



A Guide for your Christian Life between Sundays

*The Third Sunday in Advent
December 17 through December 23, 2023*

St. John the Baptist is questioned by those sent by the priests and Pharisees by what authority that he baptizes. He does not answer them directly, for he has no authority in and of himself. Rather, he says only that he baptizes to pave the way for Him that is to come, Jesus, the Christ.

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. 17	Psalm 40:1-5, 16-17	Is. 33:1-24	Rev. 5:1-14
Monday, Dec. 18	Psalm 119:81-88	Is. 34:1-2, 8—35:10	Rev. 6:1-17
Tuesday, Dec. 19	Psalm 103:11-18	Is. 40:1-17	Rev. 7:1-17
Wednesday, Dec. 20	Psalm 119:25-32	Is. 40:18—41:10	Rev. 8:1-13
Thursday, Dec. 21	Psalm 102:24-28	Is. 42:1-25	Rev. 9:1-12
Friday, Dec. 22	Psalm 115:1-8, 11	Is. 43:1-24	Rev. 9:13— 10:11
Saturday, Dec. 23	Psalm 39:4-8	Is 43:25—44:20	Rev. 11:1-19

A LOOK BACK TO THE LITURGY – DECEMBER 17, 2023

Theme: St. John baptizes with water, that we may recognize Him who is to come, who shall baptize us into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Hymn: 398, “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed”

Summary of Readings:

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11: In the face of devastation and sadness, Isaiah points to God’s promise of rescue, then breaks forth with a song of joy, proclaiming the greater things to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24: St. Paul encourages his congregation in Thessalonica to *rejoice always* and to *give thanks in all circumstances*, even those circumstances in which they find themselves hard pressed by persecution, trials, and doubt.

John 1:6-8, 19-28: John the Baptist, who was chosen by God to point us to Jesus, humbles himself and does what he is given to do, spreading the light of God’s grace even to those who challenge him.

MEMORY VERSE TO LEARN BY HEART:

Romans 8:18: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

THE CATECHISM: OFFICE OF THE KEYS (PART II)

(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 do you believe according to these words? I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

PSALM OF THE WEEK: PSALM 126 (ESV)

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

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. ²Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” ³The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad. ⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negeb! ⁵Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! ⁶He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

LUTHER’S PRAYER ON PSALM 126¹:

Merciful Father in heaven, convert the sinners and comfort Your believers with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us willing hearts and understanding minds to sow the seed of Your Word broadcast among men, and if it seems good to hide the fruit of our sowing from our eyes, strengthen our hearts that we faint not, but wait for the harvest in the world to come, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

COLLECT FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT:

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father 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: *Terry Hubmann* and his loved ones

Landry Bagley, the Weidners' granddaughter, who recently graduated

Barbara Glenn, who was diagnosed with nodules on her lungs

Judy Monroe, friend of the Haynes, who is having 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.