

DECEMBER 2022

# THE CROSS & CROWN

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## PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF GOD TODAY, PART 3: CATECHESIS

**PASTOR HANS FIENE**

In Ephesians 6, St. Paul urges us, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil." It's a section of the Scriptures that is beautiful but rather vague. What exactly is Paul telling us to do in these words? When he urges us to put on "the belt of truth" and "the breastplate of righteousness," what is he asking of us in our daily lives?

Last month, we focused on the subject of stewardship. This month, we'll focus on the catechetical life of the congregation.

American Lutheranism has a bad habit of treating confirmation like graduation. We put kids in two years of classes, they learn the core doctrines of the Christian faith, they memorize Luther's Small Catechism, and then, after the ceremony, they never sit down for formal instruction again. Just as those who have graduated high school never refresh their mathematical knowledge by going back to retake Algebra II, most Lutherans never go through instruction in the catechism after making their confirmation vows.

This was never a good way to approach catechesis, the art of learning the catechism and thus the Christian faith. Theology is certainly one of those subjects where our knowledge tends to erode the less we use it. You may perhaps know people who grew up Lutheran but eventually were rebaptized in a non-denominational church, in large part because they knew that Lutherans baptized infants but didn't remember why, which made them easy targets for those who teach falsely on the matter.

Likewise, our contemporary world makes this approach to catechesis even more foolish. In addition to this, technology, our increasingly anti-Christian culture, and the non-stop stream of information given to us by the internet have created an environment where new issues seem to arise each day. What does the Bible say about surrogate parenthood or artificial wombs? About transgenderism? About digital consciousness? If you took youth confirmation or adult instruction classes ten years ago, it's likely that these topics didn't even come up because they weren't on anyone's radar. But they're on our radar now, just as new questions and issues will be tomorrow. If we want to live our lives faithfully, it's imperative that we put ourselves in situations where we can talk through these issues, ask questions, and investigate the Scriptures.

*(CONT. on pg 2)*

### DECEMBER AT A GLANCE

**DEC 3**

**ELDERS' MTNG./DECORATE CHRISTMAS TREE**

**DEC 6**

**CCLS CHRISTMAS PROG. (6:30)**

**DEC 7, 14, 21:**

**SOUP SUPPER (5:30)**

**WED. ADVENT SERV. (7:00)**

**DEC 9:**

**GREENLEAF SINGERS (7:30)**

**DEC 11:**

**COUNCIL MTNG. (11:30)**

**VOTERS MTNG. (12:00)**

**DEC 16:**

**TOY DROP OFF DEADLINE**

**DEC 24:**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERV. (7:00)**

**DEC. 25:**

**CHRISTMAS DAY SERV. (10:00)**



"...catechism study is a most effective help against the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts. It helps to be occupied with God's Word, to speak it, and meditate on it, just as the first Psalm declares people blessed who meditate on God's Law day and night."

Luther, Preface to The Large Catechism

## IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

VICAR MATT DOEBLER

It's quite amazing when you pause to consider it that the name of a relatively unpopular, unaccomplished, and short-lived Roman provincial governor has made its way into our Christian creeds. Pilate, like so many other historical figures of comparable ilk, should have long been forgotten. The memory of his name consigned to the ash heap of history.

Yet, for nearly two millennia, Christians around the globe and in every generation have been recalling the name of Pontius Pilate—the cowardly and calculating Roman ruler who presided over the suffering, death, and burial of our Lord.

Why? What motivated Christians of long ago to preserve the memory of this otherwise unremarkable individual within a creedal confession that summarizes the very heart of their faith?

Well, human history is at the heart of the Christian confession. It's the story that God became a man and stepped into human history in order to redeem it. That's certainly what we celebrate during the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Jesus Christ—born of the Virgin Mary. But the story of God's involvement in human history doesn't let us linger long at the manger—it drives us onward. It compels us to bear witness to dark moments of temptation, astonishing miracles, confessions of faith, jealous accusations, unjust suffering, violent death, and glorious resurrection. History unfolds. Everything happens in a certain place. At a certain time. *Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate.* It's not a myth or a legend. It's history. One day it happened. And it happened for you.

Christianity is not a philosophy. The essence of Christianity is not a principle or an idea, but a reality. It's about what God really said and did in order to accomplish your salvation. The creed helps us to remember that remarkable truth by not allowing our faith to drift like some timeless tale, but by anchoring it unapologetically to human history.

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Gal. 4:4-5)*

**...suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell.**

### CONT. FROM PAGE 1

Because of this, another way we can put on the armor of God is by repeatedly availing ourselves of the church's catechetical life. Come to Bible class. Ask questions, even if they're not on subject. Come to the adult instruction class every couple years. (I'll be offering one after the new year.) You can be certain that there will always be more material to learn and more confusing muck to walk through and wash off through the word.

Don't be afraid or ashamed when you can't remember what you've learned before or when you don't know how to navigate the new issues that weren't covered in your previous bits of instruction. Your job as a Christian isn't to have perfect recall or perfect foresight. Your job is to listen and learn, to go back to the well of God's word again and again. Your job is to ask God to fill you with His wisdom every time this world has filled you with confusion and fear.

Catechesis, learning the faith, is not something we graduate from. It's a lifelong discipline, and a lifelong blessing, for the Christian. Put on the armor of God by availing yourself of this blessing often.

# ADVENT REMINDERS

## ANGEL TREE DONATIONS

Our Social Ministry Angel Tree is on display in the narthex to help us collect Christmas gifts for children in need, from newborns to teens. Please take a tag marked “boy” or “girl” from the Christmas tree (along with a candy cane treat for yourself).

All gifts must be new and in their original packaging. (See the bulletin for age-appropriate gift suggestions.) suggestions for a gift?

Please leave your unwrapped gift under the tree, by **Friday, December 16.**

## CCLS CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Our PoP-CCLS pre-k children will be having their Christmas program on **Tuesday, December 6, at 6:30 PM.**

Our congregation would like to provide the children and their families with a small reception afterwards. If you can provide cookies or another sweet treat, please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board near the front door. Cookies may be dropped off on Monday, December 5 or Tuesday, December 6, by 3:00 PM.

## GREENLEAF SINGERS

Mark your calendar now for A Christmas Madrigal Evening with the Greenleaf Singers, on **Friday, December 9, at 7:30 PM.** Our Prince of Peace member and organist Kathryn Crumrine, is one of the talented vocalists of this group. Plan to join us for this Prince of Peace tradition. Tickets will be available at the door: \$10 for adults; \$5 for ages 5-12.

## CHRISTMAS IN CRESTWOOD

“Connecting Crestwood businesses and area residents through the true spirit of Christmas year-round!” There are many ways that you and your family can be involved in this wonderful event, that is held through December 31. Please see the flyers on the credenza in the narthex for more information or visit: [christmasincrestwood.org](http://christmasincrestwood.org).



# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

## PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

GREG HALL

We continue God's work here at Prince of Peace, recognizing our many blessings in 2022. December brings us our last Voters meeting of the year. It is an important one in that we will elect officers, board chairs and elders for 2023-2024. We have many positions that need to be filled; I would urge you to consider serving in one of these congregational positions. Many members give their time, commitment, passion and energy to serve in our Church, but we need more of you to prayerfully consider doing so.

We will also vote on the 2023 budget. In our Council's most recent budget discussions, we have talked about establishing a bank line of credit. This would be a tool to help us manage our funds more wisely.

Currently, we are in need of replacing our flat roof and are looking 5-10 years forward to future facility repairs/replacements that we will need. The Voters meeting agenda will have as a discussion item a bank line of credit. This discussion will provide direction to the Council as we go into 2023.

We are in good hands with our Pastor, our committees, and our faith guiding Prince of Peace. May God bless all of you.

## SERMON AUDIO PODCAST

Like listening to podcasts? Well now you can listen to audio of past POP sermons on our brand new podcast! Simply go to your favorite podcast provider and search for "Peace Proclaimed." Or, just go to our website and click Sermons, then Sermon Audio, and follow the links there.

# A CLOSER LOOK AT... THE SEASON OF ADVENT

The four-week season of Advent has a rich history in the worship life of the Church--its observance dating back at least a thousand years but very likely even further back to the 5th or 6th century. As with Lent, Advent is historically a time of repentance and preparation--as we focus our hearts and minds on both the first and second advents (comings) of Christ. In addition, Advent marks the new beginning of the church year.

Historically, the color for the Advent season was purple, but it gradually began to be distinguished by the use of the color blue.

When we see the color blue we are reminded to look to the skies in hopeful expectation for the return of Christ.

**Did you know?....**The use of an advent wreath to mark the season is relatively recent to the Church's practice. Nonetheless, advent wreaths help us in several ways to remember the themes of advent. The circular shape of the wreath reminds us of the eternal life that Christ gives to us. The lighting of its candles reminds us that the Light of God has come in Christ and will come again. Some advent wreaths feature a rose-colored candle which signifies the third week of Advent (traditionally called *Gaudete*--Latin for "rejoice.") If you listen for it, on the third Sunday of Advent the introit will always begin with the word "rejoice."

# DECEMBER 2022



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THR

FRI

SAT

 <b>Altar Guild</b> Cathy Knight	Deadline to submit an announcement for the bulletin is 12:00 Noon, each <b>Tuesday</b> .			 <b>1</b> 9:00 a.m. <b>Matins Service</b>	 <b>2</b> 9:00 a.m. <b>Matins Service</b>  Church Office Closed	8:00 a.m. <b>3</b> <b>Elders Decorate Christmas Tree</b>  Church Office Closed
 <b>4</b> <b>HOLY COMMUNION</b> 9:00 a.m. <b>Worship Service</b> Com. Assist.: <b>McGrew</b> Usher Team: <b>4</b> 10:30 a.m. <b>Sunday School/Bible Class</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>5</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  <b>HOLY COMMUNION</b> 7:00 p.m. <b>Worship Service</b>  Com. Assist.: <b>Doebler</b> Usher Team: <b>4</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>6</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  10:30 a.m. <b>Pastor's Bible Study</b>  6:30 p.m. <b>CCLS Christmas Program</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>7</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  5:30-6:30 p.m.  <b>Soup Supper</b>  7:00 p.m. <b>Advent Worship</b> Usher Team: <b>1</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>8</b> <b>Matins Service</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>9</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  7:30 <b>Greenleaf Singers Concert</b>  Church Office Closed	 <b>10</b> 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon <b>Swaddling Clothes Shopping Day</b>  Church Office Closed
<b>HOLY COMMUNION</b>  <b>11</b> 9:00 a.m. <b>Worship Service</b> Com. Assist.: <b>Androff</b> Usher Team: <b>3</b> 10:30 a.m. <b>Sunday School/Bible Class</b>  11:30 a.m. <b>Council Meeting</b>  12:00 Noon <b>Voters Meeting</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>12</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  <b>HOLY COMMUNION</b>  7:00 p.m. <b>Worship Service</b> Com. Assist.: <b>Weisheit</b> Usher Team: <b>3</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>13</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  10:30 a.m. <b>Pastor's Bible Study</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>14</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  5:30-6:30 p.m.  <b>Soup Supper</b>  7:00 p.m. <b>Advent Worship</b> Usher Team: <b>2</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>15</b> <b>Matins Service</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>16</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  12:00 Noon <b>Toy Drop-off Deadline</b>   Church Office Closed	<b>17</b>  Church Office Closed
 <b>18</b> <b>HOLY COMMUNION</b> 9:00 a.m. <b>Worship Service</b> Com. Assist.: <b>Lasky</b> Usher Team: <b>1</b> 10:30 a.m. <b>Sunday School/Bible Class</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>19</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  <b>HOLY COMMUNION</b>  7:00 p.m. <b>Worship Service</b> Com. Assist.: <b>Doebler</b> Usher Team: <b>1</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>20</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  10:30 a.m. <b>Pastor's Bible Study</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>21</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  5:30-6:30 p.m.  <b>Soup Supper</b>  7:00 p.m. <b>Advent Worship</b> Usher Team: <b>4</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>22</b> <b>Matins Service</b>	9:00 a.m.  <b>23</b> <b>Matins Service</b>  Church Office Closed	  <b>24</b> 7:00 p.m. <b>Christmas Eve Worship</b> Usher Team: <b>2</b>  Church Office Closed
<b>HOLY COMMUNION</b>  <b>25</b> 10:00 a.m. <b>Christmas Worship</b> Com. Assist.: <b>Fletcher</b> Usher Team: <b>3</b>  No Sunday School/Bible Class	 <b>26</b> <b>NO Matins Service</b>  <b>HOLY COMMUNION</b>  7:00 p.m. <b>Worship Service</b> Com. Assist.: <b>McGrew</b> Usher Team: <b>3</b>	<b>27</b>  <b>NO Matins Service</b>  10:30 a.m. <b>Pastor's Bible Study</b>	<b>28</b>  <b>NO Matins Service</b>	<b>29</b>  <b>NO Matins Service</b>	<b>30</b>  <b>NO Matins Service</b>	<b>31</b>  Church Office Closed