

Devotions – December 3-9, 2017

By the NGL Synodical Women’s Organization Board

Sunday, December 3, 2017

Submitted by Kris Carlson, SWO Treasurer

Text: John 1:5

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

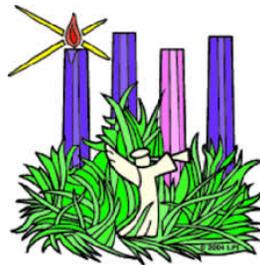
“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

ELW 240

I’ll admit it, I love candles; even from an early age. When my sister and I would stay with Grandma and Grandpa, there were always candles—even on the breakfast table.

I’m particularly fond of this Advent hymn—the Mideastern sound—the way it moves quietly each week from one – two – three – four candles as we wait for the coming of the Messiah. Advent is my favorite season of the church year; a respite and a refuge. Christmas displays and merchandise have been in the stores for two months (or more), on the TV, online, in our mailboxes. As the days are getting darker, may we all pause and reflect on the coming light – one candle at a time.

Let us pray: Lord, we thank you for the greatest gift of all. Help us find the quiet times to prepare our hearts for the coming of the light of Christ. Amen.



Monday, December 4, 2017

Submitted by Sue Hill, SWO Board Member

Text: John 15:16

You did not choose me but I chose you.

Take a minute and consider this wonderful thought. We are the chosen ones, the ones that this Christ child is going to die for. As we studied John, this verse seemed to speak to me. I was having one of those days when nothing I did worked and it seemed as if there was nobody who

cared. This verse made me stop and see that from the day I was born I was chosen to be special to this Person, this Jesus.

We are all chosen by Him and He gives us the guidelines to continue in His footsteps. What a marvelous gift this is for us.

Let us pray: Lord, help me listen to what You say and to teach others that are waiting to hear your words. Amen.



Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Submitted by Elaine Kuhlmann, SWO Board Member

PUT YOUR TRUST IN JESUS

Text: John 1:12

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.

As life has many challenges, I need to live my life believing and trusting in Jesus as the child of God. Trusting in God to take on my families suffering. My husband has CHF and my grandson has aggressive MS. I pray for my family to be restored back to health through prayers and kindness from others. I have no power to physically fix the illness of my family members but trusting in Jesus has given me peace that all will be taken care of in God's time.

I would like to share an ending prayer with you by Loise Pinkerton Fritz:

*"Put your trust in Jesus, put your trust in Him; He's the way, the truth, the life,
He'll guide your pathway dim.
For He's a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path;
He is the word that promises life to all who ask.*

*Put your faith in Jesus, to Him fore'er hold fast; This world's things shall pass away
But His word e'er shall last.
So, put your trust in Jesus, new life He'll give to you;
Believe in Him, the Living God.... is all He asks we do."*

Amen



Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Submitted by Pam Chouinard, SWO Vice President

Text: Luke 2:19

But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

I love Christmas! All of it. I love the smell of cedar and pine boughs, the Christmas cards, the food (especially the cookies!!), the decorations, the lights, Hallmark Channel, the Christmas Story and everything this special holiday brings.

The Christmas Season tends to bring out the best of most of us. We are a little kinder and gentler. A lot more giving; with not only our money but our time as well.

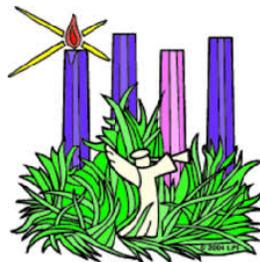
We greet people on the streets and everywhere we go saying, "Merry Christmas!" What a perfect time to spread some cheer by a little encouragement. Whether it is in the form of a smile or a gift to show how special they are.

One of the most special times of Christmas is spending time with those you love. Love and Christmas just go together because Christ was sent to us in love.

Christmas is a time that seems to conjure up memories. We think about past Christmases. We remember our children when they were little. We remember our loved ones that are no longer with us. As women, we really like to reflect on our Christmas memories as well as create new ones for our grandchildren.

Enjoy the upcoming season and keep the Christmas cheer, love and memories!

Let us pray: Dear Lord thank you for all the blessings you have given us. Help us to keep the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts as we enjoy the time with our families and friends.



Thursday, December 7, 2017

Submitted by Gail Schmidt, Board Member

Text: Matthew 19:23-30 NKJV

²³ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁵ When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

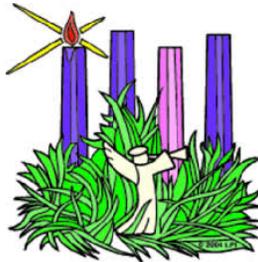
²⁷ Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore, what shall we have?”

²⁸ So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife^[a] or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord God,

Please be with us to see the best in your people. Let us be instruments of your love, and to let our lights shine for others to see their way to you. When our lives are at their darkest, help us see the light, and rely on you to know that it is well. Help us to know that with you, all things are possible. Guide us daily to your loving arms. I pray these things through Our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Christ. Amen.



Friday, December 8, 2017

Submitted by Melzee Jacobson, SWO President

Text: Ephesians 4:2

“Be patient with each other.”

I have always heard people say, including me, be careful what you pray for. If you pray for patience, then you may be provided with lessons in life for which patience is required. I have also heard that there are two ways to learn, one by emotion and the other by repetition, with that which is learned through emotion remembered the longest.

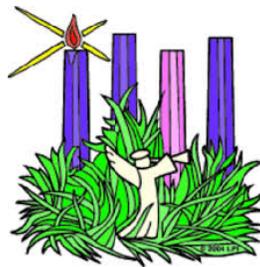
For many of us patience is not a strong trait in our personalities, especially as we begin to grow from being an infant. As an infant, we learned to let others know when we were hungry, needed a diaper change, were overly tired by fussing and crying uncontrollably until our needs were met. Through childhood we would let others know when things did not go our way, again by

complaining in some way or another and we continued through into adulthood. Our pattern was for instant gratification.

As I am now entering into my retirement years, I look back and see that as I added the years on, I also discovered one truth to a happier life. Being patient with others instead of getting upset gives me a sense of calm and peace. Taking the time to listen and learn about the other person's personal journey makes me realize how much we do and do not have in common. Our stories may be different, but the essence of the events and the growth from the experience takes us one step further to realizing that patience is what allows us to see other people as Children of God, even if they don't realize they are, and to reach out in love and respect to one another.

God's teaching of being patient with others is a gift to both the giver and the receiver that can make our life journey a pleasure rather than separating us from each other unnecessarily.

Let us pray: Lord God, help me to accept the gift of patience and allow me to learn from other's experiences and them of mine through the sharing of your Story and the story that you have provided me in this lifetime through the blessings you have bestowed upon me. Please allow me to experience the grace and peace that comes with being patient with others. Amen



Saturday, December 9, 2017

Submitted by Melzee Jacobson, SWO President

God's Son was Born

Text: Isaiah 9:6

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

As Christmas time approaches and we wait during the season of Advent to celebrate the birth of Jesus, each year the anticipation mounts as we watch, look and listen for the event to be remembered. But then there are those who continue to say that we Christians are not celebrating the true date of Jesus' birth, that it should really be possibly in our summer season. Does the date really change the truth of the event that took place so many years ago?

Calendars have been revised since that night of the original event. Somehow it was decided to recognize the day as December 25 (and you know when you have held an event two times, it definitely gains the name of "tradition"). What is more important, having a "correct date" or setting aside time to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus? I honestly think that if we did not have a set time to celebrate, then most of us would continue and never slow down in this fast pace world to acknowledge the event.

In my parent's day, church attendance, church community, church fellowship, being a community of faith together was a priority. In today's fast pace, it seems to be something that we do when we don't have anything else to do. If church celebrations had no specific date to come together and celebrate, would you even take the time to think about them?

The important aspect of the birth of God's Son is that we take the time to celebrate it and give praise for the grace that has been bestowed upon us to have the faith and belief that there is eternal life waiting for us. Our most important job is to share the Story with others and we should concentrate on the task that has been set before us and be thankful that we can be the feet, hands, and heart of God to others.

Let us pray: Help us to remember that the specifics of an event are not the most important facts surrounding it. Remind us of the importance to recognize the event and to give thanks and praise that it occurred and that we can be active in celebrating it over and over and over and remembering that is a part of who we claim to be. Amen

