Cover: “St. John, writing his letters and Gospel, on the island of Patmos” from **The Illustrated German Bible of 1483** (II. 557, often called the *Biblia Germanica* or the “Koberger Bible”). It contains some 109 woodcuts (or blocks) originally produced for the Cologne Bible of c. 1478/9, reused and hand-colored for the 1483 edition. It is one of the earliest large-scale German vernacular Bibles, appearing less than 30 years after the first printed Latin Bible by Johannes Gutenberg. --MDH

# Our Family Daily Prayers

## Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Gesima



## 2026-2027

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# Our Family Daily Prayers – 2026/2027

*Follow the order for Daily Devotions in Lutheran Worship, p.293.*

**Week of Advent One:** November 29-December 5, 2026
**Hymn** –"Savior of the Heathen, Come" (Augustana SBH #1)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 29 Sunday | Ps 149-150 | Matt 25-26 |
| 10:15 AM | **Advent One** Jeremiah 33:14-18, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 21:1-9 | |
| 30 Monday | Ex 15:1-18 | Matt 27-28 |
| 10:30 AM | **St. Andrew, Apostle** Ezekiel 3:16-21, Romans 10:8-18, Matt 4:18-22 | |
| 1 Tuesday | Lk 1:46-55 | Rev 1-2 |
| 2 Wednesday | Ps 1 | Rev 3-5 |
| 6:30 PM | **Catechesis on St. Luke 21:25-36** | |
| 3 Thursday | Ps 2 | Rev 6-8 |
| 4 Friday | Ps 3 | Rev 9-11 |
| | **Nikolaus Selnecker, Confessor** | |
| 5 Saturday | Ps 4 | Rev 12-14 |

**#70 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

But our opponents without the least hesitation trample under their feet the whole Gospel, and all the promises of grace in Christ. **Thus they teach, that we obtain the remission of sins on account of our love and works, and not through faith.** For the grace and assistance of God must be very doubtful, if they depend on our works ; because we can never be certain, when we have done enough, or whether the works are sufficiently holy and pure.

Consequently the forgiveness of sins would likewise be uncertain, and the promises of God would be destroyed, as Paul says, Rom. 4:14 : "If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." We, therefore, teach the heart and conscience to comfort themselves with the promises of God, which remain firm, offering grace and the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, and not on account of our works.

Besides, we also teach in relation to good works and the law, not that we merit the remission of sins through the law, or that we are acceptable to God on account of the law, but that God would have good works. **For we must (as Paul says, 2 Tim. 2:15) rightly divide and separate the Word of God, the law on the one side, and the promises of God on the other.** We must observe what the Scriptures say of the promises, and what of the works, but for the sake of Christ through faith. As a good tree should bear good fruit, and yet the fruit does not make the tree good; so good works must follow the new birth, although they do not render man acceptable to God; but as the tree must first be good, so man must first become acceptable to God through faith, for Christ's sake. Our works are far too insignificant for God to be merciful to us on their account, unless he were gracious unto us for the sake of Christ. **Thus James is not opposed to St. Paul**, nor does he say that we merit the remission of sins by our works, or that our works overcome the power of the devil, death, sin, and terrors of hell, and are equal to the death of Christ. Neither does he say, that our works make us acceptable to God; or that they restore our hearts to peace, and overcome the wrath of God; or that works supersede the need of mercy. James asserts none of these things, and yet our opponents add them to his words. (Henkel Translation, p. 200-201).

**Collect for Quinquagesima**

O Lord, we beseech Thee, mercifully hear our prayers and, having set us free from the bonds of sin, defend us from all evil; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

**James 2:10**
"Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."

**Catechism** - Lord's Supper, Question One *What is the Sacrament of the Altar?* **Answer:** It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.




**Illustrated German Bible of 1483** (I:466, Tobit 2:9-10)
From the Apocryphal book Tobit: Tobit, his son Tobias, and his wife, Anna together in the house. Tobit is blinded when sparrow dung falls into his eyes.

**Week of Quinquagesima:** February 7-13, 2027
**Hymn – "If Thy Beloved Son, O God"** (Augustana SBH #18)
**Hymn Ash Wednesday - "When o'er My Sins I Sorrow"** (ASBH #19)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 Sunday<br>10:15 AM | Ps 64 | Ex 19-21 |
| | **Quinquagesima**<br>Isaiah 35:3-7, 1 Cor. 13:1-13, Lk. 18:31-43 | |
| 8 Monday | Ps 65 | Ex 22-24 |
| 9 Tuesday<br>10:30 AM | Ps 66 | Ex 25-27 |
| | **St. Cyril of Alexandria, Bishop, Conf., & Doctor**<br>2 Timothy 4:1-8, Matthew 5:13-19 | |
| 10 Wednesday | Ps 67 | Ex 28-30 |
| 6:30 PM | **Learn-by-Heart** (but, no Catechesis Service) | |
| 7:00 PM | **Ash Wednesday Divine Service**<br>Jonah 3:1-10, Isaiah 59:12-21, Joel 2:12-19, Matt 6:16-21 | |
| 11 Thursday | Ps 68 | Ex 31-33 |
| 12 Friday | Ps 69 | Ex 34-36 |
| 13 Saturday | Ps 70 | Ex 37-38 |

**#85 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

Now we have frequently stated **what we call faith**; not a mere knowledge of the history of Christ, which even devils have, but **the new light and power, which the Holy Ghost works in the heart, and through which we overcome the terrors of death, of sin, &c**. True Christian faith like this is not so insignificant, as our adversaries imagine, saying: faith! faith! how easy is it to believe! Nor is it a thought of man, which he can produce in himself, but a divine power in the heart, through which we are regenerated, and by which we overcome the great power of Satan and of death, as Paul says, Col. 2:12: "Wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God," &c. **This faith, because it is a new, divine light and life in the heart**, through which we receive another mind and disposition, is living, efficacious, and abounds in good works. It may therefore be said with propriety, that **faith without works is not genuine.** And though he says that we are justified by faith and works, he does not maintain that we are regenerated through works, nor assert that we are reconciled by our works as well as by Christ, but **he is describing how Christians should live, after they have been *regenerated* through the Gospel.** As he is speaking of works which are to follow faith, it is proper to say, that he, who has faith and good works, is just; yea, not on account of law; for while the Scriptures enjoin and recommend good works, they exalt the promises of God, and Christ, the real treasure, many thousand times higher. (This text is from The Henkel Translation of the Book of Concord, which is the only English translation based on the authoritative German Dresden Edition of 1580, p. 191).

**Collect for Advent One** (*Ad Te Levavi*)
Stir up, we beseech Thee, Thy power, O Lord, and come, that by Thy protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Thy mighty deliverance; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Catechism** - The Lord's Prayer, The Sixth Petition
And lead us not into temptation.
*What does this mean?* **Answer:**
God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome, and obtain the victory .



**Zechariah 9:9**
"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

**Illustrated German Bible of 1483 (**I:362 2 Kings 19:35-37)
The Angel of the Lord Kills; Hebrews 11:37 records that Manasseh had the Prophet Isaiah executed by being sawed in half with a wooden saw by order of King Manasseh. This is also found in the Martyrdom of Isaiah, an ancient Jewish pseudepigraphal work that was widely circulated and respected in the early Church.

**Collect for the Season of Advent**
Lord, we beseech Thee, give ear to our prayers and lighten the darkness of our hearts by Thy gracious visitation; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

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**Week of Advent Two:** December 6-12, 2026
**Hymn** – The Day Is Surely Drawing Near (Augustana SBH #2)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 Sunday 8:00 AM | Ps 5 | Rev 15-17 |
| 10:15 AM | **St. Nicholas, Bishop & Confessor** Isaiah 62:1-12, Heb. 7:23-27, Matthew 25:14-23, 24-30 | |
| | **Advent Two** Micah 4:1-7; Romans 15:4-13; Luke 21:25-36 | |
| 7 Monday | Ps 6 | Rev 18-20 |
| 10:30 AM | **St. Ambrose, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor** 2 Timothy 4:1-8, Matthew 5:13-19 | |
| 8 Tuesday | Ps 7 | Rev 21-22 |
| 9 Wednesday | Ps 8 | Isa 1-3 |
| 6:30 PM | **Catechesis on Matthew 11:2-11** | |
| 10 Thursday | Ps 9 | Isa 4-6 |
| 11 Friday | Ps 10 | Isa 7-9 |
| 12 Saturday | Ps 11 | Isa 10-12 |

**#72 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

**We should and must do good works**, because God requires them ; **they are the fruits of faith**, as Paul says to the Ephesians 2:10 : "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." For this reason good works should follow faith, **as thanksgivings to God** : that our faith may be exercised, increased, and strengthened through them, and that others may be admonished by our profession and good deportment. Therefore Paul says, that **Abraham received circumcision**, not that he might be justified on account of the work, but that he might have **a sign on his body, to admonish him that he should ever increase in his faith, confess it to others, and incite them by his testimony to believe.** Thus Abel made an acceptable sacrifice to God by faith, for the sacrifice did not please God, *ex opere operato*, but Abel felt assured that God was gracious to him, and performed the work for the purpose of exercising his faith, and inciting others by his example and profession to believe. (Henkel Translation, p. 191-192).

calling faith dead, when it does not produce all manner of good works and fruits of the Spirit, obedience, patience, chastity, love, &c.; but he calls that a living faith, which produces good fruits. (Henkel Translation, p. 199-200).

**Collect for Sexagesima.**
O Lord God, Who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do: Mercifully grant that by Thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Catechism** - Office of the Keys, Question Three
*Which are these?* **Answer:**
Here consider your station according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, slothful; whether you have grieved any person by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted aught, or done other injury.

**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483** (I:526, Job 42)
Job's Understanding in Chapter 42

**Week of Sexagesima:** January 31 - February 6, 2027
**Hymn – "May God Bestow on Us His Grace"** (Augustana SBH #17)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 31 Sunday 10:15 AM | Lk 1:68-79 | Gen 49-50 |
| | **Sexagesima** Is. 55:10-13, 2 Cor. 11:19-12:9, Luke 8:4-15 | |
| 1 Monday | Lk 2:29-32 | Ex 1-3 |
| 2 Tuesday 10:30 AM | Ps 59 | Ex 4-6 |
| | **The Presentation of Our Lord** Haggai 2:6-9, Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 2:22-32 | |
| 3 Wednesday 6:30 PM | Ps 60 | Ex 7-9 |
| | Learn-by-Heart/Catechesis on Luke 18:31-43 | |
| 4 Thursday | Ps 61 | Ex 10-12 |
| 5 Friday | Ps 62 | Ex 13-15 |
| 6 Saturday | Ps 63 | Ex 16-18 |

**#84 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

In the second place, this subject itself shows, that James is speaking of **works, which follow faith**; for he tells us, that faith must not be dead, but living, energetic, efficacious, and active in the heart. Hence it was not the meaning of James, that we merit grace or the remission of sins by our works; because he is speaking of the works of those, who have already been justified through Christ, are reconciled to God, and have obtained the forgiveness of their sins through Christ. Our adversaries, therefore, are much mistaken in inferring from this passage, that by our good works we merit grace and the remission of sins; or that James meant that we should have access to God through our works, without Christ the Mediator and Reconciler.

In the third place, St. James, speaking of spiritual regeneration before this, **asserts that it is effected through the Gospel.** He says, James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." Now as he affirms that we are regenerated through the Gospel, he teaches that we are justified before God through faith. Because we take hold of the promises concerning Christ, through faith alone, when we are comforted by them against the terrors of death and sin. Hence, he did not mean that we should be regenerated through our works.

All this clearly shows, that this passage of James is not against us; **for in it he is censuring slothful Christians, who had become too secure in their minds, and imagined that they had faith, while they really had none.** He therefore makes a difference between living and dead faith,

**Collect for Advent Two** *(Populus Zion)*
Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Thine Only-Begotten Son, so that by His coming we may be enabled to serve Thee with pure minds; 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.**

**Catechism** - The Lord's Prayer, The Seventh Petition
But deliver us from evil.
*What does this mean?* **Answer:**
We pray in this petition, as the sum of all, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil of body and soul, property and honor, and finally, when our last hour has come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-7** "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."




**Illustrated German Bible of 1483 (**I:381, 1 Chronicles 11:10-14)
David's Mighty Men, including Eleazar, defeat the Philistines in a field of barley

**Week of Advent Three**: December 13-19, 2026
**Hymn** – The Only Son from Heaven (Augustana SBH #3)
**Daily Readings –**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 13 Sunday | Ps 12 | Isa 13-15 |
| 8:00 AM | **Matins on St. Lucy, Martyr** Ecclesiasticus 51:1-7, 2 Corinthians 10:17-11:2, Matthew 13:44-52 | |
| 10:15 AM | **Advent Three** Malachi 3:1-6; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 11:2-10 | |
| 14 Monday | Ps 13 | Isa 16-18 |
| 15 Tuesday | Ps 14 | Isa 19-21 |
| 16 Wednesday | Ps 15 | Isa 22-24 |
| 8:00 AM | Matins on **Ember Wednesday in Advent** Isaiah 2:2-5, Luke 1:26-38 | |
| 6:30 PM | **Catechesis on John 1:1-14** | |
| 17 Thu *O Wisdom* | Ps 16 | Isa 25-27 |
| 18 Fri | Ps 17 | Isa 28-30 |
| *O Adonai and Ruler* 8:00 AM | Matins on **Ember Friday in Advent** Isaiah 11:1-5, Luke 1:39-47 | |
| 19 Sat | Ps 18 | Isa 31-33 |
| *O Root of Jesse* 7:00 PM | **Ember Saturday in Advent** 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8, Luke 3:1-6 | |

**#73 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

Now since good works ought to follow faith in this way, and in no other, **those who do not believe that their sins are remitted unto them for the sake of Christ**, without any merit of their own, **perform their works with quite a different view.** Because, when they see the good works of the saints, they judge the latter according to the manner of man, and imagine, that they have obtained the forgiveness of their sins, or that they were justified before God by their works. For this reason they imitate the saints in their works, thinking that they shall, in the same manner, obtain the remission of their sins and appease the wrath of God.

We condemn this manifest error and false doctrine concerning works : **first,** because, when we hold forth our works instead of Christ, as a treasure, as a reconciliation of the wrath of God, and as a compensation for sin, **we deprive Christ, the true Mediator, of his honor, and give it to our feeble works**: but the honor should belong solely to Christ, and not to our miserable works.

**Secondly, the conscience cannot find peace in such works** ; for although men perform many good works, although they are zealous to do **as the treasure and the Mediator, through whom we are justified before God.** Thus Paul, when he lays down the substance of Christian faith, also connects faith and love, 1 Tim. 1:5: "The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (Henkel Translation, p. 199).

**Catechism** - Office of the Keys, Questions One & Two
*What is Confession?* **Answer:**
Confession embraces two parts: one is that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor,* as from God Himself, and in no wise doubt, but firmly believe, that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.
*What sins should we confess?* **Answer:**
Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the confessor we should confess those sins only which we know and feel in our hearts. (* *or pastor.)*

**Collect for Septuagesima**
O Lord, we beseech Thee favorably to hear the prayers of Thy people that we, who are justly punished for our offenses, may be mercifully delivered by Thy goodness, for the glory of Thy Name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Savior, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483** (I:503, Job 1)
Job's woes in Chapter One

Isaiah 55:10-11 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

**Week of Septuagesima:** January 24-30, 2027
**Hymn – "Salvation unto Us Has Come"** (Augustana SBH #16)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 24 Sunday | Ps 52 | Gen 28-30 |
| 8:00 AM<br>10:15 AM | **Matins on St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor**<br>Ezekiel 34:11-16, 1 Peter 5:1-4, John 21:15-17 | |
| | **Septuagesima**<br>Jeremiah 1:4-10, 1 Cor. 9:24-10:5, Mt. 20:1-16 | |
| 25 Monday | Ps 53 | Gen 31-33 |
| 10:30 AM | **The Conversion of St. Paul**<br>Jeremiah 1:4-10, Acts 9:1-22, Mt 19:27-30 | |
| 26 Tuesday | Ps 54 | Gen 34-36 |
| 10:30 AM | **St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor**<br>Acts 20:17-35, Ephesians 3:14-21, Matthew 24:42-47 | |
| 27 Wednesday | Ps 55 | Gen 37-39 |
| 6:30 PM | **Catechesis on Luke 8:4-15** | |
| 28 Thursday | Ps 56 | Gen 40-42 |
| 29 Friday | Ps 57 | Gen 43-45 |
| 30 Saturday | Ps 58 | Gen 46-48 |

**#83 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

They also quote St. James, 2:24, and say: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Now they imagine that this passage very forcibly opposes our doctrine; but if they only drop their wild conceits, and make no arbitrary additions, there will be no difficulty in replying. The words of the apostle James are explicit, but our adversaries add the fiction, that we merit the remission of sins by our works. Again, they pretend that good works are a reconciliation, through which we obtain the mercy of God; that we can overcome the great power of the devil, of death, and sin, by good works; and that our good works as such, are so acceptable to God, and so highly esteemed by him, that we have no need of Christ the Mediator. **None of these views ever entered into the mind of the apostle James**, though our adversaries undertake to maintain them by this declaration of the Apostle.

In the **first place**, then, we must observe that **this passage is more against our opponents than in their favor.** For they teach that men become godly and righteous before God, through love and works. They have nothing to say concerning faith, by which we cleave to Christ the Mediator; nay, they will have nothing to do with faith, and even attempt to suppress this doctrine of faith with sword and fire. James, however, pursues a different course; **he does not omit faith, but speaks of it, thus recognizing Christ** them, yet no work is so pure, important, or precious, as to propitiate God, or to secure eternal life, in short to give peace and joy to the conscience.

**Thirdly, those who build upon their works, never become truly acquainted with God or his will** ; for he that doubts the grace of God, cannot believe that he will be heard, and as he cannot call upon God, he cannot realize divine assistance, nor learn to know God. But when we have faith, namely, the assurance that God is merciful to us through Christ, we can cheerfully call upon God, and learn to know him and his will. (Henkel Translation, p. 192).

**Collect for Advent Three** *(Gaudete)*
Lord, we beseech Thee, give ear to our prayers and lighten the darkness of our hearts by Thy gracious visitation; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Catechism** - Lord's Prayer, The Conclusion & Meaning: Amen.
*What does this mean?* **Answer:**
That I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven, and heard; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised to hear us. Amen, Amen, that is, yea, yea, it shall be so.

**Matthew 6:33-34**
"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483 (**I:425, 2 Chronicles 35:20ff ) The Death of Josiah



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483 (I**I:300, 1 Maccabees 3:1-26) Judas Maccabees with the soldiers defeat Samaria and Syria.

**Week of Advent Four**: December 20-23, 2026
**Hymn** – To Jordan Came Our Lord, the Christ (Augustana SBH #4)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 20 Sunday<br>*O Key of David*<br>10:15 AM | Ps 19 | Isa 34-36 |
| | **Advent Four**<br>Isaiah 40:1-8; Philippians 4:4-7; John 1:19-28 | |
| 21 Monday<br>*O Dayspring*<br>10:30 AM | Ps 20 | Isa 37-39 |
| | **St. Thomas, Apostle**<br>Judges 6:36-40, Ephesians 2:19-22, John 20:24-31 | |
| 22 Tuesday<br>*O King of Nations* | Ps 21 | Isa 40-42 |
| 23 Wednesday<br>*O Emmanuel*<br>10:30 AM<br>6:30 PM | Ps 22 | Isa 43-45 |
| | **St. Thorlak, Bishop & Confessor**<br>Hebrews 13:7-17, Matthew 24:42-47 | |
| | **Catechesis on** Luke 2:33-40 Christmas One | |

**#74 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

The error, however, concerning his works, clings closely to the world. **The heathens also have sacrifices which came originally from the Patriarchs**. These sacrifices and works of the Fathers they imitated, knowing nothing of faith, and believing, that these works would secure to them the grace of God. The Israelites also devised works and sacrifices, with a view to propitiate God by their *opus opera tum*; that is, by the mere work, without faith. We see how vehemently the Prophets reproved them, in the 50th Psalm, verse 8 : "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices," &c. Again, Jeremiah says, 7:22 : "For I spoke not unto your fathers, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices." Here the Prophets do not condemn the sacrifices as such, because God had commanded these as external exercises among his people ; but **they reprove especially their ungodly hearts, sacrificing as they did, with a view thus to reconcile God**, *ex opere operato*, whereby faith was suppressed.

Now, as **no work can give the conscience true peace,** the hypocrites are wont, at a blind venture, to contrive work after work, and sacrifice after sacrifice, all without the word or command of God, and under the influence of an evil conscience, as we have seen in Popery. They are influenced principally by the examples of the saints ; for when they imitate these examples, they think that they shall obtain the remission of their sins, as the saints did, &c.;—but the saints *believed*. The children of Israel, seeing that the Prophets sacrificed in the high places and groves, imitated them for the purpose of appeasing the wrath of God by that work. But the Prophets made sacrifices at those places, not because they wished to merit the by unnoticed, always bear with them, and as far as possible, have patience with each other in a brotherly spirit. (Henkel Translation, p. 198-199).

## Collect for Transfiguration

O God, Who in the glorious Transfiguration of Thine Only-Begotten Son hast confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of the Fathers, and Who, in the Voice that came from the bright cloud, didst in a wonderful manner foreshow the adoption of sons, mercifully vouchsafe to make us coheirs with the King of His glory and bring us to the enjoyment of the same; 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.**

## Catechism - Confession, Question One, Two, Three

*What is the Office of the Keys?* **Answer:**
It is the peculiar church power which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners unto them, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent.
*Where is this written?* **Answer:**
Thus writes the holy Evangelist John, chapter twentieth:
The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.
*What do you believe according to these words?* **Answer:**
I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, especially when they exclude manifest and impenitent sinners from the Christian congregation, and, again, when they absolve those who repent of their sins and are willing to amend, this is as valid and certain, in heaven also, as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself.

**1 John 4:9** "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483**
(I:528, Psalm of David)

**Week of Transfiguration:** January 17-23, 2027
**Hymn** – O Wondrous Type, O Vision Fair (Augustana SBH #15)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 17 Sunday | Ps 45 | Gen 7-9 |
| 10:15 AM | **The Transfiguration of Our Lord** Isaiah 61:10-11, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matthew.17:1-9 | |
| 18 Monday | Ps 46 | Gen 10-12 |
| 10:30 AM | **Confession of St. Peter** Ac 2:22-24, 32-33, 1 Pt 1:1-9, Mt 16:13-19 | |
| 19 Tuesday | Ps 47 | Gen 13-15 |
| 10:30 AM | **St. Henry of Finland, Martyr** Daniel 3:59-92(LXX), 2 Cor. 1:3-7, Matthew 16:24-27 | |
| 20 Wednesday | Ps 48 | Gen 16-18 |
| 6:30 PM | **Catechesis on Matthew 20:1-16** | |
| 21 Thursday | Ps 49 | Gen 19-21 |
| 22 Friday | Ps 50 | Gen 22-24 |
| 23 Saturday | Ps 51 | Gen 25-27 |

**#82 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**
The difficulties between Julius Cæsar and Pompey were but small at first; and, had one yielded to the other, the great war would not have followed, in which there was so much blood-shed, so much misery and woe. But both of them being obstinate, unspeakable mischief and confusion in the whole Roman government of that time, resulted from it. Many heresies have also originated in the enmity of preachers against one another. **These words of Peter, "Love covers the multitude of sins," must therefore be understood in the sense, that love covers our neighbor's sins.** Although differences arise among Christians, yet love bears all things, is willing to pass them by, yields to others, bears their faults with brotherly kindness, and is not censorious. Peter never meant to say, that love merits the remission of sins before God, that love reconciles us to God, without the mediation of Christ, or that we become acceptable to God, through love, without Christ the Mediator. His meaning is, that he, in whom Christian love dwells, is not obstinate, overbearing, or unkind, but readily overlooks the imperfections and faults of his neighbor, forgives him in a brotherly spirit, makes peace, reproves *himself*, and yields for the sake of peace, as the Proverb says: *Amici vitia noris*, *non oderis*, that is, thou shouldst know the faults of a friend, but not hate him on their account. And the Apostles did not without good reason exhort them to this love, which the philosophers call επεικειαν; for if men are to dwell together in unity, whether it be in the church, or in temporal government, they must not weigh each others imperfections too rigorously, but let many of them pass remission of their sins by these works, but because they preached and taught there. **They offered these sacrifices, therefore, as an evidence of their faith.** (Henkel Translation, p. 192-193).

**Collect for Advent Four *(Rorate Coeli)***
Stir up, O Lord, we beseech Thee, Thy power, and come and help us with Thy great might, that by Thy grace whatsoever is hindered by our sins may be speedily accomplished through Thy mercy and satisfaction; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Catechism** - The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, First Question
*What is Baptism?* Answer:
Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's word.
*Which is that word of God?* Answer:
Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: *Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

**John 1:1-5** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."



**Illustrated Grman Bible of 1483 (**I:433, Ezra 6)
The Decree of King Darius

**Christmas Eve and Day**: December 24-26, 2026
**Hymn** – O Jesus Christ, All Praise to Thee (Augustana SBH #5)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 24 Thursday | Ps 23 | Isa 46-48 |
| 7:00 PM | **Christ's Mass Eve** Isaiah 9:2-7, 1 John 4:7-16, Matthew 1:18-25 | |
| 25 Friday | Ps 24 | Isa 49-51 |
| 8:00 AM | **Christmas Matins** Micah 5:2-4, Titus 3:4-7, Luke 2 | |
| 9:00 AM | **Christ's Mass Day** Isaiah 7:10-14, Heb. 1:1-12, St. John 1:1-14 | |
| 26 Saturday | Ps 25 | Isa 52-54 |
| No service | **St Stephen, First Martyr** 2 Chron. 24:17-22, Acts 6:8-7:60, Matt 23:34-39 | |

## Christmas Eve

**#75 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

Again, the people having heard that Abraham had offered up his son, offered up their sons too, in order that they might also do works afflictive and grievous to them. But Abraham did not offer up his son as a reconciliation, to justify him before God.

Thus Christ instituted the Eucharist in the church, offering therein the remission of sins through the divine promise, that we may be admonished, that our faith may be strengthened by the external sign, and that we may thus profess our faith before men, and exalt and preach the benefits of Christ ; as Paul says, 1 Cor. 11:26 : "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." **Our adversaries contend, however, that the mass is a work, which justifies us in the sight of God**, *ex opere operato*, and releases those from guilt and pain, for whom it is held.

Anthony, Bernard, Dominic, and other saints, by their particular mode of life withdrew from society, that they might have **a better opportunity to read the holy Scriptures**, or for the sake of other exercises. Nevertheless they maintained that they were accounted just before God through faith in Christ, and that they obtained the grace of God through Christ alone. But the great mass of people afterwards blindly rushed on, neglected faith in Christ, regarded only the example, without faith, and ventured to obtain the remission of their sins by these monastic works. (Henkel Translation, p. 193-194).

**Collect for Epiphany One**

O Lord, we beseech Thee mercifully to receive the prayers of Thy people who call upon Thee, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Catechism** - The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Fourth Question
*What does such baptizing with water signify?* **Answer:**
It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.
*Where is this written?* **Answer:**
St. Paul says, Romans, chapter sixth: *We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483** (II:377, Mark's Gospel)
Mark's Gospel includes the story of the paralytic who takes up his bed (Mark 2:1–12) and concludes with the resurrection of Christ.

**Week of Epiphany One:** January 10-16, 2027

**Hymn** – Praise God the Lord, Ye Sons of Men (Augustana SBH #10)

**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10 Sunday<br>10:15 AM | Ps 38 | Mark 11 |
| | **First Sunday after the Epiphany**<br>Isaiah 61:1-3, Romans 12:1-5, Luke 2:41-52 | |
| 11 Monday | Ps 39 | Mark 12 |
| 12 Tuesday | Ps 40 | Mark 13 |
| 13 Wednesday<br>6:30 PM | Ps 41 | Mark 14 |
| | **Catechesis on John 2:1-11** | |
| 14 Thursday | Ps 42 | Mark 15-16 |
| 15 Friday | Ps 43 | Gen 1-3 |
| 16 Saturday | Ps 44 | Gen 4-6 |

## #81 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.

They also allege the expression of the apostle Peter: "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins," 1 Pet. 4:8. Now it is evident, that Peter is here also speaking of love toward our neighbors; for he is dwelling in this passage upon the commandment of love, which requires us to love one another. Nor has it ever entered the thoughts of any Apostle, that love should overcome death or sin; or be a reconciliation, without Christ the Mediator; or be our righteousness, without Christ the Reconciler. Because love, though we possess it, is nothing more than legal righteousness; but it is far from being equivalent to Christ, through whom alone we are justified, when we believe that the Father is merciful to us for the Mediator's sake, whose merits are accounted to us. For this reason **Peter previously admonishes us to adhere to Christ, and to be built on him as the cornerstone.** He says: "He that believeth on him, shall not be confounded," 1 Pet. 2:6. We shall be confounded, indeed, before the judgment seat and the face of God, with our works and conduct; but faith, through which we obtain Christ, releases us from these terrors of death, because we are perfectly assured by the promises, that our sins are remitted through Christ.

**The language, 1 Peter 4:8: "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins," &c., is quoted from the Proverbs of Solomon, where it is said: "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins," Prov. 10:12. Here the text itself clearly shows, that Solomon is speaking of love toward our neighbor and not of the love we owe to God.** And he means the same thing that Paul does in the subsequent passage to the Colossians, namely, that we should endeavor to live kindly and brotherly, bearing patiently with one another, and avoiding disaffection and schisms; as if he would say, schisms grow out of hatred, as we see a great fire often arising from a small spark. (Henkel Translation, p. 197-198).




**Illustrated German Bible of 1483**
(II:396, Luke's Gospel)
St. Luke is show to the right composing his Gospel. This picture is a classic example of "continuous narrative," a technique where an artist includes multiple events within a single image.
In the top middle of this picture is the birth of Christ in the stable (Lk 1-6).



**Collect for Vigil of the Nativity (Dec 24)**

O God, Who has made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant, we beseech Thee, that as we have known on earth the mysteries of that Light, we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Collect for Christ's Mass Dawn (Dec 25)**

Grant, we implore You, almighty God, that we, upon whom is poured the new light of Thy Word made flesh, may show forth in our actions that which by faith shineth in our minds; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN**

**Christ's Mass Day**

**#76 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

Thus **the reason of man always esteems good works too highly**, and assigns them the wrong place. The Gospel opposes this error, and teaches that we are justified in the sight of God, not on account of the law or our works, but for the sake of Christ alone. No one, however, can embrace him, except through faith. Hence we also are justified before God, *through faith alone*.

In opposition to these views, our opponents quote the declaration of Paul, 1 Cor. 13:2 : "Though I have all faith, &c., and have not charity, I am nothing." Here they exultingly proclaim and boast, that they are assured by this passage that, not only faith, but love also, justifies us before God. But we shall find no difficulty in replying, inasmuch as we have shown above what views we entertain in relation to love and works. Paul means in this passage, that **Christians should love their neighbors, and this we also assert.** For we have already said, that **when we are regenerated, we begin to keep the law and to obey the commandments of God**. Hence, if any one neglects Christian love, he has become cold,—though he may have had strong faith,—he has become carnal minded, he is destitute of the Spirit and faith ; because **the Holy Spirit is not, where Christian love and other good fruits are wanting**. But it does not follow from this, that love justifies us before God ; that is, that we therefore obtain the remission of our sins through love ; that love overcomes the terrors of sin and death ; that love should be set up against the wrath of God and his judgment, instead of Christ ; that love fulfils the law ; that we are reconciled and become acceptable to God through love, and not for the sake of Christ. Paul says nothing concerning all these things ; and yet our opponents invent them.

For, if by our love we can overcome the wrath of God, and if we become acceptable to him by our fulfilment of the law, our adversaries may also assert, that the divine promises and the whole Gospel are of no account ; because it teaches that we have access to God through Christ *alone*, and that we are not acceptable to God for our works of the law, but on account doctrines. All this accords very imperfectly with their ostentatious display of love, of charity, &c. **For if they had but a spark of love, peace and union might easily be secured in the church,** provided they would not thus, in pure revengeful bitterness and pharisaic envy, defend their human traditions, (which are, at any rate, of no use to Christian doctrine or piety,) against the known truth, especially as even they themselves do not strictly observe their traditions. (Henkel Translation, p. 197).

**Collect for The Epiphany of Our Lord**

O God, Who by the leading of a star didst manifest Th*y* Only-Begotten Son to the Gentiles*: M*ercifully grant*,* that we, who know Thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead; 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.**



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483**
(II:396, Luke's Gospel)
The wise men coming to visit the Christ (Mt 2:1-12) from the bottom left of a "continuous narrative." See picture on Christmas Eve and Day.

**Weekly Verse for Epiphany 1**
**John 1:14** "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

**Epiphany of Our Lord:** January 6-9, 2027
**Hymn** – Now Sing We, Now Rejoice (Augustana SBH #9)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 Wednesday<br>7:00 PM | Church undecorating, 6 PM<br>**The Epiphany of Our Lord – Divine Service**<br>*(with burning of Christmas Tree following service)*<br>Isaiah 49:1-7, Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12 | |
| | Ps 34 | Mark 7 |
| 7 Thursday | Ps 35 | Mark 8 |
| 8 Friday | Ps 36 | Mark 9 |
| 9 Saturday | Ps 37 | Mark 10 |

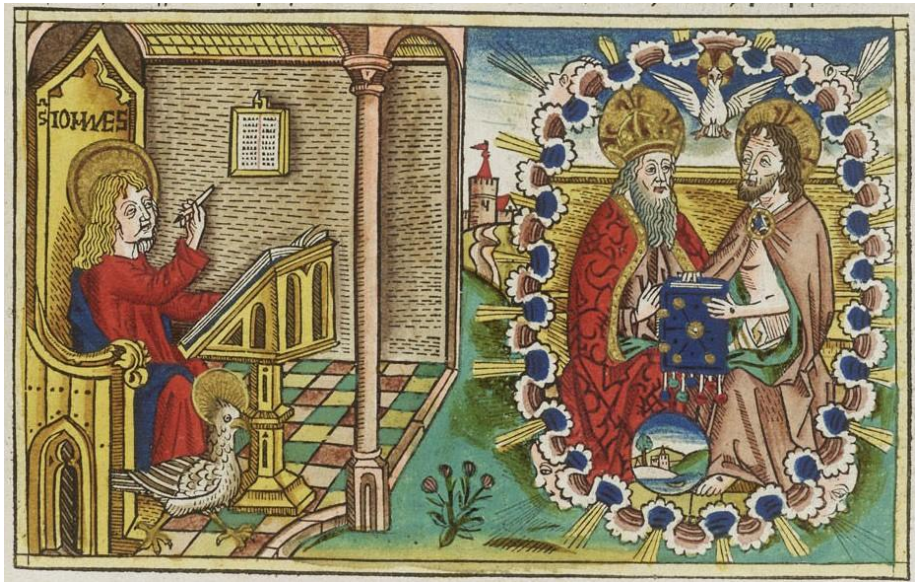
**#80 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

For union cannot continue, when the bishops unnecessarily impose upon the people burdens that are too heavy. And when the people are disposed hastily to pass severe judgment upon the whole walk and conduct of the bishops or preachers, or when they rashly become dissatisfied with their preacher, perhaps on account of some slight imperfection, factions will likewise be readily created, and it must result in great mischief; for in their bitterness, they will immediately seek other teachers and preachers. Again, **perfection and unity are maintained, that is, the church remains undivided and entire, when the strong exercise patience and forbearance towards the weak, when the people have patience with their preachers**, and when the bishops and preachers, on their part, know how to excuse the infirmities and imperfections of the people, according to circumstances. Respecting this mode of maintaining union, much is said throughout the books of the philosophers and moralists. **For we must forgive each other and excuse many things for the sake of union.** Of this Paul speaks in more than one place. Our adversaries are not right, therefore, in the conclusion that love must justify us before God ; for here Paul is not speaking of personal perfection or holiness, as they imagine, but says, that *love creates peace and harmony in the church*. Thus Ambrose also explains this passage : "Precisely as an edifice is entire, when all its parts are connected," &c.

But it is a shame for our adversaries, that while they are writing and preaching so finely about love, and crying *love, love,* in all their books, they are manifesting none at all. What noble Christian love! to destroy the unity of the church, by their unheard of tyranny,—to attempt to influence his most gracious Majesty, the Emperor, to issue bloody edicts and promulgate cruel laws,—to murder priests and other pious, upright men, for no other reason, but simply for opposing manifest, infamous abuses ! They desire the death of all those, who utter a single word against their ungodly of Christ, as the only Mediator and Reconciler. (Henkel Translation, p. 194).

**Collect for Christ's Mass Day (Dec 25)**

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the new birth of Thine Only-Begotten Son in the flesh may set us free, who are held in the old bondage under the yoke of sin; 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.**




**Illustrated German Bible of 1483** (II:427, John's Gospel)
John's Gospel begins with a glorious presentation of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

**Week of Christmas One:** December 27, 2026-January 2, 2027
**Hymn** – To God the Anthem Raising (Christmas One) (ASBH #6)
**Hymn** – To the Name of Our Salvation (Circumcision and Name of Jesus) (Augustana SBH #7)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 27 Sunday | Ps 26 | Isa 55-57 |
| 8:00 AM | **Matins on St. John, Apostle and Evangelist** Hosea 14:1-9, 1 John 1:1-10, John 21:19-24 | |
| 10:15 AM | **Sunday after Christ's Mass** Isaiah 11:1-5; Galatians 4:1-7, Luke 2:33-40 | |
| 28 Monday | Ps 27 | Isa 58-60 |
| 10:30 AM | **Holy Innocents** Jer. 31:15-17, Rev 14:1-5, Matthew 2:13-18 | |
| 29 Tuesday | Ps 28 | Isa 61-63 |
| 30 Wednesday | Ps 29 | Isa 64-66 |
| 6:30 PM | **Learn-by-Heart/Catechesis on Mt 2:13-23** | |
| 31 Thursday | Lk 1:46-55 | Mark 1 |
| 7:00 PM | **Eve of the Name of Jesus** | |
| 1 Friday | Lk 1:68-79 | Mark 2 |
| No service | **The Circumcision and Name of Jesus (Jan 1)** Isaiah 63:7-18, Isaiah 55:1-13, Gal 3:23-29; Luke 2:21 | |
| 2 Saturday | Ps 30 | Mark 3 |

The Sunday after Christmas

**#77 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

Our adversaries, by making additions, as in this place, explain many passages of Scripture according to their own opinions, and contrary to the true import. **This passage is sufficiently clear, if they only cease adding their own dreams, which are not in the Scriptures ; for they do not understand what faith is, what Christ is, or how man is justified before God.** The Corinthians and others among them, had heard the Gospel, and received many excellent gifts ; and, as is usually the case in matters of this kind, they were zealous and active in all things, in the beginning ; but afterwards, when factions and sects arose among them, as Paul informs us, they began to scorn the true Apostles. Paul for this reason reproves them, and admonishes them to union and Christian love.

Nor does he, in this place, speak of the remission of sins, or the manner of becoming just and righteous in the sight of God, or how a sinner is converted to Christ, or of love to God ; but rather concerning the fruits of faith, and concerning love toward our neighbors. Now it is most absurd to suppose, that the love we exercise on earth toward our neighbors, should

**Collect for Christmas Two**

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, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. AMEN

**Catechism** - The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Third Question
*How can water do such great things?* Answer:
It is not the water indeed that does them, but the word of God which is in and with the water, and faith which trusts such word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is simple water, and no baptism. But with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, chapter third:
By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.




**Illustrated German Bible of 1483** (II:347, Matthew's Gospel)
Matthew's Gospel begins with the genealogy of Abraham and David

**Week of Christmas Two:** January 3-5, 2027
**Hymn** – "The Newborn Child This Early Morn" (Augustana SBH #8)
**Daily Readings** –

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Sunday 10:15 AM | **Second Sunday after Christmas** Genesis 46:1-7, 1 Peter 4:12-19, Matthew 2:13-23 | |
| | Ps 31 | Mark 4 |
| 4 Monday | Ps 32 | Mark 5 |
| 5 Tuesday | Ps 33 | Mark 6 |

**#79 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

They also allege against us the declaration in Col. 3:14 : "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Hence they conclude that love justifies us in the sight of God, because it makes us perfect. We might here reply in various ways **on the subject of perfection**, but we shall be content with a simple exposition of Paul's declaration. It is evident that Paul is speaking of love to our neighbors ; hence no one has a right to think that Paul meant to say, that we should be justified before God, rather by the works of the second table than by those of the first. **If, moreover, love is a perfection, or a perfect fulfilment of the law, there is no need of Christ the Mediator** ; but Paul teaches invariably, that we become acceptable to God for Christ's sake, not for the sake of our love, our works, or the law. Not even saints (as said above) fulfil the law perfectly.

Now as Paul writes and teaches in every other place, that **there is no perfection in our works** during this life, it must not be imagined, that he spoke to the Colossians concerning personal perfection, but **he referred to the *unity of the church*** ; and the word to which they attach the sense of perfection, signifies simply to be undivided or united. And his assertion, that *love is the bond of perfectness*, signifies that **love binds, unites, and keeps together the different members of the church among themselves**. For as union is preserved in a city or in a family, by the exercise of mutual forbearance, and as peace and tranquility cannot continue, unless we frequently overlook each other's faults and bear with one another ; so Paul would exhort them to Christian love, patiently to bear each other's faults and imperfections, and to forgive one another, in order that unity might be preserved in the church, and that the mass of Christians might not be severed, separated, and divided into all manner of factions and sects ; from which great mischief, hatred, and envy, all manner of bitter feelings and evil passions, might arise, and finally public heresy. (Henkel Translation, p. 196-197).

justify us before God, when at the same time it is essential to that righteousness which avails in the sight of God, that we should obtain what will appease the wrath of God, and calm the conscience before him in heaven. **None of these things can be effected through love,** but through faith alone, by which we embrace Christ and the promises of God. This is true, however, that he who loses love, loses also the Spirit and faith. Thus says Paul : *If I have not charity, I am nothing* ; but he does not add the affirmative, that love justifies before God. (Henkel Translation, p. 194-195).

**Collect for Christmas One**
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, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **AMEN**

**Isaiah 7:14** "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483** (II:396, Luke's Gospel)
The circumcision and presentation of Christ (Lk 2:21-39) from the top right of a "continuous narrative." See picture on Christmas Eve and Day.

**Catechism** - The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Second Question
*What does Baptism give or profit?* Answer:
It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.
*Which are such words and promises of God?* Answer:
Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

**#78 Art. IV "Justification" of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.**

Yet **they allege here, that love is preferred to faith and hope** ; for Paul says, 1 Cor. 13:13 : "The greatest of these is charity." Hence, they contend, that the virtue which Paul calls the greatest, justifies and sanctifies us in the sight of God. But in fact, Paul is here speaking of love to our neighbors, and *that love*, he says, *is the greatest*, because it extends far and produces much fruit upon earth. Faith and hope are exercised in reference to God alone, but love holds intercourse with men on earth, and effects much good, by consoling, instructing, and giving assistance and counsel, both privately and publicly. Yet **we grant, that to love God and our neighbor is the greatest virtue,** because it is the greatest commandment : "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart," &c., Matt. 22:37–38. **It does not follow from this, however, that love justifies us.** But, *the greatest virtue*, say they, *must undoubtedly justify us*. *Reply*.—It might be true, if God were gracious on account of our virtue. Now it was shown above, that we are justified and become acceptable, on account of Christ, and not for the sake of our virtue, because it is impure. Yea, while the commandment is the greatest, "Thou shalt love God," yet this virtue,—love to God—cannot justify us in the least. For as this law and virtue exceed our capacity, we are not justified on account of love. Faith, however, justifies us, not on account of our deeds, but solely because it seeks and receives mercy, and will not rely on our own works ; that is, we teach, that **the law does not justify us, but the Gospel**, which bids us to believe that God is merciful to us for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of our deeds.

Our adversaries, however, teach that love reconciles us to God, because they do not understand the Gospel, and regard nothing but the law, by which they wish to secure the grace of God on account of their own righteousness, and not through mercy for Christ's sake. Consequently, they must be teachers of the Law only, and not of the Gospel. (Henkel Translation, p. 195-196).

**Collect for the Circumcision and Name of Jesus (January 1)**
O merciful and eternal God, heavenly Father, who didst cause Thy Son to endure circumcision and to be made subject to the Law, that we might be redeemed from the curse of the Law: We beseech Thee, grant us grace to become partakers of this redemption and thus obtain eternal salvation, through the same, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reignth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Weekly Verse for Christmas 2**
**Psalm 90:1-2** "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."



**Illustrated German Bible of 1483**
(II:557 Rev 1:20) 7 Candlesticks