

# The Christmas edition of the “AGAPE”



**(Advent/Christmas)**

A “BLOG-LIKE” NEWSLETTER FROM PASTOR ZEUCH

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**December 15, 2022**

## **Advent Prayer**

Dear Lord,

I don't want the Christmas story to be so familiar that it doesn't grab my heart. I don't want to be so distracted or stressed with Christmas decorating, shopping, and celebrating with family or friends that I miss connecting with Christ.

Help me be more than a spectator of the Nativity— I want to participate with you in your Gospel!

As I read this devotional, I ask you to impress upon me the example of the character that I most need to follow. Show me, Lord, who can best guide my way to worship Christ at his holy manger today.

In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

## **Zechariah**

You probably don't have Zechariah (John the Baptist's father) in your Nativity set! But you could say that the Christmas story

begins with his silent waiting. Nine months without uttering a word. Nine months of remembering his lack of faith in the angel's promise. And nine months of anticipating the birth of his son and the Messiah he was to herald! (Luke 1:5-25, 67-80). Perhaps God is inviting you also to withdraw from the noise and business of the Christmas season to enter into a time of quiet prayer? Be still to anticipate Christ's coming with Zechariah and you too will burst forth with joyous Christmas praise when your tongue is set free!



### **Mary**

Mary offered the prayer that receives the Christmas miracle: "Let it be to me according to your Word" (Luke 1:38). She was God's chosen vessel to give birth to the Messianic dream that God's people had been waiting hundreds of years for. But as any mother knows, it's painful to give birth! And in her case, she had the added trials of being scorned as an immoral woman and riding 90 miles uphill on a donkey just before giving birth to her son in a cave full of dirty, loud, smelly animals! (Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-7, 19-20). Perhaps you can relate to the promise and challenge of giving birth to God's dream for you? Is there something special that you hope to give birth to this Christmas season? Ponder and treasure this God-dream in your heart and pray for the Lord's guidance and blessing...

### **Joseph**

Joseph's daring faith in the Lord is sometimes missed in the Christmas story. He believed in Mary's virginity when no one else did and he endured a lifetime of ridicule for doing so. Joseph bet his life on words that an angel spoke to him *while he was sleeping*. He accepted the daunting challenge of raising the Messiah as his own child (Matthew 1:18-25). Maybe you too are facing a challenge? Do you need God's help to prevail in an overwhelming struggle? Pray for God's wisdom and strength to help you obey him in the midst of the stress...

### **Innkeeper**

The Innkeeper probably thought he had a good excuse for not finding a room for Jesus in his inn and for sending Mary, who was in labor, to go into the cave with the animals to have her baby (Luke 2:7). At least he provided the cave. And yet, we can imagine that when he heard that the newborn child was the Messiah, he probably regretted that he wasn't more hospitable to him! Perhaps you can relate to the Innkeeper's predicament: your

schedule is overcrowded and you don't have enough room to give the time and attention to Christ that he deserves (and that you need!)? How could you make generous space in your schedule and your heart for Christ this Christmas season? Talk to the Lord about your schedule this Advent...

## Angel

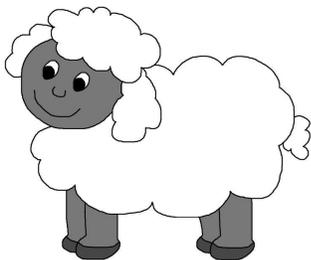
What joy was Gabriel's and all the angels who announced the Christmas gospel! What a glorious message they sang from the skies just above the shepherds' heads! (Luke 2:8-15). Maybe this Christmas season you know that you need to cultivate a *heart of worship* for Christ? What do you especially appreciate and admire about Christ? Let the angels lead you in praise to the Son of God...



## Shepherd

Imagine the thrill that the shepherds felt when the angels sang the news that the Messiah, the King of kings had just been born in Bethlehem! No one would've ever picked the shepherds to be visited by Christmas angels. They were poor. They were societal cast offs. And yet that's exactly the point of the Gospel: the last shall be first, the poor shall be rich, the least shall be the greatest, the humble shall be exalted. Probably the shepherds marveled at God's generosity and kindness and felt unworthy (Luke 2:8-20). Is it hard for you to accept that God bestows his glory on you? Are you confident in God's acceptance of you? If you struggle to esteem yourself as God does, then lift up your head with the shepherds and let the Lord honor you with the gift of Christmas...

## Lamb



Probably some lambs went with the shepherds to see the newborn King (Luke 2:7, 16). Imagine a little lamb skipping with delight across the fields to go see the baby Jesus in a cave on the outskirts of Bethlehem. Then see her smiling with joy to stand right next to Jesus as she peers into his manger. Perhaps this Christmas, what you'd like more than anything

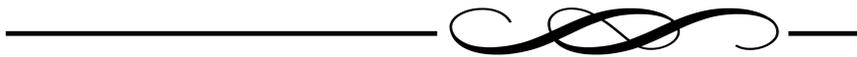
else is to accompany the shepherds and their sheep to get closer to Jesus? What would help you be closer to Christ? Talk to Jesus about your desire to have a closer relationship with him this Advent season...



## Magi

The three magi studied the stars and the ancient prophecies, risked their lives to take an arduous journey across the desert, and dealt with the murderous King Herod— all to give their gifts to the newborn king. Who ever heard of kings worshiping another king? These wisest of all wise men wanted to give their best gift to Christ (Matthew 2:1-12). Maybe you are drawn to follow the wise men’s example of giving a gift to Christ? We give Christmas gifts to many people, but may forget to give one to Christ! Follow the magi’s example and tell Jesus what you want to give to him from your heart...

(Adapted from soulshepherding.org)



### MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

**Dec 14 (Wed):** Online Bible study @ 7 p.m.

**Dec 16 (Fri):** Youth Christmas party (church basement)

**Dec 18 (Sun):** Fourth Sunday in Advent. Worship services: In German at 9:30 a.m. In English at 11 a.m.

**Dec 20 (Tues):** Youth Bible study (online) 7-8 p.m.

**Dec 24 (Christmas Eve):** Candlelight service in German at 4:45 p.m.

**Dec 24 (Christmas Eve):** Candlelight service in English at 6:45 p.m.

**Dec 25 (Christmas Day):** Worship services: In German at 9:30 a.m. In English at 11 a.m.

**Dec 31 (Sat):** Wedding of Andrew Claeys & Jennifer Hazel



#### WORSHIP TERMINOLOGY: INVOCATION

From the Latin “to call upon.” The words “In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’ (Matt. 28:19b) are spoken at the beginning of the service and remind us of our Baptism (LSB p. xxv).



# DIE DEUTSCHE ECKE

## IMMANUEL - JESUS IST „GOTT MIT UNS“

### 2. Mose 3,11-12a

"**11** Mose aber antwortete Gott: Wer bin ich, dass ich zum Pharao gehen und die Söhne Israel aus Ägypten herausführen sollte? **12a** Da sprach er: **Ich werde ja mit dir sein.**"

### Jesaja 7,14

"Darum wird der Herr selbst euch ein Zeichen geben: Siehe, die Jungfrau wird schwanger werden und einen Sohn gebären und wird seinen Namen **Immanuel** nennen"

### Matthäus 1,23

"Siehe, die Jungfrau wird schwanger sein und einen Sohn gebären, und sie werden seinen Namen **Emmanuel** nennen", was übersetzt ist: Gott mit uns"

### Offenbarung 21,3

"... Siehe, das Zelt Gottes bei den Menschen! Und er wird bei ihnen wohnen, und sie werden sein Volk sein, und **Gott selbst wird bei ihnen sein, ihr Gott.**"

Und jetzt, ein Video dass ich in Dezember 2020 gemacht habe.  
Singt mit mir das schoene Lied Oh Du Froehliche!  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZ\\_4dBXROc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZ_4dBXROc)



Thank you for taking your time to read the last edition of Agape of 2022 AD. God has blessed us thus far and we thank Him for that! May God's peace fill your days with His presence as you celebrate the birth of our Saviour!

A blessed Christmas and a wonderful New Year to you and your family!

In His service,

**Rev. Markus Zeuch**

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"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9.6

