

Good News Daily

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Sunday, December 23

Isaiah 42:1-12 *“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.”* (v.1 NIV)

It is now two days until Christians everywhere will celebrate the birth of our precious Lord Jesus, God’s servant and obedient, sinless, one and only Son (see John 3:16). I continue to marvel at God’s wisdom, power, mercy, and love for us as He speaks through His prophet Isaiah and others, foretelling both the character of the Messiah, our Savior, and also the many things that will be accomplished through him.

Today is also my wedding anniversary. In 2016 my husband and I celebrated our 50th, and both of us know and have often told others that it is absolutely, unquestionably, the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that has kept us together and kept our love for each other alive all these years. What a great blessing that he came into our lives when he did, after the birth of our second child. As we began to grow closer to the Lord, He drew us closer to each other, deepening our love and trust of each other and of Him. He directed our paths during our remaining parenting years through our participation in small group Bible studies, our attempt at daily private prayer time, and the spiritual mentoring and guidance of more mature Christian friends and leaders.

Thank You, Lord God, for giving us Your amazing servant and Savior, who has given us our very lives!

Psalms 24, 29; Ephesians 6:10-20; John 3:16-21

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for Kubwa - (Abuja, Nigeria) The Rt Revd Duke Akamisoko

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Peter’s Chapel, Chesterfield, The Rev. John R. Henry, Priest in Charge; Kahama Deanery, Tanzania: Rev. Can. Patrick Kulije, Rural Dean; The Youth Home: Casa Hogar Sagrada Familia, Arequipa, Peru, Rev’d Daniel Rodriguez, Chaplain.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Holly Dyson’s birthday

Monday, December 24

Psalms 46 *He says, “Be still and know that I am God.”* (v.10a)

On this day before Christmas, I pray that each of us will set aside a small portion of time to get quiet, enter our “prayer closet”, and be still before our Almighty and Ever-loving God. Reflect on His goodness. Thank Him and praise

Him for every aspect of your life, beginning with your family. Complete your time of thanks and praise by acknowledging Him for the greatest gift of all, His son Jesus Christ.

This one sentence, “Be still and know that I am God,” reminds us that it is only when we are still—quiet, unhurried, calm, clear-headed, focused on listening—that God can speak to us and give us the assurance of His presence in our lives. If we are not quiet, that is, if we are doing all the talking, we won’t hear Him. Think, for example, how frustrating it is to be speaking to someone when they keep interrupting you, or are looking at their cell phones while you are speaking! Admittedly, it is *hard* to be quiet before the Lord because our minds keep us distracted. The only way I am ever able to be quiet is to ask the Holy Spirit to take charge of my thoughts, and quiet my mind. He has the power I lack.

Thank You, Heavenly Father, that You never ask us to do anything that You aren’t ready and willing to empower us (through the Holy Spirit) to do.

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 45; Revelation 22:12-17, 21; Luke 1:67-80

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for Kuching - (South East Asia) The Rt Revd Danald Jute; The Rt Revd Solomon Cheong Sung Voon, Assistant Bishop

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Hope is born tonight in the birthing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Birthday of The Rev. Diane C. Mumma-Wakabayashi, Bedminster, NJ.

Tuesday, December 25

1 John 4:7-16 *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. (v.9)*

Happy Birthday, Jesus! On this day, you left your heavenly home. You, the infinite, sinless Son of God entered a finite, sin-filled world. Why? Because you love your Father and are always obedient to Him, even when you knew it would involve pain, suffering, and ultimately, your death on a cross. But you also knew that God is love, and because He loved His fallen children so very much, He sent you, the pure and perfect one, to be the final sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, for all time, so that we could have eternal life and live with you and the Father forever. You conquered death by your resurrection, and we praise and thank you for this great gift!

On this glorious Christmas Day, in the midst of the giving and receiving of gifts, the merriment and the feasting, help us, Jesus, to remember that you are the Gift from our loving Father in heaven. When we look at an *evergreen* Christmas tree, help us, Father, to be reminded of Your *ever-present* love and Your never-ending grace and mercy. Like an evergreen, Your “color” never changes. You are always with us, protecting us, always filled with compassion and *ever-ready* with Your

forgiveness. Unlike earthly evergreens, however, You will live forever and, because of what Your Son did on earth, we may now live forever through our faith in You.

Happy Birthday, Jesus. You are truly the greatest gift of all!

Zechariah 2:10-13; Psalms 2, 85; John 3:31-36

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kumi - (Uganda) The Rt Revd Thomas Irigei

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Hope is born today in the birthing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

ST. MATTHEW'S: Hally Brenneman's birthday

Wednesday, December 26

Psalm 31 *Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the god of truth.* (v.5)

This is the verse that, according to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus quoted in part just before he died. Jesus, being a Jew, had been raised with the psalms, and they were part of the worship services in the synagogues. Sometimes recited and sometimes sung, the psalms were an integral part of the fabric of spiritual life for the Jews in Jesus' time.

Scripture also records (Acts 7:59) that just before he died from stoning, Stephen uttered similar last words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." As I reflected on these two men's words, it occurred to me that this is something that must certainly please God; it is His desire that the spirits of all believers be totally committed to Him. It is what Oswald Chambers refers to in his book, *My Utmost for His Highest*, as being "abandoned" to God. Another way Chambers puts this idea is that of giving up one's rights to oneself, so that God's agenda for me supplants my own self-centered agenda. Getting to the point of being totally "abandoned" to God is not easy for most of us, but it is the goal of a Christ-centered life.

I know that this is the path to real freedom, lasting peace, and a joy-filled life. Help me, Lord to be completely abandoned to You.

Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15; Acts 6:8—7:60; Matthew 23:34-39

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kushtia - (Bangladesh) The Rt Revd Samuel Sunil Mankhin

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Feast of Title for St. Stephen's, Harrisburg.

Thursday, December 27

1 John 1:1-9 *God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* (vv.5b, 9)

What a wonderful promise we have in this passage from the first letter of John. Take a moment to ponder this idea of God being "light" and what you know about the physical properties of light. Light dispels darkness, the more light there is, the clearer and farther one can see. Full, bright light illuminates what was previously

hidden in shadows. Sunlight brings heat that warms cold objects, and without sunlight plants wither and die.

Now, with these things in mind, think about light in the spiritual realm. For me, I see God's light as the great illuminator in my life, revealing my sins and shortcomings that I may have tried to hide in the darkness. Also, as light shines on a dark path, God leads me through troubled times, and as my guiding light throughout my life, He is the illuminator of my mind, soul, and spirit. God is light and God is love, which is why He sent His Son into the world and why His Son gave his life for us, so that his blood could cleanse and purify us.

Without Your light, O gracious Lord, I stumble in the dark. Thank You for piercing the darkness of my soul with Your cleansing light.

Exodus 33:18-23; Psalm 92; John 21:19b-24

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kutigi - (Lokoja, Nigeria) The Rt Revd Jeremiah Kolo; Kwara - (Kwara, Nigeria) The Most Revd Olusegun Adeyemi

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Feast of Title for: St. John's, Albion; St. John's Centralia; St. John the Divine, Champaign; St. John's, Decatur; Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Dr. E. Eugene and Reba Hall, Champaign.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Woody Shadid's birthday and Karyn Smith & Robin Levine's wedding anniversary.

Friday, December 28

Revelation 21:1-7 *He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."* (v.6)

The imagery of thirst was probably weightier to the people of Jesus' and John's time than it is for most of us today. If I get thirsty, water is readily available from my home's faucets, or from a public drinking fountain, or from a purchased bottle of water. Also, I live in Central Florida where there are no deserts, but an abundance of trees, lakes, and streams; droughts are not commonplace. Now think of the country of Israel, especially its desert regions, and imagine that your only form of transportation is your feet. Picture yourself walking all day in your sandals, *sans* sunglasses, from your town to another in the desert heat and blazing sun, with only a small canteen of water. Think you'd get a bit thirsty?

Water quenches our thirst, but the need for it later returns. Jesus, however, can quench our spiritual thirst and the result is new life in him in which we need never be thirsty again. Also, it is a free gift, ours for the asking. In John 4:10, Jesus says to the woman at the well, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Thank you, Lord Jesus.

Jeremiah 31:15-17; Psalm 124; Matthew 2:13-18

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kwoi - (Abuja, Nigeria) The Rt Revd Paul Zamani

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Wedding anniversary of The Rev. M. Christine and Thomas Gregory, Maroa.

Saturday, December 29

Psalm 18:1-20 *In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears. He reached down from on high and took hold of me: he drew me out of deep waters. (vv.6, 16)*

No matter what our “distress” is, no matter how large or small, God always hears our cries for help and is ready to pull us out of the deeps. He cares about every detail of our lives and He knows the number of hairs on our heads (Matthew 10:30). If this is true, doesn’t it follow that He knows the nature of the stress and pain in our lives?

Some years ago, I was talking with a friend about prayer and what to pray for. When I described to her my current pain and anxiety, she suggested I tell the Lord all about it. I objected, saying that this was so small and insignificant a problem when compared with what other friends were dealing with, that I just couldn’t trouble Him with it. Then she said words that I have never forgotten: “No problem we deal with is insignificant to the Lord. If it’s causing you pain, He cares and wants to help you with it.”

What a gracious, loving Lord we have. He is always there for us and ready to reach down and pull us out of whatever despair has settled over us. Thank You, Lord.

Isaiah 12:1-6; Revelation 1:1-8; John 7:37-52

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kyoto - (Japan) The Rt Revd Stephen Takashi Kochi

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev. Donald E. Coventry, Decatur; Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Canon Dr. George E. and Ione Pence, Edwardsville.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Chrissy Stoffer’s birthday.

by Anna Cash

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Pray for the sick and those in distress: Charlie, Jenna A., Mary, James T., Julie C., Valerie R., Barbara A., Bill B., Ms. Shayne, Diane B., Steve J., Carol D., Debbie T., Robin L.

Pray for the Faithful Departed:

Pray for those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Barb W., Daniel T., and Margaret P.

Pray for: The Diocese of Tabora, Anglican Church of Tanzania, The Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, the clergy and people. The Missionary Diocese of Peru, The Rt. Rev. Alejandro Mesco. Fr. Kari Marcelle, the clergy and people of Holy Trinity St. Vincent. Fr. Dave and all clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of the Altar