

B.A.S.I.C.

Brothers And Sisters In Christ

The Lord is Coming

By Missionary Matthew Ude

Advent is here. Advent means “coming.” It is the season during which we wait and prepare for the coming of our Lord. This makes it the perfect time to remind your congregation about the Means of Grace, which is the method through which our Lord comes to us. Here are four advent themes with notes to help you teach your congregation about the Means of Grace.

The Lord comes through His Word

There are many passages that give us the promise that the Lord will work through His Word. For a pastor it can often be a very discouraging to faithfully preach the word. Most people don't listen, and even those who claim to be Christian don't act like they are listening to the Word. Sometimes we are tempted to resort to other means to convince people to come to church. Some pastors use miracles. Some pastors try to make the service more entertaining. Some are tempted to preach a great deal of law. Some preach prosperity preaching and teaching only those things that humans like to hear. All of these tricks and methods might get people to come to the church building, but spiritually they accomplish nothing. Preaching the Word faithfully won't always fill our churches with lots of members but it will accomplish spiritual growth, life, renewal and salvation.

1 Kings 18 and 19: Here we have the story of how Elijah tried to use a great miracle to convert the people of Israel because he thought that no one was listening to his preaching. Although the miracle seemed to work at first, the next day the people of Israel turned against Elijah because they were afraid of Queen Jezebel. Elijah fled to the wilderness. Here in the wilderness God taught Elijah that God does not come to people's hearts through miracles, but God comes instead through the still small voice of His word.

1 Corinthians 1:21-29; Romans 1:16,17: Although the Word and the preaching of the Word seem like nothing in the eyes of men, this is the method that God has chosen to bring people to salvation.

Isaiah 55:11,12; Matthew 18:20: Christ promises that He is present and His power is at work wherever the Word is preached. To be gathered in Christ's name means to be gathered around His Word and His sacraments, doing those things that He has commanded.

Acts 2; Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15: It is only through the Word and the Sacraments that the Holy Spirit works and that people come to faith. In Acts 2, notice that when the apostles spoke in tongues the people did not come to faith, but when Peter preached the Gospel about Christ's death and resurrection and the forgiveness of sins, then they came to faith.

*Baptism and
regeneration
do not save
the human
without faith
in all promises
God lays in
the baptism.*

The Lord comes through baptism

How do we baptize?

Mark 1:8; Mark 7:4; Matt 28:19; Eph 5:25,26:
We baptize by using water and God's Word.
The method of applying water is not im-
portant. We can pour it. We can drip it. We
can immerse people in the river. God's word
does not tell us that we should use one meth-
od and not another. We simply use water and
speak the Word of God.

Who should be baptized?

Matt 28:19 – All nations, this includes infants
because they are part of all nations

John 3:5 – Anyone who would enter the king-
dom of God,

Acts 2:38,39 – All repentant sinners. Children
are also sinners (Psalm 51:5) even though
they cannot express repentance, yet we trust
the power of God working in baptism to cre-
ate repentance and faith, even as God has
promised in His word.

Summary: John 3:5 –Everyone should be bap-
tized in order that through faith they may re-
ceive the promises of Christ.

What does baptism do?

Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5 – Baptism gives
the forgiveness of sins

Romans 6:3; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21 –
Through baptism Christ creates faith, through
faith we receive eternal life

The power of baptism

Eph 5:26,27; 1 Peter 1:23; Titus 3:5 – The
power of Baptism is in the word and promise
of God. It is not in the water or in the actions
of man.

In baptism Christ comes to us and makes us a
part of His kingdom. It is His power that is at
work in baptism. Through His power He cre-
ates faith in our hearts through baptism. With
His power He forgives our sins in baptism. In 2
Kings 5 Naaman is told to wash in the Jordan
in order to cleanse his leprosy. At first
Naaman refuses to do it, because he thinks
that there is no way that washing in the Jor-
dan can possibly accomplish anything. Nor-
mally he would be right. Normally washing in
the Jordan would not cleanse leprosy, howev-
er he had God's promise. Similarly many peo-
ple think that baptism is nothing, that it is
merely symbolic, that washing in water cannot
really do anything. But like Naaman we have
God's promise and therefore God's power is
at work in baptism to wash away our sins.

The Lord comes through Communion

Who should receive the Lord's Supper?

Matthew 26:26-28 –

1. The blood was shed for the forgiveness of
sins, therefore those who are sinners and
need forgiveness should come to the
Lord's Supper.
2. The body and blood were given "for you,"
therefore whoever has faith that Christ
did this for them should come to receive
the Lord's Supper. That is to say whoever
has faith in Christ for the forgiveness of
sins.
3. "This is my body . . . This is my blood."
Christ tells us that His body and blood are
present in the bread and wine. We cannot

see or taste the body and blood in the Lord's Supper. We do not know how it is possible that the body and blood are present. But we have faith in the words of Christ "this is my body." Therefore whoever believes the words of Christ that His body and blood are present in the bread and wine should come to the Lord's Supper.

4. 1 Corinthians 11:27,29 – Paul says only those should come who are able to examine themselves. To examine ourselves as Paul talks about means to look at our hearts to see if there is repentance and faith. We look at the first three points we made about the Lord's Supper to see if they apply to us. 1. Am I a sinner? 2. Did Christ save me by dying for my sins? 3. Is Christ's body and blood present in the Lord's Supper? Everyone who answers yes to all three questions is ready to receive the Lord's Supper.

What is given in the Lord's Supper?

Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:19,20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 –

1. Forgiveness of sins
2. Christ's body and blood
3. 1 Corinthians 10:16,17; Fellowship with Christ
4. Fellowship with one another (Therefore only those who are in agreement with scriptural teaching should join together in the Lord's Supper.)

The Lord's Supper is a continuation in a new form of the Passover festival of the Old Testament.

The Lord saved the Israelites from the Egyptians and the Passover was to be a reminder of that event. The Lord saved us and set us

free from death and sin. He has given us the Lord's Supper as our constant reminder.

The Passover was also a shadow of Christ, reminding the Israelites of the fact that the Messiah was going to come and live among them. In the Lord's Supper Jesus does come and dwell with us, since He has promised that it is His body and blood. As Paul says, it is the communion (the joining together) of ourselves with the body of Christ.

The Angel of death passed over the houses of all who did as God commanded on that first Passover. God's judgment passes over us, giving us the forgiveness of sins in the Lord's Supper.

In the Lord's Supper Jesus comes to us not just in words that we hear, but in the bread and wine that we touch, taste, and smell. For this reason we often recite the words of Simeon, Luke 2:24, "My eyes have seen your salvation . . ." For just as Simeon saw and held the Christ child, so also we see and touch and taste Christ and His love in the Lord's Supper.

The Lord comes through Absolution

Mark 2:1-11 – Here we have the story of one who does not even have a name, and was paralyzed from birth. Yet, there is no man in all of scripture that was given a gift greater than what was given to this man, not Naaman who received cleansing from his leprosy, not Elisha who received a double portion of Elijah's spirit, not even the wisdom and riches of Solomon. Here is a man who received from the mouth of the Lord himself the words, "your sins are forgiven." Consider the life of Martin Luther, who beat himself, who wept, who pleaded, who went on pilgrimages, who kissed holy relics, who fasted and prayed, in all of

this he was searching for one thing: forgiveness and mercy. In all of this Martin sought fervently that very same thing that is here given to the paralytic. In all those things that Martin did, he never found and was never given this mercy and grace.

The paralytic did not come asking for forgiveness. He came apparently seeking only physical healing of his body. But Christ did not give him only what he thought he needed but so much more. He gave him grace and forgiveness. He gave these to him without his asking. He gave these to him without any works of charity or any outward show of repentance. He simply gave them freely and richly.

In all the rest of his life who could ever challenge or say anything against this man? No matter what men or demons or conscience said to this man, he could always respond, "Jesus has spoken to me, 'Your sins are forgiven.'" If anyone said to him, "Who is Jesus to forgive sins? How do you know that He has the power to forgive sins?" This former paralytic could respond, "I was lame but now I can walk. He proved His power when he healed me."

And now this same gift is given to us, in God's word and in our baptism and in the Lord's Supper. It is given to us in the words of absolution.

²² **And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (Joh 20:22-23 NKJ)**

This is the reason that Jesus sent out His apostles, his disciples, his evangelists and yes even us. He has sent us to speak in His name and His stead the same words He spoke to that paralytic. He has sent us out to freely, without cost, and without restriction give the grace

and forgiveness that He has given to us. It is this gift which the angel choirs of heaven sang above the fields of Bethlehem, "Peace on earth." What peace? The peace of the forgiveness of our sins.

Christ has given to us the authority to speak in His name and with His power, so that everyone on earth might receive from Christ the same gift which He has here given to the paralytic. No more is there any need for men to offer sacrifices, to roll around on stones, to cut themselves, to meditate, or to go on pilgrimages. You cannot make yourself worthy of this gift, yet it is given freely without cost or work.

Martin Luther did receive this gift from God. Not from any of the works which he tried to do to make himself worthy, but when, like the paralytic, he simply came to Jesus in His Word and there heard the words that Jesus said to him. Your sins are forgiven.

This is why our Lutheran churches begin every service with a confession from the congregation, so that the Minister might do the one thing he has been sent to do. He might respond to the congregation saying, "In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins." What is the sermon compared to this short sentence? In the 30 seconds that the confession and absolution take place, the congregation lays before Christ as the paralytic lay, and the pastor stands as Christ, by Christ's own command and with His authority. So that we might know from the very lips of Christ, the promise has been given, "Your sins are forgiven."

Christ stands before us in the absolution as He stood before the paralytic.

2014–2015 Church Year Calendar, Series B
Nov. 30, 2014—Nov. 22, 2015

The lighter colors depicted below do not represent the actual shade of color for a particular season. The colors have been lightened to assist with readability for individual printers.

This periscope can also be downloaded from the LC-MS website:

<http://www.lcms.org/resources/worship/lectionary>

SEASON	DATE	FESTIVAL	1ST Reading	PSALM	EPISTLE	GOSPEL	
ADVENT	Nov. 30	First S. in Advent	Is. 64:1–9	Psalm 80: 1–7	1 Cor. 1:3–9	Mark 11:1–10 or Mark 13:24–37	
	Dec. 7	Second S. in Advent	Is. 40:1–11	Psalm 85	2 Peter 3:8–14	Mark 1:1–8	
	Dec. 14	Third S. in Advent	Is. 61:1–4, 8–11	Psalm 126	1 Thess. 5: 16–24	John 1:6–8, 19–28	
	Dec. 21	Fourth S. in Advent	2 Sam. 7:1–11, 16	Psalm 89:1–5 (19–29)	Rom. 16:25–27	Luke 1:26–38	
CHRISTMAS	Dec. 24 <i>Eve</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord	Is. 7:10–14	Psalm 110: 1–4	1 John 4:7–16	Matt. 1:18–25	
	Dec. 24 <i>Midnight</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord	Is. 9:2–7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11–14	Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)	
	Dec. 25 <i>Dawn</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord	Is. 62:10–12	Psalm 98	Titus 3:4–7	Luke 2:(1–14) 15–20	
	Dec. 25 <i>Day</i>	The Nativity of Our Lord	Is. 52:7–10	Psalm 2	Heb. 1:1–6 (7–12)	John 1:1–14 (15–18)	
	Dec. 28	Christmas 1	Is. 61:10—62:3	Psalm 111	Gal. 4:4–7	Luke 2:22–40	
	Dec. 31	Eve of the Circ. and Name of Jesus <i>(New Year's Eve)</i>	Is. 30:(8–14) 15–17	Psalm 90: 1–12	Rom. 8:31b–39	Luke 12:35–40	
	Jan. 1	Circumcision and Name of Jesus	Num. 6:22–27	Psalm 8	Gal. 3:23–29	Luke 2:21	
	Jan. 4	Christmas 2	1 Kings 3:4–15	Psalm 119: 97–104	Eph. 1:3–14	Luke 2:40–52	
	EPIPHANY	Jan. 6	Epiphany	Is. 60:1–6	Psalm 72:1–11 (12–15)	Eph. 3:1–12	Matt. 2:1–12
		Jan. 11	The Baptism of Our Lord	Gen. 1:1–5	Psalm 29	Rom. 6:1–11	Mark 1:4–11
Jan. 18		Second S. a. the Epiphany	1 Sam. 3:1–10 (11–20)	Psalm 139:1–10	1 Cor. 6:12–20	John 1:43–51	
Jan. 25		Third S. a. the Epiphany	Jonah 3:1–5, 10	Psalm 62	1 Cor. 7:29–31 (32–35)	Mark 1:14–20	
Feb. 1		Fourth S. a. the Epiphany	Deut. 18:15–20	Psalm 111	1 Cor. 8:1–13	Mark 1:21–28	
Feb. 8		Fifth S. a. the Epiphany	Is. 40:21–31	Psalm 147:1–11	1 Cor. 9:16–27	Mark 1:29–39	
	Feb. 15	The Transfiguration of Our Lord	2 Kings 2:1–12 or Ex. 34:29–35	Psalm 50: 1–6	2 Cor. 3:12–13 (14–18); 4:1–6	Mark 9:2–9	

2014–2015 Church Year Calendar, Series B
Nov. 30, 2014—Nov. 22, 2015

<u>SEASON</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>FESTIVAL</u>	<u>1ST Reading</u>	<u>PSALM</u>	<u>EPISTLE</u>	<u>GOSPEL</u>
ASH WEDNESDAY	Feb. 18	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12–19	Psalms 51:1–13 (14–19)	2 Cor. 5:20b–6:10	Matt. 6:1–6, 16–21
LENT	Feb. 22	First S. in Lent	Gen. 22:1–18	Psalms 25:1–10	James 1:12–18	Mark 1:9–15
	Mar. 1	Second S. in Lent	Gen. 17:1–7, 15–16	Psalms 22:23–31	Rom. 5:1–11	Mark 8:27–38
	Mar. 8	Third S. in Lent	Ex. 20:1–17	Psalms 19	1 Cor. 1:18–31	John 2:13–22 (23–25)
	Mar. 15	Fourth S. in Lent	Num. 21:4–9	Psalms 107:1–9	Eph. 2:1–10	John 3:14–21
	Mar. 22	Fifth S. in Lent	Jer. 31:31–34	Psalms 119:9–16	Heb. 5:1–10	Mark 10:(32–34) 35–45
HOLY WEEK	Mar. 29	Palm Sunday /Sunday of the Passion	Zech. 9:9–12	Psalms 118:19–29 or Ps. 31:9–16	Phil. 2:5–11	Mark 14:1–15:47 or Mark 15:1–47 or John 12:20–43
	Apr. 2	Holy (Maundy) Thursday	Ex. 24:3–11	Psalms 116:12–19	1 Cor. 10:16–17	Mark 14:12–26
	Apr. 3	Good Friday	Is. 52:13–53:12	Psalms 22 or Psalms 31	Heb. 4:14–16; 5:7–9	John 18:1–19:42 or John 19:17–30
EASTER	Apr. 5	The Resurrection of Our Lord <i>Easter Sunrise</i>	Ex. 15:1–11	Psalms 118:15–29	1 Cor. 5:6b–8	John 20:1–18
	Apr. 5	The Resurrection of Our Lord <i>Easter Day</i>	Is. 25:6–9	Psalms 16	1 Cor. 15:1–11	Mark 16:1–8
	Apr. 12	Second S. of Easter	Acts 4:32–35	Psalms 148	1 John 1:1–2:2	John 20:19–31
	Apr. 19	Third S. of Easter	Acts 3:11–21	Psalms 4	1 John 3:1–7	Luke 24:36–49
	Apr. 26	Fourth S. of Easter	Acts 4:1–12	Psalms 23	1 John 3:16–24	John 10:11–18
	May 3	Fifth S. of Easter	Acts 8:26–40	Psalms 150	1 John 4:1–11 (12–21)	John 15:1–8
	May 10	Sixth S. of Easter	Acts 10:34–48	Psalms 98	1 John 5:1–8	John 15:9–17
	May 14	The Ascension of Our Lord	Acts 1:1–11	Psalms 47	Eph. 1:15–23	Luke 24:44–53
	May 17	Seventh S. of Easter	Acts 1:12–26	Psalms 1	1 John 5:9–15	John 17:11b–19
PENTECOST	May 24	The Day of Pentecost	Ezek. 37:1–14	Psalms 139:1–12 (13–16)	Acts 2:1–21	John 15:26–27; 16:4b–15
	May 31	The Holy Trinity	Is. 6:1–8	Psalms 29	Acts 2:14a, 22–36	John 3:1–17
	June 7 (Prop. 5)	Second S. a. Pentecost	Gen. 3:8–15	Ps. 130	2 Cor. 4:13–5:1	Mark 3:20–35
	June 14 (Prop. 6)	Third S. a. Pentecost	Ezek. 17:22–24	Psalms 1	2 Cor. 5:1–10 (11–17)	Mark 4:26–34
	June 21 (Prop. 7)	Fourth S. a. Pentecost	Job 38:1–11	Psalms 124	2 Cor. 6:1–13	Mark 4:35–41
	June 28 (Prop. 8)	Fifth S. a. Pentecost	Lam. 3:22–33	Psalms 30	2 Cor. 8:1–9, 13–15	Mark 5:21–43
	July 5 (Prop. 9)	Sixth S. a. Pentecost	Ezek. 2:1–5	Psalms 123	2 Cor. 12:1–10	Mark 6:1–13

2014–2015 Church Year Calendar, Series B
Nov. 30, 2014—Nov. 22, 2015

<u>SEASON</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>FESTIVAL</u>	<u>1ST Reading</u>	<u>PSALM</u>	<u>EPISTLE</u>	<u>GOSPEL</u>
	July 12 (Prop. 10)	Seventh S. a. Pentecost	Amos 7:7–15	Psalm 85: (1–7) 8–13	Eph. 1:3–14	Mark 6:14–29
	July 19 (Prop. 11)	Eighth S. a. Pentecost	Jer. 23:1–6	Psalm 23	Eph. 2:11–22	Mark 6:30–44
	July 26 (Prop. 12)	Ninth S. a. Pentecost	Gen. 9:8–17	Psalm 136: 1–9	Eph. 3:14–21	Mark 6:45–56
	Aug. 2 (Prop. 13)	Tenth S. a. Pentecost	Ex. 16:2–15	Psalm 145: 10–21	Eph. 4:1–16	John 6:22–35
	Aug. 9 (Prop. 14)	Eleventh S. a. Pentecost	1 Kings 19:1–8	Psalm 34: 1–8	Eph. 4:17–5:2	John 6:35–51
	Aug. 16 (Prop. 15)	Twelfth S. a. Pentecost	Prov. 9:1–10 <i>or</i> Josh. 24:1–2a, 14–18	Psalm 34:12–22	Eph. 5:6–21	John 6:51–69
	Aug. 23 (Prop. 16)	Thirteenth S. a. Pentecost	Is. 29:11–19	Psalm 14	Eph. 5:22–33	Mark 7:1–13
	Aug. 30 (Prop. 17)	Fourteenth S. a. Pentecost	Deut. 4:1–2, 6–9	Psalm 119: 129–136	Eph. 6:10–20	Mark 7:14–23
	Sept. 6 (Prop. 18)	Fifteenth S. a. Pentecost	Is. 35:4–7a	Psalm 146	James 2:1–10, 14–18	Mark 7:(24–30) 31–37
	Sept. 13 (Prop. 19)	Sixteenth S. a. Pentecost	Is. 50:4–10	Psalm 116: 1–9	James 3:1–12	Mark 9:14–29
	Sept. 20 (Prop. 20)	Seventeenth S. a. Pentecost	Jer. 11:18–20	Psalm 54	James 3:13— 4:10	Mark 9:30–37
	Sept. 27 (Prop. 21)	Eighteenth S. a. Pentecost	Num. 11:4–6, 10–16, 24–29	Psalm 104: 27–35	James 5:(1–12) 13–20	Mark 9:38–50
	Oct. 4 (Prop. 22)	Nineteenth S. a. Pentecost	Gen. 2:18–25	Psalm 128	Heb. 2:1–13 (14– 18)	Mark 10:2–16
	Oct. 11 (Prop. 23)	Twentieth S. a. Pentecost	Amos 5:6–7, 10– 15	Psalm 90: 12–17	Heb. 3:12–19	Mark 10:17–22
	Oct. 18 (Prop. 24)	Twenty-first S. a. Pentecost	Eccl. 5:10–20	Psalm 119: 9–16	Heb. 4:1–13 (14– 16)	Mark 10:23–31
	Oct. 25*	Reformation Day (Oct. 31)	Rev. 14:6–7	Psalm 46	Rom. 3:19–28	John 8:31–36 <i>or</i> Matt. 11:12–19
	Nov. 1	All Saints' Day	Rev. 7:(2–8) 9–17	Psalm 149	1 John 3:1–3	Matt. 5:1–12
	Nov. 8 (Prop. 27)	Twenty-fourth S. a. Pentecost	1 Kings 17:8–16	Psalm 146	Heb. 9:24–28	Mark 12:38–44
	Nov. 15 (Prop. 28)	Twenty-fifth S. a. Pentecost	Dan. 12:1–3	Psalm 16	Heb. 10:11–25	Mark 13:1–13
	Nov. 22 (Prop. 29)	Last S. of the Church Year	Is. 51:4–6 <i>or</i> Dan. 7:9–10, 13– 14	Psalm 93	Jude 20–25 <i>or</i> Rev. 1:4b–8	Mark 13:24–37 <i>or</i> John 18:33–37
	Nov. 26	Thanksgiving Day	Deut. 8:1–10	Psalm 67	Phil. 4:6–20 <i>or</i> 1 Tim. 2:1–4	Luke 17:11–19
ADVENT	Nov. 29	First S. in Advent	Jer. 33:14–16	Psalm 25: 1–10	1 Thess. 3:9–13	Luke 19:28–40 <i>or</i> Luke 21:25–36

* *Observed*