



**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church**
13564 St. Andrews Drive; Seal Beach, CA 90740
Phone (562) 598-8697; FAX (562) 598-8697
e-mail: redeemer_lutheran@verizon.net

December 2025

Worship and Discipleship by Margo Geesing

“Gospel of Matthew: Cycle A”

Advent begins the new Church year. This year is Cycle A: the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew’s Gospel was written for the Jews. His symbol is the lion and his focus is of Christ as King. His Gospel is broken into seven large sections beginning with the infancy narrative. Because of the focus of “Christ as King”, his Gospel begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Through this lineage back to Abraham, Matthew presents Jesus as the King of Kings. Between Matthew and Luke, we get the entirety of Jesus’s birth and his childhood, which isn’t much. We also get to know Joseph, briefly, in his care and respect of Mary and his obedience to God.

The second part is the Proclamation of the Kingdom where Jesus begins his ministry. If you want short bits of Jesus’s teachings on various subjects this is where you go! This includes the Sermon on the Mount, salt and light, love of enemies, prayer, God and money, and the golden rule.

The third part is the ministry and mission in Galilee. This section has a number of healings and shows the compassion of Jesus. But all is not sweetness and light in this part. This is where Jesus gives the mission of the twelve, the commissioning, and warnings of coming persecutions, and finally give the conditions of discipleship and the rewards of listening to them. The next section deals with the opposition of Jesus’s teachings and behaviors by the powers of Israel. We hear the parables of Jesus and, frequently the explanation of those parables. There are comparisons of “the kingdom of heaven is like ...” which underlines the difference of attitudes of his followers and those in power and his rejection by those he has come to save. The fifth section continues with the building of the kingdom and the building of Jesus’s church on Peter. This includes Jesus’s transfiguration, more healings, more predictions of the passion, and more confrontations with the Pharisees.

The sixth section covers Jesus’s ministry in Judea and his road to Jerusalem. This is focused primarily on the costs of discipleship. Jesus gives more parables but they seem to take a darker turn. He sets an either/or tone in these parables. He speaks of the end times and judgement. Both the Sadducees and the Pharisees become more confrontational; asking questions to trip him up. Jesus responds in kind; in some instances, you can just hear the contempt he has for them all.

The last section is the Passion and Resurrection. Note that in the Gospel of Matthew there is no Ascension. The Gospel ends with Jesus commissioning them to go and teach, preach, and baptize (activities we carry on today!). There are some details that I find interesting in this Gospel. There seems to be a little more compassion for Pilate, we meet Simon the

Cyrenian, the aftermath of the death of Jesus is a bit more violent with an earthquake and rising bodies, the centurion and his men acknowledge the divinity of Jesus. Also, we hear of Joseph of Arimathea in this version and Jesus only meets the women who have come to properly prepare the body, none of the disciples, at the resurrection who react with adoration; not fear.

December 7, 2025 — *Second Sunday of Advent*

The Gospel Lesson is from Matthew chapter 3 verses 1-12

The Second Sunday of Advent, we have a lesson from John the Baptist calling us to repent and a foreshadowing of Jesus's coming. John calls the people of God to repentance and preparation. This call continues throughout history to our own time and beyond. We are always called to prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus and to continue to repent our own sins.

December 14, 2025 — *Third Sunday of Advent*

The Gospel Lesson is from Matthew chapter 11 verses 2-11

The Third Sunday of Advent, we continue with a reference to John the Baptist who expected the Messiah to bring God's judgement but Jesus turned this around by bring healing and forgiveness. Jesus honors John by naming him a prophet. Reminding the people that John was a messenger sent by God. Jesus reminds the crowds that the soft, powerful, rich, important people are in palaces; they are not necessarily the people who are going to be in the Kingdom of God.

December 21, 2025 — *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

The Gospel Lesson is from Matthew chapter 1 verses 18-25

For the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we get Joseph's perspective on the pregnant wife! Joseph never speaks in the Gospels yet we understand his role as foster father to Jesus. He is a righteous and compassionate man. He is a protector. He is obedient and accepting to the directions God gives his life. We also get two descriptions of the naming of the child: Jesus which means God Saves and Emmanuel which means God is with us.

December 25, 2025 — *Christmas Day Nativity of Our Lord*

The Gospel Lesson is from Luke chapter 2 verses 1-20

We hear the story of the birth of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke. The angels announce the birth of the Savior to shepherds in the fields. This is the first announcement: to the Jewish people; to the common people. This is where the story of Jesus' salvation of humanity begins: with the chosen people of God; with the common people; with the workers; with the poor. This is also where we, as His followers, continue the ongoing work of bringing all to Jesus' love and care.

December 28, 2025 — *First Sunday of Christmas*

The Gospel Lesson is from Matthew chapter 2 verses 13-23

The last Sunday of December we get the gory part of the birth story (chapter 2) with the flight to Egypt, massacre of the infants, and the return from Egypt. These brief passages that we have heard during Advent are all we really get about the man who was Jesus' earthly father. We get the idea of a man of great faith and trust in God. It does become a question of our faith and trust in the guidance of God in our own lives.