

LUTHERAN HERALD SUPPLEMENT
DECEMBER 31—JANUARY 5

to understand the Third Commandment properly. It is not just about worshiping on Saturday or Sunday; it is about hearing and learning God's Word by the means that He has given us! He calls men to faithfully preach, teach, and bring us the Sacraments according to Christ's instruction. Rightly called and ordained bishops, pastors, and deacons are the holy messengers who serve as the tools of God. Through them He brings all nations into the Body of Christ, so that people may faithfully know there is salvation and eternal blessings in Jesus!

We pray: O Lord God, who hast made Thine only-begotten Son the Savior of mankind and didst give Him the name of Jesus, mercifully grant that we who worship His name on earth may joyfully behold Him in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5: ISAIAH 12:1-6 **12TH CHRISTMAS DAY**

“O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.”

Our current culture teaches the wicked notion of emotional self-justification. People despise being told they are wrong, and they claim that their own feelings must be respected before they will even consider listening to those who have the responsibility of correcting them. To make matters worse, false teachers enable such wickedness by proclaiming phony grace from a god that accepts and justifies people who refuse to repent of their sin.

The one true God has every right to be angry with us. All of us have sinned and turned to our own wicked ways (see Isaiah 53:6). But He blesses us with His Word to call us to faithful repentance! Even while He was angry with us, He comes to us to help us! His Word and Holy Spirit create faith in us so that we can repent and believe in the forgiveness that comes by His grace in Christ. His anger is turned away because our sins are paid for by His Son. We are not comforted because He comes to us on our terms, respecting our vain desires for “emotional safety;” we are comforted because He speaks the truth to us and gives us the strength of His Spirit to believe it.

We pray: O Lord God, who hast made Thine only-begotten Son the Savior of mankind and didst give Him the name of Jesus, mercifully grant that we who worship His name on earth may joyfully behold Him in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31: ISAIAH 42:1-9 **7TH CHRISTMAS DAY**

The Servant of the Lord, Jesus Christ, gave us a profound example when He fulfilled these words from Isaiah. He did bring forth justice, but not as a worldly king, charging on horseback with a sword in His hand. He brought it by humbly walking (or riding on a donkey) on the path of obedience to His calling to preach and teach in the region of the world where He became man. He did not cry out or raise His voice in the street as some self-important celebrity; He came to help and to serve. And He did not do it with passive aggression or manipulative bullying, which are often the methods used by people in our current culture. He spoke the truth, did what was truly helpful, stood against liars and prideful false leaders, and kept the focus on God's will and work.

The will and work of the Lord is about us, but it is not about glorifying ourselves in a worldly way. Being a Christian does not mean going around trying to impose moral justice on everyone, especially in ways that seek to show others how pious we think we are. The Lord's will and work is to glorify us in Jesus Christ and the forgiveness that He alone brings. It is about us, but it is focused on Christ crucified, our Lord and God who gave Himself to help and save us.

We pray: Almighty and everlasting God, direct our actions according to Thy good pleasure, that in the name of Thy beloved Son we may be made to abound in good works; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1: ISAIAH 55:1-13 **8TH CHRISTMAS DAY**

“Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.”

Our Lord Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:33, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” And His kingdom is found near us in Jesus Christ! His kingdom comes to us in His Church, where His flesh and blood still abide, and are given to us in the Sacrament. There His truth and righteousness are taught to us and proclaimed. We hear the justice of His Commandments preached in order to call us to repent, and we hear the mercy of His promises fulfilled in the Gospel of Christ crucified for us.

People think they are seeking God by “being spiritual” or doing good deeds. But such efforts are typically done according to man’s broken thoughts and ways. Our Lord tells us, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways.” We are called, and made able by His Spirit, to seek His thoughts and His ways, not ours. And we are shown His thoughts and ways in the holy place where He reveals His salvation, light, and glory to all of us in the Word and Sacraments of our Lord, Christ Jesus, in His Church.

We pray: O Lord God, who hast made Thine only-begotten Son the Savior of mankind and didst give Him the name of Jesus, mercifully grant that we who worship His name on earth may joyfully behold Him in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2: ISAIAH 61:1-11 **9TH CHRISTMAS DAY**

It is good for us to remember that Isaiah’s words of divine prophecy not only foretell the coming of Jesus Christ in flesh and blood, but they also give us images of His coming again in glory at the end of the age!

When our Lord walked and taught in Jerusalem and the surrounding regions He showed us that He keeps His promises in real, flesh and blood ways. People were healed and comforted. He came to Zion and made Himself known to the Gentiles. But other things are still to come!

He has taught His vengeance and justice, but those who despise His truth and seek their own selfish ways have yet to see the full extent of His anger against their treachery. And while we do have the glorious gifts of His Word and the Sacraments to give us comfort now, we also look forward to when all the pains and troubles of this broken world are wiped away at the Resurrection.

People think about new beginnings and opportunities with the new calendar year. The Word of God reminds us that, even though the world grows more and more corrupt with sin, things will get better in the future when our Lord Christ Jesus comes again in glory to fulfill all His holy promises!

We pray: O Lord God, who hast made Thine only-begotten Son the Savior of mankind and didst give Him the name of Jesus, mercifully grant that we who worship His name on earth may joyfully behold Him in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3: MICAH 4:1-8 **10TH CHRISTMAS DAY**

“For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.”

Everyone looks to something for help and comfort. The Ten Commandments, and Dr. Luther’s Catechisms on them, remind us that those ideas, things, people, and names that we look to for sources of help are false gods. We are taught to remember that all things were made by God, the Father Almighty, and that all His good things will be given to us according to His will. But those means of help are not to be mistaken for the source. We are not to walk in ways that hold other things above the Lord who gives them.

But our age is like all the others, and people identify themselves according to false sources of help and comfort. Even faithful Christians stumble and take steps as though they fear, love, and trust in other things above God. But He continues to teach us His ways and His paths through the Word and the Sacraments of our Lord Jesus Christ in His Church. All nations are called and gathered to His Church to hear His truth, be taught to repent, and have true forgiveness, peace, and joy in the name of Jesus Christ. Only in the Gospel of Christ crucified do we walk in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and have life forever and ever!

We pray: O Lord God, who hast made Thine only-begotten Son the Savior of mankind and didst give Him the name of Jesus, mercifully grant that we who worship His name on earth may joyfully behold Him in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 4: ISAIAH 56:1-8 **11TH CHRISTMAS DAY**

The Lord faithfully upheld His words in Isaiah 56 when Philip was sent to preach, teach, and administer Baptism to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. This foreigner had the Scriptures of Isaiah, but the Lord called Philip to make him part of the Church, the very Body of Christ.

It is not enough to have a book, or knowledge, or a claim of tradition or heritage. One must have faith in the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was crucified for the forgiveness of our sins. Owning a Bible or simply having some knowledge about God does not save anyone. We are made God’s righteous people through faith alone.

The Lord’s salvation and righteousness are revealed and taught to us in Jesus Christ. This is why it is so important that people are taught