

**5** PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK **Psalm 93:5, 2, 1, 3-4**

Your testimonies are | very sure;\*  
holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, for- | ever.  
Your throne is established | from of old;\*  
You are from ever- | lasting.  
The Lord reigns, He is clothed with | majesty;\*  
The Lord is | clothed with strength.  
Surely the world is es- | tablished,\*  
so that it can- | not be moved.  
The floods have lifted | up their voice;\*  
the floods lift | up their waves.  
The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many | waters,\*  
than the mighty waves | of the sea.

**6** SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK **Hebrews 2:14-15**

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

**7** READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

**8** PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK

O heavenly Father, as You gladden our hearts again to celebrate the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, mercifully bestow on us the joy to receive Him as our Redeemer and so welcome Him when He comes again to be our judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**9** PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

**10** SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK  
**To Shepherds As They Watched By Night**

TLH 103  
Martin Luther



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. To shepherds as they watched by night<br>Appeared a host of angels bright;<br>Behold the tender Babe, they said,<br>In yonder lowly manger laid. | 4. What harm can sin and death then do?<br>The true God now abides with you.<br>Let hell and Satan rage and chafe,<br>Christ is your Brother--ye are safe. |
| 2. At Bethlehem, in David's town,<br>As Micah did of old make known;<br>'Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and King,<br>Who doth to all salvation bring.  | 6. Ye shall and must at last prevail;<br>God's own ye are, ye cannot fail.<br>To God forever sing your praise<br>With joy and patience all your days.      |



“The Christ-Child in the Temple”

**1** BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:  
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**2** SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED  
I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our  
Lord, who was conceived by the Holy  
Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered  
under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died  
and was buried. He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the  
dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at  
the right hand of God, the Father  
Almighty. From thence He will come to  
judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy  
Christian church, the communion of  
saints, the forgiveness of sins, the  
resurrection of the body, and the life  
everlasting. Amen.

**3** PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER  
Our Father, who art in  
heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth as it  
is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily  
bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who  
trespass against us;  
and lead us not into  
temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and  
the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.

**4** PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

*Morning.* I thank You, my  
heavenly Father, through Jesus  
Christ, Your dear Son, that You  
have kept me this night from all  
harm and danger; and I pray that  
You would keep me this day also  
from sin and every evil, that all my  
doings and life may please You.  
For into Your hands I commend  
myself, my body and soul, and all  
things. Let Your holy angel be with  
me, that the evil foe may have no  
power over me. Amen.

*Evening.* I thank you, my  
heavenly Father, through Jesus  
Christ, Your dear Son, that You  
have graciously kept me this day;  
and I pray that You would forgive  
me all my sins where I have done  
wrong, and graciously keep me this  
night. For into Your hands, I  
commend myself, my body and  
soul, and all things. Let Your holy  
angel be with me, that the evil foe  
may have no power over me. Amen.

# Around the Word Devotions + the week of December 31, 2023-January 6, 2024

## THEME OF THE WEEK: The Christ-Child in the Temple

Jesus comes in the flesh to redeem humanity with His flesh. He doesn't come for any other purpose or for any other group. He doesn't come for the angels or for Himself, but in great love for His beloved creation, fallen since the garden. He comes to set the prisoners free from their bondage to sin, devil, and grave. He comes that He would rule over them, having destroyed all those false rulers with His death and resurrection.

SUN

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:33-40 – Waiting for Redemption

Anna and Simon were waiting. Waiting for the fulfilment of God's promises. Waiting for the messiah to be born. Waiting for redemption. And in this, they are no different from us. We, too, are waiting, waiting for our redemption. Anna and Simeon were waiting for the redeemer to be born. We are waiting for Him to return. And waiting, in any circumstance, is not an easy thing for most of us. The Lord understands our weakness, however, and gives us, not only the promise of a redeemer, but the reality of it, even now. Jesus, our redeemer, purchases us with His blood. And the Lord gives us the reality of that redemption through His Word, in our Baptism, and in the blessed Sacrament. *Lord, help me to patiently await the return of my Redeemer. Amen.*

MON

### SCRIPTURE: Psalm 121 – Helped and Kept

This life is a life of both joy and sorrow. Times of peace and times of turmoil. We live in the midst of both sin and righteousness. And so we need help. The temptation is always to turn to the world or ourselves for help, but there is only one source that can truly help, the Lord Himself. The world is fallen, our flesh is turned from God, but the Lord is steadfast and unchanging and above all these things. He, alone, can help. And not only does He help, He keeps us. He guards us. He places us where He wants us to be. He gives us the strength and tools to be steadfast. And the primary way He helps and keeps us is through the words, promises and comfort of His Word. *Lord, thank You for helping me in my trouble and keeping me all my days. Amen.*

TUE

### SCRIPTURE: Galatians 4:1-7 – All in its Time

Everything is done in its time. The Lord creates all things at the proper time. He sends Joseph to Egypt, Moses to Pharaoh, and the Prophets to the Kings at the proper time. And at the proper time, in the fullness of it, He sends His son through the virgin birth of Mary, in order to purchase from all sin, death, and the power of the devil by His holy and precious blood. So, too, in the proper time, the Lord does everything, even now. He sends His word to us, He feeds us, He delivers us from evil, and eventually He calls us to glory. And at the proper time appointed, He will send His son again to bring into fulfilment all His work. All things, even time, are in the Hands of our Lord. *Lord, thank You for the time and gifts You give to me. Amen.*

WED

### SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11:1-5 – Judging Justly

The Lord comes in order to judge the living and the dead. He will do this at the last day but we have also already seen a foreshadowing of it in the life of Christ. Jesus, as Isaiah prophesies, judges the peoples. But unlike the judges of this world, He does not judge with the eye, for the Lord can see to the heart. He judges with true righteousness, with true equity, and with faithfulness to His promises. He declares us righteous. Upon this declaration of divine grace our faith is formed and strengthened by the Spirit. Jesus judges us based on faith. For even our righteous deeds, if done in unbelief, are filthy rags. But by faith, we are judged righteous in Christ. *Lord, keep me in the faith and in Your righteousness. Amen.*

THU

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:22-32 – Departing in Peace

Death and taxes, they say, are the only two constants in this life. And the first is certainly true. We all must face death. The question is not if, or really even when, but how. How do we face death? Simeon is one of our many guides to this in the scriptures, pointing us to two things: first that we must face death through Christ. Only in Jesus is the sting of death gone and the power and fear of death removed. Only in Christ is death no longer permanent, but temporary. And second, how to confess it: departing in peace. This is much different from how the world (and often even Christians) confess death, but it's a good and beautiful confession, and we do well to have it on our lips too. *Lord, help me face death in the example of Simeon. Amen.*

FRI

### SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 2:9-16 – Becoming Like His Brothers

For whom has Jesus become incarnate? There's only one correct answer to that. It's not for the sake of the Father, or for Himself, or for the angels. In fact, Jesus doesn't come for anything other than you, for humanity. That's why when He comes to us, He takes on flesh and blood, to become like us, that we too would become like Him. In the incarnation Jesus elevates the human nature to be joined with God in a great and mysterious way, so that as the redeemed children of God, as we are sanctified in the faith, we are being conformed more and more to that sacred image: *Jesus. Lord, thank You for taking my flesh into Yourself, so that I would be redeemed and sanctified by Your work. Amen.*

SAT

### SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:1-12 – 2 Kings

As the wisemen come from the East, they encounter a king. But not the one they've been looking for. They encounter a wicked and evil king, bent on putting all his subjects under his power. So they ask, where is the true king, the king of the Jews. This king, holy and righteous, had come to put the enemies of His people under His power. To put sin and death, devil and world, under His feet. And as the wisemen find Jesus, they rejoice exceedingly with great joy. There's no containing the excitement at encountering this king, though only a child, for He is the One who is to reign for all eternity, not as a tyrant, but as a true king, keeping and preserving His people from all evil. *Lord, thank You for coming as my king, to rule my heart and mind. Amen.*

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