



**An Advent and Christmas Devotional
Presented by members of Christians in Action
December 1, 2024 – January 6, 2025**

Christians in Action is a fellowship of congregations in South Central North Dakota. We support each other in the Body of Christ through shared goals.

**Atonement Lutheran Church, Jamestown
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Ellendale
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Gackle
English Lutheran Church, Medina
Montpelier Lutheran Church, Montpelier
St. John's Lutheran Church, Jamestown
Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown
Zion Lutheran Church, Kulm**

**Additional information and links to each congregation can be found on our common website
www.NDChristiansAct.org**

Make a Joyful Noise

December 1-

Joy to the World (vs1)

Joy to the World, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King

Let every heart prepare Him room

And Heaven and nature sing

And Heaven and nature sing

And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;

break forth into joyous song and sing praises. Psalm 98:4

Kids laughing. Birds singing. My cat purring on my lap. These are just some of the joyful noises that make me smile. We sing in the song that Heaven and nature sings. I grew up on a farm. The image of the baby in the manger surrounded by animals really speaks to me. It has always bothered me that no one would take Mary and Joseph in, but the animals were there at the birth. They got to add their voices to the song that night. It is hard for us to imagine today what that night was like. I know mangers, feed troughs, and I've seen plenty of animals being born. We had some sheep, and those are the ones that I remember clearly. Just a week or so ago, I was at a rummage sale in Guelf and found a statue, about 10 inches high, of Jesus holding a little lamb. I came home with it.

We are told that the savior is to be born. We hang decorations in the sanctuary in anticipation. We prepare to hear the Christmas Story again. Joy to the World. May our hearts be open to the coming of Jesus.

Sharon Brady

Christ the King Lutheran Church, Ellendale

Make a Joyful Noise

December 2-

Hark the Herald Angels Sing (vs 1)

Hark! the herald angels sing
“Glory to the new born King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th’ angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! the herald angels sing,“
Glory to the new born King!”
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Psalm 96:1

“Breaking news. Live video of bad things happening”

Listen or watch any news broadcast, and you are likely to hear “breaking news” quite often. More often than not, the breaking news is the worst of the bad news. We are often shown live coverage of bad situations. It seems that bad news has wider audience appeal. We often have to search for some good news.

The birth of Jesus was good news. Actually, the best news! It would clearly deserve to be classified as “breaking” news.

In the first line of “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”, the word hark invites us to listen. Harold is defined as an official messenger with news, in this case, an angel with an official message. We are all invited to share this official message. We are expected to join the triumph of the skies and proclaim that Christ is born in Bethlehem! Do we proclaim this just once? No, we are invited to “repeat the sounding joy”.

We need to “sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! PSALM 96:1

Charlie Wells
St. John’s Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Make a Joyful Noise

December 3-

Angels We have Heard on High (vs 1)

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o're the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly praising God and saying,
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased! Luke
2:13-14

Of the top 20 most notable bible verses – this passage from Luke 2 would have to be in the top 5. We can close our eyes and remember this passage from every Christmas program we have ever seen. We can think of numerous times on a dark night gazing at the star filled sky and we imagine those stars as a multitude of heavenly hosts. But as much as we can imagine how the message was delivered it is the simple message that brings us hope. Hope of a time we too, can see the glory of God and peace on earth.

But wait, do we only hope for this simple message once a year at Christmas? Our goal should be to work towards peace on earth each and every day. We should instill this hope of God's love and grace, every day to all of those we meet. If it is not us who spreads this hope – who will?

I challenge and pray that everyone will spread hope through actions and words that speak to all people. That Christ can be in our hearts and he will create a peace on earth for us all. Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

Glory to God in the highest. Amen.

Robin Izler
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Gackle

Make a Joyful Noise

December 4-

Go tell it on the Mountain (vs 2)

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth.
Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy. Psalm 98: 7-8

The Christmas Season is such a wonderful time of Joyful Noise. The sounds of caroling, children's concerts and programs, and even on mild weather years, the sounds of the end of the harvest season. Believe it or not one of my joyful noises from late fall in my childhood was always the droning whine of our grain dryer processing the corn and soybeans for bin storage. What first seemed a monotonous and annoying sound, turned into something I looked forward to, after I thought on its significance.

In this world of turmoil, we hear lots of sounds. Lots of noise. We hear people disagreeing on politics and points of view. We hear about of conflicts in countries we've never seen. We hear about the downtrodden in America and, indeed, the world. Sometimes it's hard to pick out the Joyful noises in with the sad ones. Our world makes it easy to only hear the bad. Often the bad noises are so much louder.

I think it can be a wonderful exercise to just sit in a favorite place, make yourself comfortable, close your eyes (and ears) and just think on the things that make us happy. Friends, relatives, pets, vocations, avocations, anything that feeds your soul. Reflecting on those things helps to center you and hear your Joyful Noises!

Chris Flann,
Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Make a Joyful Noise

December 5-

Do You Hear what I Hear (vs 2)

Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy
Do you hear what I hear?(Do you hear what I hear?)
Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy
Do you hear what I hear?(Do you hear what I hear?)
A song, a song high above the trees
With a voice as big as the sea
With a voice as big as the sea

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2: 8-11

Singing makes me feel happy, excited and joyful.

My favorite Christmas song is: "*Joy to the World the Lord is come. Let earth receive her king.*"
This song is joyful, heaven and nature sing, so much joy!

The lamb was excited to tell the shepherd boy that Jesus the Messiah has been born! The angel was excited to share the news that will cause joy that will make everybody HAPPY! Jesus the Messiah has been born!

My favorite Bible Verse is Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want". He is all I need. Just like the sheep need their shepherd to keep them safe, Jesus is our shepherd. He keeps us safe.

May we all keep the joy in our hearts all the time.

Justin Allan Terjesen
Zion Lutheran Church, Kulm

Make a Joyful Noise

December 6-

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (vs 1)

It came upon a midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King.
"The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. Zephaniah 3:17

I read a story recently about a woman caught in an outrageous storm. Clouds consumed a previous blue sky and dark fog settled in. Winds whipped up to 91 mph. Sheets of rain blew sideways and pounded against the house. Though the storm raged on she sat in her warm home reading a book and sipped on tea. She commented about a nest that was sitting on a branch that held a seemingly calm mother bird and her three chicks. This was the woman's own picture of peace amidst the storm. Gods peace, his perfect peace and Gods love, his perfect love was given.

Sheila Harr,
Atonement Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Make a Joyful Noise

December 7-

O Come, All Ye Faithful (vs 3)

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above!
Glory to God In the highest:
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. Psalm 104:33

This song is all about celebrating the birth of Christ, which is my favorite celebration of the year. This celebration will never end, even when we go to Heaven. Through Christ, we have been given the promise of eternal life.

God put us all on this Earth for a reason. We must praise the Lord and spread the message of His love while we are here on Earth. One of my favorite things is when the church is completely full of people belting out a familiar Christmas hymn. Let's sing together and give thanks for all God provides us.

What a joyful sight it is to picture all our lost loved ones as citizens of Heaven. The pain and burdens are gone. The older I get, the more I realize that I have too much stuff. I'm just fine with being a citizen in Medina, ND for now. I don't want to pack and move my physical belongings. Becoming a citizen of Heaven is the last move I want to make. I know I'm not the best singer, but I think I'll join the choir.

Bryan Behm
English Lutheran Church, Medina

The Savior Reigns

December 8-

Joy to the World (vs 2)

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Psalm 25:5

While not much of a singer (after three notes I go off key), I enjoy employing my voice, in a usually rousing version, of Joy to the World. It is one of my favorite hymns. People get fired up (even in the coldest weather) by its inspiring verses relating to the joy of the Season. The reference to fields, floods, rocks, hills and plains reinforces the fact that our Savior reigns no matter the topography.

We are reminded by the Psalmist in Chapter 25:5 that God is our Savior. That alone brings joy to our hearts that we proclaim in Verse 2 of Joy to the World. When things aren't going so good we need to remember that faith in God nurtures hope. By doing that often times joy will follow. So in this Advent season, and always, let us think about the joys that surround us and repeat that sounding joy.

Jerry Dally
Montpelier Lutheran Church, Montpelier

The Savior Reigns

December 9-

Silent Night, Holy Night (v3)

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born! Christ the Saviour is born

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10

Glories stream from heaven... We have been at the peak of an eleven year solar cycle this summer and solar radiation has been bombarding the atmosphere of Earth and we see the Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights. Well, I haven't seen them, I've been asleep. But I've seen pictures of them from areas all around North Dakota. Maybe if the solar activity continues as the days get shorter and shorter, I will be awake when the dancing greens and purples streak across the sky. I don't know what a heavenly host looks like while singing praise to God, but I imagine that the aurora is not a bad place to start. All of creation rejoices at the birth of Christ the Savior.

God loves us so much that the Son entered the world to save us. We sing Alleluias in response to the love that God shows. God's love starts before creation itself, was steadfast toward God's chosen people through the flood, desert wandering, and exile. God's love is made known in a particular way through the birth of Jesus. And God's love knows no end. It is with us today. As we prepare to welcome Jesus, give thanks for the ways God's love is shown in your life.

Rev. Erik Weber
English Lutheran Church, Medina
St. John's Lutheran Church, Jamestown

The Savior Reigns

December 10-

Angels from the Realms of Glory (v6)

Though an Infant now we view Him,
He shall fill His Father's throne,
Gather all the nations to Him;
Every knee shall then bow down:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
Isaiah 52:7

THE GIFT OF LOVE

If I were Santa, great gifts I'd bring
To all god's children, nations and kings

The gift of love, placed on the highest spot
Wrapped in silver and gold with a bow on top

The gentle breeze in the morning air
Will scatter this gift with tender care

This gift is given to everyone, wherever you may live
And this is what a gift filled with love will give

**Food for the hungry – warmth for the needy
Shelter for the homeless- drink for the thirsty
A light in the darkness – a hand to hold
Visits with the lonely – whether young or old
Laugh with a friend – smiles along the way
Tear of comfort – right words to say
Peace without guns – kindness for all to see
Bring shining light on the Christmas tree**

There is much more this gift will bring
When we remember love is the King of Kings
Our Savior Jesus Christ the Lord

I am not Santa or a gentle breeze in the morning air
Still I will help scatter this gift with care

Glory to God in the highest and peace and good will to everybody.

A poem by Evie Fuller, Dec, 20, 2002
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Ellendale

The Savior Reigns

December 11-

Angels We Have Heard on High (v3)

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Matthew 28:18

Christmas- I don't like all the hype associated with *The Christmas Season* now adays. It seems everyone is so busy trying to buy the perfect gifts and make all the favorite goodies that they forget to take time to stop and contemplate what Christmas should really mean to each of us. I find myself caught up in this as well. These things are important in our lives but I need to step back and celebrate the birth of Christ, which is the true meaning of Christmas. I need to find balance between celebrating Christ and enjoying the Christmas season with family and friends.

I've heard and read this Bible verse countless times but never really thought about it. I know Jesus has authority over everything but it is very difficult to actually let go and let Jesus. I am making an effort to really listen to the words of both song lyrics and the Bible verses and think about Jesus in my life. I look to Jesus daily as a guide in my life. Jesus is our Lord and King.

Pam Golde
St. John's Lutheran Church, Jamestown

The Savior Reigns

December 12-

Unto Us a Boy is Born (v1)

Unto us a boy is born!
The King of all creation,
Came he to a world forlorn,
The Lord of ev'ry nation.

For to us a child is born ,to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

“What’s in a name?” This adage, made famous by William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, expresses the point that the name or label we put on things or persons may vary, but it can still accurately describe the person. Isaiah prophesized the coming of Christ and he gives him several names...a child, a son, someone who would bear great burden upon his shoulders, an advisor of great wisdom, a divine hero who would remind us of the strength of God, an eternal father who would bless his children forever, and someone who would purchase peace for the people. Although Isaiah never calls the long-awaited Messiah by the name, Jesus, all Isaiah’s labels identify who Jesus was and what he did for all creation. Jesus is God’s gift to us, freely and graciously given for us and for our salvation; whose kingdom is everlasting. Jesus is the Savior who reigns. May he reign in your heart as you prepare for the celebration of his birth.

Shar Gumke
Synod Authorized Minister
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Gackle

The Savior Reigns

December 13-

We Three Kings (v3)

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign
O Star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to Thy perfect light

Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory. Psalm 24:10

“Over us all to reign.” Jesus comes as our Savior to reign over us all.

There are days when it may seem easier to think that Jesus reigns over the people who think the way I do or act the way I do or look the way I do. We are the Jesus people. People who look or act or think differently couldn't possibly be part of the ones Jesus cares about.

There are other days when it may seem easier to think that I am my own person and I don't need or want anyone reigning over me. I'm fine on my own. Don't tell me what to do.

And then there are the days when I remember that I am part of a community that is much more than any one person or any one way of viewing the world. The three kings came from far away in the East to the little town of Bethlehem to find the Savior of the world. The Savior of the whole world – the Savior of people who lived in Bethlehem and Jerusalem and the Savior of people who lived in the East and followed a star for many miles until they came to the place where they could see the promised King of glory.

Jesus comes to save people who don't want anyone reigning over them. Jesus comes to save people who think and act and look differently from each other. Jesus comes into the world as our Savior. “King forever, ceasing never. Over us ALL to reign.”

Rev. Kristi Weber
Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown

The Savior Reigns

December 14-

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (v2)

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne

Advent, a time of waiting. Waiting is one of life's most difficult challenges. Throughout our lives we wait for an important phone call, wait for the birth of a baby, wait for news after a doctor's appointment, wait for the family to gather around the table, wait for improvement, an outcome, a birth and/or a death. Advent, a time of waiting, just as the prophet Isaiah first rebuked the people for their sins, he then prepared them to expect the coming kingdom of Christ, and then told them that Christ alone will fulfill the promised kingdom of grace and salvation. The people must expect and believe in God's promises.

Isaiah 33:22. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; it is He who will save us.

Dear Heavenly Father, Open our heart and mind to receive your beloved Son as an infant and then as our King, our long-promised Savior. During this Advent season show us how to accept this promise of Jesus' birth and His deliverance of us through His gracious love and death on the cross for ALL of us. As we sing "Come, Thou long-expected Jesus," open our heart to prepare us to acknowledge and to share this good news with others. Amen.

Pat Rutschke
Zion Lutheran Church, Kulm

Blessings Flow

December 15-

Joy to the World (v3)

No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found Far as the curse is found
Far as, far as, the curse is found

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19

Joy to the World! One of my favorite Christmas carols. The word “curse” has always been a word of wonder of mine. What is meant by “the curse”? I am reminded of our sins and that goes way back to Adam’s sin in the book of Genesis. God’s precious gift to us is his son Jesus and Jesus Christ’s healing powers to redeem and spread joy where sin and suffering exist. God more than amply provides and takes care of us all.

So no matter who you are, where you are, or what you are experiencing, Jesus’ blessings will reach everywhere and everyone. Believe it!

LeAnn Fuchs
Atonement Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Blessings Flow

December 16-

Away in the Manger (v 3)

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants. Isaiah 44:3

Whether we fully realize it or not, God blesses us daily, for years and generations, like water on the thirsty land. These blessings should renew and increase our faith. They also encourage our discipleship to follow and trust in Jesus, as well as to share and spread the love of Jesus to everyone we encounter. After all, everyone is a child of God, and we are called to help one another understand His great love, so that we can all be ready when our time comes to worship our Lord and Savior for eternity in Heaven.

When I was examining the history of "Away in a Manger," I learned that it was originally written with only two verses. The third verse appeared unattributed about 7 years later. Dr. C. Michael Hawn suggests that this third verse "follows the pattern of many hymns by using the form of prayer." It is exactly that! It's asking Jesus to stay with us always, to bless us all as children of God. The final part of the prayer asks "to fit us for heaven," or to help us be ready and worthy when we reach our ultimate goal of praising and living with Him in heaven for all of eternity.

Even though this third verse is mainly sung at Christmas time, it should be used as a daily prayer throughout the year. We ask Jesus to continue to be with us, love us, and prepare our hearts for our life with Him eternally.

Rebecca Greer
English Lutheran Church, Medina

Blessings Flow

December 17-

O Little Town of Bethlehem (v3)

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:12

It is easy at this time of year to remember and rejoice in the blessing of Jesus' birth. This verse of O Little Town of Bethlehem reminds us of how Jesus did not come into the world with fanfare but this wonderful gift of our Savior came silently – as do many of the blessing we receive. The verse and the scripture reading reminds us that we live in a world of sin but we are blessed with the promise of heaven because Jesus was quietly born into this world and then died for us, so we can, as the scripture says, rejoice and be glad as we celebrate the birth of our Savior and the promise of heaven!

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the many blessings you have given us. Help us to see those silent blessings in our lives so we may rejoice and be glad in Your love.

Amen

Tena Lawrence

Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Blessings Flow

December 18-

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness (v3)

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness Lord
Rejoicing In My Saviour
Your Mercy Belongs To Those Who Fear Your Son
His Blessings You Have Given Them Forever
And Holy Is His Name Holy Is His Name

O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! Psalm 34:8

Life does not always go as planned. Or as poet Robert Burns wrote, “the best laid plans of mice and men go oft awry”. In fact, life so often does not follow our plans that we have a joke about God laughing at them. Knowing this, however, fails to bring the needed comfort when our ideas about how life is or will be soon are not met. We are met with shock, confusion, anger, sorrow, and often have a difficult time working through those emotions on our own. This is the point where we have a choice to make: we can go it alone and struggle through the shift in our life, or we can turn to God.

Mary chose the latter. Her situation was not easy. Here she was, a young, engaged girl with her whole life ahead of her. Then suddenly there’s a change of plans. God has chosen Mary to be the mother of God’s son, and now her once clear path forward has shifted. She could have chosen to react in fear for her future. Instead, Mary decides to fully embrace her new journey and to trust that the plan God has for her will work out for the best. She chooses to be honored by this turn of events and even rejoices in them. By trusting in God, Mary was able to find peace in her circumstances and strength to face whatever lay ahead for her life.

For us, sometimes turning to God looks like quiet contemplation and fervent prayer. Other times we trust the divine living within and through our family, friends, and a therapist, to help us navigate upset plans. Often it is a combination of these things along with time, patience, and persistence, that bring us through the rough parts of a transition. However you choose to deal with bumps in the road, remember that God is good and blessings will come when you trust in God.

Rev. Stephanie Gossett
St. John’s Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Blessings Flow

December 19-

From Heaven Above (v4)

The blessing that the Father planned
the Son holds in his infant hand
that in his kingdom, bright and fair
you may with his glory share

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17

What are some favorite gifts you've received? Is it a gift from someone like my dad who experienced great joy when you opened the gift from him? Or is it looking out the window or walking across the yard just as the sun is setting? Or making plans with some uncertainty and watching with relief as everything aspect fell into place much you your surprise?

It takes on an entirely new meaning when we remember all these gifts are from God! Including the gift of His son.

Gene and Deb Elhard
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Ellendale

Blessings Flow

December 20-

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow (v 1)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8

Have you ever tried to count all the blessings God bestows on you in a day? It is immeasurable. It goes far beyond the "glass is half full or half empty" outlook on life.

Take the actual beating of our hearts, our very existence. We have been given the amazing gift of life and all that comes along with it – the ability to reason, to create, to work, to learn, to care for one another, to experience emotion and the God-created beauty around us.

It is easy to get lost in everyday life and take blessings for granted. We tend to categorize them as either big or small, or something that happens to someone else. We often fail to recognize blessings because we're so hyper focused on asking God for what we want, rather than trusting him to provide what we need. I'm sure most of us have said, "That was a blessing in hindsight."

This week's theme is a poignant reminder to us all that God has given us the greatest blessing of all – the gift of life, both earthly and eternal. It is a blessing beyond measure. What more could we want?

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!

Pam Musland
St. John's Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Blessings Flow

December 21-

Count Your Blessings (refrain)

Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage
Psalm 33:12

Psalm 33 was originally written for the people of Israel to use in worship in the temple. It includes phrases like blessed, rejoice, praise, and sing praises to the Lord.

In verse 12 it talks about a blessed nation. Who is the blessed nation? All of us of course. A blessed or "happy" nation is any nation whose God is the Lord.

Our blessings come in many ways like family, friends, neighbors, church, health, etc.

The song above encourages us to count those blessings one by one. Recently when I was driving I heard a song by Sefi Schlueter called "Counting My Blessings". It is a great song about counting the blessings he has here on Earth. He has so many he is up to infinity. During this holiday season let's all take the time to count the blessings God provides to all of us.

Denise Wittmier
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Gackle

Blessings Flow

December 22-

Joy to the World (v4)

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. John 16:27

“He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness.” These words especially speak to me in a political world that is often divided. One doesn’t have to look far to see this especially in an election year. However, it seems to me that as people of God we sometimes forget the words spoken in this hymn. Do we look at our neighbor in the best light? Do we prove the glories of God’s righteousness?

God’s truth and grace abound as God sent God’s son into the world for each and every one of us. Through the waters of Baptism, God claims us as God’s beloved children who are called to proclaim the wonders of God’s love: this love that comes because Christ first loved us.

Where have you seen the wonders of God’s love? I immediately think of answered prayers that I have prayed for a long time. For example, for many years, I prayed “How long, oh Lord, will you forget me forever?” But God heard my prayers and finally answered them. For me, one of those prayers is finding my soulmate and getting married. The wonders of God’s love are an incredible gift that reminds us of the power of God’s love and our faith in God.

Good and gracious God, during this season of Advent, may we proclaim your love and declare the wonders of your love as we see those wonders revealed to us. Amen!

Deacon Tara Longden
Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries
Christians in Action Ministry

And the Wonders of His Love

December 23-

Peace Came to Earth (vs1)

Peace came to earth at last that chosen night
When angels clove the sky with song and light
And God embodied love and sheathed his might
Who could but gasp: Immanuel!
Who could but sing: Immanuel!

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

John 3:16 is a well-known Bible verse, memorized by many. Shelby said she remembers memorizing this verse in 6th grade and she said she even had it on her computer background. What are your memories with John 3:16?

In confirmation class we talked about our favorite Bible verses and here are our favorite Bible verses: Shelby's favorites verses that she has memorized: *"and if not, He is still good."* Daniel 3:18. Shelby says, "this verse fits everything ... if good things- thanks, if unsure than I talk to God" God is good! Shelby's second favorite bible verse specifically for sports: *"God is with her, she will not fall"* Psalm 46:5

Kendal's favorite Bible verse is: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* Philippians 4:13

Rylan's favorite Bible verse is also: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* Philippians 4:13

One of Pastor Linda's favorite Bible verses is: Jesus says: *"Remember, I am with you always..."* Matthew 28:20. What is your favorite Bible verse?

As Christmas nears, just one more day away, we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus by: going to church on Christmas Eve, gathering with family and opening presents! We give thanks to God for the greatest gift ever—God's only Son, Jesus! As the song above says: "Who could but gasp: Immanuel! Who could but sing: Immanuel!"

"And they shall name him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us'". Matthew 1:23

Confirmation Class of 2025 – Shelby, Kendal, Rylan and Pastor Linda
Zion Lutheran Church, Kulm

And the Wonders of His Love

December 24-

Good Christian Friends Rejoice (vs2)

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.¹ John 4:9-10

When I first read the theme, And the Wonders of His Love, I thought of God's Master Plan. God's Kingdom is perfect, but His children are not. He loved us too much to abandon us or start over. God had a greater plan. God was pleased for all of Himself to live in Christ. All the love of God was in Jesus. All the strength of God was in Jesus. All the compassion and power and devotion of God were, for a time, in the earthly body of a Carpenter.

Mary and Joseph were both descended from the House of David. They were both purposefully chosen to fulfill God's will regarding His Son, Jesus. When Mary was born, her parents officially dedicated her to God. She was made ready, by her upbringing, to say yes to the Lord when the big assignment came, and the Angel Gabriel appeared to her. Joseph was amazingly chosen by God above all other men in his time to be Jesus' earthly father. Joseph was a master carpenter and artisan. God watched Joseph the same way He watched Mary. He found Joseph a man committed to scripture and doing what was right. He was not religiously mean or legalistic. Joseph was exactly who God desired to raise His Son. Joseph heard and was obedient to God's voice.

The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem, some 70-90 miles, was not easy, but it was part of the plan of God. Joseph and Mary were committed to do whatever needed to be—Bethlehem. And then it happened! The miracle occurred that people are still celebrating and worshipping God for all over the world, for some 2000 years later. When Jesus was born, Light came into the world. The greatest Miracle of all time took place in that Holy Moment. Jesus entered our world not like a human, but as a human. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Because of Bethlehem, we have a Savior in Heaven. Christmas begins what Easter celebrates. The Child in the cradle becomes the King on the Cross. God is always near us. Always for us. Always in us. We need a Savior. Because of Bethlehem, we have One.

Good Christian friends, rejoice! Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Jean Hanson
Atonement Lutheran Church, Jamestown

And the Wonders of His Love

December 25-

Love Has Come (v3)

Love has come, He never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to You, God on high!

For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

The instructions for this devotional project were to read the hymn and bible verse then pray, reflect, and respond. But when I opened the paper to see my assigned hymn and verse I was taken back, as I had already prayed and reflected on this very topic just the month prior. You see, I am the Sunday School coordinator for my church. And about the beginning of September I start contemplating ideas for the Sunday School Christmas program. During a special community church service that month, the local pastors shared their favorite bible stories and their reflection on those stories. That's it! For the Christmas program, we will share the stories of our favorite traditions and memories that revolve around Christmas. But wait, we have to tie it back to the Reason for the Season-- Jesus.

"For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11. What does Jesus stand for? What was his message? Love. Love yourself, Love your neighbor, know the unconditional Love God has for each and every one of us. Love is the very essence of the gospel and Jesus is our exemplar. He lived a life that left a legacy of love. That's perfect...we will tie the Christmas memories and traditions back to the feelings of Love that are invoked in us during this season. Fast forward a month and I open this devotional project and see the day/hymn/bible verse that I received. Yes, indeed; "Love! Love! Love IS the gift of Christmas."

Michelle Lytle
English Lutheran Church, Medina

And the Wonders of His Love

December 26-

Oh Lord, How Shall I meet You (v3)

Love caused Your incarnation; love brought You down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O, love beyond all telling, that led You to embrace
in love, all love excelling, our lost and fallen race.

How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
Psalms 36:7

In times of uncertainty we look to God for guidance and protection. Jesus came to us as God on earth, to offer these things. And eventually even offering the ultimate sacrifice for his people. All of this is because of God's unending, unfailing love. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, and God coming to us in human form, it really helps us to see how much God loves us. That God incarnate chose to show us himself.

Abram Valenta
Montpelier Lutheran Church, Montpelier

And the Wonders of His Love

December 27-

He Came Down (vs 1)

He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love,
Hallelujah forevermore.

We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

I cannot read this verse without hearing in my head the Sunday School song I learned when I was tiny. "We love (clap clap) because God first loved us! We love (clap clap) because God first loved us! We love (clap clap), we love (clap clap) We love (clap clap) because God first (clap) loved (clap) us (clap)!" This verse is so foundational that even toddlers can learn it through this simple song. The claim of this verse is both simple and profound. Our ability to love comes from God. We only know how to love because God loved us first. Without the love of God, love does not happen!

As we continue to ponder the great joy of Jesus' birth, we reflect again on the love of God. God's only begotten, beloved Son has come to live among us. To show us what love looks like walking around (or lying in a manger). God's love is so great that God will not, cannot be separated from us - even by death. This tiny savior lying in a manger has come to show us how far God's love will go - from the manger to the cross to the grave to resurrection. All so we will know God's amazing love is for each and every one of us. We are able to love one another because God showed us how it is done in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The only possible response is to go out and share this amazing love with the world.

Rev. Susan Haukaas
Atonement Lutheran Church, Jamestown
Trinity Lutheran Church Jamestown

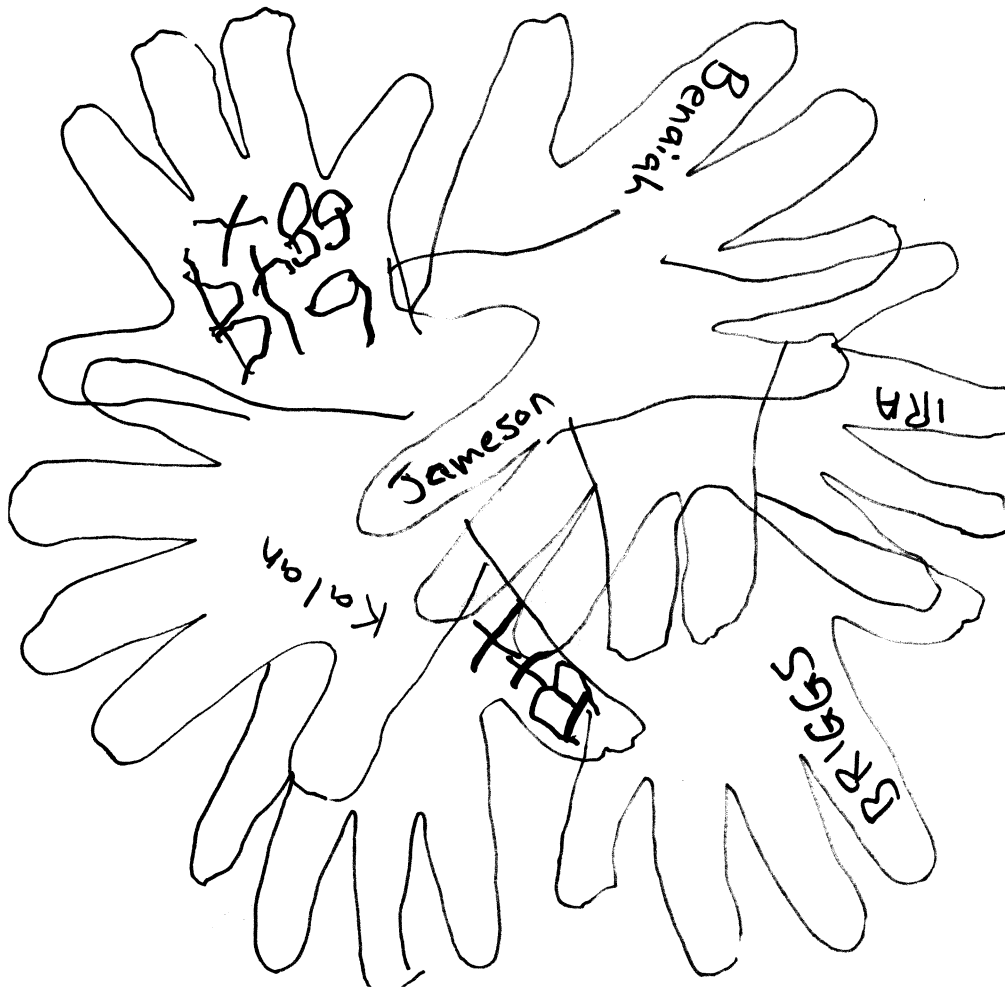
And the Wonders of His Love

December 28-

Jesus Loves Me, This I Know (vs1)

Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
they are weak, but he is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13



Yes! Jesus Loves Me !!!

Child In Our Hands 1 pm Preschool Class.
St. John's Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Rejoice!

December 29-

O come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs2)

O come, O Wisdom from on high, who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in its ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
and her people to be a gladness. Isaiah 65:18

It would be easy to think science created laws of physics. In reality, science merely names and measures the phenomena of God's creation in order to have language to discuss what God has created. And God didn't only create all the things in the universe; God created the way the universe works. Numbers work in mathematics because God deemed it so. Even the concept of language was created by God and gifted to us. God has indeed ordered all things mightily.

With all the knowledge we gather we often lack wisdom. Sometime the words wisdom and knowledge are used interchangeably, yet they are different. To know that rain is water that falls from a cloud is knowledge. Wisdom is in the loving voice that instructs us to take a jacket or an umbrella before we go outside. People often lack wisdom to make good decisions and sometimes we think we know better than the wise and loving advice from God. Often those decisions have larger consequences than getting wet. But... Rejoice!! God has come among us to forgive our mistakes and give us hands-on instructions or how to avoid mistakes in the future. Through Jesus Christ we are given the opportunity to experience true joy, true freedom!
Rejoice!

Vicar Andrew Stephens
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Gackle
Montpelier Lutheran Church, Montpelier
Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Rejoice!

December 30-

Good Christian Friends Rejoice (vs1)

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ was born today.
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Philippians 4:4

Rejoice you say rejoice, this is the time to take down the colorful and shiny Christmas decorations or maybe some of you already have done this job, how depressing! The New Year is just days away and many of us are trying to make resolutions in which we don't feel any joy in doing either. All the hustle and bustle that put us in a "good tidings" mood has gone downhill and it is hard to find joy in the coming days. You aren't alone....many of us find it hard to face the thoughts of winter as January arrives in a couple of days. Where are the concerts, programs and shopping, and that kept us so busy just weeks ago!

Maybe we need to look back and find the events that gave us joy before the holidays took over our lives. Remember your pride in watching your children or grandchildren in their program reciting their pieces and songs. Remember the smile on your elderly neighbor when you surprised them with a plate of cookies, or shoveled their sidewalk. Remember the good feeling you had when you put away the combine or baler knowing the field work is done for the season. Or the relief and joy you felt when you turned in your last paper or assignment for the semester. Sometimes we need to be reminded of the small things in life that have brought us joy.

God sent his son to save us from our sins which is a really big event to be joyful about, but God wants us to joyful in the little things that he has been a part of in our lives. Look ahead in your life to see what new joys he has in store for you. His faithfulness will not let you down and look to him to find something to rejoice about!

Joyce Spitzer
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Gackle

Rejoice!

December 31-

Angels We Have Heard on High (vs2)

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart! Psalm 32:11

Quotes inspire me. One of the ones that I think of today is, "You miss 100% of the shots that you don't take." That quote helps me want to practice, to keep shooting pucks. It is not easy to want to do that every day, but I make time for practice. It is better to celebrate with other people. It is more fun than celebrating alone. I'm happy to celebrate about something. The Shepherds were celebrating the birth of God's son. When I get good news, I want to share it with people I know. I will tell them the good news. I will talk to them. If we are not in the same room, I will text or call. When the news is really good, lots of people know. You can just tell if lots of people start doing something that it is really popular. I think that the Angels told the shepherds about Jesus because they were close. The news was close by and they could go and celebrate. Reflections by Trevor F. St. John's Confirmation Student

My parents inspire me. They encourage me to try new things. They encouraged me to try football and now I love it. I always have a choice and I am not limited to doing things only their way. I don't always do what they suggest, but I will listen. I love to celebrate things that happen, especially things that happen once per year. If you miss those times, you have to wait a whole year for them to happen again. When Jesus was born, it was the 1st and only time that God was born (for us). News about the birth of Jesus was given to the shepherds maybe because Jesus was going to be a shepherd. When good news starts to spread, people know about it. Reflections by Colby Q. St. John's Confirmation Student

Trevor F. and Colby Q., St. John's Confirmation Students
St. John's Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Rejoice!

January 2-

O Holy Night (vs1)

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope- the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. Matthew 2:10

What do you supposed it looked like when the Three Kings “rejoiced exceedingly with great joy”? I have been blessed with great joys in my life—the births of my own children being perhaps the most memorable times. I have been privileged to be present in times of immense joy for other people as well. There has been shouts of laughter, tears, hugs, even some happy dancing in a reserved, Midwestern sort of way. But I don't know that I have ever seen someone “rejoice exceedingly with great joy.”

And yet, we certainly don't have to go back to Herod's time to know a weary world, pining in sin and error. And knowing that Christ is born for us, too, is cause for that same thrill of hope. What's more, on this side of history, we know one more cause for great joy that the Three Kings didn't yet know—that Christ died and rose again, truly bringing a new and glorious morn!

Father God, you give us reason to rejoice exceedingly with great joy in the gift of your precious Son. Thank you for this new and glorious morn!

Myra Quanrud
Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Rejoice!

January 3-

O Come All Ye Faithful (vs3)

Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
[Refrain]O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him;
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous ones. Praise is becoming to the upright. Psalm 33:1

“Sing, choirs of angels...” I love this image of the choirs of angels singing in the heavens above! I can only imagine their beautiful heavenly voices singing, praising and celebrating the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel- “God is with us”, the Word made flesh! During the Christmas season worship, I love to sing this 3rd verse, **“Sing, Choirs of Angels”** during the Holy Communion liturgy instead of the usual “Holy Holy Holy”, as it reminds me of the words at the end of the Great Thanksgiving: **“and so, with the choirs of angels!”**

This year, I invite you to ponder and remember the words of The Great Thanksgiving with the Christmas Preface: (L) The Lord be with you. (C) And also with you.

(L) Lift up your hearts. (C) We lift them to the Lord.

(L) Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. (C) It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(L) It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. **And so, with all the choirs of angels**, with the church on earth & the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join **their** unending hymn... Holy Holy Holy...”

As we prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Communion, especially in the Christmas season- I challenge you to ponder on these words of the Great Thanksgiving and I ask you– as “we praise your name and join in their unending hymn”-- who is **“their”** unending hymn? **“Their” refers to the choirs of angels!** To me, the choirs of angels are the saints above; that join with us as the saints below here on earth -to give thanks and praise in the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh, Emmanuel- God is with us!”

Over twenty years ago, I remember a pastor telling me: “during Holy Communion, the curtain between heaven and earth is the sheerest!” In some mysterious way—during Holy Communion we share in the body of Christ and the body of Christ includes all the people of God- past, present and future. During Holy Communion, we too are connected with the “communion of saints” of all times. This I why I love to sing verse 3 **“Sing, choirs of angels... sing all ye citizens of heaven above!”** instead of the “Holy Holy Holy” especially during the Holy Communion liturgy at Christmas time, to remind us we are mysteriously connected and commune with all the choirs of angels- our loved ones in heaven!

In this Christmas season, REJOICE- sing for joy and **sing with all the choirs of angels!!** O come all ye faithful! O come let us adore Christ the Lord, our newborn king!

Rev. Linda J. Schauer
Zion Lutheran Church, Kulm

Rejoice!

January 4-

Go Tell It on the Mountain (vs2)

The shepherds feared and trembled When lo above the Earth
Rang out the angel's chorus That hailed our Savior's birth
Oh-oh-oh Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere (oh-oh-oh)
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born (oh, He's born)

But let the righteous be glad; let them exult before God; Yes, let them rejoice with gladness.
Psalm 68:3

Have you ever been scared? And I'm not talking about the ghosts and goblins of Halloween scary. I'm talking about when something bad is happening in your life and it's out of your control. You are absolutely helpless and the only thing you can do in that moment is pray to God that he will take over and make it all better. And then in that next moment.....he does. He 100% absolutely saves you from complete devastation and in simple words, he makes it all better. What do YOU do now?? REJOICE!! Rejoice and shout his name! Celebrate the good he has done for you and spread the good news. Be a shepherd - Go over the hills and everywhere - GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN - that Jesus got you through.

The day our oldest son, Cowan was born was a rollercoaster day. We walked into the hospital happy and excited. However, we had that scary moment I spoke about above. The moment during delivery that Cowan stopped breathing. The moment that a normal delivery turned into an emergency C-section. The scary moment when my husband watched the doctors run as fast as they could with this, not breathing, newly born child down the hall to the NICU. We feared and trembled at that moment - we were scared. But then, as the doctors were working feverishly to save our son, God in all his glory arrived on the scene and brought Cowan back to us. In that moment we became shepherds - We REJOICED, WE CELEBRATED - if there would have been a mountain in Bismarck, North Dakota we would have climbed it to tell the world that Cowan was BORN and going to be ok.

When the angels appeared to the shepherds, it was unexpected, it was out of the ordinary, at that moment it was scary to them. You can bet they were praying to be saved. In the next moment when they realized it was good news and what the news was - they REJOICED!

When YOU are having a scary moment in YOUR life and God helps YOU through - BE A SHEPHERD - GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN, what our Lord did to help you.

Tanea Clocksene
Atonement Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Rejoice!

January 5-

What Child is This (vs3)
So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him
This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. 1 Chronicles 16:10

At Christmas time, we often think about gifts. Giving gifts and getting gifts. Some of us carefully plan and curate what to get some of our loved ones. Often thinking about it for months in order to get them just the perfect gift. The Bible can be such a complicated place of parables and metaphors, but here, in this short, simple verse from a classic Christmas song we can find a boiled down version of what we could give and, also, what was given (gifted) to us at Christmas. A promise given to us countless times throughout the Bible. A promise that is often muddled by our mortal lives. This song suggests as a gift to Jesus, we bring Him incense, gold, myrrh, love, song and praise (laud). But also in the verse, we see the tremendous gift we received FROM God. First, it tells us, to clear up any wonder of who this gift IS: The King of kings and then BOOM, "salvation brings." The best gift we could ever ask for, carefully curated and thought about by our Lord and Savior, SALVATION. A promise of deliverance from our sin and life eternal with Him. Seems like one of those situations at Christmas when someone got you just the perfect gift and you gave them a hot chocolate kit. He gives us salvation and we give Him, praise? Gold? Our hearts? You got it. The Lord of the Universe offers us salvation and He wants our heart. "Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord REJOICE!!" A promise fulfilled, REJOICE!

Kendra Behm
English Lutheran Church, Medina

Rejoice!

January 6-

All My heart Again Rejoices (vs1)

All my heart this night rejoices
as I hear far and near sweetest angel voices.
"Christ is born," their choirs are singing
till the air ev'ry where now with joy is ringing.

And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. Luke 1:14

What brings you joy?

Time with my grandson who is in first grade. I find joy hearing him sound out more and more words as he learns to read. He is maturing and growing every day. He absorbs everything around him.

Joyous moments with family and friends during milestone times such as weddings and holidays.

There is a feeling of peace that comes from watching a beautiful sunrise or sunset.

God's amazing world revealed in the gorgeous Northern Lights of the night sky.

Walking outside and absorbing nature brings a warmth to my spirit – a feeling of peace and calm.

Harvest time is a reminder of the cycle in the fields: planting at the start, fruition, then finally a time for rest.

As this Christmas season ends with the arrival of the wisemen who adore Jesus on Epiphany, may you hold the joy of Christ's birth in your own heart throughout the year.

Montpelier Lutheran Church Council

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