

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a little early to be doing a Christmas Column for the December Newsletter so I thought I would do something different yet again and concentrate on Advent, specifically parts of the Advent Liturgy.

When we worship every Sunday you will notice that some things change from Sunday to Sunday. One of the things that changes from Sunday to Sunday is the Collect prayer, or the Prayer of the Day.

From another pastor, "The Collect/Prayer of the Day is one of those moments in the service that gets overlooked. In some congregations this is said by the pastor/minister. In some congregations, the entire congregation participates. The collect of the day is generally a summation of the worship service. It tries to give thematic focus to the day." Hence the name collect, it collects the thoughts of the day.

The Collect sometimes follows its own theme over a season. In Advent as well as Lent they follow a pattern.

I know we have always heard the Hope, Joy, Love, Peace but this is of a more modern interpretation and does not have any basis in the Liturgy or Lessons.

The Collects for Advent go like this.

The First Sunday in Advent: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Rescue and protect us from the threatening perils of our sins by your might; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Stir up your power, is the theme for all of Advent. In Advent we stand in anticipation of the coming of God. That was why back in the 80's we changed the color of Advent from purple (penance) to Blue (anticipation or preparation) We stand waiting for God to come to us as the Christ Child at Christmas, but also now to prepare for his coming once again when he will come to judge the quick and the dead (as we say in the Creed.)

Just as we close out the Church year talking about the End of time we do the same as we begin Advent but in joyful anticipation of the coming of Christ to be our Savior.

We continue this in Second Sunday in Advent: Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of your only Son, so that by his coming we may worship you with pure minds; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Sunday was to stir up power, this week it is stir up our hearts. Get ready, prepare make way for the Lord. As we continue to get closer to Christmas we feel the anticipation ramping up.

The Third Sunday in Advent changes up the beginning: Lord, hear our prayers, and lighten the darkness of our hearts by your gracious appearing; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

As we get closer to Christmas it gets darker and darker outside. The end of the year is coming and we know that time is winding down. We ask for God to lighten the darkness in our hearts. We recognize we are indeed sinful and need God's forgiveness that comes through Christ.

Finally, it comes, the Fourth Sunday in Advent: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Help us by your great might, that whatever is hindered by our sins may be speedily accomplished for your glory; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Again we hear the phrase, stir up your power O Lord. As we fast approach Christmas day we want God's power manifest in us as we celebrate his coming once again through the Christ Child. We stand in anticipation and hope of the Christ Child, knowing that as he came to us once, he will come once again in God's power to bring us home to heaven with him.

As we gather Christmas day we say Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of our sin that we may rejoice in the salvation You have delivered unto us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Notice how we now change over from anticipation to celebration as we rejoice that the Son of God has now come to be with us. We no longer wait for God; God is here with us this day.

I hope that this little journey through the Collects of Advent helps us remember what Advent is for us. It is a preparation time, a getting ready time for Christmas. It is not Christmas yet, no matter how much the world wants to rush things, but Christmas will come. Until Christmas comes we prepare, get ready anticipate the coming of the Christ child for us all. May our worship prepare us for the coming of that time.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Marshall

OTHER NEWS



Birthdays for the month of December

10 Joyce Anne Green
12 Betty Rice
12 Ainsley Riederer
13 Dorothy Herrod
18 Megan Raddle
19 Pat Baughman
20 Adam Shorts
20 Andrew Raddle
31 Carole Michael

If *we forgot you, we apologize, it means we most likely don't have it. Please see that the office receives it. Thanks*



Baptismal Anniversaries for the month of December

Rachel Clinton
Isla Piper Burrus
Bettye Johnson



Sunday School Attendance for the month of October

Students:

Adults:

Not available



Sunday Average Attendance for October– 45

Sunday Average Attendance online for October– 27

September Offerings – $13,670.71



LWML NEWS

God's Perfect Gift

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

At this time of the year, our minds can focus on the brightly colored packages with shiny bows tucked neatly underneath the Christmas tree. We wonder, "What is in those packages that we see?" Regardless of our age, we all enjoy receiving Christmas gifts. What is the best Christmas gift you have ever received? (Allow time to share answers.)

The best gift I was thinking of was not wrapped and waiting for me under the Christmas tree, but it was a Christmas gift, of sorts. My gift came a little before Christmas when my first child, a daughter, was born on December 2.

Even though my daughter was a wonderful gift, she was not the perfect gift. There is one gift that fits all sizes, all ages, all nationalities, all races. It is a gift we can all share. Once you have discovered this gift, you will not want to return it. That is why it is the perfect gift for everyone. My baby was not this perfect gift, but another baby was. That baby, that perfect gift, is Jesus.

Many do not think they need the gift of Jesus. Many ask, "At Christmas, why do we need to talk about a baby who was born over 2,000 years ago?" Romans 3:23-24 answers that question. That passage states, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* Our sins separate us from God. To save us from the
eternal death our sins cause, God sent Jesus, the perfect gift, to redeem us through His death and resurrection. Jesus has bought us back and made us righteous (perfect and sinless) before God, so that God now views us as justified. That means God declares us innocent and sees us just as if we have never sinned. How does Jesus do this? It is only through grace, which is undeserved love. This is the essence of this perfect gift. It is something we do not deserve, but is freely given to us by our loving heavenly Father!

I had thought waiting almost nine years for my daughter was a long time, but people waited, and waited, and waited for many centuries for Jesus, the perfect gift, to arrive. Today some are still waiting to hear of Jesus. The work of the LWML is so important to all those people still waiting in darkness. The LWML produces Christ-centered materials we can use to share the Good News of Jesus. The LWML raises funds to support missionaries throughout the world. The Holy Spirit works through the Word we and those missionaries share so that those sitting in darkness will be able to join Jesus, the perfect gift, for eternity in heaven. At Christmastime, we celebrate when this perfect gift came to earth. Jesus **is** our gift. He is the perfect gift for everyone!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, at Christmastime and always, help us to proclaim to all the world that You are the perfect gift. May the Holy Spirit work through Your Word of truth that we and missionaries proclaim so that those in darkness may come to know You as their Lord and Savior. In Your name we pray. Amen.

ESTHER GUILD MAILBOX MEMBER GROUP

During the days leading up to Thanksgiving, Esther Guild members were asked to consider setting apart a time of reflection and Eucharistic (a Greek word meaning "saying grace" or "giving thanks"). Beginning November 1, they were invited to participate in a Scripture reading plan that is focused on giving thanks to God. Here is the link to that Bible reading plan. November-Eucharistic-project. They were also asked to take it a step further: select a verse (or portions of verses) from the day's reading to write on index cards, a note pad, or in a journal. The discipline of writing Scripture engages your head, hands, and heart.

It slows us down, letting the Word sink in. It also gives us tangible reminders to keep at our fingertips, to display in our homes, or to share with our family and friends. It was mention to string or clip the cards on a ribbon to make a "Thanksgiving Garland," include them in Thanksgiving cards, or use them as place cards at your table.

The Midsouth District of LWML is asking for people to let them know if they want to ride a bus together to the national convention next year in Oklahoma City. The cost and other pertinent information can be found on the LWML Midsouth District website at Erin Foster has further to give you if you are interested in this. Here is the website if you are interested. https://www.midsouthlwml.org/

Neighbor to Neighbor is needing support from our community to help feed our neighbors who do not have enough money to make their food budget last through the month. We particularly asked to provide 100 cans of fruit or fruit cocktail both in October and November to help provide Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. Thank you to all of you who have been helping with their mission. Please continue your donations. We are asking everyone to give what they can to help. No amount is too small. It can be any nonperishable food that is not expired.

Do you want to participate in LWML but do not have the time for a monthly meeting? Esther Guild Mailbox Member program is a way for you to become involved. You will receive a monthly email with devotions, crafts, LWML news, and other news. You can stay up to date on what is going on locally, around the zone, the district, and at the national level. Please let Erin Foster know if you would like to receive this email and she can get you signed up.

Your Sister in Christ, Erin Foster

DECEMBER 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 6:30 Advent Worship	3 10:00 Thursday Bible Class 12:00 Mary Guild Christmas Party	4	5
6 9:30 Sunday School/Bible Study 10:45 Worship W/Comm. 12:00 Elders Meeting 2nd Sunday in Advent	7	8	9 6:30 Advent Worship Newsletter Deadline	10 10:00 Thursday Bible Class	11	12 9 a.m. - 2:00p.m.Church Youth Craft Sale
13 9:30 Sunday School/Bible Study 10:45 Worship W/Comm. 12:00 Congregational Meeting 1:00 Confirmation Class 3rd Sunday in Advent	14	15	16 10:00 Newsletter Committee 6:30 Advent Worship	17 10:00 Thursday Bible Class	18	19 Parsley Family use of the Fellowship Hall
20 9:30 Sunday School/Bible Study 10:45 Worship Service w/comm.& Children's Christmas Program. 4th Sunday in Advent	21 Start of Winter (Winter Solstice)	22	23	24 6:30 p.m.Christmas Eve Worship	25 Christmas 10:45 Christmas Day Worship	26
27 9:30 Sunday School/Bible Study 10:45 Worship Service 1st Sunday After Christmas	28	29	30	31		

December 2026

	Elder	Ushers	Acolyte	Lector	Flowers by...	Counters
SUN 6	Steve Shorts Steve Lochmann	Dan Riederer Andrew Raddle	Emily Saylor	Erin Foster	Waymond & Kaye Meins “Christmas Blessings to Everyone”	Judy Clinton Julie Shorts Sharon Calabretta
SUN 13	Bill Witt Steve Shorts	Phillip Dunger Harold Jacobs	Espen Riederer	Steve Lochmann	Lynne Russell “In Memory of Claudette Russell”	Phillip &Amanda Dunger
SUN 20	Phillip Dunger Bill Witt	Steve Lochmann Dan Riederer	Hope Puddephatt	Bryan Puddephatt	Christmas Poinsettias	Tricia Jacobs Lynne Russell
SUN 27	Dan Riederer Phillip Dunger	Harold Jacob Steve Shorts	Kaleigh Frye	Erin Foster	JP & Phyllis Dunger “In Thanks to God for Another Blessed Year”	Joyce Anne Green Charleen Weathers

Trinity Lutheran Church Worship Service Attendants

Altar Care: Kaye Meins, Phyllis Dunger

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Return Service Requested

Recipient's Name
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Trinity Lutheran Church

Pine Bluff, Arkansas



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