with calling you to repentance or encouraging you to be in worship, know that he is only caring for your soul.*
- *Esteem him highly – Take the time to thank him for his faithful service to Christ, the congregation and your family.*
- *Be at peace – This is an easy time for even minor annoyances to get blown out of proportion and become full-blown conflict. This not only spoils the season of Advent and Christmas, but it also spoils our stewardship of the Gospel and those who serve us in that Gospel. Remember that Jesus came into the world to be the Prince of Peace. This is an act of grace and mercy. The steward seeks to reflect this toward their pastor and their brothers and sisters in Christ.*

Stewardship at Christmas can be a challenge. Stewardship of your pastor during this time of the year is critical to our shared stewardship of the Gospel at a time of year when many are more open to hear and receive it.

December

Verses for Finding Jesus as Joy

- 1 - Lev. 9:24 - Thank You that we have Jesus, no need for animal sacrifices
- 2 - 1 Chron. 16:27 - My strength and joy are found in You, God
- 3 - 1 Chron. 16:33 - May we be like the trees, shouting for joy before You
- 4 - Neh. 8:10 - The joy of the Lord is my strength, may I find joy in You alone
- 5 - Job 8:21 - Lord, when I'm unable, You fill my mouth with laughter and joy
- 6 - Psalm 5:11 - May we take refuge in You and find gladness in You
- 7 - Psalm 16:11 - You will fill me with joy in Your presence
- 8 - Psalm 19:8 - Your ways are right and they bring joy to my heart
- 9 - Psalm 20:5 - In You is victory, Lord, may we shout for joy
- 10 - Psalm 28:7 - Lord, You are my strength and shield, my heart leaps for joy
- 11 - Psalm 30:11 - You turn my mourning into wailing, my grief & replace it with joy
- 12 - Psalm 51:8 - God, may I find joy in Your correction & rejoice because You love me
- 13 - Psalm 51:12 - Lord, restore the joy of my salvation, grant me a willing spirit
- 14 - Psalm 90:14 - God, You satisfy me with Your love, may I always sing for joy
- 15 - Psalm 94:19 - Even when I'm overwhelmed, Your comfort is my joy
- 16 - Psalm 100:2 - Lord, may we always come into Your presence with joyful songs
- 17 - Psalm 107:22 - Even when joy is a sacrifice, may I continue to give You thanks
- 18 - Psalm 119:111 - God, Your Word brings me joy. You are my treasure.
- 19 - Psalm 126:3 - May I never forget Your awesome works, I am filled with joy
- 20 - Psalm 126:5 - Thank You that we sow with tears, we will reap with songs of joy
- 21 - Proverbs 10:28 - Jesus, thank You for Your righteousness, and with that, joy
- 22 - Proverbs 12:20 - God, You tell us that when we promote peace, we find joy
- 23 - Isaiah 12:3 - Father, with joy You save us, may we share that with the world
- 24 - Isaiah 35:10 - God, You have rescued us and we have everlasting joy
- 25 - Isaiah 55:12 - Lord God, may we go out in joy and be led in peace
- 26 - Isaiah 61:7 - You replace shame with grace, our inheritance gives us joy
- 27 - Habakkuk 3:17-19 - Though all falls apart around me, I will rejoice in You
- 28 - Rom. 12:12 - God, may I be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer
- 29 - Galatians 5:22 - Lord, because the Holy Spirit lives in me, I have the fruit of joy
- 30 - Phil. 2:1-3 God, may we be more like You, unified in Christ, with joy
- 31 - Phil. 4:1 - Lord, may we rejoice in You always because of who You are, not because of our circumstances



Advent & Christmas Services

Wednesday, Dec. 3rd -Soup Supper at 5:30 PM
Service of Vespers in the Fellowship Hall-6:45 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 10th -Soup Supper at 5:30 PM
Service of Vespers in the Fellowship Hall-6:45 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 17th -Soup Supper at 5:30 PM
Service of Vespers in the Fellowship Hall-6:45 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 24th Christmas Eve Service 6:00 PM

Thursday, Dec. 25th Christmas Day Service 9:30 AM

Wednesday, Dec. 31st New Year's Eve Service 6:00 PM