

*For the week of the Third Sunday in Advent
December 17th through December 23rd, 2023*

Notes for the Week — Rejoice Always, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

The Third Sunday in Advent is the time that we light that special “pink” candle on the Advent Wreath. This Sunday is known as *Gaudete* Sunday, or, the Sunday of Joy.

This is the only Sunday in Advent with an official liturgical theme: the joy that Christ brings. “Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King!” Now that’s an odd phrasing, isn’t it. *The Lord is come!* Notice the jubilant shout of the beloved Christmas hymn isn’t “The Lord has come,” but “the Lord is come!” Of course we prepare ourselves in Advent to receive the Lord in the celebration of His birth on Christmas, but in the “coming” of Advent and Christmas we celebrate more than just a memory. We celebrate the continual coming of our Lord, the King of Heaven and earth. He came to us as an infant, then He grew into the man who would offer Himself on the cross for the sins of the World. Then He ascended back to His heavenly throne.

However, Jesus did not die to make us His own to then just leave us. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you,” Jesus says (John 14:18). This coming, too, is more than Jesus’ final return. But as John confesses, “I baptize you with water,” but Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Jesus sends to us the Holy Spirit, and it is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus comes to us here and now. As we gather together, as we receive His Word, as we pray, as we give thanks. And it is that same Spirit that Paul tells us not to quench. Why? Because it is that Spirit who reveals the truth to us through the Word of God.

It is the truth of Jesus given to us by the Spirit that we are able to find our solace, our peace, our strength, our forgiveness, our salvation, our life, even when the world and the devil rage and storm around us. That is because we know that this world is passing away and the devil’s time is short. They are coming to an end. However, what the Spirit brings us is eternal. We know that an end is coming for sin and death, and we have that hope and joy living in us. In fact, that eternal existence is so real that it flows back to us here and now. Through faith, we get a foretaste of the feast to come.

That is where our joy comes from. It doesn’t come from what we can muster up ourselves, but rather it comes from Jesus whose word and Spirit dwell within us. And the Spirit makes and keeps us holy and blameless and brings us safely to the day when Jesus comes again to put away sin and death once and for all. That is truly a message of joy!

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

*Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate.
Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.*

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

APOSTLES’ CREED

VERSE: MATTHEW 11:10B

Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.

PSALM 126 and/or the appointed daily psalms.

Prayer on the Psalm

Merciful Father in heaven, convert the sinners and comfort Your believers with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us willing hearts and understanding minds to sow the seed of Your Word broadcast among men, and if it seems good to hide the fruit of our sowing from our eyes, strengthen our hearts that we faint not, but wait for the harvest in the world to come, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. . Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	97, 98	101	103	105	107	108, 110	113, 114	116, 117
Evening	99, 100	102	104	106	109	111, 112	115	118

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

	Bible Narrative for the Week	Second Reading
Sunday	John 1:6–8, 19–28	
Monday	The Annunciation of Our Lord—Luke 1:26–38	
Tuesday	Christ's Birth Is Foretold to Joseph—Matthew 1:18–25	
Wednesday		
Thursday	The Visitation—Luke 1:39–56	
Friday	The Nativity of St. John the Baptist—Luke 1:57–80	
Saturday	2 Sam. 7:1–11, 16	Rom. 16:25-27

The Catechism: The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

What is Baptism?	Third Grade +
Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's Word.	
Which is that word of God?	
Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: <i>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.</i>	Second Grade +
What benefits does Baptism give?	
It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare..	
Which are these words and promised of God?	
Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mar: <i>Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.</i>	

DEVOTION OR MEDITATION

DAILY PRAYER

Select from among the following prayers as time and circumstances allow:

Collect of the Week

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Themes for Prayer

- Sunday:** *For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and Sacrament.*
- Monday:** *For faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.*
- Tuesday:** *For deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with sin.*
- Wednesday:** *For marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to the Word of God; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.*
- Thursday:** *For the Church and her pastors; for teachers, deaconesses, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of Christ's body and blood.*
- Friday:** *For the preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.*
- Saturday:** *For faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors and people as they prepare to administer and receive Christ's holy gifts.*

In Our Prayers this Week

Our Congregation: *Terry & Sharon Rohlfing; Timothy & Marie Roth, Levi, Nathaniel, Abigail, Shiloh; Thresa Scarberry; John & Sharon Schultze*

Baptismal Birthdays: *Larry Bender; Callie Shea; Remington Dewey; Daniel White; Nathan White; Malorie Wagner; Teresa Falls*

Wedding Anniversaries: *Marty & Jan Burik; Hershel & Margi Harris*

Members of the Congregation:

Friends of our Congregation:

Other:

Our Circuit:

Trinity Lutheran Church, Garnett; Vacant

Zion Lutheran Church, Vassar; Vacant

Our District Staff and President, Rev. Justin Panzer.

Heather Williams, Business Manager

Shannon Fender, Administrative Assistant

Our Synod and President, Rev. Matthew Harrison

Our Community: *City of Wellsville; USD 289*

Our State and Governor, Laura Kelly

Our Nation and President, Joseph Biden

LORD'S PRAYER

MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER FROM THE CATECHISM

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. **Amen.**

HYMN OF THE WEEK

“Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding”

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1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
“Christ is near,” we hear it say.
“Cast away the works of darkness,
All you children of the day!”

2 Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.

3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from heav’n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
One and all, to be forgiv’n;

4 So, when next He comes in glory
And the world is wrapped in fear,
He will shield us with His mercy
And with words of love draw near.

△ 5 Honor, glory, might, dominion
To the Father and the Son
With the ever-living Spirit
While eternal ages run!

Text: Latin, c. 5th–10th cent.; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814–78, alt.
Text: Public domain

Looking Forward to “Christmas Eve”

December 24, 2023

Readings: Isaiah 7:10-14 | 1 Joh 4:7-16 | Matthew 1:18-25

Though Ahaz would not ask, the Lord gives a sign to the House of David — “the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Is. 7:14). With this promise, He signifies that salvation is by His grace alone. It is no work or achievement of man, but the Lord’s own work and His free gift. The promise is fulfilled as the Son of God is conceived and born of the Virgin Mary, and the sign is received in faith by the House of David in the person of Joseph (Matt. 1:20–24). “Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary” (Nicene Creed), God is with us (Immanuel) in the flesh of Jesus, Mary’s Son. Joseph believes that Word of God and so demonstrates a marvelous example in his immediate and quiet obedience, taking Mary to be his wife and caring for her in faith and love. He loves her because the love of God is manifest in this, that “the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world,” to be “the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10–14).

