

# Prince of Peace Tidings

Volume 25

December 2023

Issue 12

## The Season of Advent and the Twelve Days of Christmas

### Advent

Although the season of Advent is strongly associated with the celebration of Christmas, its historical development was multifaceted. Even now, Advent is a season of repentance in which the Church anticipates the coming of her Lord, not only in the liturgy with His Word and Sacraments, but in glory for the Final Judgment of the living and the dead at the end of days. It is not without hope or rejoicing that the Church watches and waits her coming Lord, but it is with serious and sober expectation, especially knowing that this present world is passing away.

So, the best and most appropriate way to discern the diverse emphases and purposes of Advent is to consider the Holy Gospels of the season, as well as the other readings and propers (prayers and liturgy) appointed for each of the four Sundays in Advent. After all, it is the Word of the Lord that is proclaimed, confessed, and prayed that actually constitutes the character and content of the Church Year in every case.

For the Sundays in Advent this year, the following is the Church's focus:

Sunday or Monday	Name of Sunday <i>(comes from opening words of the Introit)</i>	Gospel Focus
Advent 1 (Sunday, Dec. 3, or Monday, Dec. 4)	<i>Ad te levavi</i> : To You I lift up	Jesus comes into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
Advent 2 (Sunday, Dec. 10, or Monday, Dec. 11)	<i>Populus Zion</i> : Say to the daughter of Zion	The preaching of John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-8)
Advent 3 (Sunday, Dec. 17, or Monday, Dec. 18)	<i>Gaudete</i> : Rejoice in the Lord	John points to the Lamb of God (John 1:6-8, 19-24)
Advent 4 (Sunday, Dec. 24)	<i>Rorate Coeli</i> : Shower, O heavens	The Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

Yes, you saw that right. The Fourth Sunday in Advent this year is on December 24. So, what do we make of that? Well, Christmas Eve doesn't occur until the evening. So, in the morning of December 24, it is still the season of Advent.

### Christmas

The season of Christmas begins on the evening of December 24 and continues to the evening of January 5, which is the Eve of the Epiphany. Our consumer world may be convinced that the Christmas season is the final weeks of shopping before December 25, but the Twelve Days of Christmas are actually from Christmas Day (The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord) to the Eve of Epiphany (January 5).

The focus of these Twelve Days is on the incarnation and appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, conceived and born of the virgin Mary (Galatians 4:4-5; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:4-8. The seasonal Gradual of the propers highlights this emphasis with the words of the prophet Isaiah, also heard every year on Christmas Eve:

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*For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)*

The Christmas season encapsulates the Church's confession, celebration, and encouragement throughout these days. The fulfilment of Advent is pronounced that Christ has come in human flesh to save His people from their sins, and that He would prepare us for the Final Judgment through His Word and Sacraments.

Even with the celebration of Christ on our lips and in our hearts, we also realize that Christ's coming in human flesh also caused conflict in this fallen world. The festivals that occur over Christmas don't seem too celebratory, but they are days of celebration. We remember St. Stephen (Dec. 26), St. John the Apostle and Evangelist (Dec. 27), and the Holy Innocents (Dec. 28). Each of these days relate to the Nativity of our Lord. These festival days set before us three different kinds of martyr: St. Stephen is martyred in both his will and his body; St. John is martyred in his will but not his body; and the Holy Innocents are martyred in their bodies but not their will. The celebration of these martyrs in the early days of the Christmas season can be jarring to people, but doing so demonstrates the contrast and conflict between the Light of Christ and the darkness of sin and death in this fallen and perishing world (John 1:5, 9-11). As Christ came to suffer and die for the sins of the world, so do His people, His children of all ages, bear His cross and suffer with Him. So, these days are beneficial in the life of the Christian.

Christmas is a season of celebration and not just a day or two. The Twelve Days of Christmas is a season to look back at why God became man for us. It is a season to look back at how a humble Baby is also the Almighty God. It is a season to look back at why that humble Baby came. He came to save you. He came with the expressed purpose to fulfill the Law of God, suffer and die on the cross for the sins of the world, and resurrect from the dead for our justification, so that you would be saved from your sins. But it is also a season to look forward. We look forward to the consummation of it all – Christ's coming again on the Last Day.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

In Christ,  
Pastor Adelsen

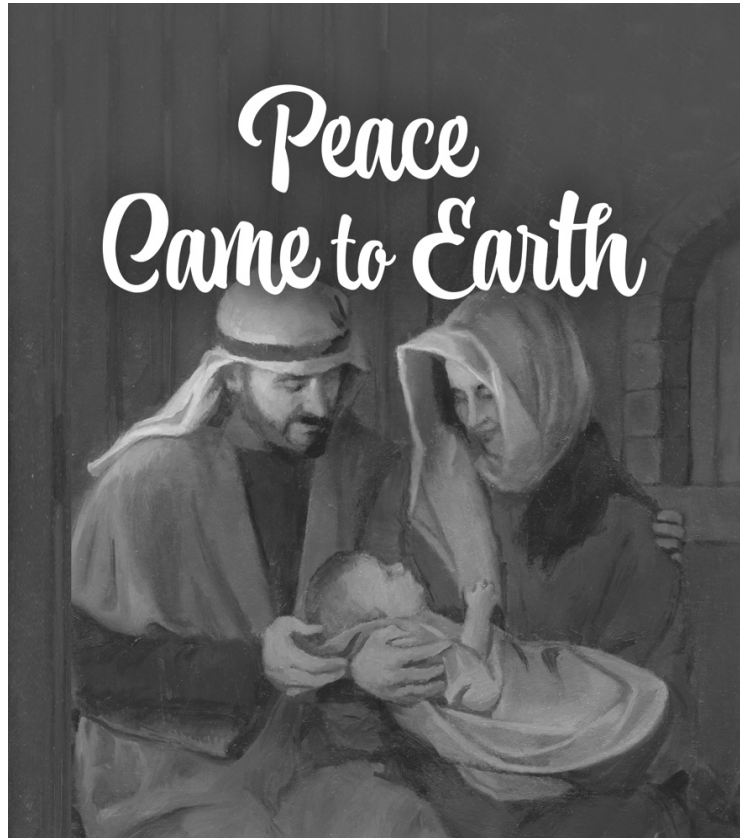
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## Advent Midweek Series: “Peace Came to Earth”

Peace is our common pursuit. As Advent leads us to Christmas, we are especially seeking a distinct season of peace. We need a quiet place to rest during this restless time. Year after year, with each Advent season, we wonder if this year will bring a peace that endures. We crave the reassurance that God knows all our needs and will provide for them, not just for these short weeks but for every season.

Often, we grow impatient as we seek peace. Despite knowing the promises of God to provide for us, we might try to find peace on our own. We then define peace according to the ways we seek it. We might imagine that peace comes when we finally have enough of all the things we plan to buy. Or we might look for the perfect place where peace is an undisturbed solitude, the cabin beside a still lake. We might seek peace by escaping memories of the past. Or peace might be an elusive future where everyone does exactly what they should. These are our many ways of defining peace, but sadly, each of these directions could go on and on without ever being fulfilled.



To illustrate both our pursuit of peace and God’s plan for us, our Advent series this year uses a five-point star for each sermon. Each sermon will emphasize a different point of the star. Overall, the star reminds us of the Christmas star of Matthew 2 and that wonderful light that guided the Wise Men to find Jesus. Their long journey ended with the blessing of a lasting peace. Just as the Wise Men followed the star, so we will go to each point in this Advent star. This won’t be a useless journey that never ends. We will find that God meets us at each point of the star, knowing our needs and bringing us the peace we are seeking.

Since the five-point star will guide our journey, picture yourself drawing such a star. Start in the bottom left corner and draw up to the top center point. Stop and draw downward to the bottom right corner, then upward to the middle of the left side. Draw across to the right, and back to the bottom left corner, eventually reaching each point. Every point goes a certain distance but then is stopped. In the same way, each of our paths to peace could go on and on, never being fulfilled. There won’t be enough possessions or perfectly calm places to give us lasting peace. But as we seek peace in these many ways, God intersects us with a peace that both passes our understanding and yet meets our needs. God

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knows the many ways and directions by which we seek peace. As we journey, God meets us, halts our endless pursuits, and gives us a new understanding of His gift of peace. That peace comes always through the birth of Jesus, the Word become flesh who steps into the world and fulfills our desire for peace.

In the end, we find our lasting peace and treasure. God's peace doesn't send us on an impossible search. God's peace is not an invisible needle buried in a haystack. God's peace is a treasure laid in the straw of the manger. God's peace is the priceless Son of God, born in the stable and laid in plain view for us all. He is the diamond found in the manger's straw. As the Prince of Peace, He is the peace that we seek.

Date	Theme
Midweek of Advent 1 (Wednesday, Dec. 6)	"Look Up! The Star of Peace Draws Near"
Midweek of Advent 2 (Wednesday, Dec. 13)	"Peace to All, Near and Far"
Midweek of Advent 3 (Wednesday, Dec. 20)	"Our Peace Rests on Him Alone"
Christmas Day (Monday, Dec. 25)	"The Diamond Found in the Manger"

## Advent and Christmas Schedule

Date	Day	Time
Sunday, December 3 and Monday, December 4	First Sunday in Advent	9 a.m. Sunday 7 p.m. Monday
Wednesday, December 6	Advent Midweek 1	7 p.m. Wednesday
Sunday, December 10 and Monday, December 11	Second Sunday in Advent	9 a.m. Sunday 7 p.m. Monday
Wednesday, December 13	Advent Midweek 2	7 p.m. Wednesday
Sunday, December 17 and Monday, December 18	Third Sunday in Advent	9 a.m. Sunday 7 p.m. Monday
Wednesday, December 20	Advent Midweek 3	7 p.m. Wednesday
Sunday, December 24	Fourth Sunday in Advent	9 a.m. Sunday
Sunday, December 24	Christmas Eve	7 p.m. Sunday
Monday, December 25	Christmas Day	9 a.m. Monday <i>No evening service.</i>
Sunday, December 31	First Sunday after Christmas	9 a.m. Sunday
Monday, January 1	New Year's Day: Circumcision and Name of Jesus	9 a.m. Sunday <i>No evening service.</i>

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## Advent Sunday Adult Bible Study

Beginning on Sunday, December 10, the Sunday Adult Bible Study on Christian denominations will take a break until January. So, on December 10, we will begin an Advent study that relates with our Advent midweek theme “Peace Came to Earth.”

“Peace on earth.” What a wonderful phrase of promise and hope! We yearn for peace in every season, but perhaps especially in the weeks before Christmas. In these busy, even frantic weeks, we seek peace in many ways. For the Sunday following the Advent midweek, the Sunday Adult Bible Study will be using a five-point star as our central image. Each point on the star happens when two lines intersect, and it’s that intersection that brings us a point of peace. We expect certain things will bring us peace. God meets us in each expectation and says, “Here. This is real peace.”



Date	Study Theme
Sunday, Dec. 10	“Look Up! The Star of Peace Draws Near”
Sunday, Dec. 17	“Peace to All, Near and Far”
Sunday, Dec. 24	“Our Peace Rests on Him Alone”
Sunday, Dec. 31	“The Diamond Found in the Manger”

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*Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, the Light no darkness can overcome!* (John 8:12, John 1:5) At 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 10 at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Onalaska, come, listen, and sing as choirs from Faith Lutheran Church, La Crosse; Gift of Grace Lutheran Church, Holmen; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Tomah; Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, West Salem; and Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Onalaska, praise God under the theme “Let Light Shine Out of Darkness”: Lessons and Carols for Advent.

## **Baby Hats**

Baby hats knitted and crocheted needed! We will be having a dedication for the hats on Life Sunday January 21st. So please have your finished projects in by Sunday January 21! Our hats will be sent to Mercy Hospital St Louis for new borns who are in need. Thank you so much!

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## Financial Peace University

Have you ever lost sleep because of your financial situation? According to a Ramsey Solutions study, 40 percent of Americans have admitted to exactly that. With credit cards, car loans, student loans, and inflated grocery prices, your financial situation may change rapidly. Even if you are doing well financially, the current economy has made that a challenge. You can change your financial future by joining Financial Peace University where you will learn how to pay off debt fast, save more money, build lasting wealth, and give generously. Financial Peace University begins at 5:30 p.m. on Mondays. Cost is \$79.99 per family without a book or \$99.99 with the book. You may sign up in the POP narthex, or by visiting <https://www.fpu.com/CDA906>. For more information, please see Pastor Adelsen or email him at [pastor@wspop.org](mailto:pastor@wspop.org).

There will not be class on December 25 or January 1.

## The Book of Revelation – Wednesday Morning Bible Study

The Book of Revelation is addressed to seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. These seven churches represent the Christian Church for all time and place. When reading through Revelation 2-3, we certainly see that fact. Each congregation was far from perfect, they are sinner-saints after all, as they all dealt with false teachings from within or from without. To each congregation, Jesus spoke to them law to show them their sins and gospel in showing what Christ has won for them. Below are some examples of how we still face the same challenges as the congregations of the past.

- **Ephesus:** Persevering in the midst of suffering, and uncompromising against evil.
- **Smyrna:** Poor monetarily, but rich in God's grace.
- **Pergamum:** Double-mindedness. Saying that they are Christians but not living the life of faith.
- **Thyatira:** Heresy and seduction.
- **Sardis:** Going through the motions of religion as Jesus meant little to them.
- **Philadelphia:** Kept the word of Jesus and have not denied His Name.
- **Laodicea:** Apathetic in their faith in Christ as they found security in their possessions and wealth.

As God's Word says in Ecclesiastes 1:9, "*There is nothing new under the sun.*" We can see ourselves in each of these congregations – for good or bad. But despite their faith or lack thereof, Christ is still present as the ruler of His Church offering the forgiveness of sins that He won for all people through His death and bodily resurrection.

This is just a taste of what the Wednesday Morning Bible Study has learned so far in our study on the Book of Revelation. Please join us each Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.!

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## Congregational President's Comments December 2023

I hope everyone enjoyed a blessed Thanksgiving Day. The holidays, and particularly our church holidays, seem to come and go without adequate time to reflect on the meaning of the day. I find that I often neglect to thank the Lord our God for blessings received. We are all so blessed to be a part of this Prince of Peace church family and especially the family of God!

The Christmas season is upon us. Already. Prince of Peace will be celebrating Wednesday Advent worship services starting December 6 at 7 p.m. in preparation for Christmas and the birth of Jesus. A wonderful season of lights, beautiful music and the story of Christ's birth! There will be many opportunities to worship and hear God's Word this month. Please remember the "reason for the season".

Church attendance has continued to be fairly limited again in November. I mention this because I believe we need to encourage each other, and especially our friends and family that are not regularly attending worship, to remain steadfast in hearing God's Word every Sunday, observing the Sacraments and strengthening our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christmas season has become terribly sectarian and materialistic. It often seems we make time to shop for things that nobody wants or needs, prompted by the retail marketing media ads we see and simply forget why Christmas is truly a celebration. Wouldn't it be magnificent to fill God's house for worship this Christmas season?

The congregational voter's meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 17 after worship. Please attend as the 2024 budget will be presented for approval together with committee reports and nominations and election of officers. Your thoughts and input continue to be solicited and may be offered at the voter's meeting.

The area Genesis Project (LCMS school feasibility discussion) continues with the assignment of a synodical school consultant. The consultant plans to visit the area in December to discuss demographics and perspectives of the study group member churches. Specific reports are posted on the kiosk located in the narthex.

I hesitate to discuss the financial conditions here at Prince of Peace because I truly believe that the Lord will always provide. The Church Council is managing a challenging condition as best it can. Please pray for inspiration and guidance.

TOGETHER IN CHRIST. ALLELUIA!

Kurt Childs, Congregational President, Appointed

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## LWML News:

Ladies, you are cordially invited to attend our Advent Tea and Cookie Exchange on Saturday, December 2, beginning at 9:30.

Our next meeting will be Saturday morning, January 6, at 9 a.m.



## Our December birthdays

Lucas Martin	2 <sup>nd</sup>
James Jacobson	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Jen Kuehn	5 <sup>th</sup>
Josh Leyh	6 <sup>th</sup>
Gabriel Mauss	6 <sup>th</sup>
Tom Mauss	6 <sup>th</sup>
Jared Hinds	9 <sup>th</sup>
Jessica Reibel	13 <sup>th</sup>
Holly Ford	16 <sup>th</sup>
Cadence Kolander	21 <sup>st</sup>
Sue Rowe	28 <sup>th</sup>
Grace Ruffi	30 <sup>th</sup>

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## December Schedules

### Ushers

December 3-Roger & Ginny Emmons

December 10-Randy & DeAnne Otto

December 17-Dan & Kari Moen

December 24- Willie & Leatta Danielson

December 24 at 7 p.m.-Elaine Schmidt & Barb Hinds

December 25-

December 31-Roger & Ginny Emmons

### Greeters

December 3-POP Family

December 10-Barb Hinds & Chris Leis

December 17-Randy & DeAnne Otto

December 24-POP Family

December 31-POP Family

### Money counters

December 3-Barb Hinds & Ona Childs

December 10-Elaine Schmidt & Debbie Dunnum

December 17-Lori Peters & Chris Leis

December 24-Barb Hinds & Debbie Dunnum

December 31-Ona Childs & Elaine Schmidt

### Song Leaders

December 3-Holly Ford

December 10-Sarah Kolander

December 17-Horstmann Family

December 24-Brooklynn Scholze

December 31-Holly Ford

### Altar Guild

Ginny Emmons

Barb Hinds

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