

The Shepherd

December, 2024 pt. 2

*Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod
Colorado Springs, CO 80922*

“The Advent of Our King”

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (St. John 1:14).



Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus,

Advent! It's a word that we know has something to do with Christmas, but we're not quite sure how! When we think of Advent, we often think of Advent calendars, counting the days until Christmas, trying to finish Christmas shopping (gasp!); and, maybe, trying to make it to church on Wednesday evenings for Vespers! But what is Advent really about?

Advent, for one thing, marks the beginning of a new Church Year. Advent comes from two Latin words (*ad* and *venire*) meaning “to come to.” It is the time when we think about Jesus coming to earth.

What was it that caused Him to come to earth to dwell among us (St. John 1:14)? In a word... sin! It was sin that caused Jesus to come down and to become one of us...a flesh and blood human being! He came down to earth to save us from our sin!

It was our sin that caused Jesus to come down to earth; therefore, Advent is traditionally a penitential season. This means that it is a time when you pause to reflect on your sin and God’s great love for you in redeeming you from your sin. It is a holy season of reflection and meditation! This is marked in the liturgy as the church refrains from singing the *Gloria in Excelsis* (with an exception of Gaudete Sunday) until Christmas Eve.

Advent, however, has a lot of competition. The commercial world does not want you in a reflective mood. They do not want you thinking about your sin. It’s hard for you to stay focused on the cause of your Lord’s coming [your sin] during Advent. Because of that, it’s hard for you to appreciate what His coming means for you [our salvation]. You would rather skip the penitence and Vesper services and get right to the celebration!

The second part to Advent has to do with your Lord’s Second Coming; His Second Advent! Just as He came to earth at His First Advent; so, you also know that He will come again! When your Lord returns at His Second Advent, He will come again as your Judge and King. Thus, not only do you wait in patience and penitence for the celebration of your Savior’s Birth, you do the same for the “*celebration of celebrations*” when He returns in glory on the Great Last Day!

So, what can you do to slow down, reflect, and meditate during this Advent season? Well, make a commitment to attend Vesper service on Wednesday nights. This is an opportunity for you to sit and reflect on God’s Word. You will have the opportunity to ponder many of these questions, and learn from Him about why He came to earth. The theme of our Vesper services is The Seen Yahweh, which will lead you to reflect on the revelation of the Christ in the Old Testament. Therefore, maybe, for just a little while, you can forget all of the commercials, all of the ads, all of the stuff about the secular “pseudo-Christmas” and prayerfully consider what the first Christmas (the True Christmas) means for you!

You can also pray. You can pray that your Lord would open your heart and mind to understand His Son, Jesus, the Christ. You can pray that you might forsake your sin and the darkness of the world, and look to Him, your true Light!

Finally, you can ponder His Word. Take time each Lord's Day and at evening Vespers to bring into focus what it means that Christ would come to earth as an Infant! And, certainly, you should make the commitment to attend Adult Bible Study! Especially this year as we take a "deep-dive" into the events surrounding our Lord's birth! Remember, you're not that busy!

You know this...being a Christian is not easy! Thank God for seasons like Advent that are meant to remind you of Who He is, what He did, and what that means for you today. May this Advent season be a time of penitence and joy for you and your family. May you be lead to pray with all the faithful of all time:

Stir up, I implore You, Your power, O Lord Jesus, and come, that by Your protection I may be rescued from the threatening perils of my sins and be saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

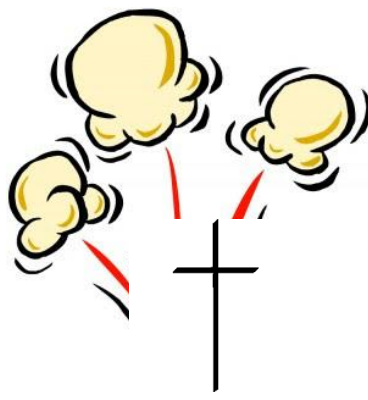
God grant you a blessed Advent and a Joyous, Merry Christmas!

In His Service,

Pastor +++



HOLY NIGHT



The Divine Service

The Benedicamus and The Benediction

The concluding elements of the Divine Service have deep Old Testament roots. In yet another salutation (*P: “The Lord be with you.”*) (*C: And with thy spirit.”*), the pastor proclaims the presence of the Lord to bless, and the congregation replies that the pastor is there in Christ’s stead and with his spirit to carry out the Lord’s blessing of His people.

Then follows the Benedicamus, the pastor saying, *“Bless we the Lord,”* and the congregation response is: ***“Thanks be to God.”*** Each book of the Psalms concludes with, *“Blessed be the Lord...”* (cf. the end of Pss. 41, 72, 89, 106, and 150)! The Psalms is the worship book of the Old Testament. How fitting that our worship should conclude similarly!

The response, ***“Thanks be to God,”*** is a repetition of the same thought: that God is praised or blessed when we thank Him for what He has done for us. What has He gifted in the span of the last hour or so, in particular, when we sing these words? The phrases, *“Bless we the Lord”* and ***“Thanks be to God,”*** reflect in kernel form two chief modes of Israelite prayer, carried over into New Testament forms. Both are grounded in God’s saving acts, and praise Him for His mighty deliverance of His people. Read Eph. 4:3-14 for an extended example of “blessing the Lord,” and Eph. 4:15-23 for an extended example of “giving thanks to the Lord.” In the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus’ prayer is one of blessing (St. Matt 14:19) and in the feeding of the 4,000, of thanksgiving.



**Commemoration of
Ambrose of Milan, Pastor and Hymnwriter
December 7**

December 7th is the day set aside on the LC-MS liturgical calendar to remember Ambrose. He was the first Latin Church leader to be born, raised, and educated not as a pagan, but as a Christian! He was born about 339 in the city of Treves (Trier) in what is now France, where his father was Prefect of Gaul, the governor of a large part of Europe. Ambrose studied the classics and the law at Rome, and before he was thirty-three, he was named governor of Liguria and Aemilia, with headquarters in Milan, which was at that time the seat of the imperial court. When the Arian bishop of Milan died, Ambrose settled the violence that broke out between the Arians and the Catholics. Both sides unanimously insisted that he become their bishop, even though at that time he had not yet been baptized. (It was a custom of the time to delay baptism until late in life so that one might be cleansed close to the time of death!). Ambrose finally bowed to pressure

from Church and state authorities and rapidly was baptized, ordained a priest, and consecrated as their bishop; some say it was all done on the same day, December 7, 373 or 374.

He gave a portion of his family wealth to the poor and set an example of strict asceticism. Although the Roman Empire was in decline, Ambrose, by his preaching, writing, organizing, and administration, made Milan one of the most distinguished centers of learning and Christian activity, in some way surpassing even Rome itself. He was a powerful preacher, and his sermons affected many, most notably Augustine of Hippo, whom he baptized in Milan at the Easter Vigil, 387.

The empress Justina, mother of Valentinian, jealous of the growing importance of Ambrose, organized a coalition against the bishop and at the beginning of Lent in 385, demanded that one basilica in Milan be given to the Arians. Ambrose refused, and a riot broke out in the city. Just before Easter, Justina demanded the bishop's own cathedral. On Palm Sunday, there were a series of clashes between the imperial troops and Ambrose's congregations. On Maundy Thursday, the court abandoned its attempt to seize and hold a church. The struggle, however, continued. An edict against the Catholics [those who believed in the biblical Trinity and that Jesus was both fully God and fully human] was promulgated in June 386, and Ambrose was called to appear before the emperor. He refused and took refuge in his basilica, which was surrounded by imperial troops. Ambrose and his people spent the time singing psalms and hymns of their bishop's own composition. At length, the court was forced to rescind the edict.

Ambrose was a zealous defender of orthodoxy and one of the most important Latin authors of his day. At the request of the emperor Gratian, he wrote *On the Christian Faith*. He is also the author of a work of pastoral care, *On the Duties of the Clergy*. One comes closest to the saintly bishop, perhaps, through his hymns. He was one of the first to write metrical Latin hymns, and many of them are still sung in Christian churches. Three of them have been included in the *Lutheran Service Book*: “*Savior of the*

Nations, Come,” LSB 332; “O Splendor of God’s Glory Bright,” LSB 874; and “O Blessed Light, O Trinity” LSB 890. St. Augustine, addressing God, says of Ambrose’s hymns:

“The tears flowed when I heard your hymns and canticles, for the sweet singing of your church moved me deeply. The music surged in my ears, truth seeped into my heart, and my feelings of devotion overflowed, so that the tears streamed down. But they were tears of gladness” (Confessions, IX, 6-7).

Though there are many icons of the saints, Ambrose is the only Church Father of whom we know for sure his image is based on the real man. There is a mosaic with his name that adorns a chapel in the basilica dedicated to his brother Satyrus that was made at the beginning of the fifth century, shortly after his death. Ambrose died at Milan on the Vigil of Easter, April 4, 397.

Collect for the Commemoration of Ambrose: *O God, You gave Your servant Ambrose grace to proclaim the Gospel with eloquence and power. As bishop of the great congregation of Milan, he fearlessly bore reproach for the honor of Your name. Mercifully grant to all bishops and pastors such excellence in preaching and fidelity in ministering Your Word, that Your people shall be partakers of the divine nature; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit.*





Members

Jill Damec

Ron Dodge

Lana Packer

Cheri Penwell

Darrell Root

Marlene Schmidt

Teddy Sustek

Military

Captain Rob Landers (USAF) (Barry's Son-in-Law)

Captain Abel Wilson (USAF) (Friend of SSLC)

1LT Frederick Heidt (USAF) (Friend of Larry and Sue)

Master Sergeant (USMC) Kyle Chase (Dale & Kari's Nephew)

First Sergeant (USA) Benjamin Kueter

Sergeant First Class (USA) Jordan Etchells (Dale & Kari's Son)

A1C Trevor Smith (USAF)

Cadet Ethan Dodson (USAF Prep School)

Family Members

Gayle Rathbone (Heather's Mother)

Patty Krueger (Barry's Widow)

Kathi Chase (Kari's Sister)

Rainer Dieterle (Conny's Father)

Dennis Etchells (Dale's Brother)

Eli (Shannon and Ben's nephew)

Blake (Shannon's brother)

Janice Patterson (Pastor's Mother)



Bible Chapter and Verse

Submitted by Gary Law

So who developed the system of chapters used in modern Bibles and when was it implemented? The oldest biblical manuscripts have neither chapter or verse designations. The text is continuous with occasional paragraph breaks. In the 10th century AD, Masoretes (highly trained Jewish biblical scholars) developed a system using a special symbol to mark the end of a verse. This was, however, for the Hebrew Bible. Still no chapters. It was English Cardinal Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (from 1207 to 1228) that developed the system of chapters now used in modern Bibles. (He also played a major roll in the events surrounding the Magna Carta.)

Langdon's system proved a convenient division into smaller units and a simple means for referencing specific passages. This system was adopted rapidly into copies of the Latin Vulgate. The first to apply it to the Hebrew text was R. Solomon ben Ishmel in 1330.

With the advent of the printing press in the 15th century, Langton's system became widely accepted. The New Testament came later in the 16th century with a system developed by French printer Robert Estienne. This became the basis for following numbering systems. The first English Bible printed with chapter and verse numbers was the Geneva Bible of 1560. Luther's 1522 German Bible contains chapter headings and paragraph breaks, but does not yet have verse numbers.

Happy Anniversary

Dec. 2 Larry and Sue Groggel
Dec. 10 Drew and Tiffany Ochsner

Happy Birthday

Dec. 19 Jason Packer
Dec. 27 Ryan Damec
Dec. 30 Teddy Suszek

Reminder notes for Dec.

Midweek Advent Theme: *The Seen Yahweh*

Everyone is welcome

6:00PM Advent Vespers dinners

Dec. 4: American

Dec. 11: Mexican

Dec. 18: German

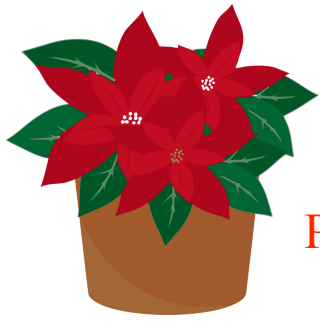
7:00PM Advent Vespers Services

Dec. 4: The Angel Yahweh

Dec. 11: The Name of Yahweh

Dec. 18: The Word of Yahweh





FROM Sunday Dec. 22, you are invited to bring live poinsettia plants to place in front of the altar. Nothing artificial or glittery, please. Coordinate with Nina Kuberski. Plants will be cared for through Dec. 25.

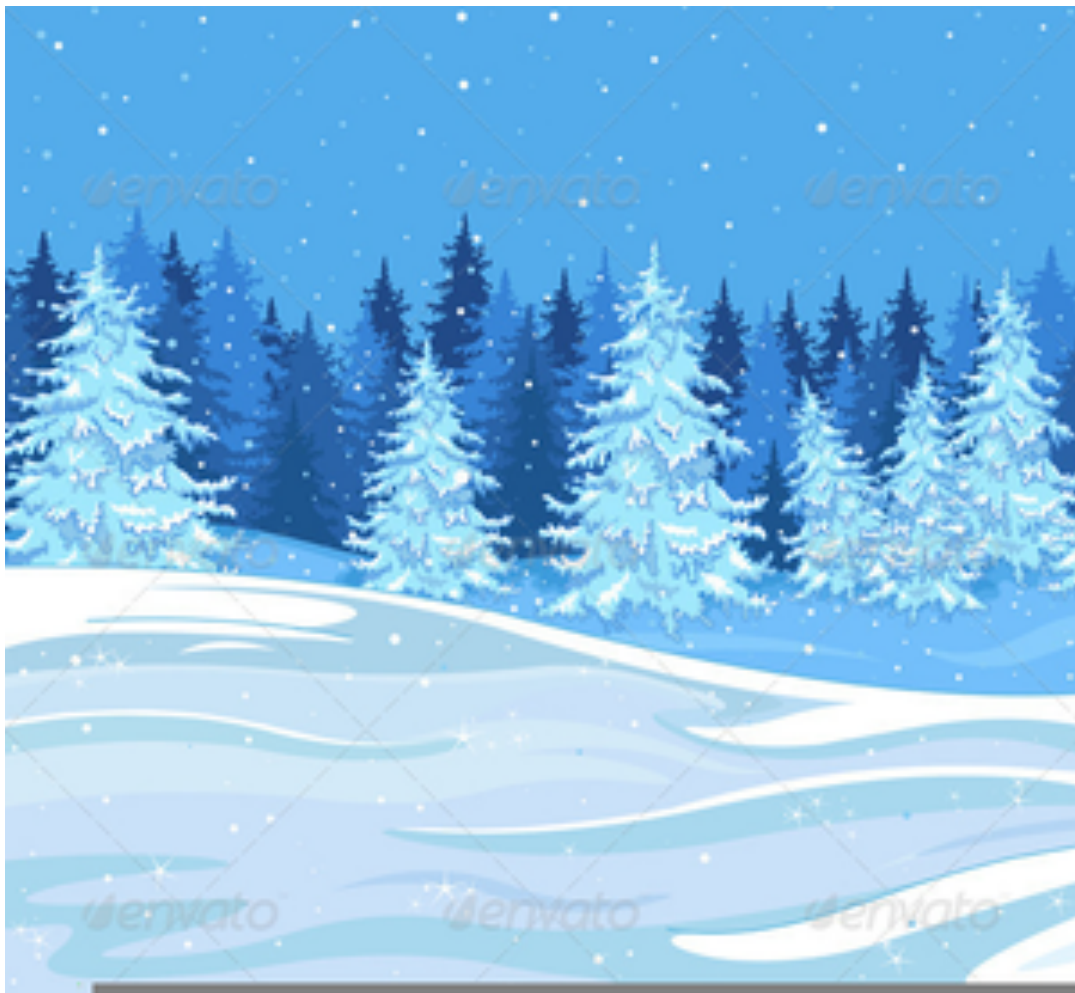


***TUES. DEC. 24 7:00 pm
EVE OF THE NATIVITY
CANDLELIGHT VESPERS***

***WEDS. DEC. 25 9:00AM
DIVINE SERVICE
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD***

***Adeste, fideles chorus...
“O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!”***

Attributed composer John Francis Wade (1712?)



*“Silent Night, Holy night,
All is calm, All is bright...”
Joseph Mohr 1818*

*The Shepherd newsletter is a publication of Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church,
Missouri Synod*

A Confessional, Evangelical, Sacramental, and Liturgical Church

Where the Lutheran Reformation Lives!

Rev. Jeff Patterson-Pastor@sslc-cos.org (719) 396-4710

Dr. Steven A. Hein-Deacon Steven Hein <heinsteven@ix.netcom.com>
(719) 338-7891

Address of Church: 6755 Earl Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Website: www.sslc-cos.org

Please direct corrections, comments, questions to Sue Groggel at shkodani@gmail.com

