



God With Us

MATTHEW 1:23

"and they shall call his name Immanuel"

Advent 2020 Devotional





November Twenty-Ninth

Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:13-14)

About 700 years before Christ was born, there was this nasty guy around named King Ahaz. He was facing some major problems in the Kingdom of Judah, and the Lord sent the prophet Isaiah to confront him and call him to trust in God alone. Ahaz responds with a statement of disbelief – and God is not fooled. Though Ahaz does not want to hear from Isaiah, Isaiah spoke up anyway, telling Ahaz that a sign would come: the miraculous birth of a little boy who would be called Immanuel (which means God with us).

There will always be times in our lives where we are a bit like Ahaz – doubtful, maybe even unbelieving, and unwilling to hear God’s Word... but our doubts, our unbelief, or our unwillingness to hear Him don’t take away God’s deity – He’s still God! He is large and in charge, no matter what.

The sign that Isaiah gives to Ahaz is a sign that Ahaz did not live to see, but it’s a sign and a promise we now live in. The Virgin did conceive and bear a Son – Immanuel – and He is God with us. He’s victorious over all our doubts, over all the battles we face in life, and over all the hurt. The victory He brings is expressed well in the hymn “A Mighty Fortress”: *He’s by our side upon the plain, with His good gifts and Spirit. And take they our life, good fame, child, and spouse, though these all be gone, our victory has been won; the Kingdom ours remaineth.*

The sign Isaiah gave to Ahaz is the promise God wants you to remember now. He is “God with us”.

Pastor Travis Ferguson



November Twenty-Ninth

Questions from Devotion

When have you been unwilling to hear God's Word, or doubtful of it?

Where have you seen God at work in life today?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



November Thirtieth

Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. May he judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. (Psalm 72:1-2)

Who is in charge? Who will lead? How will this be done? These are questions that have been on our minds throughout this presidential election year in America, and these are questions that have been asked of all people from all cultures and nations since Adam and Eve left the Garden.

We look to leadership for order and direction. The psalmist in our verse for today pleads for leadership that is both *just* and *righteous*. The people of God spent many years under earthly leadership that was neither just nor righteous. It was common to pray words like these for a righteous king who would rule with fairness and solve the problems of oppression and affliction. God did promise that such a King would come, and the people of God were waiting expectantly for this promise to be fulfilled.

Jesus came to be such a king. Jesus was and is the fulfillment of the royal son who judges perfectly in righteousness. He was sent to do so in a way that was far beyond the understanding and expectations of earthly rule. Jesus' leadership provides perfect justice and establishes complete righteousness to all who believe in His leadership at the cross.

It should come as no surprise that earthly rulers and authorities still fall short of righteous and perfectly just. Only Jesus is our perfect leader. We still need to lift up this prayer today for every level of leadership, from our pastors and teachers to our governors and presidents, but as we do, we can put our faith and trust completely in the one leader: Jesus Christ... "God with us".

LeAnna Christopher
Christ Lutheran School Third Grade Teacher



November Thirtieth

Questions from Devotion

When have you placed faith in earthly leaders for deliverance over God's authority?

In what ways can you allow God to lead and rule in your life?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

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What do you want to ask God for?



December First

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

For most people, when they think of hope they think of a wish you desire to come true. "I hope I get the new phone I want for Christmas." "I hope my team wins the game!" Such hope expresses a desire that may or may not happen. Such hope provides good insight to someone's heart and desires.

Yet, such hope is not Biblical hope. Hope is about a person. The vision for a better future isn't based in our wishful thinking. Hope is wrapped up in a Person. Hope is a who.

Hope is not a *what*, or a *when*, or a *why*. Hope is a **Who**. Things don't get better just because we want them to. They get better because somebody does something.

That's why I love Paul's life-building hope combo of **endurance** and **encouragement**. Such a hope combo flows out of Jesus doing something coming to be born in a manger and coming to be born into your heart and life.

When you live with the hope that God's Word brings, God builds your endurance as you recognize God's faced every problem. He knows what's coming. He's in control. You can find your strength in Him. You can read about such strength (and believe) as you engage God's Word each day.

We are a church of hope because our "who" is Jesus! We are a church of hope because we build our faith on His story – a story of hope filled with endurance and encouragement. A story filled with "God with us".

Pastor Richard Burkey



December First

Questions from Devotion

What is your favorite story of hope from the Bible, and why?

As you look at your need for hope in your life today, do you need endurance or encouragement?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Second

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. (Micah 5:2-3)

Long before Jesus was born, God’s prophet Micah told of a ruler that would come from Bethlehem.

Bethlehem wasn’t famous. It didn’t have any amusement park, great sports team, or awesome beaches. It was the most unexpected, and yet fitting place, for Immanuel, God with us, to be born. Why? Because God loves to do things that no one expects.

You’ve certainly heard of Bethlehem before. It is in Christmas songs and the Christmas story in Matthew and Luke. It’s a place today that many people travel to and ponder the birth of the Christ-child.

God had it planned all along. From an unexpected place came the One who would save all people from their sins. From this unexpected place came the One who would grow up to perform miracles, love people, wash feet, die, and rise again.

In this season of Advent, embrace the unexpected places you’ll find hope, love, joy, and peace. You are sure to find it because “God with us”, Immanuel, is everywhere.

Cheri Selander
Director of Christian Education



December Second

Questions from Devotion

Why do you think God chose Bethlehem as the place of birth for Jesus?

What are some unexpected places you've seen God before?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Third

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way – a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” (Mark 1:1-3)

As a science teacher, I find myself preparing the way for my students. Composing clear and concise lab instructions, organizing a wide array of supplies and materials, filtering the abstract to formulate the concrete; these are among the myriad ways I structure my class to foster curiosity and understanding of God’s awesome creation. It is my role as Science Teacher at CLS to “prepare the way” for my student’s academic science career.

In Mark 1:1-3, John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of Jesus by preaching about the coming Savior. John denied being the Savior (John 1:20), but baptized in the name of the Savior (John 1:28). John denied being the Light of the World, instead preaching the greatness of the One to come after him. John the Baptist paved the way for Jesus’ death and resurrection, the way to which all mankind would ultimately find salvation.

Many vocations find themselves preparing the way for others. The scope of these vocations are not limited to your profession, but to the daily roles you play in the lives of others, your neighbors. Teachers prepare society to understand. Truck drivers prepare food to be bought and sold. Farmers prepare food to be consumed. Mothers and fathers prepare their children to benefit society. Pastors prepare society for salvation. God uses these vocations to give us our daily bread, to enact His will on Earth as in Heaven, to deliver us from evil, and to ultimately point towards His redeeming grace.

All vocations prepare the way for Jesus – “God with us”.

***Aaron Mietzner
Christ Lutheran School Science Teacher***



December Third

Questions from Devotion

Who is someone that has prepared the way for you?

How does God use you and your family to prepare the way for others?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Fourth

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:38)

Two things stand out in this verse. The first is Mary's recognition of her identity as a person. She states, "I am the Lord's servant." She knows who she is and what her purpose is here on Earth. That is pretty amazing because Mary was a young teenage girl at this time. In her response to the angel, Mary exemplifies the Biblical truth that St. Paul would later write about in the book of Galatians: "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives through me" (Galatians 2:20). And she also lives out what Jesus would say thirty years later: "I came to serve, not to be served" (Matthew 20:28). The five words she says are so profound: "I am the Lord's servant."

The second thing that stands out, once again illustrating Mary's amazing spiritual maturity for her age, is her understanding that, in the end, God's will is going to be done. Mary's world was turned upside down when God called on her to be the mother of Christ Jesus. Like many other people in the Bible she may have been tempted to run from what God was calling her to do. But she doesn't. She accepts what the angel says and replies, "May your words to me be fulfilled." Solomon stated in Proverbs: "People may make all kinds of plans, but the Lord's will is going to be done" (Proverbs 19:21). Mary understands this and is quick to accept God's calling of her.

Mary provides a wonderful example for us. We, like her, need to have a servant's heart. And we, like her, need to accept God's will in our lives, whether it mirrors what we are hoping and planning for, or if it is completely different and, like Mary, takes us into the unknown. Mary brought Jesus, the Light of the World, into the world. When we follow her example, we become a light in the world as we share the Light of the World – "God with us".

Mark Kusel
Christ Lutheran School Eighth Grade Teacher



December Fourth

Questions from Devotion

Who is someone you know who embraces being the Lord's servant? How does it show in his/her life?

Reflect on a time when God made His will known to you. Like Mary, did it include sacrifice on your part? Were you taken into the unknown? What good fruit resulted from it?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Fifth

Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. (John 12:37)

One of my all-time favorite Christmas movies growing up was *The Santa Clause*. In the film, Tim Allen's character, Scott, is forced to become Santa Clause. At the beginning of the movie, Scott is taken to the North Pole and given directions regarding his new responsibility; however, he doesn't believe it's real. Even as he speaks to an elf while looking out over the North Pole, he still doesn't believe he is Santa Clause. In many ways, our doubt is similar to Scott in *The Santa Clause*. He has the entirety of the North Pole and Santa's workshop in front of him. He even has an actual elf telling him what must happen. Yet, he still does not believe it.

In Genesis 1:1, we are told, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Throughout the rest of the chapter, God tells us the steps He has taken to create the world around us and our very lives. Yet, Earth's creation is sometimes not even enough for us to believe in God's presence.

Fast forward to John and our scripture verse today, God sent Jesus to Earth. He sent His Son as a physical person to be with us. Over and over, Jesus performs signs of God's existence. And yet, our sinful nature would not let us believe in Him. When we take the time to pause and look at creation, the story of Jesus, the miracles of Jesus, why do we still doubt?

The turning point for Scott in *The Santa Clause* happens when the elf tells him, "Seeing isn't believing. Believing is seeing." God created the Earth around us, the people in our lives, and even sent Jesus. When we are willing to look with the eyes of faith, the truth of "God with us" becomes obvious!

Katie Bigon
Christ Lutheran School Second Grade Teacher



December Fifth

Questions from Devotion

What was your turning point that brought you to faith?

Where in creation do you see God?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Sixth

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. (Isaiah 9:2-3)

When I hear the word *light*, I think of many famous sayings, “Let your *light* shine”, “*lights*, camera, action!”, and, of course, “this little *light* of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.”

I also think about my childhood. I grew up in the inner city of Detroit. At the time, it was a very dark place, literally and figuratively. It was important that I came home when the streetlights came on, for obvious reasons. For me, the streetlights were a signal that darkness was looming, and it was safer for me to be on the inside than on the outside.

I would imagine that the world was a pretty dark place for those living life before Jesus. It wasn’t just dark due to the fact that there wasn’t electricity.

One dark night, after many years of waiting, the Light of the World came from the outside to be with us on the inside. He came to walk with us, give us new commands, to encourage us, to light up this dark world, and to eventually die on the cross for our sins. What a bright morning that first Easter must have been!

One of my favorite Christmas hymns captures this melancholy, yet hopeful feeling: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. My favorite line reads, “Yet in the dark streets shineth, the everlasting light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight.” In one moment, a light from the outside made it possible for all those hopeful people on the inside to finally see the light. We are no longer people of darkness. That light is “God with us”.

Casey Sitze
Christ Lutheran School Fifth Grade Teacher



December Sixth

Questions from Devotion

When is a time you were in complete darkness? How did you feel?

When you think of Immanuel, God with us, describe a time when you felt His presence strongly in your life?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Seventh

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)

Call me crazy, but it seems that stores put out seasonal items earlier and earlier as the years go by. It's June 22. It must be time for back-to-school sales to begin! Wait... Doesn't school begin in the fall? August 1? Happy Halloween! When do Christmas items start to roll out, early September? Our senses can be confused if we follow the pattern of the world. We see mixed messages of Halloween, the harvest, and Christmas in stores. As December nears, advertisements and displays shift to non-stop images of a nutcracker, manger, and Santa. On any one day, as early as November 1, we tune the radio dial and hear "Jingle Bells" right after we have been lost in the beauty and reverence of "O Holy Night". We know the saying that "Jesus is the Reason for the Season", but our holiday movies include the Grinch and Santa. It's hard to focus as we go from one activity to the next and check off items on our lists. Christmas can be complicated.

But...For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given...

Our Christmas season is filled with activity. We shop for gifts, attend programs, spend time with friends and family, bake cookies, and often feel stressed. Our lives are complicated. So were the lives of all the characters that first Christmas. Take the time to read Luke 2 and see all the chaotic moving parts for those entrenched in God's plan of sending His Son to be "God with Us". We worship, celebrate, give, navigate relationships, and even travel. In our movement, we can stop and focus, as the characters in the Christmas story, because, "...to us a child is born, to us a Son is given..."

Today and in this Advent season, in your complicated life, take the time stop to focus and embrace the One we call Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace... "God with us".

Jacob Sitze
Christ Lutheran School Sixth Grade Teacher



December Eighth

Questions from Devotion

In your celebrations, activities, and attitude, where is your focus?

How can you place your focus on Jesus more in the hustle and bustle of this season?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Eighth

You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" (Isaiah 40:9)

What is the highest point you have ever climbed to? Growing up, my family loved to hike. The Southwestern United States is home to a wide variety of mountain ranges and National Parks. National Parks such as Zion, Bryce Canyon, and the Grand Canyon offer picturesque views for miles around. My hometown of Las Vegas sits in a valley surrounded by mountains; a clear view of the entire valley and ensuing desert is easily accessible from a variety of hikes. Although Heaven being literally above us is idiomatic, from these high, sweeping vantage points, I feel tangibly closer to God.

The reason my family lived in Las Vegas was due to my father being in the Air Force. I am quite privileged to have traveled all over the world, including the country where Judah was once located. The passage above is from Isaiah, writing from what is now considered the country of Israel. The physical geography and climate of Judah, southern Israel, is very similar to that of southern Nevada: rugged, dry, arid and mountainous. It is quite easy for me to visualize ascending a high mountain to shout the glory of God!

Historically, we think of the shepherds in the proximity of Bethlehem as the first missionaries. The angel of the Lord appears to them, striking them "sore afraid" (Luke 2:9, KJV), leading them to proclaim the good news of our Savior's birth. The spirit of Isaiah 40:9 is embodied in the Christmas hymn, "Go Tell it on the Mountain": "Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!" When I hear these words, I imagine shepherds running over that same desert landscape, tripping over their robes and shouting the good news they have been told. Fittingly, the ensuing verses describe God as a shepherd, gently tending to His flock (Isaiah 40:11). God ultimately allowed His most precious Lamb, His son Jesus, to die and rise again, for the sake of the flock.

Regarding this good news, we are instructed to "not be afraid"! God's precious gift has been given to all mankind – He is "God with us".

***Aaron Mietzner
Christ Lutheran School Science Teacher***



December Eighth

Questions from Devotion

Where is a “high mountain” you can share the Good News?

If shouting is not your forte, what is another way you can share the good news?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Ninth

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5)

Guru is a Sanskrit word typically defined as “one with great knowledge and wisdom.” It’s one I hear in India often. Though Jesus would fit the definition of one with great knowledge and wisdom, there’s another reason I think of it as a name for Jesus.

“Gu” in *Guru* stands for darkness. “Ru” in *Guru* means light. Literally, a *Guru* takes someone from the darkness into the light.

Into the Gu, God sends the Ru. Into the darkness, into the mess, God sends the light. God’s own Son is born in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. That’s kind of ironic because, in our day, whenever you see a nativity scene in somebody’s home, it always looks so neat. People in the nativity scenes look like they just got out of the shower and sprayed their hair. Their robes look all ironed and everything. But in the actual barn where Jesus was born, it wasn’t that way because a barn’s a messy place. Into the Gu, came the Ru. Into the mess of the darkness, comes the master of light.

Because Jesus came into the mess, He brings you forgiveness with His light and life. Advent is a time to get ready for Christmas, to clean up the mess, to turn it over our darkest sins and all our sins over to God and to receive His light. And it all happens because of “God with us”.

Pastor Richard Burkey



December Ninth

Questions from Devotion

What is your favorite name for Jesus and why?

Where do you see the most darkness in your life? Where do you see God is working?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Tenth

**And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.”
(Luke 1:46-48)**

Throughout my life, I have met a lot of amazing women. My mom is one – she raised me by herself. Evelyn is another one – she was a member of my home church who “took me in” as a grandson. Then there was JoAnn, who I met during my internship in Cape Girardeau, MO... she was a peach.

When I met JoAnn, she was undergoing treatment for cancer. Not once did she complain. Not once did her painful treatment become a roadblock between her and God. I was astonished at her faith. The more I got to know her, the more astonished I was. She and her husband had adopted two kids very early on in their marriage. One son died from cancer before age 10. The other son died in a parachuting accident in the military before age 30. Did she experience pain? Absolutely. Was she upset with God? You’re darn straight. But did she ever let these great losses, these terrible “valleys”, pull her away from God? No.

When I think of Saint Mary’s song in Luke 1, referred to as *The Magnificat*, I think of JoAnn. I think of her life and her “song.” Mary’s melody gives praise to God’s faithfulness, and her own thankfulness. She glorifies God and rejoices in her Savior – a Savior that was growing in her womb. JoAnn’s “song” was similar. Even in the sadness, losses, and pain that she experienced in life, she rejoiced in her Savior, and shared that loving spirit with others.

What about you? Maybe our song isn’t always like Mary’s (or JoAnn’s), but it certainly has the ability to be. By looking at our life with the perspective of eternity, we can accept anything that comes our way, and glorify God through it all, rejoicing that our Savior, “God with us”, will see us through it no matter what.

Pastor Travis Ferguson



December Tenth

Questions from Devotion

Who is someone whose faith has inspired you in some way?

Where you feel like you need to glorify God in your life more?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Eleventh

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. (Psalm 89:1)

The Old Testament teaches us that one of the tribes of Israel was Levi. Men from this tribe, called Levites, were set aside by God to be in charge of worship, from the time of their escape from Egypt, wandering in the wilderness, to the construction of the temple, and beyond.

One of these Levites was named Ethan. He is the author of Psalm 89, a song of worship that recounts the ways in which God saved and blessed the nation of Israel. It is a long Psalm – 59 verses! – that includes both praises and laments. With his words, Ethan testifies to the love of God, through good times and bad. This love was shown through King David, whom the Psalm honors, but it finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.

The name Ethan means “strong and optimistic, solid and enduring; permanent.” Ethan was a musician in David’s court (likely a cymbal player). We don’t know what his voice was like, but he was not afraid to sing and make God’s faithfulness known “with his mouth.” (He is a good example for us to follow as we worship – don’t be reluctant to sing!) As you read his words in Psalm 89, you can experience his optimism... even as God’s enemies mock Him and His chosen king David, Ethan still offers his “praise to the Lord forever” (Psalm 89:51-52).

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world, we remember the Lord’s great love which prompted Him to send a Savior to us. God’s love and faithfulness are proven by this Savior, Jesus Christ: “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8b). He is “God with us”.

Roger Howard
Director of Music and Worship



December Eleventh

Questions from Devotion

How have you experienced the love of God in Jesus, even in times of suffering?

How does your family testify to the light, and point people to Jesus?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Twelfth

...the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. (Matthew 4:16)

Can you believe there was a time before Disney +, Netflix, Hulu and Amazon Prime? Before that there was DVR and DVD. For some of us, we can even remember what a VHS tape was. And there were several other less-known devices in-between. All of these have allowed us to watch, and re-watch our favorite TV shows, movie and sporting events, to the point of quoting every line. These technologies allow us to share common language and experiences with one another as we “rerun” these shows over and over.

Today’s verse is a rerun from Isaiah 9:2 (we just read it six days ago). For the Jewish people, Matthew connects this well-known prophecy directly to Jesus as He begins His ministry. The people have seen a great light, and that light is their Savior.

Two thousand years later, we continue to “rerun” these Scriptures. We reread these words at Lessons and Carols and Christmas Eve Worship. We put them in devotions like these. God’s Word is meant to be reread, time and time again. God’s Word is meant to be resaid, time and time again. Because when it is, Jesus, the Light of the World, continues to shine into the darkness of the hearts of those that hear and read it.

When you read Scripture, remember that all of it points to Jesus – “God with us”.

Brandon Heath
Director of Christian Education



December Twelfth

Questions from Devotion

What verses from Scripture do you like to read over and over?

What verses help you to remember that Christ is the light of the world?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Thirteenth

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him--the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)

NFL football teams have some great images – New York has Jets and Giants. Kansas City has the Chiefs. New England the Patriots. Tennessee the Titans... and that team that used to play here – the Chargers! Images of power and strength!

Isaiah's image for the coming Savior is a shoot from the stump. Go, stump, go! And yet Isaiah has a sense of the humility and hope Jesus message brings. We believe in a baby born in Bethlehem's manger and our God who died on a cross outside Jerusalem's walls. The world sees a Savior cut down. By faith we see, that from a stump comes a branch, from a cross and an empty grave comes living hope.

That is why Isaiah continues as he describes what the Spirit of God brings to Jesus (and to us) wisdom and understanding, counsel and power, knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (The fear of the Lord in this sense is not to be terrified by God but to be moved by how terrific His love, grace, peace and power is!)

The gifts the Spirit gives to Jesus for ministry are still gifts given to us today! Need wisdom? Ask Him! Feeling weak? Ask for His power.

You might feel like a stump, but His mighty branch of Himself is coming! You are the fruit He desires. It's your life Jesus entered this world to save! He is the One who goes with you in the day ahead – from stump, to branch, to tree of life, to His Spirit at work in you! He is truly "God with us".

Pastor Richard Burkey



December Thirteenth

Questions from Devotion

What moves you about who God is today? Take time to praise Him.

Where do you need God's wisdom and understanding? Take time to ask Him.

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Fourteenth

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. (Isaiah 11:6)

Fear and worry seem to be a constant in our lives today. Fear and worry are powerful feelings that drive us to often behave in ways that are both hurtful to ourselves and others. A virus, an election, turmoil in our streets, and so much more has caused a higher level of uncertainty and anxiousness in many of us this past year. We have convinced ourselves that this is the worst year ever. And for some of us, that may be true. We will likely remember this year for years to come.

In Isaiah 11:6 God gives us an image of that hope for peace, an image we often find difficult to understand; an image of the world with no fear, no worry, and no sin; a true image of peace; an image of enemies finding peace in situations that seem destitute; a peace that transcends our understanding of what we perceive as the natural order; a wolf lying with a lamb, and a leopard lying with a young goat.

Today we might characterize this as two opposing political parties agreeing with each other over something... Wouldn't that be a sight to see – two diametrically opposed groups finding peace and working together for the good of the Lord?

This peace is what the birth of Christ has brought to the earth. It is not found on your Facebook page, Instagram, or Twitter feed, or your favorite news network where we so often look for answers. The hope of peace we seek in this world came as a child, Christ Jesus. God sending Christ to earth to live among us has brought that peace to earth. This Advent season, remember where you can find peace. It is found in Jesus – “God with us”.

Josh Payne
Christ Lutheran School Fourth Grade Teacher



December Fourteenth

Questions from Devotion

What does peace look like to you?

How can you promote peace and unity in the world today?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Fifteenth

When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:7-9)

The “Triumph Entry,”: For actors it is dressing up in name-brand clothes and walking down the red carpet. At concerts, the stadium goes dark and then music and lights attack the senses all at once as the band begins to play. In Jesus’ day, leaders would ride a beautiful “war horse” down the main streets to celebrate their latest conquest.

Jesus chose a different way to enter the city of Jerusalem. His triumphal entry involved riding in on a donkey. Donkeys were symbols of peace. They were sometimes used in treaties of the time. In this way, Jesus humbly enters the city.

He entered our world very much the same way. Jesus was born in a stable, where animals live, were fed and did their business. When born, Mary placed him in a manger. Shepherds, the average Joe of the time, were the first people to see Jesus – all pretty humbling.

Humble is also how you might describe the end of Jesus’ life. He was arrested without fighting. He went before the crowd to be judged. He was beaten while being mocked. He hung on a cross for hours, in the nude, where He was sneered at. In humility, Jesus suffered on our behalf to take away our sin and give us forgiveness.

In every area of our life, we need to pursue humility. And we do that by following Jesus – “God with us”.

Brandon Heath
Director of Christian Education



December Fifteenth

Questions from Devotion

When you hear the word “humble,” who do you think of?

Where do you need a dose of humility in your life?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Sixteenth

**Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
(Isaiah 40:1)**

Throughout the Bible we read many stories about God's people being comforted; Joseph comforted his brothers by telling them God used his slavery for good (Genesis 50:21), Ruth found comfort in the way Boaz spoke kindly to her (Ruth 2:13), even Jesus comforted Mary and Martha when their brother, Lazarus, died (John 11:31). God gives us comfort in our times of need; "I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow...declares the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:13b).

Scripture tells us that God gives us the ability to pass on His comfort, too; "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). Showing compassion and providing comfort is a way for us to extend Jesus' arms around His children.

We need to take our lead from the God of comfort and offer words of encouragement, words of healing, and words of love to others. We do not want to get down the road and find out that someone we knew was feeling isolated like the Psalmist David who cried out: "If only one person would show some pity; if only one would turn and comfort me" (Psalms 69:20b).

When you go through a time where you need comfort, remember that God is there to comfort you. He is by your side. And when you are on the other side of that time, you now have the experience of being comforted to offer that same healing comfort to someone else. "God *with us*" teaches you to be *with others*.

Kathy Barkett
Assistant Director of Music and Worship



December Sixteenth

Questions from Devotion

What are some ways you can show love and provide comfort to someone?

Whom has God placed in your life that you feel needs your comfort right now?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Seventeenth

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners... (Isaiah 61:1)

The prophet Isaiah served the people of Israel under four kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Many of his prophecies were warnings of God's judgment due to the people's sin; in fact, he even predicted the exile to Babylon in chapter 39. But Isaiah also promised hope and the restoration of the kingdom.

It is this hope that shines so clearly in our reading for today. As is true for most prophecies, this prophecy had two times of fulfillment: a "here and now" moment and a future "not yet" moment. The "here and now" fulfillment was when Cyrus, king of Persia, released the Israelites from captivity and allowed them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild in 536 BC. The "not yet" moment can be read in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 4, verses 16 to 21.

Can you imagine the emotion that ripped through the synagogue when Jesus said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"? I would have loved to be there at that moment. Jesus was telling them, "I AM the promised Messiah!" The people certainly needed hope in that day: oppressed by the Roman occupation, burdened by the requirements of the legalistic Pharisees, and suffering from demon-possession, poverty, and illnesses like leprosy.

We also need the deliverance of the Savior and the hope which He brings. Racial tension and violence, a world-wide pandemic, polarized political elections, and illnesses like cancer and Alzheimer's rob us of joy. The difference between the time of Luke and today is that Jesus was *physically* present back then. Today, Jesus calls *us* to be His hands and feet to bring His good news to the world. We can do this only because of "God with us".

Roger Howard
Director of Music and Worship



December Seventeenth

Questions from Devotion

When did you first come to know the Good News about Jesus?

How can you be the hands and feet of Jesus to share His good news with others?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Eighteenth

“As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And, He said to him, “ Follow me.” So he arose and followed Him.” (Matthew 9:9)

One morning, I was sitting in bed praying and begging the Lord to speak to me about the same thing He had already impressed upon my husband. You see, for three years my husband had been telling me that the Lord was urging him to sell both of our homes and let go of our material possessions. I had been unwilling to do that. After all, we had worked our entire lives to obtain them, and to get to where we were. Therefore, there was discord between us. So, I cried out to the Lord one morning and begged him, that if He really wanted us to sell our homes, could He please tell me too? It is one thing to listen to your husband and obey, but it is a different thing altogether to listen when the Lord speaks, and obey Him. “Just tell me God, and I’ll do it!”, I pleaded. That morning the Lord spoke to me through his Word and said, “You’re walking in the desert now, but I want to give you the Promise Land.”

I knew in that moment He was confirming to me that He wanted us to sell our homes, in obedience to Him. I wasn’t sure why. I just knew He wanted us to let go of them. I could either choose to obey Him or to disobey Him. The choice was mine.

Living in obedience to God is not always easy, especially when you have your whole life planned out just the way you want it. You think your ways are the best ways, the fastest, the most productive, the most lucrative. But God does not call us to an easy life. He does not call us to a simple life, a fast life, or a lucrative life. Rather, He calls us to a life of obedience. When we are walking in obedience to Him, everything falls into place as it should. After we sold our homes, the peace and joy I felt was indescribable. Nothing else seemed to matter. There was no negative or positive circumstance that could take that peace away. There still isn’t.

All God wants is our obedience. In return, He provides an endless supply of peace and harmony. “God with us” is *enough* for our life.

Tiffany Giles
Christ Lutheran School Seventh Grade Teacher



December Eighteenth

Questions from Devotion

When have you felt the Lord asking you to do something, but you *did not* obey?
What was the result/outcome?

When have you felt the Lord asking you to do something, and you *did* obey? What was the result/outcome?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Nineteenth

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. (James 1:22-24)

What's the purpose of a mirror? The purpose of a mirror is to evaluate ourselves.

James' image of a mirror invites you to consider how you see yourself. To use the mirror of God's Word helps you see yourself clearly.

The most famous mirror I know is the mirror in Snow White. She won the "fairest of them all" contest with that mirror. But the Biblical mirror doesn't call us to look and compare ourselves with others, but to see who we are in Christ.

When you got up this morning, at some point you looked at a mirror to assess the damage from last night. Then you evaluated what needed to be changed before you walked out that door. You may have run a brush or comb through your hair. Or, you said "I don't have time to do that," and put on a ball cap. Or you washed your face.

God wants us to see what needs to be fixed. God also wants us to see what we can be as His children. God wants to empower us to do something about what needs to change. That's why James' image of the mirror reinforces his idea – **do not merely listen to the word... do what it says.**

We are to be doers of the Word. At the heart of that Biblical message is what Jesus has done for you and how that empowers what we do for Him. As you look into the mirror of your life, look to be more like Jesus! You can do it because of "God with us".

Pastor Richard Burkey



December Nineteenth

Questions from Devotion

See your heart in the mirror. What did God make good in you? What still needs work? Where did you miss putting God's Word into practice today? Where do you need God's strength to live out your faith?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Twentieth

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:3-4)

Victor Frankl was a psychologist who survived imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp. As he entered into the prison camp, he had to surrender his clothes and was given a set of worn-out rags of an inmate who had been sent to the gas chamber. Inside of his newly-acquired coat pocket was a single page torn out of a Hebrew prayer book, which contained the main Old Testament prayer called "The Shema." The Shema says: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God the Lord is One. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

Later in his life, as Frankl reflected on his ordeal, he wrote in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, "There is nothing in the world that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions, as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life... 'He who has a *why* to live for can bear almost any *how*.'"

The suffering that we see in Jesus' life has sparked several questions throughout the centuries. "How could God do this to His Son?" "Why does God allow suffering to begin with?" "Why do the righteous suffer?" For some of these questions – I have no answer. I can, however, say that Jesus was able to get through the *how* of suffering because He knew *why* He was suffering... He was suffering for you.

Jesus' life was difficult to say the least. From the humble birth to the painful ending – He always had one thing on His mind: you. Now, as you might experience suffering in this world, you can have one thing on your mind to make it through: Jesus, "God with us".

Pastor Travis Ferguson



December Twentieth

Questions from Devotion

When have you experienced suffering in your life?

What did you learn about yourself and your faith during that period of suffering?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Twenty-First

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

I grew up on a farm in the small, rural town of Eden, Idaho. For many years, my mom and dad also did the hard work of “lambing.” Basically... we raised sheep and sold the lambs. We had a large lambing shed. We sometimes had to bottle feed “bum lambs”. We had the sheep sheered once a year. We sometimes had to help ewes deliver lambs that were breech. We had a lot of experience with sheep, so believe me when I say... sheep are *not* smart animals!

Sheep spook easily. They get confused. They wander off all the time. They get tangled in fencing. Sheep are a great target for predators like coyotes. They need protection. They need clear boundaries. They need to be cared for every day.

“We all, like sheep...” We are foolish. We are stubborn. We spook easily. We get confused. We wander off. We get tangled in sin. We need protection. We need clear boundaries. We need to be cared for. We need to be forgiven. We need a Savior.

For Christians, the Advent season is a beautiful reminder that we, like sheep, do not get what we deserve... we get a Savior. *“The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* The only thing we contribute to our salvation is the sin that makes it necessary. We need a Savior to redeem and renew our hearts and this world. We find this Savior in the beautiful and humble story of Advent. Lay your iniquities on Jesus – our Savior, Redeemer, and Friend. He is Emmanuel – “God with us”.

Xavria Schwarz
Christ Lutheran School Principal



December Twenty-First

Questions from Devotion

What foolish, stubborn, and sinful habits cause you to turn your own way?

What symbols of celebrations of Advent are reminders for you that Jesus is your Redeemer?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Twenty-Second

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)

Good news is a game-changer. It can turn a bad day into a great day. It can change your attitude in a heartbeat.

News is all around us, all the time. We are inundated with local news, national news, and international news. Driving to work, news updates come in on the radio, news notifications pop up on our phones throughout the day, and the evening news streams into our living rooms at night. Unfortunately, these news updates do not reveal the Good News: The Gospel and the hope of a Savior. Instead, most of the news we see and hear, point away from Christ and hope by distracting us with other thoughts, often times filling our minds with worry.

The best news we have ever received is the news of a Savior. We need to fill our lives, hearts, and minds with the Good News which the prophet Isaiah is speaking of here. We have a Savior who paid the price for our sins. We have hope in eternal life through the grace His sacrifice provides.

Born in a manger as a tiny baby, He went on to live a life full of trials and challenges just like us, and then He gave up His life for us, to pay the price for our sins. This news is not only *Good News*, it's the *Best News!* Because of Jesus, you are loved, you are forgiven, and you are given eternal life in paradise.

During this Advent and Christmas Season, turn off the news of the world and fill your heart with the Good News of the Gospel... the news of Emmanuel, "God with us".

Melissa Payne
Christ Lutheran Preschool Director



December Twenty-Second

Questions from Devotion

What's some good news that you've heard lately?

What's some good news that you can bring to other people each day?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Twenty-Third

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! (Isaiah 64:1)

When I was a fire chaplain, I was “swapping war stories” with a couple of firefighters. They told me about a 911 call that they would never forget. One morning they were called to a woman who was stuck on the toilet. Yes – you read that right. They responded to the call thinking that this was going to be complete nonsense, but when they got there, sure enough, this woman had been stuck on the toilet for 12 hours and she had been screaming for help when her neighbor finally heard her and called 911. The cause of this? The woman’s husband left the toilet seat up and when she went to sit down, she became stuck due to suction, and her bottom swelled up and she couldn’t get off. They actually had to detach the toilet from the floor and take her to the hospital.

I think it would be fairly safe to assume that you have not been in that situation – but there have been times, even seasons, of your life where you have cried out for help. And frequently those times result in *waiting* for help to come.

As Isaiah sounds this lament, it becomes evident that the world needs a God who does more than watch from afar. The world needs a God who tears open the space that separates man from the Divine and comes to dwell intimately into the here and now. And that’s exactly what Christmas brings.

Whether you are wondering how to pay bills this Christmas; whether you’re grieving the loss of friends and family; whether you’re saddened at the distance that might separate you from a loved one... take heart in promise of a Savior who knows suffering. Take heart in a Savior who tears open the heavens to be with you. Take heart in “God with us”.

Pastor Travis Ferguson



December Twenty-Third

Questions from Devotion

When have you most recently cried out for help? Why did you feel as though you couldn't conquer the issue on your own?

Who is crying out for help in your life this season? Think about the ways God can use you as His hands and feet.

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Twenty-Fourth

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. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:10-12)

From my perspective, the shepherds are under-appreciated characters in the Christmas story. They were very ordinary folks, visited by celestial beings, and some of the first to see Jesus. Wow! Their lives had to be permanently changed after an adventure like that! And to think... they almost missed the miraculous experience because they were afraid.

How many times in our lives do we almost miss the miracle because fear gets in the way? We are often uncertain before we experience the bold presence of the Holy Spirit. Fear often proceeds faith. The shepherds cowered in fear, and then, because of their faith, they were the first visitors to our Savior’s manger.

I wonder what the shepherds did once they found Mary and Joseph and the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger? I would assume they just lingered. I cannot imagine there was much to “do” once they arrived at the birthplace of our Savior. Isn’t that exactly what Jesus wants from us, not only at this time of year, but during every season? He wants us to linger at the manger. He wants our time. He wants our attention. He wants us to put our fears and worries and uncertainties and calendar and wallet and whatever else might be consuming us, down, and simply linger in His presence.

I do not know what this Advent and Christmas season has been like for you, but my hope is you’ll find time to be like the shepherds. Stop being afraid. Go to the manger. Linger in the presence of our Savior. He is “God with us”.

Xavria Schwarz
Christ Lutheran School Principal



December Twenty-Fourth

Questions from Devotion

What fears have you uncertain about this Advent season?

How will you linger at the manger this Christmas and in 2021?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



December Twenty-Fifth

**... Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.
(Luke 2:19)**

What a whirlwind for Mary... the angel's revelation... her visit to Elizabeth... breaking the news to her family and her fiancé... the journey to Bethlehem... no room in the inn... taking shelter in a barn... the miracle of birth... and then, out of nowhere, a group of shepherds show up telling her about seeing an angel and hearing a heavenly host.

Mary took a moment to think about what it all meant. She connected the dots of what happened, and begins to see Jesus' presence means salvation. That's what it means to treasure and ponder.

I encourage you to follow Mary's example. Experience Christmas with a sense of wonder. Make time for Jesus by treasuring and pondering who He is and what He means for your life.

How does that work? As you open each gift, think not only of this one gift — this set of handtowels, or this oversized sweater, or how fun the box will be to play with — but think of all the gifts you have received: the fact God has placed such good people in your life, and He pours out so many blessings in so many ways. Let each gift point you to something bigger than the gift itself. Let it be about appreciation for the giver and recipient. Let it remind you of the greatest gift of all — his Son Jesus Christ.

In every gift, remember He is the greatest of all gifts.
In every song, remember He is the truth that we sing.
In every greeting, remember He is the reason for the season.

When you look for Jesus everywhere, that's where you're sure to find him... for He is "God with us".

Pastor Richard Burkey



December Twenty-Fifth

Questions from Devotion

Consider the gifts you *gave*. How did they reflect Jesus' love to the recipient?

Consider the gifts you *received*. How did they reflect Jesus' love to you?

Daily Reflection (Based on the Examen Prayer)

What do you want to thank God for as you look back over today?

When did you feel most fully connected with God?

Where did you feel out-of-tune with God?

What do you want to ask for forgiveness for?

What do you want to ask God for?



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