

ANNOUNCEMENTS
WEEK OF DECEMBER 18, 2022

IN OUR PRAYERS: Jim & Penny Cleveland; Jack & Lureen Vaught; Darlene Welsh; Walt & Carolyn Trier; Aiden Snyder; Bob Schneider; Lorna Kukelhan

CHOIR REHEARSAL today at 11:30am. New voices always welcome!

STUFFING THE STOCKINGS FOR VETS TODAY during the Bible study hour.

YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY TODAY after the second service!

CHRISTMAS EVE AND BEYOND: check the calendar for service days & times!

BABY BOTTLE DRIVE: please take a bottle or two! Bottles and/or donations for A Hope Center should be returned by Sunday, Dec. 25. Thank you!

JANITOR NEEDED: Bob LeFever will be retiring from his janitorial duties at the end of this year. If interested, talk to Jeremy or another council member!

CALENDAR

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| Sun. Dec. 18 (Advent 4) | 8:00 & 10:00am Divine Service 9:00am Stuffing the Stockings! 11:30am Choir 12:00pm Youth Group Christmas Party |
| Mon. Dec. 19 | 8:30am Discussion of next Sunday's readings |
| Wed. Dec. 21 | 8:30am Matins 9:00am Book of Concord Study (Smalcald Art.) 6:00pm Potluck Supper 7:00pm Advent Midweek Service |
| Thu. Dec. 22 | 7:00pm Bible Study (Genesis) |
| Sat. Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) | 4:00 & 7:00pm Candlelight Lessons & Carols 9:00pm Candlelight Service w/ Holy Communion |
| Sun. Dec. 25 (Christmas Day) | 8:00am Coffee & fellowship 9:00am Christmas Day Divine Service |
| <i>**Please note regular mid-week activities are not held Dec. 26-30**</i> | |
| Sat. Dec. 31 | 7:00pm Divine Service |
| Sun. Jan. 1 | 8:00 & 10:00am Divine Service w/ installation of Elders & Council 9:00am Bible Study / Confirmation |

THE BACK PAGE

One of the most beloved hymns of the Advent and Christmas seasons is “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (*LSB* 357). If you look at the bottom of the page, underneath the sixth and seventh stanzas, you find a list of the Great “O” Antiphons. An *antiphon* is a refrain of a Bible verse or historic liturgical text that is sung before, after, or during a Psalm or other song. In Advent and Lent each Sunday has a Latin name from the antiphon of the Introit. Today is *Rorate Caeli*, which is the Latin text of Isaiah 45:8 (“Shower, O heavens”).

The “O” Antiphons come from around the eighth century, when it became a regular practice to sing one “O” Antiphon each day during the seven days before Christmas Eve (December 17-23). In the twelfth or thirteenth century, these antiphons were paraphrased into verses which eventually became the hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” As you compare each O Antiphon with its respective stanza, you’ll notice that it’s actually the final of the seven antiphon (O Emmanuel) which became the now-iconic first stanza of the hymn.

Each of the antiphons addresses the Messiah by one of His titles and implores him to “come” by using images drawn from Isaiah and other prophecies. The Antiphons are: O **E**mmanuel (God with us), O **R**ex (King), O **O**riens (Dawn), O **C**lavis (Key), O **R**adix (Root), O **A**donai (Lord), O **S**apientia (Wisdom). The antiphons form an “acrostic,” which means that the first letters spell out a word or phrase. The first letters form the Latin words **ERO CRAS**, which means: “*Tomorrow, I will be [present].*”

In our waiting for the Messiah’s Second Advent, it is good for us to be reminded of the themes that each antiphon emphasizes and how Christ is the embodiment of those ancient promises. The basic progression of themes can be understood this way: The framer of the universe (**Wisdom**) who gave the Law (**Lord**) promised through David’s throne (**Root of Jesse**) to set free the captives of sin (**Key of David**) and bring the Light of salvation to dawn (**Oriens**) not only on His chosen people but all nations (**King**) and dwell with us as one of us eternally (**Emmanuel**).

The brief devotional booklet written by David Woelmer is again available on the tables (yesterday was the first day!). A devotion for each antiphon will also be posted on our facebook page, and you can download the entire devotional booklet from our website. Happy Advent!