“...The Scripture Cannot Be Broken.” (John 10:35)

Surely
I AM
coming quickly.

Amen.
Waiting for More than Christmas

The outcome is always the same. Christ and His Church always come out victorious and all His enemies will be judged.


John was in exile, banished to the island of Patmos where he was isolated from the people he loved and prevented from preaching the Word of God to them. Many of those whom he called “my little children” were suffering terrible persecution. Some were fed to wild animals or slaughtered by gladiators, others were burned as human torches or crucified. Still others lost homes and businesses and wandered as fugitives, despised by all.

In such terrible times, one longs for and prays for deliverance. As the Children of Israel prayed for God’s deliverance from their cruel slavery in Egypt, so also John pleads with Christ, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

Our lives are much easier. We don’t suffer physical persecution as early Christians did. What a blessing to be able to worship God freely and confess His name without the fear of being cast to the lions! However, like Lot (2 Peter 2:7-8), our souls are being tormented by all the evil in the world, and by the sins in our own lives.

Christ revealed to the exiled apostle what we can expect in this world. Satan will be attacking God’s Church in every way possible. He will use world governments, worldly philosophies, a myriad of false prophets; all to undermine the truth of God’s Word and destroy faith in Christ. He has raised up the great Antichrist—the Roman Catholic papacy—to usurp the power and rule of Christ in the world, and by the sins in our own lives.

Repentance itself is a longing to be cleansed and a deliverance from our cruel slavery in Egypt, so also John pleads with Christ, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” We may enjoy our lives in this world and give thanks and praise for God’s blessings, but let us never forget that the best is yet to come. Jesus promises to come quickly. May our Advent prayer ever remain, “Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!”

Reverend David Reim is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Vernon, British Columbia.
Prepared by John the Baptist

John the Baptist was born to prepare people to meet the most holy God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. What a daunting calling! Where would John even begin? Where would you begin?

Preparation to meet the Lord begins with the heart. John came preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matthew 3:2). Repentance is a 180-degree turn. It is a turning around as you realize you were headed in exactly the wrong direction.

As we prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus, we need to hear John’s call to repentance. The mirror of God’s Law needs to show us when we are headed in the wrong direction and have made sinful choices. Through such preaching, hearts are being prepared to meet the Lord who comes in the Gospel with His saving love announcing, “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). Through the Law, John showed the people their desperate condition and their need to be rescued from sins of the heart and sins of the mind. They were then prepared to hear of “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

When God Gave His Oath

"For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, 'Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.' Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). Thru John, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 6:13-20).

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**Hymn 64**

“Jesus, Thy Church with Longing Eyes”

**ADVENT**

Hymn 64 is an Advent hymn. Advent is a “three tense” season: the past and the future unite in our present worship.

In the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the first part of the definition for the word *advent* is “The coming or arrival of something or someone that is important or worthy of note.” In the Advent part of the church calendar, we look back to the first Advent (coming) of Christ, His birth in Bethlehem, when God came to mankind as a man in order to redeem the world to Himself. But even more than this sacred past, Advent is a time when we look forward to a sacred future, when this same Redeemer of mankind will return—not this time as a lowly manger-born infant—but rather as the One to Whom every knee shall bow and about Whom every tongue shall “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

Distinctively Scriptural hymns are an important part of our Lutheran heritage. Hymn 64, for example, is based on Revelation 1:7, “For Thine expected coming waits.” From that text, William Hiley Bathurst1 distills the ardent yearning of the Christian for that second Advent. He writes (v.1),

“Amen.” From that text, William Hiley Bathurst1 distills the ardent yearning of the Christian for the second Advent. He writes (v.1),

**A HYMN OF GLORY LET US SING**

This is the first article in a series to be based on selected hymns from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, with each hymn chosen for its connection to the theme of the issue. Martin Luther once famously remarked, “Music is an outstanding gift of God and next to theology.” We hope in this series to give our readers a deeper insight into, and appreciation of, the hymns used in our worship services to edify the spirits and gladden the hearts of believers.

1 Born August 28, 1796, died November 25, 1877. Bathurst was an Anglican (Church of England) clergyman whose best-known published work was *Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Use*. This book contained 205 hymns and 150 Psalm versifications. Bathurst wrote all the hymns, and 112 of the metrical versifications of the Psalms. In *The Lutheran Hymnal*, he is the author of Hymns 64 and 396.

We have two suggestions: First, have a copy of *The Lutheran Hymnal* to which you can refer, because the length limitations of the articles will mean that not every part of a hymn can be treated on this page. Second, listen to the music for the hymn. The musical settings of the hymns are designed to complement the thoughts expressed in the verses. An excellent way to hear the music is to use the website Pastor Paul Naumann has prepared, on which you will find MP3 files of all the hymns in TLH except for 86 and 180 (which are still under copyright). That website is [http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/](http://lutherantacoma.com/hymns/).

We pray that the God Who created music will bless you as you study these wonderful gifts to His Church.

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1 Do you remember what it felt like to be a young child when Christmas day approached? Do you remember your eager impatience for what you wanted *right now*, and how hard it was to wait? And do you also recall the feelings you had a few days after Christmas? For many, the joys of Christmas are followed by a “let down” because that happy time has passed, and will not come again for another entire year.

Advent is like the first part of that sequence, but without any of the last part. We may be somewhat impatient for the second Advent of Christ—and the greater our sorrows and troubles in this world, the greater will be our impatience for His return. We may be impatient, but still we know that the coming of Christ in glory at the proper time cannot fail, because it has been promised by Him Who cannot lie. Moreover, there will be no later “let down” after His return. Rather, we shall experience joy and love far beyond what we can presently even imagine, and we shall do so eternally, solely by God’s grace to us in Christ Jesus. So we pray along with Bathurst,

“E’en now, when tempests round us fall
And wintry clouds o’er cast the sky,
Thy words with pleasure we recall
And deem that our redemption’s nigh.”

Do you remember what it felt like to be a young child as Christmas day approached? Do you remember your eager impatience for what you wanted right now, and how hard it was to wait? And do you also recall the feelings you had a few days after Christmas? For many, the joys of Christmas are followed by a “let down” because that happy time has passed, and will not come again for another entire year.

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Our Great Commander

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and beheld, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?” So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” Then the Commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so. Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the Children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the Lord beckons Joshua to stand up with confidence, as He has marvelous plans for the battle ahead.

Joshua’s army lacked the power and the means to take the city, but the Lord promised to give Jericho, its king, and its mighty men of valor into his hand.

The Lord drew His sword not to terrify Joshua but to assure him of the victory that awaits him—true for all who trust in the Lord. What joy and peace He gives when He stands before us, ready to save us from seemingly insurmountable obstacles!

The same Lord who often took the form of man in the Old Testament ultimately became fully incarnate to win for us the greatest victory of all. As Commander of the Lord’s army, He could have called on more than twelve legions of angels to assist Him, but He went forth alone. Shortly before He was betrayed, He said, “…for their [His disciples’] sakes I sanctify Myself” (John 17:19). He set Himself apart.

The Great Commander, the One who commanded men like Moses and Joshua to take off their sandals before Him, humbly placed Himself into the hands of His own enemies to take on sin, death, and the devil—ultimately defeating all three and winning everlasting victory!

He came to do what you and I can never do for ourselves—win the victory of our salvation!

Delwyn Maas is pastor of Gift of God Lutheran Church in Mapleton, North Dakota.

“Why is Our Church So Strict about Divorce?”

Strictly speaking, the appropriate word for the issue of divorce is serious. We are serious about divorce because we strictly adhere to the Word of God. The seriousness of divorce is not determined by “our church,” but rather by what God has said in His Word. God is serious about His institution of marriage, and therefore He is also serious about that which tears apart what He has joined together. Just as one cannot murder without setting himself above God, neither can one tear apart a marriage without setting himself above God.

In Genesis 2:28, God said of Adam, “It is not good that man should be alone.” Marriage was instituted by God for the benefit and blessing of man. Divorce is the result of man spurning that benefit and blessing for his own selfish appetite. For the Christian, marriage takes on an even higher status as it becomes an opportunity for the Christian husband to reflect the love of Christ toward his wife, and for the wife to reflect toward her husband the submission of the Church to Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33). Divorce mars that beautiful picture of marriage that compares it to the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Still, we haven’t gotten to the heart of the issue which, of course, is the heart. Divorce, as well as the sins that lead to it, is the product of a heart that has been corrupted by sin. Jesus tells us, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, adultery, murder, deceit, greed, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person” (Mark 7:20-23 ESV). What this means is that no divorce has ever occurred except as the result of some sin that has been committed by one or the other spouse, or even by both. Divorce is serious business because sin is serious business. The Church is serious about sin because the Lord is serious about sin.

Please don’t misunderstand. The Church is not in the business of getting rid of sinners, but rather of calling sinners to repentance. The Church doesn’t make herself holy and without spot or blemish by getting rid of sinners. Christ makes the Church holy by forgiving sinners. The Church, in respect for Her Head, calls her children to repentance in accord with Her Lord’s Word. Just as the Lord does not desire the death of the wicked, neither does the Church. It is sin that brings death, and the only remedy for sin is the forgiveness that comes through the cleansing blood of Christ.

Sadly, there are two views of divorce in the world today that are contrary to the Gospel. One is that divorce is a “mortal sin,” leaving one without the grace of God. The other is that divorce involves no sin at all so that the grace of God is unnecessary. In either case, the one who commits the sin that leads to divorce finds himself in the same boat—without grace. The truth, though, is that while divorce is serious business to God, inasmuch as it occurs only because of sin, with God there is forgiveness in Christ Jesus. For the one who turns from his sin and trusts in Christ as his Savior, God promises to remember the sin no more (Jeremiah 31:34). So we, too, are serious about divorce because we are serious about preaching the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ.

There can be many side issues that come up on the topic of divorce, so you may have some other questions not answered in this brief response. If so, be sure to contact your pastor and he will help you, through a study of God’s Word, to find answers to your questions.

Frank Gantt is pastor of St. Luke’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lemmon, South Dakota.
The things we take for granted—like light. During our last mission visitation to Torreón, Mexico, CLC Board of Missions Chairman Todd Ohlmann and I were privileged to join some of the members of the Iglesia Luterana Confesional (ILC-Mexico) in an evening worship service. The service was conducted by Pastor Juan José Olvera, but there was a problem—the one light bulb owned by the congregation was not located in the room they used as a sanctuary. Their solution was to follow the light by moving the service to the adjoining room—the one with the light bulb.

This simple action was actually very symbolic of the journey of this small, confessional group in Mexico. When Pastor Olvera recognized that the darkness of false teaching and practice had crept into his former church body, he followed the light of God’s Word and sought out fellowship with the CLC. The struggles and challenges were significant—both for Pastor Olvera and his family, and for the faithful members who made the journey with him. In an effort to lighten their burden, the CLC through our Board of Missions has been supporting these fellow Christians with a small monthly subsidy since 2014.

Seeking to follow the lighted path of the Holy Spirit’s leading, Pastor Olvera recently made the difficult decision to relocate from Torreón in central Mexico to Juárez (located some 530 miles to the north—directly across the border from El Paso, TX.) Pastor Olvera had previously served a promising group in this area but was forced to relocate due to the dramatic increase in drug-related and gang-related violence. That violence has, by God’s grace, diminished somewhat of late, thus allowing Pastor Olvera to return.

Since resuming his ministry in Juárez, the Lord in His wisdom has allowed Pastor Olvera’s family to be presented with a new challenge: his wife Claudia has been diagnosed with cancer. This is yet another reason for us to remember:

When Pastor Olvera recognized that the darkness of false teaching and practice had crept into his former church body, he followed the light of God’s Word and sought out fellowship with the CLC.

He has also undertaken to train two men in Juárez who are studying for the pastoral ministry.

Yet still God’s light shines. Though we can only imagine that the temptation to seek out other area churches must have been great, the congregation in Torreón has remained faithful. They continue to be served at a distance by Pastor Olvera, while Pastor-in-training Braulio continues to conduct services and to share the light of God’s Word as he is able. While regular visits to Torreón would be extremely beneficial, and while Pastor Olvera would very much like to make the twenty-two-hour round trip more frequently, they lack the financial wherewithal to do so. By phone, internet, and mail, the various members of the ILC-Mexico continue to share with each other the light of the Gospel of the Savior they treasure.

Despite the many demands on his time, Pastor Olvera, while conducting regular services in Juárez, continues to make return visits to Torreón as time and finances allow. He has also undertaken to train two men in Juárez who are studying for the pastoral ministry.

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It would be both understandable and not unreasonable for this tiny conservative group of fellow Christians to regularly petition the CLC for additional financial support—those who have been given so much thereby sharing with those that have so little. Yet what they regularly solicit is the precious contact of fellowship, together with the ongoing prayers of their new brothers and sisters in the Lord. Their simple request is that we continue to ask the Lord to protect and preserve their humble effort, to the end that they may continue to be bearers of the one light that alone can lead others to their Savior.

Michael Roehl is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Bismarck, North Dakota.
The Invisible Hand

In the study of economics, I think it was Adam Smith who first coined the term “the invisible hand” to refer to the operation of economic markets in which thousands and thousands of decisions are made daily, buying and selling, supply and demand. The point is that no government or group of people could possibly make these decisions as well as the multitude of individuals can, given their own individual situations. It is as if an invisible hand were at work to advance the business of people.

Of course we know that in the spiritual realm there is THE Invisible, and His hand involves Him in all affairs on this earth and into the next life for us. We celebrate the way His invisible hand works to further the outreach efforts of the CLC.

Uganda—Pastor Jeremiah has been working with contacts in Uganda for some years now, and part-time Missionary Michael Gurath continues to visit there periodically.

Zimbabwe—Correspondence with the Board of Missions by an individual in Zimbabwe opened a door for Pastors Ohlmann and Ude to visit that country recently.

Zambia—in the Lusaka area Pastor Ibrahim (see article in the March issue) has been working, coming from Tanzania. In the Kitwe area Pastor Yumba from the Congo CLC has been working.

Kenya—Pastor Gurath worked at Moi’s Bridge to establish a true Lutheran congregation there, supported by the CLC congregation in Phoenix, Arizona.

Peru—The CLC congregation at Mankato, Minnesota, has been working in Lima through its member, Daniel Pfeiffer. Even though that work is currently in hiatus, we pray for further progress.

Sudan—Not long ago work started—also through the Mankato congregation—among the people in this newly-independent country. At the same time Pastor Panpani from Kenya has been traveling up to Juba to work there.

Thailand—We continue to pray that we will be able to resume work here.

Liberia—There has been much news about Ebola in this part of Africa. Grace Lutheran Church in Fridley, Minnesota, has been working with a Liberian, Alvin, to help set up a Christian school there. This is good news. Pastor John Hein of Fridley also conducts classes with Liberians over the internet, and he and I are planning a visit there in the near future.

Sweden—Pastor David Reim currently conducts internet classes with several people in Sweden, and he and I are planning a visit there in the near future.

We could not possibly as a group plan and carry out what God’s invisible hand does.

What a joy to be co-workers with Him! We are but the earthen vessels that carry the treasure to others. The treasure is His to share. He sends us to the recipients. He blesses the reception.

David Koenig has served as a foreign missionary in Africa, India, and elsewhere. Though officially retired, he continues to be active in the synod’s mission endeavors.
The “Coulee Region” of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa extends approximately fifty miles on either side of the Mississippi River for a distance of about two hundred miles. In the heart of this Coulee Region lies Onalaska, Wisconsin, and its larger, more famous twin sister, La Crosse, Wisconsin. Onalaska is on the Black River. La Crosse is on the Mississippi River. This Coulee Region is filled with deep valleys or “coulees”—both narrow and wide—separated by steep ridges. The coulees appear to have been formed by water erosion. The ridges and peaks along the river are known as the Mississippi bluffs. Both La Crosse and Onalaska, approximately five miles apart, were settled in the 1850s. La Crosse (population 52,000) received its name from the French word for curved stick—the French word for curved stick is la croix. The city did not get its name from being a location where the pioneers could cross the river! Onalaska (population 17,000) received its name from the poem “The Pleasures of Hope,” written by Scottish poet Thomas Campbell in 1799, in which the small Alaskan island of Oonalaska (Unalaska) is mentioned. The city’s founder considered this enchanting name appropriate for this beautiful location in the wooded hills on the ridge above the river. He removed an “o,” and the name became “Onalaska.”

Onalaska is a city in La Crosse County, Wisconsin. The population was 17,736 at the 2010 census. Onalaska is built on a slightly elevated ridge above the Black River. Natural areas include both river bottom land and high, heavily wooded, scenic bluffs. A man-made reservoir at the city’s western edge is known as Lake Onalaska. Onalaska is known as “The Sunfish Capital of the World.” Wikipedia

The coulee area was rich in forests. Logging and sawmill operations were the early industries. Fertile farmland became available as the coulees and plateaus atop the ridges were cleared by loggers. Wheat farms sprang up and were followed by dairy farms. The Norwegian and German immigrants who came to the area formed the beginnings of Lutheran churches. First Lutheran in La Crosse (WELS) was founded in 1856. St. Paul Lutheran and particularly a strong WELS, presence in Onalaska and La Crosse area.

Our CLC’s presence began in 1959 when Pastor John Lau and a group of members left St. Paul’s and the Wisconsin Synod, to form St. Mark’s. Unfortunately, St. Mark’s was also divided. In 1997 the congregation voted to leave the CLC; however, a small remnant remained. The remnant began worshipping at the home of Elise Pabst in nearby Brice Prairie. The group became part of Messiah congregation in East Claire and was served by CLC pastors from various locations. The group organized in 2000 with a membership of twenty-five, taking the name Peace with God Evangelical Lutheran Church. Pastors Robert Mackensen, John Hein, Mark Gurath, Michael Sydow, Paul Gurgel, and Arthur Schulz, plus others, all served from a distance in these early years. From 2005-2011 retired pastor/professor David Lau, living in East Claire, served Peace with God. The congregation is now served by Pastor Richard Kanzenbach as part of a tri-parish arrangement with Morning Star of Fairchild, Wisconsin, and Trinity of Millston, Wisconsin. Membership stands at eighteen.

Lutheran, and particularly a strong WELS, presence in the Onalaska and La Crosse area.

Yet the congregation and its members have PEACE. They rejoice to gather together in Jesus’ saving name. They gather faithfully. The message of Word and Sacrament, "JESUS, THE CRUCIFIED AND RISEN REDEEMER, HAS RESCUED YOU FROM SIN, DEATH, AND HELL" gives them faith, confidence, and joy for each week. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1), "The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). They do have peace—peace which “passes all understanding.”

Richard Kanzenbach is pastor of Morning Star Lutheran Church in Fairchild, Wisconsin, Trinity Lutheran Church in Millston, Wisconsin, and Peace with God Evangelical Lutheran Church in Onalaska, Wisconsin.
IN THE PIPELINE (FIRST IN A SERIES)

Joe Naumann

Age: 25
Program: Seminary
Year in School: Senior
Where were you born? Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.
Where did you grow up? Ketchikan, Alaska, until age ten. Then Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, until age 20. Eau Claire since then.

Married? Unmarried? Tell us about your family. My parents are Pastor David and Mrs. Desirae Naumann of Clarkston, Washington. I am the oldest of five children, four boys and one girl. My wife, Rachel Sydow, and I were married in September, 2014. We are expecting a baby in December, 2015.

What hobbies, sports or extracurriculars interest you? I enjoy hunting, camping, weight lifting, running, playing guitar, and watching the Green Bay Packers.

Tell us one thing about yourself that most people don’t know. I grew up wanting to be the very first man to walk on Mars. I even spent two years studying astronautics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison before the Lord led me back to Immanuel. The heavens still remain a fascination of mine.

Which academic subjects especially interest you? Greek, Practical Theology, Homiletics, and Liturgics.

How did you first come to consider the public teaching or preaching ministry as a career? As the son of a pastor, that is something that I have always considered. However, it was especially after the death of my grandfather, Bertram Naumann (also a pastor), that I began to evaluate the gifts and abilities that the Lord has given me with a view toward the ministry. The support and encouragement of so many people—including parents, grandparents, friends, and others—has led me to the desire to serve to serve the Lord in the best way that I am able. Most of all, I believe that the Lord has led me to this point in my life and I pray that He will continue to lead me to serve Him as He wills.

Want to meet the person who may be your next pastor or Christian day school teacher? This series profiles the men and women who are preparing for the public teaching and preaching ministry at our Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Hope for Every Child in the Child of Hope

“Would you like to hold her?” Those are some of my favorite words to hear when I visit new parents. So with that invitation I carefully cradled all 6 lbs. 10 oz. of a precious little girl barely seven hours old. I never grow tired of seeing the wonder firsthand of a child “knit together” by the Lord Himself.

What happens, however, when the glow of the moment is gone and Mom and Dad take their little one home? What does the future hold for her? In some ways she will face a world more complex and dangerous than that of her grandparents. What new terrorist organizations will spring up in her lifetime? How much farther from decency and morality will society stray? What sadness will she have to endure? What pain will her own sins cause her? St. Paul warned Timothy: “There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful,骄傲, abusive—without self control” (2 Timothy 3:1-3 NIV84). Such thoughts have caused parents to fear for their children or even to wonder whether it is wise to bring them into the world.

But then we remember another Child, the Seed of the woman promised by God from the earliest days of the world... the eternal Lord of all.

THE CHILD OF HOPE

...then we remember another Child, the Seed of the woman promised by God from the earliest days of the world... the eternal Lord of all.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Michael Eichstadt is pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, and president of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Blessings to you and yours in His name!
## “BREAD OF LIFE” READINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Jeremiah 33:14-16</td>
<td>TLH 645</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Certainly Jesus does what is just and right, but more than that, He is our righteousness.</td>
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<td>Dec 2</td>
<td>Luke 21:25-36</td>
<td>PS 76</td>
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<td>Because of Christ, we will not only stand on the Last Day, but we will lift up our heads in excitement, too.</td>
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<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Mark 13:24-37</td>
<td>WS 703</td>
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<td>Keep watch, for you do not know when Jesus will appear again.</td>
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<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Isaiah 64:1-9</td>
<td>TLH 65</td>
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<td>We see our sins and we cry to the Lord, “Come down from heaven and help us!” And He has.</td>
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<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 1:3-9</td>
<td>PS 4</td>
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<td>Speaking, knowledge, faith—and all else you need to wait for Christ’s return—has been given to you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Luke 17:20-25</td>
<td>TLH 56</td>
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<td>Do not be deceived: Jesus will not reign here like the kings of the earth, and when He comes again it will be obvious to all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Romans 1:16-20</td>
<td>PS 100</td>
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<td>There is salvation for everyone who believes in Christ, for the righteous will live by faith.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>Isaiah 40:1-11</td>
<td>TLH 69</td>
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<td>First the prophet speaks tenderly of the goodness of sin, then he urges the people to make straight the way for the Messiah.</td>
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<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>2 Timothy 3:10-17</td>
<td>WS 704</td>
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<td>How precious are the Scriptures, which point us to the One born for us, making us wise for salvation!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 11</td>
<td>2 Peter 3:8-14</td>
<td>PS 42</td>
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<td>Our new home will be a home of righteousness, so let’s live holy and godly lives as if we’re there already.</td>
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<td>Dec 12</td>
<td>Isaiah 61</td>
<td>PS 110</td>
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<td>“Instead of . . . . See how many in this chapter Christ replaces something bad with something good.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>1 Thessalonians 5:16-24</td>
<td>TLH 60</td>
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<td>Praise God we don’t have to sanctify ourselves, rather He Who called us and is faithful will do it!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>Luke 3:3-14</td>
<td>PS 38</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The crowds did not understand at first what “fruits of repentance” might look like, so John showed them.</td>
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<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>John 1:19-28</td>
<td>PS 24</td>
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<td>John prepared the way, but it was all about Jesus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 17</td>
<td>Isaiah 7:10-14</td>
<td>TLH p. 120 (&quot;Benedicite&quot;)</td>
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<td>[Daniel and the Three Men] “And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man” (Nicene Creed).</td>
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<td>Isaiah 52:7-10</td>
<td>WS 715</td>
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<td>At Christ’s birth, God’s salvation could be seen with the eyes. Now tell of it with your mouth, too.</td>
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<td>Jesus Christ is a son of Adam just like you are. That makes Him your brother.</td>
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<td>John 14:6-7</td>
<td>WS 710</td>
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<td>[St. Thomas, Apostle] Yes, Thomas, you do know the way, because He knows you.</td>
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<td>Dec 22</td>
<td>John 1:18</td>
<td>PS 46</td>
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<td>Jesus came and made His home with the likes of us. It’s hard to imagine, but in Christ, that is just what happened.</td>
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<td>Dec 23</td>
<td>Titus 2:11-14</td>
<td>TLH 646</td>
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<td>Jesus appeared to redeem us from all wickedness.</td>
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<td>&quot;Now He shines, the Long-expected; Let creation praise its Lord Evermore and evermore.&quot; (TLH 98:4).</td>
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<td>Dec 25</td>
<td>Isaiah 9:2-7</td>
<td>TLH 94</td>
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<td>This is your Baby to hold and to cherish. That’s what it says. Unto us a child is born.</td>
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<td>Dec 26</td>
<td>Acts 7:5-8:2</td>
<td>PS 27</td>
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<td>[St. Stephen, Martyr] Stephen dies for the Christ Child because the Christ Child died for Him.</td>
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<td>Dec 28</td>
<td>Matthew 2:23-23</td>
<td>TLH 273</td>
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<td>(The Holy Innocents, Martyrs) Jesus’ death would not be by Herod’s hand. Jesus would give His life into death when the time was right.</td>
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<td>Romans 16:25-27</td>
<td>PS 8</td>
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<td>God establishes us in the faith by the gospel. To the only wise God be glory!</td>
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<td>Galatians 1:3-5</td>
<td>WS 746</td>
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<td>The Father willingly sent His Son into death to rescue us. To Him be glory!</td>
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"Now He shines, the Long-expected; Let creation praise its Lord Evermore and evermore." (TLH 98:4).

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This is your Baby to hold and to cherish. That’s what it says. Unto us a child is born.

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More Evidence for Intelligent Design Discovered in DNA. “Researchers have found a second layer of information embedded in DNA, refueling a debate between proponents of Darwinism and intelligent design. Since the 1960s, scientists recognized that the order of molecules in DNA represented a particular code that governs the development of gene-forming proteins. Now, researchers from the University of Washington have discovered a second set of instructions in DNA that governs how those genes function. The fact that DNA contains two separate sets of instructions that cannot interfere with each other reveals something greater than just random chance, intelligent design advocates argue. ‘Usually one thinks of a spy or prisoner of war who can conceal a second message with meaning B in a message with meaning A as showing unusual skill and intelligence,’ said Dr. Angus Menuge, a professor at Concordia University Wisconsin who has studied the intersection of science and theology. ‘Both messages have to make sense in their own terms and not somehow interfere with each other.’ Menuge realizes that scientists with an almost religious adherence to Darwinism may not be able to see what that complexity points to: ‘Of course, the more obvious the evidence for design is, the more some will say isn’t it amazing what natural selection can do.’” Yow, Jesse. “DNA discovery illustrates creation’s complexity.” Daily Dispatches. WORLD, 7 Jan. 2014. Web. 8 Oct. 2015.

Atheists Criticize National Motto on Police Cars. A decal saying “In God We Trust,” displayed on the back of Childress, Texas, police cruisers has drawn the ire of a militant atheist group. The Wisconsin-based “Freedom From Religion Foundation” registered a complaint about the decals, as they have against police departments in Missouri, Florida, Arkansas, Kentucky, and elsewhere. Gary Parsons, a sheriff in Lee County in Virginia, said his office spent a total of $50 to have the decals added to about twenty-five vehicles. He said many people feel their belief system is being trampled and that adding the phrase is a way of pushing back. “It’s not only a symbol of moral values but also a symbol of patriotism,” he said. “In God We Trust” began appearing on federal coins in the Civil War era, and Congress in 1956 approved it as the national motto. Warren, David. “Police cars’ ‘In God We Trust’ decals draw complaints.” The Big Story. Associated Press, 6 Sep. 2015. Web. 8 Oct. 2015.


Joel Osteen Has Two Words For You. In a new book that appeared in bookstores October 6, megachurch pastor Joel Osteen says he is trying to influence people to think positively about themselves by focusing on the words, “I AM.” Called The Power of I Am: Two Words That Will Change Your Life Today, the book aims to show the way the words “I Am” can help individuals find confidence and success. Osteen claims the book is filled with life-changing messages, including “the secret that changed Oprah’s life.” The Power of I Am, though, has not been universally well-received among Christians, many of whom hold the traditional view that it is Christ Who should be the focus of faith, and not the individual believer. It was, after all, Jesus who said, “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58), and, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). Hochwald, Lambeth. “Can Two Words Can Change Your Life? Joel Osteen Says ‘Yes.’” Parade Daily. Parade Magazine, 6 Oct. 2015. Web. 10 Oct. 2015.