

**First Sunday of Advent**

**Luke 21:25-36      12-2-18**

**WE'RE EXPECTING!**

*“Look at the fig tree and all the trees: as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So, also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.”*

Luke 21:29b-31 (NRSV)

“We’re expecting!” The Christian looks forward to Christ’s Second Coming in power and glory when Jesus’ identity will be made visible to all and God will restore all of creation to his intended purposes.

In revealing the signs that will occur before the Day of the Lord, Jesus refers to them as *“the beginning of the birth pangs.”* The image of a pregnancy can be used to talk about the birth of the new heavens and earth.

- The WHEN of Jesus Second Coming.
- The HOW to prepare and wait for Jesus’ Second Coming.

As we trust in Jesus as our Savior and let our lives come under his direction we will be ready for our Lord’s coming again – be it at our deaths or be it when he comes the second time to restore all creation and us to his perfect order.

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*“No one is better prepared for Judgement Day  
than the person who longs to be without sin.”*

Edwin Plass, *What Luther Says*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 1959, #2176, p. 699.



**Second Sunday of Advent**

12-9-18

**Sunday School Children's Christmas Program**

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**Third Sunday of Advent**

**Luke 3:7-18      12-16-18**

**THIS IS GOOD NEWS?**

*“John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire...so, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.” Luke 3:7-9, 18*

Last week's Gospel told us God sent John the Baptist *“to prepare the way for the Lord”* by preaching *“a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”*

This week's Gospel shows us what repentance looks like in very practical terms.

- Repentance involves recognizing false securities.
- Repentance involves daily, very practical matters.
- Repentance is not a self-improvement project but is actually God's work in us.

John the Baptist's words sound harsh but they point forward to Jesus who will *“baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.”* So instead of asking about John's preaching, *“This is good news?”* we can exclaim, *“This is good news!”* Repentance is the means through which God brings us to Jesus who bestows new life.

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*“Repentance is begun when we acknowledge our sins and are sincerely sorry for them; it is completed when trust in the mercy of God comes to this sorrow and hearts are converted to God and long for the forgiveness of sins.”*

Edwin Plass, *What Luther Says*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 1959, #3854, p. 1210.

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**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Micah 5:2-5a      12-23-18**

**“He Shall Be the One of Peace”**

- A. Time...** *“whose origin is from of old...”*
- B. Task...** *“he will stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord...”*
- C. Consequences...** *“And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth...”*

***A Luther Sermon Quote:*** [In a sermon on Luke 1:39-56 Luther said the following:] *Therefore we must grant the Gospel this honor and concede to it this glory that it is a means and way and, as it were, a pipe, through which the Holy Spirit flows and comes into our hearts. This is why St. Paul tells the Galatians that they have received the Holy Spirit, not through the works of the Law but through the preaching of faith (3:2) And, writing to the Romans, he draws this conclusion (10:17): “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” From this it follows that they act foolishly, yea, against God’s order and institution, who despise and reject the external Word, thinking that the Holy Spirit and faith should come to them without means. [Luther is here speaking of some of the radical reformers who believed that. And he concludes by writing.] It will indeed be a long time before that will happen. (Plass, *What Luther Says*, 2864, p. 914f)*

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**First Sunday of Christmas**

Luke 2:41-52      12-30-18

**“Shifting Gears – About the Father’s Business”**

- A. What was Jesus’ relationship with John the Baptist**
- B. What is the “Father’s business...?”**
- C. This is still the Father’s business today...**
- D. Are we about the Father’s business today? ...**

*A Luther Sermon Quote:* [In a sermon on Luke 2:41-52 Luther writes:]  
*Therefore there can be nothing else [than the word of God] which comforts the soul even amid the slightest temptations. For whatever else exists by which a man wants to comfort himself, no matter how great it is- it is all uncertain. Then the heart is forever thinking: Ah, who know whether it is right? Ah, if only I were sure of it! Etc. But when a heart cling to the Word of God, it can, without wavering, say: There is God’s Word, it cannot deceive or fail me. Of this I am certain. But this is our greatest battle: to keep the Word and to stay with it. When the Word is torn from the hearts, a person is lost. (Plass, What Luther Says, 950 p. 322)*