

# The Parish Voice

St. Thomas Lutheran Church — Streetsboro, Ohio

December 2020

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Julius Caesar summed up his military achievements in three words, “Veni Vidi, Vici.” (“I came I saw. I conquered.”) The first word gives us the clue to what the season of Advent is about. Take the passive participle of the Latin word *venire*, (*ventus*), employ the prefix *ad-*, and you wind up with *adventus* — “came to” (as in “I came to see the new painting,” not “I was out for a while and then I came to.”)

That makes it seem as if the Advent season is only about what happened. It is not. The Advent season is about what happened, what is going to happen, and what is happening. In short, the Advent season is a microcosm of the Christian life.

Of course, our Christian life has its roots in what happened — the birth life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord. He is the focal point of all that it means to be Christian — He came! So Advent is a time when we get ready to celebrate that coming. We call it Christmas, an event that took place more than 2,000 years ago.

The One whose coming we celebrate has promised He will come again. We look forward with eager hope to that Second Coming, in which event all of human history will have its culmination. Some, of course, see that coming as something of a danger, a time when judgment will be rendered for sins committed. Those of us who know that forgiveness is the free gift of the incarnate Lord do not look forward with dread; we know that our sins have already been dealt with in His sacrifice for us. So Advent is a time for us to look forward in hope.

Okay, so things happened; things will happen. What’s happenin’?

That is not just a remnant greeting from the 60's and 70's, it is a serious issue about what faith sees in the here and now. Our faith must be trifocal. We need to keep an eye on the past, for that is where the story — our story — has its origins and from which we glean its meaning. We must keep an eye on the future, because we await the fulfillment of Christ’s promise; our hopes are pinned to that future. We must keep a very clear eye on what is going on right now, in the present moment so that we can be attentive to what God is doing and how God wills us to respond. Advent is a time for us to position ourselves to be aware that God is active now.

The Holy Spirit is always at work in us. Through His means, he enlivens our faith, comforts our sorrows, empowers our witness, and joins us in fellowship with other Christians. All this is done so that we can embrace the past completely and enthusiastically, while at the same time we anticipate the future and what a glorious future it will be. It is the present that so often hits us hard. We need to be aware constantly that God is with us, no matter what is happening.

Illness, injuries, setback of all kinds, relationship troubles, disappointments, bad choices, foolish mistakes — all these keep flooding into our lives uninvited. They can knock us down and leave us confused . . . unless we are fully aware that God draws near to us in just such moments and brings His power to bear in our lives.

This has been called “the sacrament of the present moment,” and while it does not fit our classical Lutheran definition of a sacrament, it comes very close. Just as we need to be in constant connection to Word and Sacrament — investing time reading God’s Word, meditating on it, sharing it with others, remembering our baptisms daily, frequently partaking of Christ’s Body and Blood — we need to pay attention to the present moment and look for what God is doing.

For Caesar it was “*Veni Vidi. Vici.*” For us it is “*Venit. Veniet. Venit* — “*He came. He will come. He is coming.*” We look for Him, and because He is gracious, He finds us.

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## Our Worship This Month

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### December 6 — Advent II

Sermon: “*How Do I Prepare?*”

Texts: Isaiah 40:1-4,8-11; Psalm 85; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

The Baptist cries out for us to prepare? How do I do that? What does it involve? Is it just an “Advent thing”?



### December 13 — Advent III

Sermon: “*The Spirit on Me*”

Texts: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

The prophet Isaiah announces that the Spirit of God is on him (words echoed by Christ). True for us?



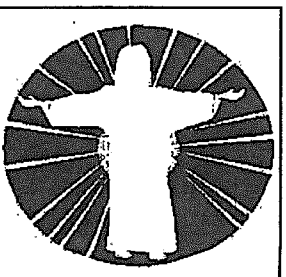
### December 20 — Advent IV

Sermon: “*How Can This Be?*”

Texts: 2 Samuel 7:1-11; Psalm 89; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Mary responds with amazement at the message of her pregnancy. How do we react to the Gospel?

Our Christmas worship is detailed on the next page.



### December 27 — St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

Sermon: “*The Light Has Shined*”

Texts: Revelation 1:1-6; Psalm 116; 1 John 1:1-2;2; John 21:20-25

The message from St. John is consistent: We have the true light from Christ to illumine and guide our path through life. (*See more on next page.*)



**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY, DEC. 6  
AFTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE  
IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL  
SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL BE OBSERVED  
FELLOWSHIP HALL CHRISTMAS TREE WILL ALSO BE  
DECORATED DURING THE MEETING**

### **BULLETIN PICKUP**

Steve is standing in the Narthex watching for cars. He will bring out your bulletin and communion cup. If you would like to add someone to the prayer list let him know and he will bring out the book for you. He will also be collecting your offering, 1+1+1 donations and other donations.

Those coming in can pick up their bulletin and communion cups from the usher inside. An offering plate will be available at the back of the sanctuary. The 1+1+1 box will be on the stand. Prayer book will be on the stand in the narthex.

Thank you everyone.

### **SEARCH COMMITTEE**

We would like to thank Diane Pencin, Robin Hoffman, Gilbert Ayers and Guy Jeanblanc for volunteering to be on the search committee to help us gather all the facts we need to present to the Synod to begin our search for a new Pastor. Pastor Just will be retiring from his ministry with St. Thomas at the end of December.

We have finished the forms that the Synod wanted us to fill out. We have been talking to Pastor Gau and will be meeting with him soon.. If anyone has any questions, please see a council member or a member of this committee. You can find their numbers in the church directory.

### **COMMUNITY PANTRY**

During the month of December, members are being asked to bring a food donations, paper products, toiletry items or a monetary donation to help out the pantry for the Christmas baskets. Please have your donations here by December 13 so we can get these items to them in time to fill their baskets. Thanks you for your thoughtfulness!

## 1 + 1 + 1 giving

We thank you for continuing to give to our 1 + 1 + 1 fund raiser throughout this pandemic. The missionaries who spread the good news of Jesus are very appreciative of your generosity. 1+1+1 means \$1 per member each Sunday. There is a plastic box as you pick up your bulletin for you to place your \$1 each Sunday. It will be posted each Sunday in the Offering List. Thank you for your donations!

## BENEVOLENCE

For many years, council pledged \$1,000/year to support the work of the synod. The synod uses the pledge amount from all congregations for part of its budget. Offerings designated for Benevolence, as indicated on our offering envelopes, go towards this pledged amount. If at the end of the year the offerings for Benevolence are less than the pledge, then the shortfall is made up from our general fund. If benevolence offerings exceed the \$1,000 pledged, then all of it is sent. Other offerings also go the synod, such as mission and 1+1+1, but these are for those specific programs and not counted towards the pledge. Please note that a check is sent to the synod on a regular basis as offerings are received and not one check at the end of the year.

Also on the budget that will be discussed at the congregational meeting will see a raise of 3.9%. If you can possibly help us out by raising your tithe amount by at least \$5.00 it would really help. Thank you!

## WE CARE

We care about you! Please let us know if there is any need during this time of the pandemic. We are here to help you in any way it is needed, driving you somewhere, picking up groceries for you or just someone to talk to, please call your church family. Everyone has a new church directory! We are here for you!

You have several options to worship with us. If you can't get out, then please join us on Facebook. We are meeting in the parking lot and you can listen to the service on Channel 96.9 FM. You can also come inside. Your temperature will be taken at the door. Masks must be worn. We have plenty of room to space members out so it is very safe. However you worship with us it is just great to see all of you!

Stay safe everyone! You are all in our prayers!

If you haven't checked out our church website yet, please do and let Del Groff know how you like it or if there is something you would like to see added. The website is [www.stthomasstreetsboro.com](http://www.stthomasstreetsboro.com)

**Advent Folders and Offering Envelopes** are available on the table in the Narthex.

**Our October-December** Portal of Prayers devotionals are available now. You can find them on the table by the door or ask Steve for one and he will bring it to your car.

**Contact Person:** Please call Pastor Just at 216-789-6688 or Council President Steve Hlava at 330 422-1959 for any emergencies or questions. Pastor Just is in the office on Thursdays from 8:00-4:00.

## REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Bill Crile	Carol Earle	Deb Earle	Corey Hautmann
Linda Hautmann	Palagia Hlava	Nicole Johnson	Lorene Kozar
Joanna Nicely	Ken Nicely II	Kenny Nicely IV	Carol Poston
Heather Poston	Diane Seman	Ron Stenglein	Joyce Torres
Debbie Anderson	Avis	Ed Boland	John Buterbaugh
Jeremy Campbell	Joyce Cavanaugh	Carl	Russ Carnes
Jerry Chapala	Scott Corban	Tom Corban	Toni Corban Family
Jamie Dunn	Bill Earle	Sue Ellinwood	George Foerster
Pastor James Gau	Bridget Gehri	Todd Gless	Summer & Mark Dunlevy
Ken Granville	Karen Groves	Charles Hohne	Debbie Hovanetz
Janice	Kathi	Larry Knaus	Brad Kozar
Suzanne Latham	Lauren	Dave Lauver	Lori
Frank Manijak	Nadine Nicely	Samantha Nicely	James Olsen
Inge Osborne	Sandy Platten	Art Robinson	Agnes Rovison
Barbara Schreiber	Teri Stroki	Mary Small	Derrick Smith
Tim Tolodzieski	Kenneth Udovic	Linda Velatta	Tara Vargo
Tim Wheeler	COVID-19 patients	Hurricane and fire victims	
Family Units being attacked by Satan		All Marriages to stay strong in Christ	
Safety for all our school and college students			

Our shut-ins—please send them a card

Mrs. Audrey Holland  
4552 Aspen Lake Road  
Apartment 102  
Brunswick, OH 44212-4582

Carole & Heather Poston  
3096 E. Pioneer  
Aurora, OH 44202

Our College Students—Grace Rohaley, Abigail Ayers, Corey Hautmann, Troy Roman and Joanna Nicely

If there is anyone you would like to add or delete from this list, please let Marla Manijak know. You can reach her at 330-472-3045 or fill out one of the cards in the pew and put in offering plate.

### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

#### Birthdays

2-Pastor Just  
13-Robin Hoffman  
17-Vicki Weber  
21-Ben Wolff  
31-Diane Pencin



### DECEMBER BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

#### Baptism Birthdays

19-Elizabeth Ayers  
19-Madelyn Ayers  
27-Linda Hautmann

Happy Anniversary to  
9-Joyce and Anibal Torres

## **OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL HOLIDAYS FOR DECEMBER!!**

**1-Giving Tuesday**  
**4-Sock Day and Cookie Day**  
**5-Walt Disney's birthday**  
**7-Pearl Harbor Day**  
**10-Hanukkah Begins**  
**12-Gingerbread House Day**  
**16-Boston Tea Party Anniversary**  
**17-Wright Brother's First Flight Anniversary**

**18-Ugly Christmas Sweater Day**  
**Hanukkah Ends**  
**21-First Day of Winter**  
**24-Christmas Eve**  
**25-MERRY CHRISTMAS**  
**26-Kwanzaa Begins**  
**28-Card Playing Day**  
**31-New Year's Eve**

This article was found in one of our past newsletters and was published in Pulpit Helps (1989). Thought we would share it with you again.

### **Ten Commandments for The Christmas Season**

1. Thou shalt remember to keep Christ in Christmas.
2. Thou shalt pause in thy business to consider the magnitude of God's gift of Christ to mankind.
3. Remembering that Mary and Joseph found no room in the inn, thou shalt give Christ the chief room in thy heart.
4. Thou shalt participate in the Christmas activities sponsored by the church.
5. Thou shalt be generous in thy gifts to foreign mission at Christmas.
6. Thou shalt take time to plan for the happiness of those outside thine own circle of family and friends.
7. Thou shalt enjoy, in unhurried calm, the priceless heritage of Christmas music which exalts the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. Thou shalt give of thyself in all gifts, giving not for duty, for reciprocity, or personal satisfaction—but for the simple joy of sharing.
9. Thou shalt remember, with great patience and understanding, all those who serve thee: the salesclerk, the postman, the delivery man, and all the others who bear the physical burden of the holiday season.
10. Thou shalt teach thy children the true meaning of Christmas, of the Prince of Peace, who came to give mankind a way to righteousness and true lasting happiness.



**Happy Birthday Jesus!**

**St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 2247  
9042 State Route 43  
Streetsboro, OH 44241**

**Change Service Requested**

**THE PARISH VOICE NEWSLETTER**

**Office: 330-626-4945**

**Pastor Just office hours—Thursdays 8:00-4:00**

**Cell Phone (216) 789-6688    Email: [doctorjust@gmail.com](mailto:doctorjust@gmail.com)**

**Web Site: [www.stthomasstreetsboro.com](http://www.stthomasstreetsboro.com)**

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

**TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 A.M.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE AT 8:00 P.M.**

**IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT ON CHANNEL 96.9 FM**

**LIVE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE**

**OR YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US INSIDE**