

DECEMBER 2025

# GOOD NEWS

from  
Christ  
Lutheran  
Church



**Christ Lutheran Church**  
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Calendars  
Sioux Falls Lutheran School  
Lutheran Family Service

## AWAIT GOD'S FUTURE AN ADVENT-CHRISTMAS SERMON SERIES BASED ON ISAIAH BY PAUL R. RAABE

### ADVENT WEEK 1

Isaiah 36-37—"Yahweh Will Save His Zion"

### ADVENT WEEK 2

Isaiah 13:9-13, 19; 14:1—"The Day of Yahweh Will Come"

### ADVENT WEEK 3

Isaiah 19:23-25—"Gentiles Will Belong to Ancient Israel's God"

### ADVENT WEEK 4

Isaiah 25:5-9—"Death the Swallower Will Be Swallowed Up"

### CHRISTMAS EVE

Isaiah 12:4-6—"O Give Thanks unto Yahweh"

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Isaiah 16:4-5 — "The Righteous King on David's Throne"

Advent is the time of the church year that concentrates on the future tense. The overall theme of the series is "Await God's Future." It is God's future that we are yearning for based on what God himself has announced. God's future is our hope, not human-made futures, not human-concocted utopian dreams, not future visions depending on human technology, engineering, and science. The overall goal of the series is to enable people to hear some of the future-tense announcements of the ancient prophet Isaiah, so that these ancient words will instill in the hearts and minds of the listeners repentance, faith, and hope in the coming of Yahweh. Isaiah bids us: "Await God's Future."

The texts come from the prophet of ancient Israel named Isaiah son of Amoz, from parts of his book generally unfamiliar to people. For each text I give some preliminary notes<sup>1</sup>. The sermons are sermon starters. The pastor will need to fill in with additional material based on the local context. My goal is to stimulate some homiletical ideas and approaches. In this series we want to practice a double hearing, to hear the prophet preaching to his original listeners and to hear his words continue to speak to us through Christ now 2700 years later in North America. These ancient words were the true word of God then, and they remain the true word of God now. The season of Advent is a good time to hear the

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**Issues, Etc.**

Talk Radio for the Thinking Christian

[www.issuesetc.org](http://www.issuesetc.org)

### Sacred Music 24/7



[lutheranpublicradio.org](http://lutheranpublicradio.org)

**Lutheran Doctrine:  
Christ-Centered,  
Cross-Focused**

**Voters Meeting, Dec 14, 2025 after Divine Service**

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 02 Bryan Nelson
- 04 Tamara Hartwig
- 04 Melanie Hericks
- 08 Norma Miller
- 15 Carl Deardoff
- 16 Carol Brack
- 20 Ellis Robinson

## DECEMBER BAPTISMS

- 01 Ruthie Wetzel
- 04 Susan Powell
- 12 Daniel Monson
- 15 Mildred Corey
- 17 Jason Clare
- 26 Melanie Hericks
- 26 Ellis Robison
- 27 Bryan Nelson
- 29 Carl Deardoff
- 31 Constance Bartlett



### IN OUR PRAYERS

Mildred Corey, at home  
 Susan Powell, at home  
 Elva Clauson, at home



## Life Quotes

**December 14** “And every life matters to God. It is impossible to live—even for a few moments on this earth—and not influence somebody in one way or another. We are all always influencing somebody—either for good or for bad. Life matters. Your life matters. Lives of kings and lives of shepherds all matter. We all matter and are important to God.” *Dennis D. Nelson, Lutheran CORE – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

**December 21** “As we celebrate the birth of our Lord, let us pray for all mothers who find themselves pregnant and afraid. Abortion is never the answer. We pray daily that the Lord will strengthen all expectant mothers who find themselves alone and seemingly without hope and that He will help them choose life. Every human being’s life is a precious and beautiful miracle.” *Judie Brown, American Life League – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

**December 28** “Look back at how God changed you. Look ahead to what God promises for you. The future looks bright when you’re connected to the crucified and risen Lord Jesus. May the Lord continue to strengthen you to live in your baptismal grace all the days of your life.” *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

## CHOIR

Choir practice will rotate  
 between Bell and Vocal

December	3	Bell
	10	Vocal
	17	<b>Bell Vocal</b>



*“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.



**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
TREASURER'S REPORT  
December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

	<u>09/2025</u>	<u>10/2025</u>	<u>11/2025</u>
<b>Deposits:</b>	\$7,846.00	\$18,103.55	\$ 20,168.30
<b>Disbursements:</b>	\$ 17,703.45	\$ 14,405.89	\$ 31,206.41
<b>Deposit Breakdown:</b>			
<b>General Fund:</b>	\$ 18,967.30	\$ 7,818.00	\$ 18,045.53
<b>Designated Funds:</b>	\$ 1,201.00	\$ 28.00	\$ 58.02
<b>Monthly Budget Requirement:</b>	\$ 16,987.20	\$ 16,987.20	\$ 21,234.00
<b>Mortgage Balance as of 12/4</b>			\$ 23,176.95

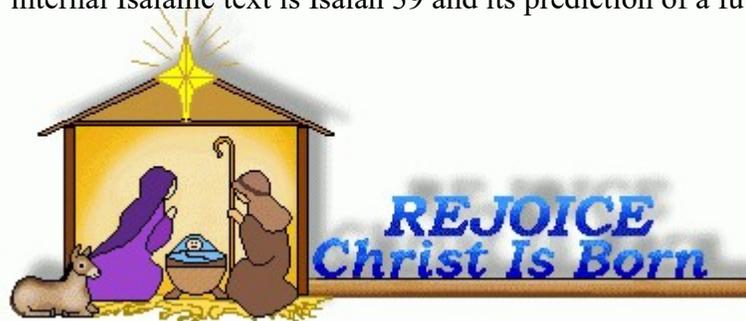
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prophets of ancient Israel announce the future. In this series we will let Isaiah ben Amoz move us and lead us to respond properly to the future he was announcing. We now live in the time between the times, in the “now” of the age of fulfillment and in the “not yet” waiting for the future consummation. Each one of Isaiah’s passages has already been fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah and we already enjoy its blessings now by faith. At the same time, we await its full empirical and visible realization when Jesus returns in glory. Isaiah can help us prepare and wait for that future.

**Isaiah ben Amoz**

Isaiah ben Amoz was called into the prophetic ministry by the Holy One of Israel. That call came during the year that King Uzziah of Jerusalem died in 740 BC (Is 6). Isaiah conducted his public ministry in Jerusalem during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Is 1:1). Isaiah had access to the palace in Jerusalem. The two major narratives in the book concentrate on Isaiah’s interactions with King Ahaz (Is 7–8) and King Hezekiah (Is 36–39). Therefore one historical audience was the king and advisers in the palace in Jerusalem. No doubt another historical audience was the people of Israel who would gather at the temple site. A third historical audience comprised envoys from Gentile nations seeking relations and alliances with the Jerusalem palace and Gentile traders and merchants. We have no record of Isaiah traveling to other lands, but we do know that other lands had dealings in Jerusalem. We should not think of eighth-century BC Jerusalem as an isolated, backwoods town. It was a bustling city full of activity and well known in the ancient Near East. Archaeology reveals that eighth-century BC Jerusalem was a rather large walled city for that day, about 150 acres with a considerable expansion to the western hill.<sup>2</sup>

Isaiah’s context in the second half of the eighth century was dominated by the kings of Assyria and their military power. Especially three kings of Assyria loom large, Tiglath-pileser III (744–727), Sargon II (722–705) and Sennacherib (705–681). They turned their sights to the west, which meant trouble for Phoenicia, Philistia, Damascus and Aram, Moab, and Arabian tribes to the east. It also meant disaster for the northern kingdom of Israel and for Judah and became a large threat to Jerusalem itself. The campaigns of Sargon II and Sennacherib and the historical narratives concerning them in Isaiah 20 and 36–37 are especially crucial for understanding the material. The other key internal Isaianic text is Isaiah 39 and its prediction of a future king of Babylon.



# Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

## Lutheran Service Book 345 | study by Steven P. Mueller

### Introduction

“Hear ye, hear ye!” the town crier yelled, drawing attention to himself. He then began to proclaim the news that he was commissioned to bring.

“Extra! Extra! Read all about it!” yelled the person selling newspapers on the street, calling customers to buy a copy.

“Act now!” “You may already be a winner.” “Click here for details.” Such bids from the media of our day seek our attention and action.

Though the methods change, many different voices call out for our attention. They all ask us to listen to them and follow their counsel. But in the midst of all the voices we hear comes a different voice with a more significant message: “Prepare a way for the Lord!”

The hymn we study today brings together many of the themes of Advent, including the message of that herald John the Baptist.

- There are many voices we hear, some of which we should listen to. What voices threaten to distract us from God’s call? How can our attention be focused so that we hear what God wants us to hear?
- How are the themes of Advent different from what we hear in our society’s “holiday” celebrations?

### Exploring the Scriptures

One of the themes addressed by this hymn is the contrast between light and darkness. Read Eph. 5:8–14.

- What does this passage mean by darkness? What are the “unfruitful works of darkness” (v. 11)? What place do darkness and its works have in our lives?
- What does it mean to be “children of light”? What is the source of our light? What effects does this have in our lives?
- Read part of the Benedictus, the song of Zechariah, in Luke 1:76–79. While praising God for the gift of a son, what does Zechariah say about the Light which John will proclaim?

### Exploring the Hymn Background

Following customs developed in the early Christian Church, many generations of Christians adopted a detailed pattern of worship each day. A system of seven services was developed. These services were used at various times of the day and night. Many thought that this pattern was reflected in the psalms. For example, Ps. 119:164 says, “Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules.” Though not everyone would participate in all of these services, they were diligently followed in monasteries. The Lutheran Confessions rejected the “babbling of the seven canonical hours of prayer” that turned worship into a work (LC preface 3) and cautioned that such a system was a human invention and it was not sinful to omit such services (AC XXVIII 41). Still, Luther urged that Christians be involved in daily worship and devotions, and Lutherans have continued to use several of these offices, including Matins, Vespers and Compline.

In the Middle Ages, as the community gathered for one of the morning offices known as Prime, an Advent custom emerged. On the First Sunday in Advent — the first day of the new Church Year — they would sing “Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding.” From then until Christmas Eve, at each service of Prime, they would sing this hymn because it summarized the themes of Advent and called the singers to prepare themselves for their Savior.

Though we do not know the author of this old hymn, it continues to call people to hear the Advent message. Today, many Christians hear this hymn as one of the songs often sung in the famous Service of Lessons and Carols that is broadcast worldwide from King’s College Chapel in Cambridge, England, every Christmas Eve. It remains a powerful witness to the message of Advent.

- While the chief service of the congregation is the Divine Service, why is daily worship important? How can we make worship part of our daily lives?
- What value do you see in helping people see the themes and purpose of the seasons of the Church

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Year? What can our congregation do to bring greater awareness?

## Text

This hymn opens by talking about a “thrilling voice.” Read Is. 40:3–5 and Luke 3:2b–9.

- What is the thrilling voice? What message does it bring? How would the words of Isaiah’s prophecy have heightened excitement when people saw and heard John?
- John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the Messiah. How did he prepare people for the Messiah’s first arrival? Does he prepare us to be ready to receive Christ as He comes to us today? Does he help prepare us for the Savior’s second coming?
- This hymn describes our natural spiritual state as “works of darkness,” “earthbound,” and spiritual “sloth.” If we were reliant on ourselves, would the coming of the Son of God be good news? How does Jesus take care of us in this situation (see John 1:29)?
- How does this hymn describe our spiritual state without Christ in stanzas 1 and 2? Do these things still characterize us today?

Advent reflects on all of Christ’s comings: His birth in Bethlehem long ago, His coming to us today through His Word and Sacraments, and His coming at the end of time. Read Matt. 25:31–34, 41 and Luke 21:25–28.

- What two responses will there be to His glorious return? What makes the difference?
- This hymn concludes with a powerful doxology. How is this an appropriate response to Christ’s comings?

## Making the Connection

The world’s “holiday” celebrations, even those called Christmas, can distract from Advent’s preparations for us to truly receive the gift of our Savior. The message of Advent, and of this hymn, does not always line up with the experiences of other aspects of our lives.

- How can we keep Advent as a time of real preparation, with our focus on things that truly matter?
- Crowds of people went out into the wilderness to hear John’s message, repent and be baptized. Where

do we go to hear his message? What is our response?

## In Closing

The Baptist calls us to prepare ourselves by acknowledging our sin and lifting our eyes to see the Savior. This is the greatest thing we can do in Advent — or any day of the year. We remember who we are, we look to our Savior. And because of His work, we receive His mercy, love and heavenly pardon.

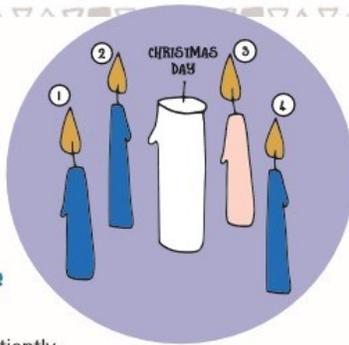
- Sing or read together LSB 345, “Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding.”

## Prayer

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 (Collect of the Day, Third Sunday in Advent).



+ + +  
**KIDS IN THE  
 DIVINE SERVICE**  
 + + +



**What does it mean  
 when four candles  
 have been lit on the  
 Advent wreath?**

You've been preparing and patiently waiting for that wonderful day of celebration. When four of the candles on the Advent wreath have been lit, it means that Christmas is almost here! That's right! The day on which we remember the birth of our Savior is right around the corner!

**What does this mean to me?**

Today is the Fourth Sunday in Advent. Today is the last Sunday of preparation for the birth of Jesus. Next week the Church will celebrate Christmas Day, one of the most important days of the whole year. As you can see, Advent has prepared us for the coming of Jesus, our wonderful Savior from sin!



**Parents:**

Remind your children of the important part that Advent plays in the lives of all Christians. This is the time in the Church Year that prepares us for the coming of our Savior. Be sure to bring your children to both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.

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**UPCOMING 2025**

**2025**

- Dec 3, 10, 17, Advent Services, 7pm
- Dec 14: Voters Meeting, after Divine Service
- Dec 14, 4:00 pm Children's Christmas Service
- December 24 Christmas Eve service, 5pm
- December 25 Christmas Day Service 9:30 am
- No New Year's Eve/Day Service

**2026**

- Jan 06, Epiphany Divine Service 7pm
- Feb 18 Ash Wednesday Divine Service, 7pm
- Feb 25, Mar 4, 11, 18, 25 Midweek Lenten service, 7pm (Dinner prior)
- Mar 08 Daylight Savings Time Begins, 2am
- Mar 08 Voters' Meeting
- April 02 Maundy Thursday Divine Service, 7pm
- April 03 Good Friday Tenebrae Service, 7pm
- April 05 Easter Sunrise Matins Service, 7am
- April 05 Easter Breakfast, 8am
- April 05 Easter Festival Divine Service, 9:30am
- May 10 Mothers' Day Breakfast
- May 14 Ascension Day Divine Service 7pm
- June 14 Voters Meeting
- July 19-223 VBS
- Sept 13 Voters Meeting
- Nov 01 Daylight Saving Time Ends, 2am
- Nov 26 Thanksgiving Day Divine Service, 9:30 am

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN'S  
 CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

The Sunday School Children's Christmas Service will be Sunday December 15th at 4pm. Practice will be during the Sunday school hour. Please come and listen to the Children tell about the birth of our Savior.



## SERMON TEXT AND TITLES FOR DECEMBER

- December 7<sup>th</sup>**      *“His winnowing fork is in His hand”*      St. Matthew 3:12  
**Hymn of the Day:** *“ On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist Cry”*      LSB 344  
Isaiah 11:1-10  
Psalm 72:1-7  
Romans 15:4-13 1:2-11  
St Matthew 3:1-12
- December 14<sup>th</sup>**      *“John heard in Prison!”*      St. Matthew 11:2  
**Hymn of the Day:** *“ Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding”*      LSB 345  
Isaiah 35:1-10  
Psalm 146  
James 5:7-11  
St. Matthew 11:2-15
- December 21<sup>nd</sup>**      *“Behold a virgin?”*      St. Matthew 1:23  
**Hymn of the Day:** *“ O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”*      LSB 357  
Isaiah 7:10-17  
Psalm 24  
Romans 1:1-7  
St. Matthew 1:18-25
- December 24<sup>h</sup>**      *“O Gave Thanks unto Yahweh”*      Isaiah 12:4-6  
Isaiah 7:10-14  
Psalm 110:1-4  
1 John 4:7-16  
St Matthew 1:18-25
- December 25<sup>h</sup>**      *“The Righteous King on David’s Throne”*      Isaiah 16:4-5  
**Hymn of the Day:** *“ Of the Father’s Love Begotten”*      LSB 384  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 2  
Hebrews 1:1-12  
John 1:1-18
- December 28<sup>h</sup>**      *“Rise and take the Child and His mother and flee”*      St. Matthew 2:13  
**Hymn of the Day:** *“ Let All Together Praise Our God”*      LSB 389  
Jeremiah 31:15-17  
Psalm 54  
Revelation 14:1-5  
St. Matthew 2:13-18

