

Redeemer Lutheran Church 1000 Pioneer, Delta, CO 81416

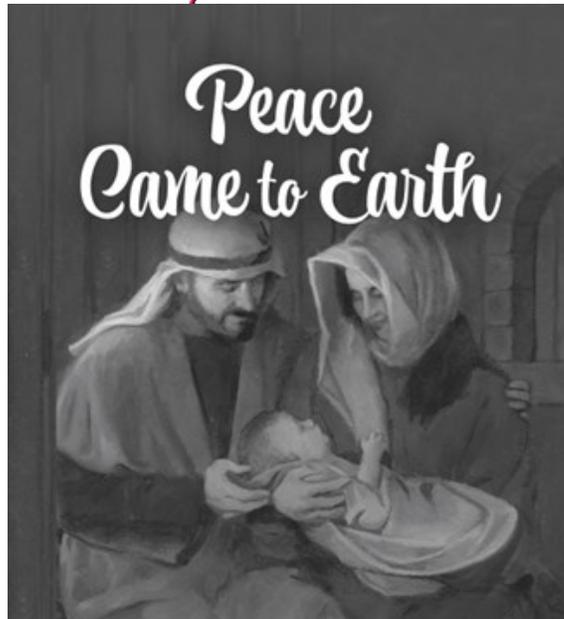
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## Redeemer's Christian Connection

# Pastor's Page



Our Midweek Advent series this year is "Peace Came to Earth." The following are brief summaries on the focus for the three Wednesday's in Advent, and Christmas Day, using a star as an illustration.

### MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: Look Up! The Star of Peace Draws Near

We begin our Advent journey with the most common way to seek peace: possessions. This is the top of our star, the most obvious pursuit of peace, shooting upward without an end in sight. The Advent season knows all about seeking more things. Shopping is in full swing and the promise is that if only we had all the right things, then we would be complete and at peace.

To counter that pursuit of peace by gathering more and more, God intersects us with the words of contentment from Paul. "Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content." (1 Timothy 6:6-8) Join all who have heard His invitation and have followed His star. In Him we have a lasting peace.



### MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 2: Peace to All, Near and Far

In week 2 of Advent, we have two contrasting pursuits of peace. These two make the two middle points of the star. First, Peace is a place a long way away. Peace is leaving it all behind. Peace is that perfectly calm lake. But God's true peace comes in the middle of the storm when the Savior is in the boat with us.

Second, we might also seek Peace as the past—if only we could erase it. If we could rearrange all the pieces of our past, putting some pieces far away, we imagine the peace we seek might finally come. But God comes to us where we are and says, "Peace be to you." God "makes peace by the blood of his cross." (Colossians 1:20) Peace comes at the cross where we are completely forgiven. We find peace in God's telling of His Son's story, His death and His resurrection. In that story, we are not just better. In that story, we're forgiven and at peace.



### MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 3: Our Peace Rests on Him Alone

In Advent week 3, we finish the star with the two points at the bottom of the star. First, Peace is with people when they follow your directions. If everyone would only listen to us and do what we say, there would be peace.

We think of Jesus as the Messiah, the Prince of Peace. And yet, Jesus says in Matthew 10 that He has come to bring not peace but a sword to divide the world. What brings peace finally to the world? Jesus brings peace by stepping into the center of our troubled world, letting Himself be the focus of the world's anger.

Therefore, Peace is finding our Purpose. All this work to get ready for Christmas—why bother? What will bring us peace when so much is still undone? We find our peace rests not in our work but in following Him, the Prince of Peace. He filled the manger and the cross and there we find our peace.



### The Nativity of Our Lord: The Diamond Found in the Manger

Now in our celebration of Christmas, we find there is a diamond in the center of the Advent star. That diamond rests in the manger of the Bethlehem stable. The treasure of the Christmas star therefore is not in the distant heavens but in the stable. Peace is finding the diamond of God's gift in the straw of the manger.

That peace becomes His gift to the world. This Christmas peace reminds us to focus on giving thanks for His gifts. By giving thanks, we can begin to step away from the useless treadmill of worry. Peace is placing our cares where they belong, with the One who cares about us. This Christmas, we have the peace that passes understanding, and this gift comes from the God who understand us perfectly. As Mary, Joseph and the shepherds pondered God's gift through the baby born, so we find peace. God's peace is found in the treasure of God's Son, laid in the straw of the manger.





## Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

LSB 359

One of the most successful German Christmas hymns translated into English is *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*. The text is by that greatest of poets, Anonymous. It does, however, spring from prominent Medieval poetry about Mary in which the Virgin is identified with a rose (see Song of Solomon 2:1), flowering from the branch/shoot or "root of Jesse," Isaiah 11:1-10. The Church is also associated with the "Rose of Sharon," which blooms from the branch/shoot or "root of Jesse."

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.*

### The Text:

The earliest source for this hymn text is from a 16th Century prayerbook, in which the poetry extends to 23 verses, all the way from the prophecies of Isaiah to the arrival of the Wise Men! Michael Praetorius (more on him later) set two of the poetic stanzas to the tune we associate with this hymn today. The text Praetorius utilized was also slightly altered from the original (either previously or by Praetorius himself) in order to change the focus of the text from Mary to Christ. It is this version of the text, translated into English by Theodore Baker roughly 100 years ago, that appears in *Lutheran Service Book*. These two verses dwell largely on the prophecies of Isaiah.

The third verse is another matter entirely, and is the original work of Fridrich Layriz, who lived 1808-1859, and was a Lutheran pastor. This verse makes explicit the identification of the rose in the poetry with Christ (as opposed to the Medieval identification of Mary with the rose), before confessing the two natures of Christ - "True man, yet very God," - and the work that the Christ child has come to do - "From sin and death He saves us."

The final verse is from verse 22 in the original poem, again edited to make Christ the object of the poetry, rather than Mary. In this verse the singer implores the Savior to forgive our weakness (of which He is aware through having experienced it in the Incarnation), and to lead them "*To the bright courts of heaven.*" The juxtaposition of the incarnate Christ in his manger with the image of Christ in glory and the salvation of Creation is here as powerful as it is anywhere else in the canon of Advent and Christmas hymnary.

From beginning to end, this hymn can be seen as a series of poetic scenes, two or three in each verse, where the text dwells alternatively on the prophecies of the Incarnation, the reality of that Incarnation, and the salvation purchased in that reality for all humanity.

### The Tune

As noted earlier, the tune as we have it is credited to Michael Praetorius, who is also responsible for the harmonization given here.

## LIVE NATIVITY



Saturday, December 16th We are once again having the Tiny Treasures Preschool children present the Christmas story with the help of the congregation. We really need help in three areas: 1) congregational singing of the hymns (so please plan on being here and maybe bring a friend), 2) we need baked goods for the bake sale, so please consider baking something yummy, 3) we also need help with the soup supper. We have some preschool families signed up to make soup to share, but need help serving the soups. Please consider how you can help with this annual event and thank you for all your support of Tiny Treasures Preschool, it is greatly appreciated. See you Saturday, December 16th, ready to sing at 6:00 p.m. and then to fellowship at 6:30 p.m. around soup, baked goods and real Christmas joy.

## NEWS FROM REDEEMER LUTHERAN SCHOOL

RLS students and their families will celebrate Jesus' birth with a Christmas program on Thursday evening, Dec. 14 at 6:00 p.m. You are invited to join us. Through Bible readings, recitations and songs, the students will share how the first Christmas was truly a night like no other! Tiny Treasures will host its annual Live Nativity program on Saturday evening, Dec. 16.

RLS and Tiny Treasures Preschool were represented in the Delta Parade of Lights on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Our students participated by decorating and riding on a float. Thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Wilson for providing the truck and trailer, and to all the RLS families who helped out.

Christmas break begins Wed., December 20, at which time we will be half-way through the school year! The teachers at Redeemer Lutheran School have high expectations of their students, and the students have grown academically and learned a lot of very important things. Most importantly, they continue to learn about God's love in sending Jesus, their Savior from sin.

The Parish School Board is extremely grateful for all the support from congregational members and others who share the goal of providing a nurturing Christian environment of academic excellence for all the students. If you are interested in seeing what is happening in our school, please contact Mr. Jace Holden to arrange a visit.

## Birthdays

Carol Rustebakke—December 3rd  
Devona Henderson—December 4th  
Sarah Tunget—December 10th  
Herb Kruger—December 10th  
Nicci Egan—December 13th  
Amy Mummert—December 17th  
Michael Althaus—December 19th  
Gracie Kindschy—December 19th  
Aaron Clubb—December 20th  
Gary Grasmick—December 21st  
Austin Althaus—December 21st  
Ruby Weber—December 23rd  
Kathy Kadlec—December 25th  
Cody Weber—December 30th

## Wedding Anniversaries

Bruce & Jeanne Nelson—December 10th  
Dave & Linda Wacker—December 28th  
Cody & Ruby Weber—December 31st



## Baptismal Birthdays

Cornelia Reynolds—December 3rd  
Audrey Kruger—December 6th  
Michael Guerra—December 7th  
Marguerite Wingfield—December 15th  
Samuel Bachman—December 15th  
Kathy Bieth—December 18th  
LeeAnn Sinner—December 21st  
Madysen Scarbrough—December 23rd  
Sue Morris—December 24th  
Mark Thiebaud—December 24th  
Gary Grasmick—December 28th  
Pastor VanFossan—December 30th  
Ayla Kruger—December 30th

## THE LORD'S MINISTRY

Redeemer Lutherans attendance figures and financial blessings that were given for the month of November to further maintain the Lord's ministry.

Date	Attendance	Communicants	Offerings Received Gen./Designated Funds	Needed Operating Budget
11-5- 2023	82	64	\$2,635.00/\$389.78	\$4,455.06
11-12-2023	88	67	\$2,656.00/\$35,525.00	\$4,455.06
11-19-2023	93	74	\$2,330.00/\$1,333.63	\$4,455.06
11-22-2023	19	19	\$760.00	
11-26-2023	65	56	\$2,085.00/\$15,020.00	\$4,455.06



## Life Thoughts in the Church Year

**December 4 – Advent II** – Our sinfulness once left us lifeless as stones, but God has taken us for His own beloved children (Matthew 3:9) by becoming a little one among us Himself (Isaiah 11:6). Now we get to welcome others as Christ has welcomed us. We proclaim the sanctity of every human life to defend the cause of the poor, and we put it into practice to give deliverance to the children of the needy (Psalm 72:4).

**December 11 – Advent III** – Abortion and assisted suicide attempt to acquire one's salvation by violence (Matthew 11:12). But God's kingdom comes as He mercifully preserves at our weakest (Matthew 11:5-6). We need not seize happiness at the expense of others. Rather, we advocate endurance in sufferings such as surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis (James 5:11), and with our support for them we strengthen instead of extinguish (Isaiah 35:3).

**December 18 – Advent IV** – Surprise pregnancy once redeemed the whole world. Joseph would have aborted the undertaking, but the Lord explicitly forbid it (Matthew 1:19-21). Even human limitations could not prevent the Heavenly Father from keeping His promises (Romans 1:2-3). So, every surprise pregnancy we encounter—along with our lives and everyone else's (Psalm 24:1)—belongs to Almighty God, and we may rejoice to say so.

**December 25 – Nativity of Our Lord** – The Lord bared His holy arm (Isaiah 52:10) not just by appearing in the form of a full-grown man. The Word became flesh (John 1:14) first as an embryo and a fetus. The clearest revelation of God's glory (Hebrews 1:2-3) also designates every human life precious, no matter what age, appearance, or ability. We can no more keep quiet about the sanctity of life than we can leave out Christmas or Jesus from the Gospel!

