

## *Good News Daily*

**Volume XIX**

**December 22-28, 2019**

**Number 51**

### **Sunday, December 22**

Genesis 3:8-15 *“Where are you?”* (v.8b NIV)

Late at night a policeman saw a man searching the pavement under a streetlight. “Loose something?” the policeman asked. “My car keys,” said the man. He pointed to a shadowy area beyond the streetlight’s illumination. “I lost them over there, but the light is better here.”

Our Advent life is often just the opposite. We need help but prefer to look somewhere that will not reveal our shabby condition, the very reasons we need the help. We search earnestly but shy back at the same time. The psalmist knew the mysterious King of Glory that had been promised to Israel would be Almighty and therefore scary and not in our control. As Adam had done, we would want to hide in shadows from the One who came to help us.

God nevertheless chose to send His Son out in the dark to find us. He sent him in peace. And He sent him in the least scary way possible, as a baby who would himself need our help and care at first.

Psalms 24, 29; Revelation 12:1-10; John 3:16-21

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* PRAY for Christians in other denominations and the work of the ecumenical movement; for His Holiness Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome; for His All Holiness Archbishop Bartholomew of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch; for The Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches; for Bishop Ivan M Abrahams, General Secretary World Methodist Council and for The Reverend Chris Ferguson, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches

*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. Birthday of Meredith Moses, Troy, widow of Richard H. Moses, Priest

### **Monday, December 23**

Psalm 61 *You have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.* (v.5b)

What is it like just before we can finally see and understand what God is doing with our lives? With anyone’s life? That time we are getting in the car for our first driver’s license test before we know if we are going to pass? When the love-sick boy doesn’t yet know if she will say, “Yes” and marry him? The mom who is still all uncomfortable the day before she gives birth?

What was on Mary's mind making that uncomfortable trip with Joseph to tiny Bethlehem at the worst possible time, one more unexpected turn in her upside-down year? Perhaps Scripture echoed in her heart that day: "The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm." "My salvation and my honor depend on God."

At His appointed season God brings His word to light. Before that appointed time, we may be able to do little else than sing praises to His Name. So, let us sing them.

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Psalm 62; Titus 1:1-16; Luke 1:1-25

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Evo (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Innocent Ordu; Exeter (England) The Rt Revd Robert Atwell, The Rt Revd Nick McKinnel, The Rt Revd Jackie Searle.

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* May this day be for us a day of obedience and of charity; a day of happiness and of peace and a day of Thankfulness for all that you have provided.

*ST. MATTHEW'S:* Holly Dyson's birthday.

## **Tuesday, December 24**

Matthew 1:18-25 "*She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.*" (v.21a)

One of my favorite games to play when visiting family on holidays is Scrabble®. Once I even began teaching a Sunday School class playing a few rounds with a class member. We both knew the game. But I pointed out neither of us could say how the game would come out when we began. We each had to proceed with our contribution step by step to learn that.

Mary and Joseph were each given a role to play in God's plan. At their turns, it was important for each one to act as called upon. There was to be no change or substitution with their own ideas. As Matthew summed it up, "This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about."

Once Jesus grew up, it was his turn to "ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness." Only then could the full intention of God's plan be seen, after each one had done their part.

The first Christmas gift from God was that He called on us to participate in His plan.

Isaiah 59:15b-21; Psalms 45, 46; Galatians 3:23—4:7

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Pray for Ezo (South Sudan) The Rt Revd John Kereboro Zawo; Faisalabad (Pakistan) The Rt Revd John Samuel.

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

## **Wednesday, December 25**

1 John 4:7-16 *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.* (v.14b)

I worked at radio stations that sponsored Christian concerts for our audiences. In the weeks leading up to these events we raised all the hoopla we could. There were ads on-air, pictures in the newsletter, and announcers would talk about it every time they played a song by the artist who was coming. After all the advance noise we made, it was interesting that some of the most moving moments in the concerts came when the artists would sing and play softly.

God filled the sky with angels for a few humble shepherds to gawk at. But the people who sought out the majestic King being announced found only a very ordinary, small, helpless baby who needed close care and protection.

That is still God's way of approaching us. Fireworks may get our attention at first. But Jesus is looking for a close, intimate encounter. The relationship he seeks is finally a deeply personal one. It's easy to miss if you are expecting only noise and flashing lights.

Micah 4:1-5, 5:2-4; Psalms 2, 85; John 3:31-36

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem and the People of Bethlehem; Falkland Islands (Parish of) (*Falkland Islands*) The Rt Revd Timothy Thornton; False Bay (*Southern Africa*) The Rt Revd Margaret Brenda Vertue; Federal Ministries (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd Carl Wright, and The Rt Revd James Magness.

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

*ST. MATTHEW'S:* Hally Brenneman's birthday.

## **Thursday, December 26**

2 Chronicles 24:17-22 *Although the LORD sent prophets to the people to bring them back to him, and though they testified against them, they would not listen.* (v.19)

Murphy's Law is the laconic observation that if anything can go wrong, it will. This law is based partly on God's gift of free will to mankind. People are given the right to choose and sometimes they choose foolishly and wrong. Often, this first gift makes it hard to receive further gifts from God. We think we don't need them. We decide we want something else.

God's ambassadors were caught in the middle of this dilemma. Some, like Stephen, paid with their lives while trying to share what God wanted to provide. Stephen was chosen by the young church to help make sure non-Jewish members were not overlooked. His death resulted in Paul, one who initially supported stoning him, being sent out ultimately to the entire non-Jewish world to share what God had provided in Jesus Christ.

It was Paul who would observe that God made all things work together for good for those He called (Romans 8:28). It was another of His many gifts to us.

Psalms 28, 30; Acts 6:1-7; Matthew 23:34-39

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Fianarantsoa (*Indian Ocean*) The Rt Revd Gilbert Ratelison Rakotondravelo;

Florida (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd John Howard.

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

### **Friday, December 27**

1 John 5:1-12 *We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.* (v.9a)

The Internet has changed the world of book publishing. Writers no longer need permission or cooperation from traditional print-on-paper book publishers. They can upload electronic copies of their work via computers at home. These "ebooks" are instantly available around the world.

Independent authors have discovered they also face a new challenge: how can they make their books known to their readers? Even ebooks have "covers" used by web page distributors. These covers serve as intermediaries introducing a book's content. Shoppers who don't find a cover appealing aren't likely to explore further inside the book itself.

Do we trust a cover to tell us about the book? Or do we look at the author's name and remember we liked what we've read from them before? God sheds light on the righteous and joy on the upright in heart. We remember that when it happens. But He also asks us to be a "cover" around His word that can help attract new readers. Because, like it or not, people still judge a book by its cover.

Proverbs 8:22-30; Psalms 97, 98; John 13:20-35

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Fond du Lac (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd Matthew Alan Gunter; Fort Worth - The Rt Revd Scott Mayer.

*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:* Karyn Smith & Robin Levine's wedding anniversary.

### **Saturday, December 28**

Isaiah 49:13-23 *"Lift up your eyes and look around; all your children gather and come to you. As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride."* (v.18)

Recently two residences next to our home came open. My wife began praying for good new neighbors. "And, Lord," she would add, "It sure would be

nice if they had young children.” We have not had our own children. She grew up in a large family and misses them.

Within a few weeks two new families moved in, both with young children that she has been delighted to entertain.

It must be the same with God’s heart. Jesus blessed little children and told us we had to share their pattern of trust if we expected to be welcomed in heaven. Isaiah said children would be like jewels that God would place as ornaments to our lives.

The Holy Innocents murdered by Herod in his desperate effort to kill baby Jesus were victims of Satan’s rebellion against God’s kingdom. We pray for the day when such rebellion and slaughter will end. The promise that soon there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain in God’s kingdom is an anchor of hope through our present-day tears.

Psalms 2, 26; Revelation 21:1-7; Matthew 18:1-14

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Fredericton (*Canada*) The Rt Revd David Edwards;  
Freetown (Sierra Leone) (*West Africa*) The Rt Revd Thomas Arnold Ikunika  
Wilson.

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Wedding anniversary of The Rev. M. Christine and Thomas Gregory, Aiken, S.C..

*by Rick Hoover*

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**Pray for** the sick and those in distress: Margret L., Allan H., James G.

**Pray for** the Faithful Departed: Charlie C. and Steve W.

**Pray for** those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Barb W., 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.