

Gettysburg Seminary Advent Devotions 2013

Advent Week One

Sunday, December 1

Psalm 122

Lord of Advent, we begin this season of joy, hope, peace and anticipation. With excitement the psalmist shouted out with joy at being invited to go to the house of the Lord. Grant us this day the psalmist's joy as we anxiously await your coming presence. Thank you for providing nourishment that will sustain our patient waiting, and for the peace you offer to the world. Amen.

★*Betty Lou Deuchler, Student, Delaware-Maryland Synod*

Monday, December 2

Genesis 8:1-19

Gracious God, you call us to tasks we may not always welcome and to ventures where we are your vehicles, but we may not be in control. Help us to be your instruments even in and through challenging undertakings so that your will and your ways may be done anew through us as your faithful servants. Give us courage to go forth as you seek to lead us and not simply to go forth as we want to be led. Amen.

★*The Rev. Dr. Richard P. Carlson, Glatfelter Professor of Biblical Studies, Director of Internship and Coordinator of Post-Internship Candidacy, Allegheny Synod*

Tuesday, December 3

Hebrews 11:32-40

Holy God, throughout time you have provided heroes to be examples for us. We thank you for the example of their lives and the faith you inspired in them and now in us. All gifts come from you: our lives, our possessions, and grace through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

★*Ellen Lundie, Student, Southwestern PA Synod*

Wednesday, December 4

Isaiah 54:1-10

Heavenly Father, as we await the celebration of the birth of your Son, we are reminded of your continued patience and everlasting love for your people. As you assured the Israelites your love would never end, so you have made the same promise to us. And we await your birth – come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

★*Paul Wangerin, Seminary Board of Directors, West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod*

Thursday, December 5

Acts 1:12-17, 21-26

Forgiving God, you know what is in our hearts. We thank you for choosing us, forgiving us and accompanying us on this journey of faith. Send now your Holy Spirit to strengthen us as we gather together to pray in the name of your son our Lord, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

★*MaryLou Matthews, Student, Upper Susquehanna Synod*

Friday, December 6

Isaiah 30:19-26

Gracious God, in these days of preparation and waiting, let us, like our ancestors of old, realize that our cries are answered by you. Although at times we taste the bread of adversity and drink the waters of affliction we seek to walk in the way that you direct us, toward the place which you have prepared for us. In these days of waiting let us be mindful there is much work to be accomplished until all the world knows your salvation plan. Give us glad hearts to do this work. We ask all this in Jesus' name, Amen.

★*David Petr, Student, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

Saturday, December 7

John 1:19-28

God of the prophets, we give you thanks that in every time and place you have sent your messengers to disturb and unsettle us with your word. Inspire us with the power and love of the Holy Spirit that we, too, might lift our voices on behalf of the poor and lowly. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

★*The Rev. Dr. Kristin Johnston Largent, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Metro DC Synod*

Advent Week Two

Sunday, December 8

Romans 15:4-13

Oh We welcome you, Lord Jesus, to our table, as you welcome us to yours. May this meal nourish us and fill us with hope for your coming, that we may one day dine at your eternal banquet. In your holy name we pray, Amen.

★*Joseph Graumann, Student, New Jersey Synod*

Monday, December 9

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Gracious God, you sent your Son to earth to be an example for us to follow. Continue to guide us as we struggle to live our daily lives according to your Holy Word. Strengthen us that we may love each other as you love us. In your Son's name we pray. Amen

★*Christine Kirchner, Student, Pacifica Synod*

Tuesday, December 10

Psalms 21

While we wait for the Word made flesh to be born among us, it's a good time to think and pay attention to the words we say. Are they full of criticism and judgment or are they full of grace, encouragement and welcome? Dear God, help us to remember to speak from love and not from anger. Forgive us and bless us so we may bless others with our words. Amen.

★*Robert Oshlo, Spouse of Student, Nebraska Synod*

Wednesday, December 11

Genesis 15:1-18

God of the generations, you used the stars in the heavens to make a promise to Abram of many descendants, and in time you again used the heavens, and one particular star, to reveal your promise of salvation to all people. We give thanks for your promises kept, Lord, from Abram to Jesus Christ, your Son. We pray that we may have confidence in your promises, that we may trust you to provide our daily bread, and that you may bring us to eternal life. Amen.

★*Barbara Krumm, Student, Virginia Synod*

Thursday, December 12

Ruth 1:6-18

Good and Gracious God, We praise you for blessing the people of every tongue, tribe, and nation. Help us to be aware of your presence in our lives. May our words and actions be signs of your steadfast love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

★*David Sensenig, Student, Metro DC Synod*

Friday, December 13

2 Peter 3:11-18

Gracious God, in patient anticipation, we give thanks. Bless now in holy grace this food before us spread. All daily bread may we acknowledge always. Help us to share and dare to wait in peace and love, recognizing in joy the fullness of your creation. Amen.

★*Carol Black, Student, Upper Susquehanna Synod*

Saturday, December 14

1 Samuel 2:1-8

Heavenly Father, Holy Lord, come. We pray with Hannah, our hearts rejoice in you. Our rock like no other, be with us this day that we may in faith be humbled and strengthened. In your holy and eternal name we pray. Amen

★*The Rev. Jeremiah Sassaman,
Alumni Association President, Northeastern PA Synod*

Advent Week Three

Sunday, December 15

Matthew 11:2-11

Continue and prosper in us, O Lord, the desire to know you and to recognize your works in our midst. Give us grace and help to discern your presence and your will in all that is loving, life-giving, forgiving, and restoring. In the name of Jesus Christ, who was and is and is to come, we pray. Amen.

★*The Rev. Julia Fraser, Seminary Board of Directors, Northwestern PA Synod*

Monday, December 16

Acts 5:12-16

Gracious God, you have empowered your apostles throughout the ages to act as your healing presence in the world. And so, we ask you to empower us, by your Spirit, in the same way. May the flickering shadows of our Advent Candles cast a healing Spirit on all who await Advent's fulfillment. Amen.

★*The Rev. Glenn E. Ludwig, Vice President of Seminary Advancement, West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod*

Tuesday, December 17

Jude 17-25

Our dearest God, the most generous provider, we come to this table with humble hearts. Our Mother of Life, the source of all goodness, we taste the bread of life and raise the cup, singing your praises, for the gifts given and yet to come, for us to share. Amen.

★*The Rev. Dr. Kirsi Stjerna, Professor of Reformation Church History and Director of the Institute for Luther Studies, Southwestern PA Synod*

Wednesday, December 18

Zechariah 8:1-17

Lord of all, bring forth Your New Age of truth and righteousness. Save us and defend us from all harm, and bring peace to all the nations. Amen.

★*Andrew Wagner, Student, United Church of Christ*

Thursday, December 19

Galatians 3:23-29

Thank you Lord for nurturing us and allowing us to grow in faith so that we can love one another just as you love us. Remind us that we are all your children and each of us has a place at your table. Amen.

★*Christina McGrath Fair, Spouse of Student, Lower Susquehanna Synod*

Friday, December 20

2 Samuel 7:18-22

Loving God there is none like you. We strive to be your faithful servants and look to the coming of your Son as the ultimate testament of your love. In you there is peace and love in which we rejoice. Amen.

★*Zachary Baer, Student, Southeastern MN Synod*

Saturday, December 21

John 3:31-36

Amidst the Advent season, it is important to remember in whom all authority is given. Real truth and authority come from Jesus Christ. Through truth in Christ, God gave every one of us the greatest gift of all, namely Godself and eternity in God's presence. Amen.

★*Allison Johnson, Student, Greater Milwaukee Synod*

Advent Week Four

Sunday, December 22

Romans 1:1-7

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the gift that you gave us in your son Jesus Christ. Through whom you give us obedient hearts full of faith that we might receive your grace. Strengthen us through this meal and empower us to share your story with all whom we encounter. Amen.

★*Adam Buff, Student, North Carolina Synod*

Monday, December 23

Genesis 17:15-22

God of Surprises, We give you thanks for the covenant you made with Abraham and Sarah as well as the ones you make with us. We ask for your forgiveness and grace for those times we don't trust in the promises you have made. Continue to shock and surprise us so we might be able to find ways to trust and grow in knowing you more. Amen.

★*Nicole Welke, Student, East-Central Wisconsin Synod*

Tuesday, December 24

Isaiah 9:2-7

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your son, "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." We welcome with you, the light of the world. We pray with you that those who lead us will be guided and enlightened by the light. We rejoice with you as you ease our burdens and help us serve you with our labor. Amen.

★*Dr. James Lasko, Chair, Seminary Board of Directors, Allegheny Synod*

Wednesday, December 25

John 1:1-14

Joy to the World, the Word/Lord has come! Today we rejoice that your Word once again invades with Light the dark places in our lives and our world. Now and forever, you are among us to heal, bring hope, and enfold us with your eternal love. Hosanna! Amen.

★*The Rev. Dr. Michael Cooper-White, 12th and current President of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg*