



Emmanuel Lutheran News

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Pastor's Word for December 2023

December Newsletter 2023 - It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

It's my favorite time, for sure. Well. Maybe this time and early October. I prefer warm to cold, but October is lacking in seasonal music, except for the Monster Mash, and December is just LOADED with great music.

And it's the music that makes the season for me! Everything from Mariah Carey to Bing Crosby, from dark poetry from the Fifth Century to music made last year, I love Advent, and Christmas, and all that goes with it.

Over centuries of great art and wisdom our Lutheran tradition gathers a treasury of great poetry matched to compelling melodies. When we enter that tradition with curiosity, energy, and delight, those ancient poems and melody become the song of the living body of Christ on earth. And that song is powerful beyond words.

Now the challenge, of course, is entering that tradition if you're not already steeped in it. To help out, I will be making a YouTube playlist of songs that bring the Advent message to light.

That Advent message is complex – at least compared to our culture's dominant mythos. Let me attempt to define that mythos:

During the weeks before Christmas, children, (and everyone) are reminded to 1. Behave and 2. Get their lists to Santa, the magical Master of Christmas. This Santa makes visits ahead of time, especially to shopping malls and romantic comedies on the Hallmark channel. On the big night, Santa visits everyone's home delivering gifts and cheerful messages of goodwill. Everyone is expected to remain on good behavior the rest of the year.

There are more details, but that's the gist of it. The Advent message is different:

The world, originally a gift of a loving God, is abused and neglected by those responsible for its health (all of us). That abuse and neglect is mirrored in the wounded hearts of all people. The night is closing in, no light appears at the end of the tunnel, despair and gloom are all around.

In the midst of the despair, hope comes in the form of a child whose birth is foretold by generations of prophets- and that child's arrival among us changes everything. Hope, joy, peace and love are restored in the world.

That's the message, the mythos: both yearning AND arrival, both darkness AND light, both sorrow AND joy. It's ALL of that, and it's glorious to be part of. I can't wait. So here's to a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas to you and to all.

Pr Greg