

4th Sunday in Advent December 22, 2019

Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran Lectionary

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An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.

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<http://www.sacerdotus.com/2016/12/4th-sunday-of-advent-emmanuel-forever.html>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 357 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 62

“O come, O come, Emmanuel”

“The text for "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" comes from a 7 verse poem that dates back to the 8th century. It was used in a call and response fashion during the vespers, or evening, service. The original text created the reverse acrostic "ero cras," which means "I shall be with you tomorrow," and is particularly appropriate for the advent season. A metrical version of five of the verses appeared in the 13th century, which was translated into English by J.M. Neale in 1851. Each of the five verses expounds upon one of the names for the Messiah: "Emmanuel" (Isaiah 7:14, Mt 1:23) means "God with us" "Adonai" (Exodus 19:16) is a name for God, the giver of the law "Branch of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1) refers to Jesus' lineage "Oriens" (Malachi 4:2, Luke 1:78-79) is the morning star or daystar "Key of David" (Isaiah 22:22) again refers to Jesus' lineage --Greg Scheer, 1994”

- https://hymnary.org/text/o_come_o_come_emmanuel_and_ransom
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO7ySn-Swwc> My personal favorite, ThePianoGuys
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xtpJ4Q_Q-4 Traditional 12th century Latin hymn, English text with lyrics performed by a traditional choir. “Vipul Walia I'm an atheist. After listening to this i realise how it feels like to believe in him.”

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

O.T.– “Behold, the virgin shall conceive..., and shall call his name Immanuel. ”

Psalm – “Who is this King of glory?”

Epistle – “promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures ”

Gospel – “And he called his name Jesus. ”

Isaiah 7:10-17; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Isaiah 17:10-16 (Next week: Isaiah 63:7-14; RCL, Isaiah 63:7-9)

“This is a very challenging chapter to interpret, much less to preach, in part because it requires that one be familiar with a number of related texts (Isaiah 7:1-9; 8:1-8; 2 Kings 16).

Given the importance of the Immanuel promise (Isaiah 7:14-17) to Christian theology, however, this text needs to be preached -- with great care, discipline, and passion. If we are patient in listening to this text, we will recognize in it a God who is both comforting and disturbing, threatening and assuaging. The God of Isaiah 7 is the God we know in Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 7:10-16 is the second movement in a larger “sermon” offered by Isaiah to king Ahaz of Jerusalem. To more fully appreciate these verses, then, let us first consider the immediate literary context. Verses 1-2 set the scene:

“In the days of Ahaz son of Jotham son of Uzziah, king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel went up to attack Jerusalem, but could not mount an attack against it. When the house of David heard that Aram had allied itself with Ephraim, the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind” (verses 1-2)...

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3124
[Michael J. Chan](#) Assistant Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

Isaiah Sent to King Ahaz Verses 1-9

The Sign of Immanuel Verses 10-23

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹“Ask a sign of the LORD your^{10a} God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³And he^{13a} said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.^{14a} ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. ¹⁷The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”

- a. [Isaiah 7:11](#) The Hebrew for *you* and *your* is singular in verses [11](#), [16](#), [17](#)
- b. [Isaiah 7:13](#) That is, Isaiah
- c. [Isaiah 7:14](#) *Immanuel* means *God is with us*

“Here is the promise: *God is with us*, so that we might live.

God is with us, so that we might believe. *God is with us*, because it is hard to believe, and God knows it.

"And the Lord kept talking to Ahaz" (Isaiah 7:10). This first detail tells us we have entered a story well underway. It is a story of national crisis and a king's gut-wrenching fear.

This scion of the house of David, king in Judah, has a responsibility to seek the welfare of his people. He must make political judgments that will lead to national security, health and life. External threats to national security seem to require military or diplomatic resolution.

But there is tension. The king also has a responsibility to learn and keep God's law (Deuteronomy 17:18-19)...

Ahaz faces a threat. Two neighbors to the north, Israel, with its capital in Samaria, and Syria, with its capital in Damascus, are forming a coalition. Their kings, Pekah and Rezin, are vassals to the mighty Assyria. They have surrendered tribute, dignity, and human life. They are ready now to throw off the yoke. They press Ahaz to join them and lend Judah's armies to their rebellion. He refuses. They respond with aggression...

This is the story we have entered. "And the Lord kept talking to Ahaz" (Isa 7:10). The summons to faith is hard to answer, and God knows that if God stops talking, Judah doesn't have a chance. The power of God would be too incredible to believe if there weren't signs of it everywhere.

Ask me for a sign, says God (Isaiah 7:11). Ask me anything. What can you imagine? What can you not imagine? I will show it to you...

Turn your face, turn your mind, turn your hope upward, and I will show you a sign there in the sky. I put sun and moon and stars in the sky for signs (Genesis 1:14); I put my bow in the clouds as a sign of my covenant with creation (Genesis 9:12).

I gave Moses signs, and the people believed (Exodus 3:12; 4:3-31). I worked signs in Egypt (Exodus 7:3, 8:18, 10:1-2; Deuteronomy 4:34-35; 6:22; 7:19) to make it known that I have the power to save. I can save and I choose to save. Believe it. I know that you need a sign. I am ready to help you believe (cf. Isaiah 65:1). Ask me for a sign (cf. 1 Kings 3:5; 2 Chronicles 1:7; Psalm 2:8).

Ahaz refuses. Ahaz refuses because God's signs are too good... No, says Ahaz, "I will not ask. I will not test the Lord" (Isaiah 7:12).

On the surface this refusal sounds righteous...

Now, if Ahaz does not need God's help to believe, we might applaud his show of deference. Isaiah does not applaud. He accuses the house of David of wearing out humans and God alike (Isaiah 7:13). So much has been entrusted to them, and they are using it up. When God offers to replenish the well (cf. Psalm 68:10), they refuse. Isaiah slams Ahaz for his pretense of faith, and calls him out of his unbelief (cf. Isaiah 1:14)...

This is the story behind Ahaz's refusal. Ahaz already has a plan and does not want to believe. It is easier to sell himself to Assyria than wait for salvation from God. But God still gives even when we will not ask. "Therefore the Lord will give a sign to you." It is still a sign of salvation. It is still a sign of God's power to save. It is a security for every promise even when faith fails.

There is much more to the story of Immanuel...I invite you to explore how the proclamation of the birth of Christ reveals the persistence of our God who knows how we struggle with faith and will give any sign, any grace, to help us believe and live."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=855

Anathea Portier-Young Assoc. Professor of Old Testament, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, N.C.

For one perspective on the translation as a "young maiden" vs. "virgin" read:

- <https://jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/issues-v09-n01/almah-virgin-or-young-maiden/>

Psalm 24; RCL, Psalm 8:1-7, 17-19 (Psalm 111; RCL, Psalm 148)

Psalm 24 is also used on Pentecost, Proper 10, Year B.

“From the title we learn nothing but the authorship: but this is interesting and leads us to observe the wondrous operations of the Spirit upon the mind of Israel's sweet singer, enabling him to touch the mournful string in Psalm twenty-two, to pour forth gentle notes of peace in Psalm twenty-three, and here to utter majestic and triumphant strains. We can do or sing all things when the Lord strengtheneth us.

This sacred hymn was probably written to be sung when the ark of the covenant was taken up from the house of Obed-edom, to remain within curtains upon the hill of Zion. The words are not unsuitable for the sacred dance of joy in which David led the way upon that joyful occasion. The eye of the psalmist looked, however, beyond the typical upgoing of the ark to the sublime ascension of the King of glory. We will call it The Song of the Ascension...

*The Psalm makes a pair with the fifteenth Psalm. It consists of three parts. The **first** glorifies the true God, and sings of his universal dominion; the **second** describes the true Israel, who are able to commune with him; and the **third** pictures the ascent of the true Redeemer, who has opened heaven's gates for the entrance of his elect...”*

➤ <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=24> Charles Spurgeon

The King of Glory A Psalm of David.

24 The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,^[a]

the world and those who dwell therein,

² for he has founded it upon the seas

and established it upon the rivers.

³ Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?

And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart,

who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.

⁵ He will receive blessing from the LORD

and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him,

who seek the face of the God of Jacob.^[b] **Selah**

⁷ Lift up your heads, O gates!

And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

⁸ Who is this King of glory?

The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle!

9 Lift up your heads, O gates!
 And lift them up, O ancient doors,
 that the King of glory may come in.
 10 Who is this King of glory?
 The LORD of hosts,
 he is the King of glory! **Selah**

- a. Psalm 24:1 Or *and all that fills it*
- b. Psalm 24:6 Septuagint, Syriac, and two Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text *who seek your face, Jacob*

“Psalm 24 is notoriously difficult to interpret.

While virtually everyone sees that it falls into three parts: verses 1-2; verses 3-6; and verses 7-10, their disparate nature renders most attempts to explain their interrelationship conjectural at best and speculative at worst. Oh well ... here goes!

By far the most common approach to Psalm 24 sees it as a liturgy that sketches the return of the Ark of the Lord. This return may be identified with an actual battle; David’s bringing the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:13-19; 1 Chronicles 15:25-16:3); Solomon’s completion of the Temple construction (1 Kings 8:1-11; 2 Chronicles 5); part of the pre-exilic Feast of Tabernacles; or the post-exilic Babylonian Akitu Festival marking the advent of the New Year. Since Israel did bring the Ark into battle and enjoyed military success as a result (1 Samuel 4), one assumes it would also have been brought back and that its return would likely be celebrated...

Recent work on the psalm, provides a measure of encouragement for this reading... there is a growing consensus that Psalm 24 is an entrance liturgy due its placement in a series of psalms displaying a concentric structure:

A Psalm 15 entrance liturgy

B Psalm 16 psalm of trust

C Psalm 17 prayer for help

D Psalm 18 royal psalm

E Psalm 19 torah-psalm

D' Psalms 20-21 royal psalms

C' Psalm 22 prayer for help

B' Psalm 23 psalm of trust

A' Psalm 24 entrance liturgy...

Verses 1-2 celebrate God as the creator of all. This ringing proclamation of divine sovereignty is made all the more emphatic by the placement of “(to) the Lord (belongs)” in rhetorical exposure as the first word of the psalm. Its omission in the second half of the verse provides yet another emphasis since it must be recalled in order to make sense of the phrase...

Verses 3-6 make clear that only those who “seek” (verse 6) God can enter the Temple as indicated by “the hill of the Lord (i.e., Zion)” and “his holy place.” But this seeking is a matter of the will. “Heart” refers to what we would call the mind. Matters of the heart, in Hebrew, have to do with the will, not feelings or emotions as in our culture. Similarly, the adjectives “pure” and “clean” that belong to the sphere of ritual in our way of thinking, in the psalmist’s culture are matters of morality and suggest that the proper qualifications will be concerned with integrity and honor. Those who gain admittance are showered with blessing, vindication, and salvation (verse 5).

In a similar fashion, **verses 7-10** depict God’s parallel entry, cast in the imagery of Mesopotamian festive processions that return the divine “presence” to its dwelling, as a celebration of the Divine Warrior, the King of Glory, Yahweh Sebaot (Yahweh of Armies) This claim connects God the deliverer (verses 7-10) with God the creator (verses 1-2). Into this presence of God as creator and redeemer the worshiper enters (verses 3-6) and receives the blessing, vindication, and salvation (verse 5) that he seeks...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2657 **Mark Throntveit** Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Romans 1:1-7; RCL, the same reading (Galatians 4:4-7; RCL, Hebrews 2:10-18)

The opening of the letter to the Romans contains, in seven tightly packed verses, a summary of the themes that will be discussed in the rest of the letter.

It describes who Paul is and how he gets his authority. It presents the content of the gospel and its implications for Paul’s addressees, and it describes who these addressees are.

The first seven verses of the epistle are as good an introduction as any to some of the main elements of Paul’s thought. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben even goes as far as to say that the first verse of the epistle contains the letter as a whole: “... each word of the incipit contracts within itself the complete text of the Letter, in a vertiginous recapitulation. ... Understanding the incipit therefore entails an eventual understanding of the text as a whole.”¹

The opening sentence in the Greek is twelve lines long and encloses all seven verses. It intertwines elements about Paul, Christ, and the Roman community. When Paul writes to the community in Rome, he addresses a community he has not founded, contrary to the other communities to which we know he sent letters. Because of this particularity, Paul needs to justify why he writes in order to prepare his visit and then ask for support for his mission. Thus, in the opening section of his letter, Paul is able to show how he and the Roman community are interconnected and therefore have some obligations to each other...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1895 **Valerie Nicolet-Anderson** Maître de Conférence (Assistant Professor), Faculté Libre de Théologie Protestante, Paris, France

Greeting

1 Paul, a servant^[a] of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning his Son, who was descended from David^[b] according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Longing to Go to Rome Verse 8-15

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith Verses 16-17

God's Wrath on Unrighteousness Verses 18-32

- a. [Romans 1:1](#) For the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface
- b. [Romans 1:3](#) Or *who came from the offspring of David*

“This is a surprising choice for the Fourth Sunday in Advent.

Juxtaposed to the readings from Matthew and Isaiah, one may be tempted to simply ignore it and focus on the prophecy of a birth (Isaiah) and its fulfillment (Matthew). This would, however, also focus the attention of the gathered community on what they already expect. Advent is simply about getting ready for Christmas, a Christmas "count down." And the expected Christmas, of course, is very culturally defined. But what if Advent is really preparing for us for the incarnation, God's incarnation into human flesh, the infinite into the finite, God fully embodied? Then obviously Christmas is more than just a story about a birth in a manger... though it is also and always that story.

Reading Paul's introductory words to the church in Rome along with the Matthew and Isaiah reading provides a perspective that changes both our understanding of those two texts and of Paul's text. These opening verses of Paul's letter to the Romans establishes the context, we might say, the plot of the whole story. Using what was probably a recognized formula, "traditional" already in his day, Paul greets the community of faith in Rome with a (perhaps liturgical) greeting that summarizes the faith. Christ is identified in these 2 short verses as the one who is both human (descended from David) and divine (declared Son of God). The resurrection is the ultimate declaration or seal. This resurrection is God's work, "with power according to the spirit of holiness". The Trinity is present and invoked.

With this greeting, Paul not only establishes his own credentials -- that is, he shows himself familiar with the formula, he is an adherent, called and set apart as he describes it himself. But

he frames, if you will, the plot of the entire letter. I would also argue that he frames not only the plot of this letter but, in the context of the Fourth Sunday of Advent (and the corollary readings), Paul provides the "scenery," the space in which we are to understand both the Matthew and the Isaiah texts..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=801 [Dirk G. Lange](#) Fredrik A. Schiotz Chair of Missions and Professor of Worship, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Matthew 1:18-25; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 2:13-23; RCL, the same reading)

Strictly speaking, the Fourth Sunday of Advent is the last Sunday in the season of preparation for celebrating the first advent (coming) and anticipating the second advent (apocalypse, second coming).

However, some congregations effectively regard today as "Christmas Sunday." While liturgical purists bemoan this development, it has something to commend it. The worshipping community that gathers on the Fourth Sunday of Advent is likely made up primarily of the local congregation whereas on Christmas Eve and Day, the worshipping community includes many visitors, while many regulars are themselves visiting elsewhere.

Matthew 1:18-25, like the rest of Matthew's Gospel, is intended to address the congregation as people who are bound together for long-term life and witness. Of course, others can benefit, but "Christmas Sunday" affords the congregation an opportunity to consider the birth of Jesus as community. From this point of view, the story has several dimensions..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3092 [Ronald J. Allen](#) Professor Emeritus of Preaching, and Gospels and Letters, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Ind.

"The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 1st Chapter"

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ Verse 1-17

The Birth of Jesus Christ Verse 18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ^[a] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed^[b] to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. **19** And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. **20** But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" [Cited from Isa. 7:14](#)

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

- a. Matthew 1:18 Some manuscripts *of the Christ*
- b. Matthew 1:18 That is, legally pledged to be married

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“We usually think of the word “annunciation,” in connection with the announcement to Mary that she will bear a child (Luke 1:26-38). However, in Matthew’s Gospel, it is Joseph to whom the angel appears. Luke tells us of Mary’s obedience (Luke 1:38), but Matthew tells us of Joseph’s obedience (v. 24)...

Luke features Mary prominently in his account of Jesus’ birth (Luke 1-2), but Matthew brings Joseph to the forefront. Joseph is important to Matthew’s Gospel, because Jesus becomes part of David’s lineage through Joseph (1:1-17)...

Matthew’s purposes in this Gospel lesson are to show that:

- Jesus is of the house and lineage of David through Joseph.
- Joseph, a righteous man (v. 19), is righteous by obeying God’s command instead of rigidly observing a law requiring him to divorce Mary—or worse...

Joseph is described as righteous—he lives by God’s law. However, he is not *self*-righteous, a quality that would cause him to demand harsh justice. He resolves to divorce Mary quietly so that he might not cause her unnecessary pain. In doing so, he models Christ-like compassion in the face of sin. He also demonstrates a Godly balance between the Law of Torah and the Law of Love.

“But when he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream” (v. 20a). This is the first of three occasions in which an angel appears to Joseph in a dream. In each instance, the angel calls Joseph to action and Joseph obeys. He has no speaking part—Matthew does not record one word that Joseph says. In this first appearance, the angel commands Joseph to take Mary as his wife. In 2:13, the angel will tell Joseph to take the mother and child to Egypt to escape Herod’s wrath. In 2:19, the angel will, at the death of Herod, tell Joseph to return to Israel. In a fourth obedience, after being warned in a dream (no angel this time), Joseph will go to Galilee (2:22)...

➤ <https://sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/matthew-118-25/> Richard Niell Donovan Copyright 2019,

Question: "Why wasn't Jesus named Immanuel?"

Answer: In the prophecy of the virgin birth, [Isaiah 7:14](#), the prophet Isaiah declares, “The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” This prophecy had an initial fulfillment during Isaiah’s day, but it ultimately refers to the birth of Jesus, as we see in [Matthew 1:22–23](#) This does not mean, however, that the Messiah’s actual given name would be [Immanuel](#).

There are many “names” given to Jesus in the Old and New Testaments, and Immanuel is one of them. Isaiah elsewhere prophesied of the Messiah, “He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” ([Isaiah 9:6](#)). Jesus was never called by any of those “names” by the people He met in Galilee or Judea, but they are accurate descriptions of who He is and what He does. The angel said that Jesus “will be called the Son of the Most High” ([Luke 1:32](#)) and “the Son of God” (verse 35), but neither of those was His given name...

To say that Jesus would be called “Immanuel” means Jesus is God, that He dwelt among us in His incarnation, and that He is always with us. Jesus was God in the flesh. Jesus was God making His dwelling among us ([John 1:1, 14](#)). God keeps His promises...

No, Joseph did not name Jesus “Immanuel,” but Jesus’ nature makes Him truly Immanuel, “God with us.” Isaiah told us to watch for Immanuel, the virgin-born Son of God. He will save us; He will reconcile people to God and restore creation to its original beauty. We know Him as Jesus, but we can also call Him “God with us,” because that’s exactly who He is.”

➤ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Immanuel-Jesus.html>



➤ Agnus Day appears with the permission of <https://www.agnusday.org/>

“Immanuel,” “God with us.” God being with you is all you need. “Immanuel.” That is the word Ahaz should have heard and heeded back in 735 B.C. Now fast-forward to, well, like 1 B.C., in other words, to just months before the birth of Christ. There is a man named Joseph, and he seems stuck between a rock and a hard place. The woman he’s planning to marry, Mary—she has turned up pregnant. And Joseph knows he’s not the daddy. So what can he do? He decides to break it off. Obviously, to him, she’s been fooling around with somebody else.

But such is not the case. The Lord comes with a word for Joseph. It’s a word of assurance. Mary has not been fooling around. She is still a virgin. She is pregnant in a unique, one-of-a-kind way, by the Holy Spirit. Mary is part of the fulfillment of a prophecy, Isaiah’s Immanuel prophecy: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us).”

This son that Mary will bear, he will be the ultimate “God with us,” the ultimate “Immanuel.” His name will be “Jesus,” meaning “Savior,” “for he will save his people from their sins.” “Their sins.” That is the big threat facing people. Not Syria or Assyria or Babylon or an

unfaithful fiancée. But sins. Our sins. Still to this day. That hasn't changed. We still need saving, we still need deliverance, because of our sins. That's what separates us from God. That's what leads to death, the Big Death of eternal damnation...

Dear friend, do you ever find yourself stuck between a rock and a hard place? Beloved, no threat can overpower you. No threat can shake you like trees in the wind.

Trust in Jesus, Immanuel, God with us."

- <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2016/12/isaiahs-immanuel-prophecy-sermon-isaiah-710-17-pr-charles-henrickson/> Rev. Charles Henrickson currently serves at [St Matthew Lutheran Church in Bonne Terre, Missouri](#).

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A traditional time of year to listen to the Messiah by Handel.

Handel's Messiah conducted by Colin Davis and London Symphony Orchestra with an introduction to the piece.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuG S0kYWfDQ>

Contemporary soul-pop artists, including [Patti Austin](#), [Tevin Campbell](#), [Stevie Wonder](#), [Quincy Jones](#), [Take 6](#), [Howard Hewett](#), and [Dianne Reeves](#), take a pop-song approach to [Handel's](#) classic Christmas oratorio

- <https://www.allmusic.com/album/handels-messiah-a-soulful-celebration-mw0000615362>

Don't expect traditional – the music is but the visual is not. George Frideric Handel: Messiah - Claus Guth, Jean-Christophe Spinosi (2009, Full HD 1080p) Staged Version by Claus Guth, Konrad Kuhn and Christian Schmidt

[shnimmuc](#) "Another attempt to look at one of the greatest of all musical creation ever penned, and in my mind this is a bit weird."

[Hans-Michael Dolle](#) "I'm deeply impressed by this staged version because I've heard, seen and felt it matching and illustrating the music in nearly every moment."

[Coos Oorlog](#) "This is so lutheran it makes me dizzy."

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NgXggn91uY>

How are you doing with **THE MATTHEW CHALLENGE**, a handwritten copy of the book of Matthew by the Last Sunday of the Church Year (Christ the King Sunday), November 22, 2020. At one verse a day you would be up to Chapter 1, verse 22: "All this happened so that what the Lord said through the prophet would be fulfilled."

Now where did I hear that before?

(43 verses to go to be on schedule by the end of the month)