

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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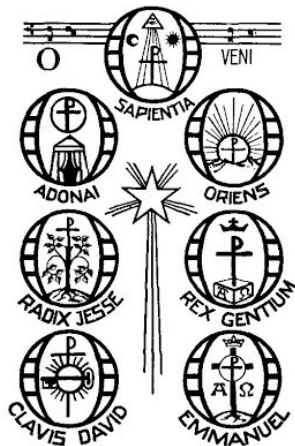
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The Seven Great O Antiphons of Advent



When seeking advice on what to do for our Advent midweek services, a suggestion was made to consider doing something with the O Antiphons. What is this, you ask? At first this may sound weird and unfamiliar and perhaps the kind of thing that only a few theology nerds or Church Historians may know or care about. But actually, you are probably already more familiar with the O Antiphons than you realize.

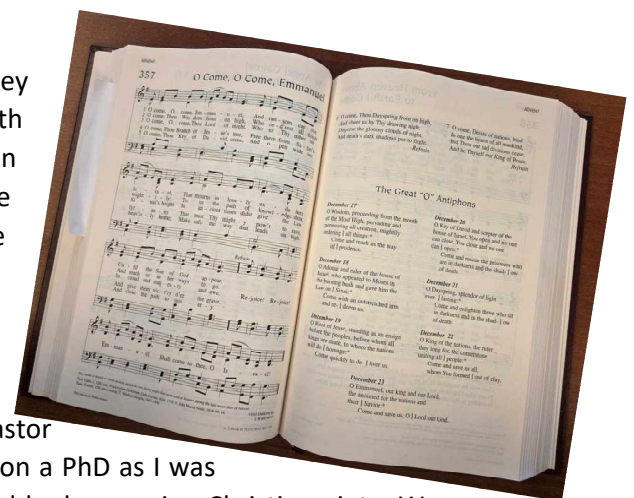
The O Antiphons are a series of Christian prayers dating back to the 12th century that were prayed in the days leading up to Christmas. Each prayer begins by calling out to Christ, "O" and addresses Him by a name given to the promised Messiah in the Old Testament. For example: "O Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel, You open and no one can close, You close and no one can open: Come and rescue the prisoners who are in darkness and the shadow of death." Why is this familiar? Because these 7 O

Antiphons are the basis for one of the most beloved Advent hymns of all, one you know and surely love: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

The great thing about this hymn and these prayers, and why they make for a great Advent theme, is that the words are rich with Scripture. By focusing on different titles or names of Christ in Messianic prophecies, each antiphon would have us consider the words of the prophets who foretold of Christ's coming. Because there are seven antiphons but only three Midweek Advent services, we won't be able to delve into all of them. Instead, we are going to focus on "O Wisdom" (Proverbs 8) "O Root of Jesse" (Isaiah 11) "O Dayspring" (Malachi 4). The sermons will be based on a great series written by a former colleague, Charlie Henrickson. Pastor Henrickson was at Concordia Seminary in the late 1990s working on a PhD as I was finishing with my MDiv. He was very conservative, very smart, and had a genuine Christian piety. We weren't particularly close, but I thought highly of him. I was sad to hear he died last year at the age of 71, passing away unexpectedly, yet peacefully in his sleep.

Our Advent services will be a great way to prepare for the High Holy Day of Christmas –thinking about our Savior and how the prophets told God's people He would come. Please plan to attend Wednesday services at 1:00 PM or 7:00 PM.

PrS





Israel, October 2026

Would you like go to Israel with your pastor and some friends from Lord of Life? Five years ago we had a trip planned, but then COVID brought everything to a halt. Likewise, the war with Gaza has hindered travel to Israel for the last few years. Now that things are looking better, some of us are hoping to get there next year to experience the Holy Land. Christians have made pilgrimages to places like Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth since the earliest days of Christianity to see the places where our Lord lived, died and rose. I got to experience Israel in 2008, and really enjoyed the trip. It is fascinating to see and experience the Holy Land, to walk where Jesus was and visit the places where Jesus conducted so much of His ministry and see this Promised Land God gave to His Chosen People. I found that it really deepens one's understanding of the Bible and helps to give you a renewed appreciation for the context of the events talked about in Scripture. There are brochures about the trip available in the narthex and if you are interested, please let me or Doug Hite know.

Shalom!

PrS



A Letter from Our Deaconess Intern

The Spirituality of the Cross

If any of you have ever peeked into my office, you'll know that I have quite a few books. Not as many as Pastor has (yet), but a fair number. Most of them are theology books, along with some philosophy, mental health, and the *Chronicles of Narnia* scattered within. I haven't read every single book that I own, but the goal is to read and annotate all of them so when someone asks me for a recommendation, I can genuinely say, "Here, I think this book would help you."

One of my books I have been reading in my pursuit of having good and helpful book recommendations (as well as keep up on my own personal study) is *The Spirituality of the Cross* by Gene Edward Vieth, Jr. I've had this one on my shelf for a while. It was given to me by a pastor and one of my best friends, who, upon gifting it to me, said, "This was the book that helped me understand Jesus. It was given to me by my pastor when I was considering becoming a Christian, and now I'm giving it to you so you can learn from it, too." I don't know about you, but that's pretty high praise for a book. So, naturally, I got intimidated and didn't read it for the longest time. I made so many excuses not to read it because I figured it couldn't contain anything that I didn't already know or was learning in seminary from other sources. Then, when I came down to Lord of Life to start my internship, Pastor saw my books and started asking me about them. I told him what I said at the beginning of my newsletter as he perused the shelves. After a few minutes, he pulled *The Spirituality of the Cross* off the shelf and asked me if I had read it yet, to which I said, "No." So he handed me the book and simply said, "Read it."

So, I'm reading it and wow, is it a rich little book. The author is an educated layman who has done his own research on what it means to have a God Who would send His Son to die for the sins of the world. He weaves his way through Christianity (specifically Lutheranism), beginning with the first evangelicals, then beautifully parsing what it means to be justified and how we receive that justification through the Means of Grace, and ending with the spirituality of the cross and how to live as redeemed Christians in this world until Christ receives us in the next. The strength of this book lies in its simplicity. It is not written by a pastor with a point to prove or a seminary professor who has forgotten how to turn off "high academia speak." Instead, and thanks be to God, this book is written by a man who seeks to clarify what he found confusing when he joined the church by simply asking who, what, when, why, and how. From there, he is able to explain some fairly complex ideas in a way that is helpful and easy to understand without watering anything down.

I am about a chapter and a half away from finishing the book, but let me tell you a little bit of what I've rediscovered from reading it. One: A fundamental piece of Lutheran spirituality is to recognize that we are imperfect. While many other spiritual practices emphasise a "route to perfection," we have a spirituality that recognises our sinfulness and the need for a gracious God. In other words, we are poor, miserable sinners whose perfection is found in our connection to Christ and His work on the cross, not in spite of Him. Two: We cannot decide for ourselves to receive the benefits of Christ's work. That is a Gift given entirely by grace through means such as the waters of Baptism, the Word of God, and the sacrament of the Altar. We cannot reach this grace by our own merit: that is where Christ and the Spirit come in. It's not what we do for Christ, it's what He does for us. Three: God is hidden, but that does not mean that He is absent. God is always with us, even though we can't see Him. Vieth, the author, uses the analogy of a child playing hide and seek. Just because you can't see the child doesn't mean that the child doesn't exist or that you should stop looking for them. God exists, and we don't have to look far to find him: in Word and Sacrament in the Divine Service.

Lutheran theology is not about a theology of glory that emphasises how good a job we can do to prove to God that we are worthy of His perfect grace. Instead, it is a theology of the cross. "... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) That is what this book gets to the heart of: Christ for you. Not you earning Christ and climbing a ladder to perfection, but Christ snatching you up in your imperfect state, drowning in sin and death, and raising you to new life. That is the spirituality of the cross.

I'm almost done with *The Spirituality of the Cross* and am excited to see what Gene Edward Vieth, Jr. has to say about vocation and living in the Two Kingdoms (sacred and secular). It has been a fulfilling read and a book that I will be sure to recommend to anyone struggling with what it means to live life as a Christian. You may even have a very excited deaconess intern come up to you and say, "Have you read this book? I think you would like it."

“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5:12-13)

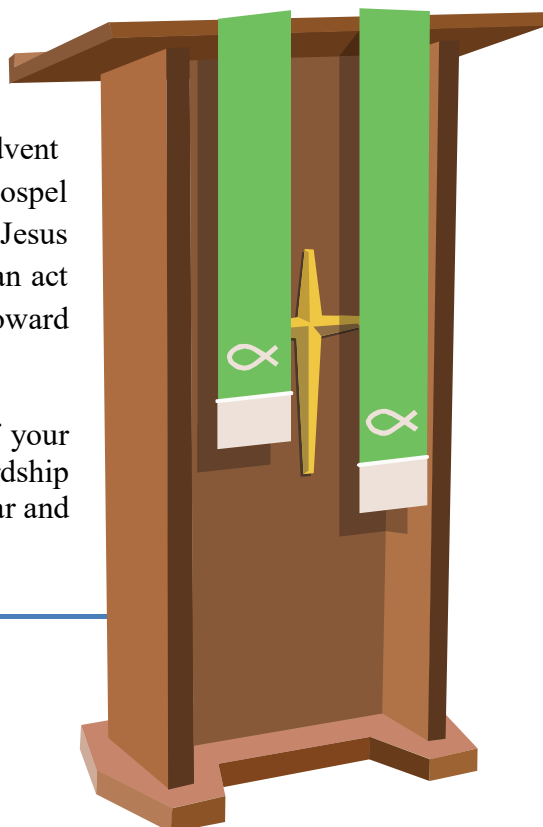
Have you finished your Christmas shopping yet? Do you have a person or two on your list that you just don't know what to give them? While I know you are running short of ideas...dad doesn't really want another tie, and your kid's teacher doesn't need another coffee mug. It can be nothing short of maddening to try to figure things out in the middle of this busy season!

As stewards of all of life and life's resources, we know that life is more than giving gifts. We stewards never want to take anything the Lord provides for granted. During this season of Advent and Christmas, it is a great idea to do whatever you can to be a faithful steward of your pastor. Even more so than the rest of the year, the demands on their time, their presence and their stewardship of the Gospel in the congregation become heightened.

The demands on pastors can wear them down and wear them out. How does the steward in the congregation serve as a faithful steward of the treasure that is their pastor? Here are a few ideas:

- Put them at the top of your prayer list. – Pray that the Lord guards them against the weariness that makes them susceptible to the work of the devil.
- Make worship a priority – St. Paul admonishes the Thessalonians and us to respect those who labor among us. There is no greater way to steward your pastor than to respect him enough to show up and receive what he has been sent to offer in the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the Holy Sacraments.
- Be receptive to his work – If your pastor is tasked with calling you to repentance or encouraging you to be in worship, know that he is only caring for your soul.
- Esteem him highly – Take the time to thank him for his faithful service to Christ, the congregation and your family.
- Be at peace – This is an easy time for even minor annoyances to get blown out of proportion and become full-blown conflict. This not only spoils the season of Advent and Christmas, but it also spoils our stewardship of the Gospel and those who serve us in that Gospel. Remember that Jesus came into the world to be the Prince of Peace. This is an act of grace and mercy. The steward seeks to reflect this toward their pastor and their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Stewardship at Christmas can be a challenge. Stewardship of your pastor during this time of the year is critical to our shared stewardship of the Gospel at a time of year when many are more open to hear and receive it.





The Women's Ministry is sponsoring a baking day in Lord of Life's beautiful kitchen. Come Bake cookies and enjoy fellowship anytime from 9am to 1pm on Sat., Dec. 13th. Please sign up in the narthex and indicate if you would like childcare provided. Recipes and ingredients will be provided.

Lord of Life Small Groups

EPIC PARENTING

- † For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth
BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com
- † Usually meets one Sunday a month in the afternoon or evening

FRUITS OF THE VINE CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Scott Peters at 972-898-3351 cell or speters@planolutheran.com
- † Usually meets on a Friday at 6:30 PM for Bible study

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Will meet Sat., December 13 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

YOUNG ADULTS

- † For those in their 20's and 30's
- † For info contact Lauren Moudy at laurenemoudy@gmail.com or (214) 415-8939
- † Will meet Sun, December 21 at 6 PM for Bible study and dinner





DECEMBER

birthdays & anniversaries

- 1 Tim & Alyson Wood (18)
- 4 Mollie Manning
- 4 Monique Phelan
- 6 Samuel Short
- 10 Evelyn Tribble
- 11 Paula Lowery
- 13 Gail Wolf
- 14 Stu Ehrett
- 14 Augustine Herrmann
- 14 Jack Schrank
- 14 Mark & Susan Knowles (46)
- 15 Sebastian Shaltanis
- 17 Marty & Angie Buckmeier (37)
- 18 Stephanie Tabor
- 19 Karol Rice
- 20 Dave Peters
- 21 Lizzy Short
- 22 Dennis & Linda Delzer (58)
- 23 Kevin & Cheryl Tyler (32)
- 26 Andrew Buckmeier
- 26 Ben Scarth
- 26 Mariel Tweedie
- 27 Phil Klein
- 27 Andrew & Rebecca Short (22)
- 28 Kelly Engelbert
- 28 David & Becky Armstrong (40)
- 30 Dennis Delzer
- 30 Tasie Kade
- 30 Doug & Janet Sanders (48)
- 30 Ken & Rhonda Tabor (42)



prepare for worship in december

December 3: Midweek Advent I, 1 & 7 PM

December 7: Second Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 11:1-10; Rom. 15:4-13; Matt. 3:1-12
HotD: "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry," 344

December 10: Midweek Advent II, 1 & 7 PM

December 14: Third Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 35:1-10; James 5:7-11; Matt. 11:2-15
HotD: "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding," 345

December 17: Midweek Advent III, 1 & 7 PM

December 21: Fourth Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 7:10-17; Rom. 1:1-7; Matt. 1:18-25
HotD: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," 357

December 24: Christmas Eve, 6 PM

December 25: Christmas Day, 10 AM

December 28: First Sunday after Christmas

Texts: Is. 63:7-14; Gal. 4:4-7; Matt 2:13-2
HotD: "Savior of the Nations, Come," 332