



Our Saviour's & Balsamlund Lutheran Church; ELCA E-News

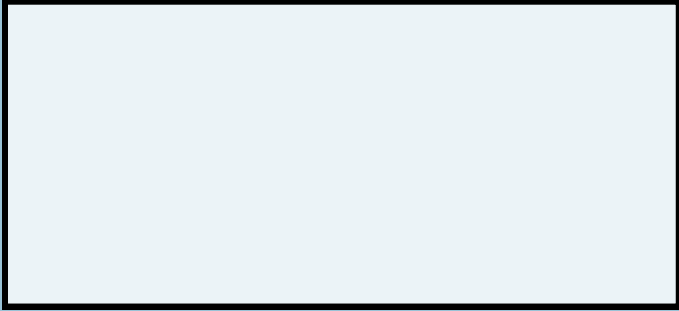
December 19, 2021

DAILY BIBLE READINGS 12/19 – 12/25



SUNDAY- Isaiah 8:1-20
MONDAY- Isaiah 8:21-9:7
TUESDAY- Luke 1:1-25
WEDNESDAY- Luke 1:26-56
THURSDAY- Luke 1:57-80
FRIDAY- Luke 2:1-20
CHRISTMAS DAY - John 1:1-18

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12/19 4th Sunday of Advent
9am Fellowship
9am Sunday School
10am Worship / Holy Communion

12/22
No 9am Quilters, *next session is 1/5/22*

12/24
4pm Christmas Eve Worship

12/26 First Sunday of Christmas
9am Fellowship
No 9am Sunday School
10am Worship / Holy Communion

Balsamlund Announcements : Confirmation is held every 4th Wednesday of the month.
Join us for Christmas Eve worship on December 24th at 6:30pm!

OSLC Announcements:
* We are looking for someone to head up the Adult Vocal Choir and the Bell Choir. If you are interested in helping out with one or both of these groups please contact Pastor Eric for more info.
* As we head into winter, if you are not on Pastor Eric's call list, but would like to be, please contact Rita at the OSLC office or Pastor Eric's cell phone.

- * Thanks to all who helped with this year's Operation Christmas Child. Maureen Dragseth did a fine job of organizing & delivering the gifts to Wadena County. There will be more happy hearts & smiles this Christmas because of "you".
- * Youth Group Holiday Poinsettia Fundraiser 2021. Thank you to all who participated this year.
- * The Wednesday Quilters will resume activities on January 5, 2022. Happy New Year!
- * The baptismal "Cradle Roll" position is available. Open immediately. Please inquire at the office if interested.

Join us for Christmas Eve worship December 24th at 4:00pm!

While people on social media or around tables in the fellowship hall share their opinions on favorite Christmas hymns and Christmas music on the radio, everyone reacts strongly when I confess to begin listening to Christmas music about the middle of September. Every year. Without fail.

I love Advent music. I love Christmas music. I love the old standards. I love the new interpretations. I love 'em all.

Well, I shouldn't say *all*.

I have one song in particular that I can bristle against now and again. I enjoy listening to it, but it asks a question that I spend a lot of time wishing I could answer back. I wish there was a time for audience response at the end of the song.

The question asked that I'd love to be able to answer is this: "Mary, did you know?"

We've heard this song. It's beloved by so many of us. But when we come to the first chapter of Luke's gospel, we receive our answer: She knew! Isn't that incredible?!

The angel Gabriel comes to Mary and tells her she will bear God's Son. Mary then goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with the baby who will become John the Baptist. In Mary and Elizabeth's first interaction, Elizabeth says she knows Mary is pregnant because she can feel baby John in her womb doing an Olympic-level gymnastics routine.

How does Mary respond? She sings.

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ...

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty."

She knows exactly who her son is. She knows the great reversal that God is beginning in the world through her and through the birth of her child.

She knows what God is up to.

She knows the prophecies of the Hebrew prophets for the Messiah.

She knows the world around her is upside down and that Jesus will turn it right-side up.

She knows that he will cast the mighty from their thrones and uplift the lowly.

She knows it all.

And her song of praise in Luke's gospel is her response. It's her acceptance of all that God is doing in her life and the celebration of this great reversal God has initiated in her.

It's such a powerful beginning of the gospel because it reminds us that our God is one who lifts us up when we are lowly and who comforts us in our grief. And it also means that when we're a little too full of ourselves, God finds ways to humble us as well.

In this Advent season, as we wait for God's arrival in our world, may you be filled with the confidence of Mary in God's power and promise.

God has come to set our world right side up. For that, we can always say thanks be to God!

Grace + Peace,

Pastor Eric