

The Congregation at Prayer

*A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer
For the Week of the Second Sunday in Advent
December 10 through December 17, 2006*

Catechesis Notes for the Week — "A Lover's Word"—This week we begin two weeks of meditation on Confession and the Office of the Keys. These headings from the Catechism might sound dry and sterile to some, but these sections are all about receiving "a Lover's Word." Jesus' Word of forgiveness is a Lover's Word—the Word of Him who loved us, His bride, so much that He laid down His life in death to cover the ugliness of our sin and rebellion against God. Just as the words of our beloved in marriage strengthen our relationship with our spouse, so the words of absolution from our Lover Jesus strengthen our relationship with Him. Even more than this, His Word of forgiveness makes us beautiful, strengthens faith against sin and temptation, and gives us comfort. What woman doesn't want to hear the word of him who loves her? This is how we should view the absolution, and why we should learn to value it and long to hear it from our pastors.

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate. Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.

Theme: E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

Verse: Psalm 103:1-3

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases.

Psalm 50 and/or the appointed daily psalms for listed below. The psalms for Advent remain the same each week.

Prayer on the Psalm: Lord Jesus, our Savior, enlighten our eyes to know all Your mercies, and create in us such hearts as may be truly grateful to You. Forgive us our sins for the sake of Your sacrifice on the cross, and enlarge our hearts to walk in the way of Your commandments and to be faithful to You, even unto death, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	24	122	33	50	18:1-20	102	90	24
Evening	25, 110	40, 67	85, 91	14, 16	126, 62	130, 16	80, 72	25, 110

The Catechism: Confession

What is Confession?

Confession has two parts.

First, that we confess our sins,

and second, that we receive absolution,

that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself,

not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

Kindergarten +

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins,

even those we are not aware of,

as we do in the Lord's Prayer;

but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Second Grade +

Which are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments:

Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband wife, or worker?

Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy?

Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome?

Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds?

Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

Third Grade +

Readings for the Week of the Second Sunday in Advent

Day	First Reading—Bible Stories for the Family and Academy	Second Reading
Monday	The Annunciation of Our Lord—Luke 1:26-38	Acts 17:16-34
Tuesday	Christ's Birth Is Foretold to Joseph—Matthew 1:18-25	1 John 4:9-16
Wednesday	Advent Service: The Woman at the Well—John 4:1-26	Colossians 1:1-8
Thursday	The Visitation—Luke 1:39-56	Philippians 2:12-18
Friday	The Nativity of St. John the Baptist—Luke 1:57-80	Philippians 3:12-16
Saturday	Look ahead to Sunday	Colossians 3:1-11

Prayers: Collects for the Week, Daily Themes for Prayer, In Our Prayers at Peace

Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent:

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be given to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Themes for Prayer

- Sunday:** *Pray for the joy of the resurrection among us; true and godly worship throughout the world; and the faithful preaching and hearing of God's Word.*
- Monday:** *Pray for faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; your calling and daily work; the unemployed; the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for government; and for peace.*
- Tuesday:** *Pray for deliverance against temptation; the addicted and despairing; the tortured and oppressed; and those struggling with besetting sins.*
- Wednesday:** *Pray for marriage and family; living together under the grace of Christ according to the Word of God; those adults who must rear their children alone; and godly schools, especially Peace Lutheran Academy, our church schools, and seminaries.*
- Thursday:** *Pray for the church and her pastors; for missionaries; fruitful and salutary use of the blessed sacrament of the Lord's body and blood.*
- Friday:** *Pray for the preaching of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; its spread throughout the whole world and our community; the persecuted.*
- Saturday:** *Pray for faithfulness to the end; the dying; the revival of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; receptive hearts for worship and study on the Lord's Day.*

In Our Prayers this Week

- Eleanor Wick and her family who mourn the death of her husband Lloyd.*
- Maggie Gehlbach recuperating from heart surgery at Children's hospital.*
- Marvin Zahn at Linden Grove nursing home; Shirley Marlow, recuperating from shoulder surgery.*
- Tom DeRidder, suffering with lung cancer; Tom Kennedy, recovering from a stroke.*
- Ann Pagac, mother of Joanne LaSage, in hospice care.*

Lord's Prayer and Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism

Hymn of Week

"Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding"

345 (St. 1, 4)

Look forward to the Third Sunday in Advent

December 17, 2006

Hymns: 344, 347, 349, 350

Isaiah 40:1-11: *"Comfort, yes, comfort My people' says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." These words of glorious prophecy foretell the consummation of Christ's work through the preaching of the Gospel. By the proclamation of the Gospel the Holy Spirit lays upon our hearts the comfort of the forgiveness of all our sins. This gift of grace is greater than all our sins for it comes from the faithful Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep.*

1 Corinthians 4:1-5: *The Apostle Paul speaks of himself and all ministers of the Gospel as "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."*

Matthew 11:2-11: *John the Baptist didn't have a very long ministry. He had no retirement. He had no pension. He preached for a few years preparing the way for Jesus' coming. He was imprisoned by King Herod Agrippa I and, shortly after the events of this Gospel reading, his head was cut off and presented to his brother's wife Herodias with whom Herod had been in an adulterous marriage. So goes the way of God's faithful prophets in this world. When they preach repentance, uncovering man's sin in order to proclaim to them God's salvation in Christ, they are persecuted and put to death. The imprisonment and death of John the Baptist teaches us that there are more important things in life than happiness and success, namely Christ. He is our Lord and Savior. He is the object of our worship and the focus of our hope. It is Christ alone who leads us by and through His suffering and death to the glory of eternal life with God. By all the things through which we suffer, faith is tried in a furnace, the dross is purged, and we are fitted for the Kingdom of God. This is why the introit for this Sunday is the Word of God from Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"*