



**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
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Worship and Discipleship by Margo Geesing

“Advent and Beyond”

Usually, Advent begins the last Sunday of November, but this year the whole of Advent is in December, starting December 1 with the First Sunday of Advent. So, all those Advent Calendars with just 24 days is correct this year! This year all of our Gospel Lessons come from the Gospel of Luke. Come along on the journey, perhaps you will learn something about your relationship with Jesus or perhaps someone will learn something from you through your relationship with Jesus but we always travel in relationship with Jesus!

December 1, 2024 – First Sunday of Advent

The Gospel Lesson is from Luke chapter 21 verses 25-36

The First Sunday in Advent Jesus is warning his followers about the end times when he will return again. He outlines signs and portends of the coming tribulations. An interesting thing is that Jesus says, *“Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place.”* Yet, we are still here. He has not returned, yet. Of course, we all think we are in the end times. The Jews believed that Jesus was coming back soon. Nostradamus foretold the end time on numerous occasions. The world was going to end at the change of the century mark, the world was going to end in 2012. The world is going to end in 10 years, 25 years, 40 years... Jesus flat out tells us that we will not know when this is going to happen. The Father is the only one who knows. Our concern is not to know when it is going to happen, but to be prepared when it does happen. Our concern is to continue the mission he started. Our call is to live the Christian life in love for the Lord and one another. *This week of Advent, practice hope in your Savior.*

December 8, 2024 – Second Sunday of Advent

The Gospel Lesson is from Luke chapter 3 verses 1-6

The Second Sunday in Advent we hear from John the Baptist, the foreshadower of Jesus and Jesus's cousin! While John the Baptist did actually prepare the way for Jesus, we also need to prepare the way for Jesus. We need to prepare ourselves. We need to prepare our friends and families. We need to prepare our neighbors and communities. Not only do we prepare for the coming of Christmas this year but also for the Second Coming of Christ. It is not enough for us to wonder were we celebrating Christmas this year or with whomever we are celebrating with. We need to look forward to the future and where we are going to celebrate eternal life and with whom are we going to be with. We are called to bring all to Christ. To share the

peace within ourselves that only comes from knowing the Lord. To live in the peace of Christ. *This week of Advent, practice being at peace within yourself and the world around you.*

Sunday, December 15, 2024 – Third Sunday of Advent

The Gospel Lesson is from Luke chapter 3 verses 7-18

The Third Sunday in Advent we are still following John the Baptist as he prepares the people for the coming of the Messiah. He calls the people to repentance and not to depend on who their forefathers were to be saved. He calls them to bear good fruit from the gifts they are given. He calls them to live their vocations with honor. He calls them to mercy, justice, and generosity. These are the fruits that we must bear. This message has been continuous in the Gospels; whether from John the Baptist, St. Paul, St. Peter, or Jesus himself. This kind of life has a natural joy that comes from living the life we are called to in harmony with God's will for us. *This week of Advent, practice living in the joy that comes from knowing Christ.*

December 22, 2024 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Gospel Lesson is from Luke chapter 1 verses 39-45 [46-55]

The Fourth Sunday of Advent we hear the story of Mary going to her cousin Elizabeth in the time of Elizabeth's confinement. Then we hear the beautiful praise of God by Mary in response to Elizabeth's greeting. The absolute trust and love that these women, and their men, place in God is astounding. These are not rich and powerful people with a life of ease. These are everyday people who so love God that they allow God to guide their lives freely. At no point does God tell them that their life will be easy or soft if they do these things for him. There is no bargaining with God. There is just obedience coming from their love. How often do we respond to God with this same trust and love? How often do we try to bargain with God? How often do we treat God as a vending machine – we put this into the relationship and I get this back from God? *This week of Advent, practice living in love for God and his many gifts he has given to each of us.*

December 29, 2024 – First Sunday of Christmas

The Gospel Lesson is from Luke chapter 2 verses 41-52

The final Sunday in December is the First Sunday of Christmas. Jesus has grown into a twelve year old little boy. I was a parent of three children, one a little boy. If my son had answered me the way Jesus answered Mary, there would be words. I always wonder if the story Luke heard was a bit cleaned up. Think about it. They had traveled a day from Jerusalem. They looked through their friends and relatives for maybe a few hours. They returned to Jerusalem, another day of travel. Then they spend another day looking for him. So, their twelve-year-old son has been lost to them for three days. And his answer to them, *"Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"* This is not an answer any parent wants to hear. They want to hear, I'm sorry, or, I won't do it again. Luke glosses over the aftermath of this with, *"Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them, ..."* Luke ends with that Jesus increased in wisdom and in years. And, hopefully, a little more care for his earthly parents! A final thought, it is interesting to look at this Gospel

lesson from the beginning of Jesus's life in comparison to the end of Jesus's life. His parents search for him for three days just as Jesus was in the tomb for three days.

December 24 / 25, 2024 – Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Day

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

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Gospel is the announcement of Jesus to the shepherds by the angels. For me, this is the Christmas Gospel. And I hear it in the voice of Linus from the Peanuts. It is a beautiful lesson. I just suggest you sit with this and think about it. Our God came as a little baby to bring to the world the gifts of hope, joy, love, and peace.

December 25, 2024 – Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Day

The Gospel Lesson is from John chapter 1 verses 1-14

The other possible lesson is from John 1:1-14. It is the declaration that Jesus is one with the Father. He was at the beginning of creation and he is the light of the world. He has passed that light to us in baptism. YOU are a light to the world. Go, light the world in hope, joy, love, and peace.