



A Guide for your Christian Life between Sundays

*The Second Sunday in Advent
December 10 through December 16, 2023*

We often throw around the word ‘gospel,’ in the Church. Particularly, we Lutherans even pride ourselves as having ‘rediscovered the Gospel’ during the Reformation. In fact, before we began to be called ‘Lutherans’ by others, we first called ourselves the ‘Evangelical Catholic Church,’ that is, ‘the universal Church of the Gospel.’ Yet we often do not understand what the true meaning of this most biblical word is. Such can only be understood by knowing the ambitions of a pagan city, and the spiritual realization of those ambitions in the humility of God made man.

AN ORDER FOR DAILY MEDITATION AND PRAYER

Read the Scriptures appointed for the day, review the readings from Sunday, and learn by heart the appointed verse and portion of the Small Catechism. Conclude with the Psalms, the Collect, and the prayers, using the guidelines as you see appropriate.

DAILY READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, Dec. 10	Psalm 86:1-7	Is. 26:20—27:13	1 John 4:1-21
Monday, Dec. 11	Psalm 5:1-8	Is. 28:14-29	1 John 5:1-21
Tuesday, Dec. 12	Psalm 106:1-5	Is. 29:1-14	Jude 1-25
Wednesday, Dec.13	Psalm 89:20-29	Is. 29:15—30:14	Rev. 1:1-20
Thursday, Dec. 14	Psalm 27:1, 4-5, 11-14	Is. 30:15-26	Rev. 2:1-29
Friday, Dec. 15	Psalm 146:1-7	Is. 30:27—31:9	Rev. 3:1-22
Saturday, Dec. 16	Psalm 149	Is. 32:1-20	Rev. 4:1-11

A LOOK BACK TO THE LITURGY – DECEMBER 10, 2023

Theme: In Christ, the Gospel has been completed.

Hymn: 347, “Comfort, Comfort Ye My People”

Summary of Readings:

Isaiah 40:1-11: We are all like grass that withers and dies. But our Lord does not abandon us to death, but comforts us with His promise of salvation – His promise of a Savior who will take away our sin, bring an end to our warfare, and be our Shepherd to carry us home in His bosom.

2 Peter 3:8-14: What is Jesus waiting for? Well, with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, and Jesus is waiting patiently for all people to recognize their sin and to turn in repentance to receive His gifts by which they will be found without spot or blemish when He comes.

Mark 1:1-8: Mark begins with shocking assertion that the following narrative is that of the *true* “Gospel,” that of Jesus Christ, the Son of God—not of any Roman caesar. John the Baptist proclaims God’s salvation in the Mighty One to come, the One who baptizes us with His Holy Spirit and leads us through this wilderness to life everlasting in His kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE TO LEARN BY HEART:

Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

THE CATECHISM: OFFICE OF THE KEYS (PART I)

(Important! If you have memorized a different translation in confirmation, it is best to pull out your old catechism and refresh your memory from those texts.)

What is the Office of the Keys? The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written? This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven” (John 20:22-23).

PSALM OF THE WEEK: PSALM 85:1-13 (ESV)

Meditate on this Psalm every day when you pray, and use it as the starting place for your own prayer:

¹ LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. ² You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin. Selah ³ You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger. ⁴ Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us! ⁵ Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? ⁶ Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? ⁷ Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. ⁸ Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly. ⁹ Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. ¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other. ¹¹ Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. ¹² Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. ¹³ Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.

LUTHER’S PRAYER ON PSALM 85¹:

Remember not, O God, our transgressions against us, and record not our sins in Your book, but cast them into the depth of the sea, and remember them no more forever. Impute to us the obedience of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all righteousness for us and gave Himself a sacrifice for our sins. Let us live for His sake, and enable us to walk worthy of our calling. Amen.

COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT:

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

¹ Reading the Psalms with Luther, CPH, 2007

DAILY THEMES FOR PRAYER – (From LSB page 294)

Sunday: Pray for the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and Sacraments.

Monday: Pray for faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.

Tuesday: Pray for deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with besetting sins.

Wednesday: Pray for marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to the Word of God; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.

Thursday: Pray for the Church and her pastors; for teachers, deacons, deaconesses, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed sacrament of Christ's body and blood.

Friday: Pray for the preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.

Saturday: Pray for faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors and people as they prepare to administer and receive Christ's holy gifts.

IN OUR PRAYERS AT CHRIST:

Prayer Family: *The Held Family* and their loved ones

Dennis Christensen, friend of the Pedersens, who was diagnosed with kidney cancer

Kathleen Crews, Jo Rudsenske's friend, who is healing

James Junkans, Christina Gallarno's brother, who is recovering from surgery

THE LORD'S PRAYER

LUTHER'S MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Luther's Morning Prayer:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.