



**The LORD
is our
righteousness.**

Jeremiah 33:16

**December 1, 2024
First Sunday of Advent
9:30 AM Worship**

First Lutheran Church
709 5th Ave. – P.O. Box 218
Washburn, North Dakota 58577
www.flcwashburn.com
701-462-3775

PRELUDE AND BELLS

AS WE GATHER

(The First Sunday in Advent is a time to celebrate the coming of Jesus, our Savior and King. He is a Savior like no other, giving his life as a sacrificial offering for the forgiveness of the world. We look forward to his coming! Welcome to God's house today!)

WELCOME

(put prayer requests on yellow cards)

HYMN LBW #22

"The Advent of Our God"

The Advent of Our God

22

1 The ad - vent of our God Shall be our theme for prayer;
2 The ev - er - last - ing Son In - car - nate stoops to be,
3 Come, Zi - on's daugh - ter, rise To meet your low - ly king,
4 As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come a - gain,

Come, let us meet him on the road And place for him pre - pare.
Him - self the ser - vant's form puts on To set his peo - ple free.
Nor let your faith - less heart de - spise The peace he comes to bring.
And all his scat - tered saints u - nite With him on high to reign.

5 Before the dawning day
Let sin be put to flight;
No longer let the law hold sway,
But walk in freedom's light.

6 All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one
Through all eternity.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESSp. 56

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your holy name. Amen

P: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

THE LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

P: Lighting a candle in the darkness helps us find our way. In darkness we lose direction. We cannot see where we have been or where we are going. A single candle, flickering brightly, helps us find our way again.

C: “Stir up your might, O Lord, and come to save us. Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved” (Psalm 80:2b-3).

The first candle is lit as we sing: LBW #34 v. 1

***Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appears.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.***

P: Light one candle; see it glow, Brightly, so that all may know,
How one candle shows the way, Making our darkness bright
as God's day.

C: **"Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be
saved".** (Psalm 80:3)

**We Pray: Dear God, on this first Sunday in Advent, let this
light shine brightly as the days grow shorter, so that we
will be ready for your face to shine upon us at Christmas.
In the Savior's name we pray. Amen.**

We Sing: LBW #34 v. 5

***Oh, come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.***

FIRST READING Jeremiah 33:14-16
*(Jeremiah promises a new beginning as God remembers his
great love and promises a Savior.)*

¹⁴"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will
fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of
Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous
Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and
righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved,
and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by
which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'"

PSALM (Read responsively)Psalm 25:1-11
(*God's people lift their hearts in trust and confidence in the Lord and His promises. Those who do so are never put to shame.*)

¹ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

² **O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me.**

³ Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴ **Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.**

⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.

⁶ **Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.**

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!

⁸ **Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

⁹ He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

¹⁰ **All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.**

¹¹ For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
(*St. Paul speaks words of blessing for the Thessalonian Christians and for us today.*)

⁹What thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? ¹¹Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, ¹²and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

BAPTISMAL HYMN (vs 1 & 2)..... LBW #474
“Children of the Heavenly Father”

474

Children of the Heavenly Father

1 Chil - dren of the heav'n-ly Fa - ther Safe - ly in his bo - som gath - er;
 2 God his own doth tend and nour-ish, In his ho - ly courts they flour - ish.
 3 Nei - ther life nor death shall ev - er From the Lord his chil - dren sev - er;
 4 Though he giv - eth or he tak - eth, God his chil - dren ne'er for - sak - eth;

Nest - ling bird or star in heav - en Such a ref - uge ne'er was giv - en.
 From all e - vil things he spares them, In his might - y arms he bears them.
 Un - to them his grace he show - eth, And their sor - rows all he know - eth.
 His the lov - ing pur - pose sole - ly To pre - serve them pure and ho - ly.

© Text: Caroline V. Sandell Berg, 1832-1903; tr. Ernst W. Olson, 1870-1958
 Tune: Swedish folk tune

TRYGGARE KAN INGEN VARA
 L.M

BAPTISM

Baptized today is Rayden Otis Vetter, son of Tyler & Amanda Vetter. Rayden’s sponsors are Kaitlynn Carlson, Tiffany Schmitz and Ryan Vetter. We welcome Rayden as our newest member of First Lutheran.

SPECIAL MUSIC Brent Petersen
“Make This Child Yours”

BAPTISMAL HYMN (vs 3) LBW #474
“Children of the Heavenly Father”

ALLELUIA

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 21st chapter.

Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL READING Luke 21:25-36
(Jesus speaks of his return at the end of time. While heaven and earth will pass away, Christ's words will not.)

²⁵{Jesus said,} "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." ²⁹And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. ³¹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³⁴But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON Pastor Paul Krueger
"Faith for Troubling Times" – Luke 21:25-36

APOSTLES' CREEDp. 65

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

**HYMN LBW #29
"Comfort, Comfort Now My People"**

OFFERINGS ARE RECEIVED

OFFERTORY

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the
seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.



Gath-er the hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the
 prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
 pres - ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Merciful Father,

C: we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION (2 Aisle Floor Stations)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION:

Lamb of God – p. 72

☩ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
 mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
 world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
 sin of the world; grant us peace.

LBW #439 – “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

LBW #518 – “Beautiful Savior”

LBW #524 – “My God, How Wonderful Thou Art”

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

☩ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.
 Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear his name.
 He re - calls his prom - is - es and leads his peo - ple forth in joy with
 shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P: Heavenly Father, You have given us Your promise that You will be with us. You have given Your Son as our Savior, your guarantee that Your presence with us always.

C: We praise You for Your great gifts, Lord. We have Your promise and it gives us tremendous comfort to know that You are always with us, and that Your deliverance is near.

P: Your Word is a priceless treasure for us, Lord. It reveals Your care for us and how much You desire for us to live as Your people. As we approach Christmas, help us remember that Your gift is greater than life itself.

C: We praise You and give You thanks for Your generous intervention in our lives.

P: Continue to bless us with Your Spirit as we share the Good News of Jesus' birth with those who do not have a Christmas faith.

C: Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

BENEDICTION

Psalm 32:10

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace

Numbers 6:24–26

In the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

HYMN LBW #35

“Hark the Glad Sound!”

Hark, the Glad Sound!

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Your wel - come

prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre -
bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
soul to cure, And with the trea - sures
shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal

pare a throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.
fore him burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
of his grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
arch - es ring With your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751
Tune: attr. Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

CHESTERFIELD
C.M.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please join us for fellowship/coffee hour after worship.

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Today's Worship Leaders & Volunteers – Thank You!

PASTOR Pastor Paul Krueger
ACOLYTES..... McKayde Baumann & Carter Engesser
USHERS/GREETERS Dennis & Gayle Johnson
READER George Swanson
COMMUNION ASSISTANTS George Swanson
Randy & Gwen Hall
ORGANIST Theresa Petersen
ALTAR GUILD..... Theresa Petersen
FELLOWSHIP/COFFEE HOUR Donna Kroll
Sherry Kinnischtzke
SERVICE GROUP COORDINATORS Larry & Kathy Keller
Eric & Sarah Rosenquist

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PASTOR: Paul Krueger email: revpaulkrueger@gmail.com
Cell phone: 701-240-4712

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY: Jeannette Rost
Church Office: 701-462-3775
Email: flc@westriv.com

Website: www.flcwashburn.com

COORDINATOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES: Melissa Rothe
Email: fly@westriv.com

OFFICE HOURS: T-T-F 9:00 am - 12:30 pm, 1:30 - 3:30 pm
W – 9:00 am - 12:30 pm

ORGANISTS: Theresa Petersen and LeAnn Richard

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Randy Hall

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR: Gwen Hall

CUSTODIAN: Jeff Schmidt

Our Mission

“Working hand in hand to know Christ and make Christ known through Worship, Christian Education, Evangelism, Fellowship, Caring Ministries, and Service.”

Welcome to all who have come to worship.

Happy New Year! Today the church calendar begins anew with Advent as we celebrate Jesus’ coming in the past, present and future. Welcome to worship.

Visitors

We welcome all visitors to First Lutheran today and ask that you sign our guest book in the narthex.

Nursery

The nursery, located beside the narthex, is available for use for any parent feeling the need to use it during worship services with their child.

Thank you for your giving

Sunday, November 24

Attendance – 165

Online Viewing – 20

General Fund & Plate Giving - \$4,677.00

Hearing Assist

First Lutheran has hearing assist systems to be used during the worship services. If you feel you could benefit from this or want to try it, please see the ushers in the narthex.

Holy Communion

All are welcome to receive the Lord's Body and Blood who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and believe that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with and under the forms of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Receive the bread into your open, flat palm. Ask if you wish to receive grape juice or a gluten free wafer. Alert an usher if you, or someone you know, needs communion served in the pew.

Pastoral Care

Please call Pastor Paul (701-240-4712) or the church office (701-462-3775) if you or a loved one are in the hospital or know you will be going to the hospital. The church does not get informed of your stay by any of the hospitals even if you are registered under our congregation's name. We want to make sure you get pastoral care. Thank you!

This week we pray for:

This Week's New Prayer Requests:

Prayers of Christian Sympathy:

Long Term prayer requests:

Members: Alton Krebsbach, Howard Johnson, Karen Goehring

* The person in parenthesis is who the person is related to or friends of. Please feel free to ask these individuals how best you can pray for their family/friend.

This month we pray for:

Members: Bob Weisgarber, Joan Zimmerman, Emily Scheresky

Friends & Family:

This Quarter we pray for:

Members and Nonmembers: Corrine Kerzmann (Donna Gunderson), Marion Narum (Peggy Moran), Ty Brown (Jody & Nicole Brown), Alice Richard, Jackie Olson

Military Prayer and Card List

We pray for the Men & Women in our Military who protect our country, especially those assigned to serve overseas or away from home.

- **Members of First Lutheran on Active Duty in the Military and the National Guard:**
 - SGT Bryce Rost – Army National Guard
 - SPC Olivia Retterath – National Guard - Deployed
 - SPC Cassidy Sommer – National Guard
 - SGT Jonathan Melvard – Army National Guard

- **Friends and Family on Active Duty in the Military and in the National Guard:**

SGT Dustin Enockson – National Guard

Emily Johnson – Air Force

Bryar Anderson – Marines

1SGT Jordan Ternes – Army National Guard

Tech. SGT Andre Austin – Air Force

Hunter Feigum – National Guard

Morris Duffy – Medical Air Guard

Adam Walsvik – National Guard

SGT Tom Heidelberger – Army

2LT Tony Heidelberger – Air Force

Notice of Prayer List Policy

We have a monthly/quarterly prayer list cycle. When you add someone to our prayer list the request will remain on our monthly list for four weeks and then be removed. If you would like to have the request moved to our quarterly list, please contact the office and the request will be added to our “This Quarter we pray for:” list for the next three months. Please help us keep our prayer list current by communicating updates to the office at 701-462-3775. Thank you all for your faithful prayers for all of God’s people.

Large Print Bulletins

We have large print bulletins for those wanting or needing larger print. Ask the ushers for one.

Education Committee

The Education Committee will meet today, December 1st, after Sunday School.

Raising Hope Ministry

Raising Hope Ministry will meet today, December 1st, at 2:00 pm. Please join Kellie for a time of serving families who have experienced infant and pregnancy loss. When parents lose a child/baby, their arms are empty, and Kellie would like to provide a little extra comfort for them. It is open for anyone who is looking to volunteer their time and hands. It is the goal to make 3 to 4 blankets to have on hand for local families. Thank you for your loving support and prayers.

FLCW Advent Breakfast

Join us for the FLCW Advent Breakfast titled “The Twelve Days of Christmas” on Saturday, December 7th, at 9:30 am. Women of all ages are welcome. Bring a friend.

Hang Out with Ben

Ben Hylden is going to come on Saturday, December 7th, and FLY going to do an informal time of him sharing his story, games, going to the gym, etc. It will be from 7 pm – Midnight. Anyone leaving early will need to have their parents let Melissa Rothe know before they can leave. Please bring a snack to share and your own drinks.

Parents Free Time

Parents, do you need a break from your kids? Need to shop for Christmas? Need a date night? The Guatemala Mission Team is hosting a Parent’s Free Time on December 8th at the church from 1- 7 pm. We will entertain your kids with games, crafts, feed them snacks and supper and have a great time. It will be \$30 for the first kid and \$20 for each additional kid. Families with more than 4 kids will receive a discount. We welcome any child 3 years and older if they are potty trained. Any questions, contact Melissa Rothe.

Confirmation Meals

We are still looking for people to serve confirmation meals on **December 11th, January 8th and 22nd, and February 12th and 19th. Contact the church office at flc@westriv.com or **Melissa Rothe at fly@westriv.com to sign up for one of the meals!** The kids (and adults) enjoy the meals and talking with the various servers! Thank you to everyone who has already served this year!**

Poinsettias

It’s that time of year again to decorate the church with Poinsettias. First Lutheran has purchased 30 poinsettias from Frontier Floral to decorate our poinsettia tree at a cost of \$18.00 each. If you would like to purchase one, please fill out a form that is in the narthex or your December newsletter. Bring the form and \$18.00 for each to the church office no later than noon on Thursday, December 19th. You are also welcome to purchase your own some other place, fill out a form and bring it to the church office by December 19th.

Advent Devotions

There are advent devotions from NALC and LCMC on the table in the narthex for you to use during the advent season.

Connections Magazine

The November/December issue of *Connections* is in the magazine racks in the narthex. Pick up a copy today to read updates on LCMC, NALC and other interesting articles.

Our Daily Bread and Portals of Prayer

The December/January/February issue of *Our Daily Bread* and the October - December 2024 issue of *Portals of Prayer* are in the magazine racks in the narthex. Pick up a copy to use with your daily devotions.

COMMUNITY AND AREA ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ⇒ Washburn School is looking for families that would like to host students on storm days when they can't make it home from school. If you would be interested in hosting, please contact Megan Leingang at the school 701-462-3221.
- ⇒ Washburn Baptist Church invites you to their **Mother-Daughter Christmas Tea** on December 8th at 5:00 pm. Title is "Fill My Cup, Lord". Music by Brittany Lasher Price from Center. A light meal will be served. There is no cost, tickets or fees. Just come and enjoy the music and decorations of the season. A freewill offering will be taken and regifted to programs in our community.



Giving of Gifts

First Lutheran Church is working hand in hand with Washburn Public School to help fill the Cardinal Community Pantry. Please bring any of the following items by Sunday, December 15th to lay under our Christmas Tree to help our local families in need!

Most Needed Items

- Deodorant (boys and girls)
- Sanitary Napkins
- Tampons
- Easy Mac
- Cup O'Noodles
- BoBo PB&J Sandwiches
- Individual Snacks
- Jerky/Meat Sticks
- Applesauce/Yogurt Pouches
- Protein Bars
- Instant Microwavable Meals

Other Welcomed Items

- Individual packs of Oatmeal
- Individual chips or Veggie Straws
- Individual packs of cereal
- Canned Tuna or Chicken
- Non refrigerated meals
- Microwavable Popcorn
- Microwavable Rice

THIS WEEK AT FIRST LUTHERAN

TODAY	8:30 AM	Bible Study
	9:30 AM	Worship w/Holy Communion Holy Baptism
	10:30 AM	Fellowship/Coffee Hour
	10:45 AM	Sunday School Fireside Bible Study
	11:45 AM	Education Committee Meeting
	2:00 PM	Raising Hope Ministry
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting Al-Anon Meeting
	TUES.	8:00 AM
10:00 AM		Mommy's Group
WED.		Pizza Day
	9:30 AM	Friendship Bible Study
	5:30 PM	Confirmation Meal
	6:15 PM	Confirmation 10-12 Grade FLY
	7:45 PM	Choir 7-9 Grade FLY
SAT	9:30 AM	FLCW Advent Breakfast
	7:00 PM – Midnight	FLY hangs out with Ben Hylden
SUN.	9:30 AM	Worship – Cantata
	10:30 AM	Fellowship/Coffee Hour
	10:45 AM	Sunday School Fireside Bible Study
	1:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Parent Free Time – Mission Trip Fundraiser
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting Al-Anon Meeting

Listening for the Promise

Sola Publishing – Weekly Devotions

First Sunday of Advent – December 1, 2024

SOWeR Site — Weekly Devotional © Sola Publishing: www.solapublishing.com, 2024, written by Peggy Hoppes. Scripture taken from ESV Bible® (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright ©2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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*“Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.”*

- Psalm 25:5 -

The Light of Salvation

Have you ever noticed that a lamp appears brighter at night than it does during the day? It isn't that the lamp is brighter, but that the light from that lamp is diminished by the light that surrounds it. The lamp overcomes darkness much better than other light. That's why faith and the Gospel stand out so much more clearly when the world is in chaos.

We don't think much about God so much when things are going well. We pray and worship and offer thanks, but we don't fall on our knees in hopeful expectation of God's grace. However, we see our need for Him when we face a crisis and turn to Him in desperate prayer and expectation. Christ is not a softer light in the good times, but His light does not seem quite as bright when we need Him most.

Darkness has existed from the beginning of time. The world is constantly in flux and goes from bright moments of hope and peace to times filled with hatred and war. We begin Advent in darkness as a reminder of our life without Jesus. The light of our Advent wreaths shines brighter and brighter as we light one new candle each Sunday. That's how it is in our texts throughout this season. We begin with a promise, watch as God prepares the world for the coming of our Lord, and then end on Christmas Day with the fulfillment of the promise: Jesus Christ is born. The true Light comes into the world.

As we enter this season of waiting and wonder, let us keep our hearts and minds on the One for whom we wait, looking to His faithfulness, mercy, and grace. Jesus is coming! He is the child in the manger and the King in the clouds. He is the fulfillment of all God's promises of salvation and the restoration. Jesus is the Light that will never be overcome, He banishes the darkness of our chaotic world.