

**Pastors Advent Challenge**  
**to the people of the United Proclamation of the Gospel Parish and**  
**St. John's Windish Lutheran Church!**

December 21- December 25

Share the gift of "Hope"

For my Facebook friends, or for people who utilize social media. Let's fill social media this week with messages of hope within the world in which we live. Point to those people, places, things, you bear witness that inspires us to have hope! Hope in God, hope in one another, hope for the future. Then ask your friends to "Go and Tell" others about the places in which they are inspired by hope in the world.

If you don't use social media, call a friend or two and share stories about the hopes that you have in God; for Christmas, for the world around you. Then ask your friends to "pay the gift forward" and ask them to call a friend or two and share the same topic.

**Some suggested readings on "Hope."**

**Monday December 21, 2020 Reading**

**Psalm 25**

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, I give my life to you.

<sup>2</sup> I trust in you, my God!

Do not let me be disgraced,

or let my enemies rejoice in my defeat.

<sup>3</sup> No one who trusts in you will ever be disgraced,  
but disgrace comes to those who try to deceive others.

<sup>4</sup> Show me the right path, O LORD;  
point out the road for me to follow.

<sup>5</sup> Lead me by your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God who saves me.  
All day long I put my hope in you.

<sup>6</sup> Remember, O LORD, your compassion and unfailing love,  
which you have shown from long ages past.

<sup>7</sup> Do not remember the rebellious sins of my youth.  
Remember me in the light of your unfailing love,  
for you are merciful, O LORD.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is good and does what is right;  
he shows the proper path to those who go astray.

<sup>9</sup> He leads the humble in doing right,  
teaching them his way.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD leads with unfailing love and faithfulness  
all who keep his covenant and obey his demands.

<sup>11</sup> For the honor of your name, O LORD,  
forgive my many, many sins.

<sup>12</sup> Who are those who fear the LORD?  
He will show them the path they should choose.

- <sup>13</sup> They will live in prosperity,  
and their children will inherit the land.
- <sup>14</sup> The LORD is a friend to those who fear him.  
He teaches them his covenant.
- <sup>15</sup> My eyes are always on the LORD,  
for he rescues me from the traps of my enemies.
- <sup>16</sup> Turn to me and have mercy,  
for I am alone and in deep distress.
- <sup>17</sup> My problems go from bad to worse.  
Oh, save me from them all!
- <sup>18</sup> Feel my pain and see my trouble.  
Forgive all my sins.
- <sup>19</sup> See how many enemies I have  
and how viciously they hate me!
- <sup>20</sup> Protect me! Rescue my life from them!  
Do not let me be disgraced, for in you I take refuge.
- <sup>21</sup> May integrity and honesty protect me,  
for I put my hope in you.
- <sup>22</sup> O God, ransom Israel  
from all its troubles.

**Prayer:** Almighty God, In all we see in the world around us, the awesomeness of the skies, the beauty and grandeur of the mountains, the serenity of babbling streams, and the power of the ocean gives us pause to have continued hope for the world. Hope that what seems impossible for humans is possible in Your time and in Your presence. Open our eyes and our minds to bear witness to the hope inspired by You! In Jesus' name we pray these things. Amen.

**Tuesday December 22, 2020 Reading**

**Isaiah 51:1-8**

- “Listen to me, all who hope for deliverance—  
all who seek the LORD!  
Consider the rock from which you were cut,  
the quarry from which you were mined.
- <sup>2</sup> Yes, think about Abraham, your ancestor,  
and Sarah, who gave birth to your nation.  
Abraham was only one man when I called him.  
But when I blessed him, he became a great nation.”
- <sup>3</sup> The LORD will comfort Israel again  
and have pity on her ruins.  
Her desert will blossom like Eden,  
her barren wilderness like the garden of the LORD.  
Joy and gladness will be found there.  
Songs of thanksgiving will fill the air.
- <sup>4</sup> “Listen to me, my people.  
Hear me, Israel,  
for my law will be proclaimed,  
and my justice will become a light to the nations.

<sup>5</sup> My mercy and justice are coming soon.  
My salvation is on the way.  
My strong arm will bring justice to the nations.  
All distant lands will look to me  
and wait in hope for my powerful arm.  
<sup>6</sup> Look up to the skies above,  
and gaze down on the earth below.  
For the skies will disappear like smoke,  
and the earth will wear out like a piece of clothing.  
The people of the earth will die like flies,  
but my salvation lasts forever.  
My righteous rule will never end!

<sup>7</sup> “Listen to me, you who know right from wrong,  
you who cherish my law in your hearts.  
Do not be afraid of people’s scorn,  
nor fear their insults.  
<sup>8</sup> For the moth will devour them as it devours clothing.  
The worm will eat at them as it eats wool.  
But my righteousness will last forever.  
My salvation will continue from generation to generation.”

**Prayer:** Comforting God, in the past of our lives, when we thought we were completely lost and had no strength, Your comforting arm guided and directed our paths. Now Lord, in this time when once again the world seems to be “out of order” remind us of how You brought through times of trial in the past that we may have hope for a brighter tomorrow. In Jesus’ name we pray these things. Amen.

**Wednesday December 23, 2020 Reading**

**1 Thessalonians 2:17-20**

<sup>17</sup> Dear brothers and sisters, after we were separated from you for a little while (though our hearts never left you), we tried very hard to come back because of our intense longing to see you again. <sup>18</sup> We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but Satan prevented us. <sup>19</sup> After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! <sup>20</sup> Yes, you are our pride and joy.

**Prayer:** Gracious Lord, as we look upon our sisters and brothers in Christ, their individual actions can inspire hope in the lives of others and in our lives. We give thanks for those who have shared their gifts and talents with the world, for those who help to feed the hungry, for those who care for abandoned pets, for those who offer shelter, and for those who extend a helping hand to a neighbor. Allow their righteous behaviors to inspire hope in our lives for a brighter tomorrow. In Jesus’ name we pray these things. Amen.

**Thursday December 24, 2020 Reading**

**Luke 2:1-7**

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. <sup>4</sup> And because

Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. <sup>5</sup> He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

<sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. <sup>7</sup> She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

**Prayer:** Almighty Lord, in the birth of our Savior, You grant us all a moment of true hope! Knowing that You have humbled Yourself to become human. Knowing that You have redeemed us all from the cross. Knowing that our sins are forgiven and Your steadfast love is ensured inspires hope in our lives. Thank You Lord for the gift of You! Amen.

### Friday December 25, 2020 Reading

### John 1: 1-5

In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup> He existed in the beginning with God.

<sup>3</sup> God created everything through him,  
and nothing was created except through him.

<sup>4</sup> The Word gave life to everything that was created,  
and his life brought light to everyone.

<sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness can never extinguish it.

**Prayer:** Glorious Lord, You have acted in ways which leave those who witness Your glory in Awe and in splendor! Allow all those who feel Your presence to feel the glory of Your presence in the world in which we live and love, laugh and mourn. Mystify our minds Lord with Your ability to be present in every moment of our day! Inspire us to live better lives because the source of all hope is found in You. In Jesus' name we pray these things, Amen.