

Good News Daily

**Volume
XVI**

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Number 52

Sunday, December 25

John 3:31-36 *“For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.”* (v.34)

Merry Christmas. This year the Nativity of Our Lord falls on a Sunday. Sounds special, right? Yet how many will see it from the aspect of being cheated because a holiday lands on the weekend or grumble because their favorite restaurant in which to eat Sunday breakfast is closed? Deep down you may struggle with the thought of not going, even though it's Sunday, because you already went to midnight Mass.

I wonder if on that historic night in Bethlehem some groused because that brightly shining star disturbed their sleep, or caused their roosters to crow and their dogs to howl. Did those prone to thievery and crime scowl because the illumination drove away shadows?

When we head to our worship services and hear the organ music swell, let us remember those who are not coming up the sidewalk to church. Amidst the pageantry and glitter, the hymns and presents, food and family, open your hearts to receive, and then pass on, the best gift of all—Emanuel. He is the reason we celebrate today, and every Sunday.

Zechariah 2:10-13; Psalms 2, 85; 1 John 4:7-16

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for Kitale - (Kenya) [The Rt Revd Stephen Kewasis](#)

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. George's Episcopal Church, Belleville, The Very Rev. Canon Dale Coleman, Rector; 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: Hally Brenneman's birthday.

Monday, December 26

Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15 *“This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the LORD. Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word. Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from their evil ways.* (vv.2-3a)

Today is Boxing Day. Traditionally, it was the day the Lord of the Manor gave gifts to his servants and tenants, i.e. those beyond his immediate family. Often in my upbringing, Christmas Day was reserved for the parents and siblings

only and Boxing Day for getting together with and exchanging gifts with the extended clan—grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, etc.

The 26th is also the day the first Christian was martyred. Stephen offered the gift of salvation to those extended “family members” of the Jewish community and was stoned for his efforts. His gift was not well received.

Jeremiah also was called by God to give a gift. He prophesized for people to return to the Lord and receive the gift of His favor. It was not well received either.

Today, you may be bustling about the stores exchanging items and buying up the bargains. In all the chaos and cacophony of the day after Christmas, will you take time to give Christ to someone else, even if it is not well received?

Psalm 31; Acts 6:8—7:60; Matthew 23:34-39

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kiteto - (Tanzania) [The Rt Revd Isaiah Chambala](#)

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

ST. MATTHEW’S: Judy & Loren Thomson’s anniversary.

Tuesday, December 27

John 21:19b-24 *This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.* (v.24)

Traditionally on December 27th, the life of St. John the Evangelist is celebrated. Author of five books in the New Testament, he called himself, “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” I once considered this a rather boastful statement, until a Bible study leader pointed out that could be said of any follower of Christ. Even though John was one of the original twelve, he chose to write in the third person, not “I”.

Today, in honor of St. John, I encourage each of you to elevate Jesus more than yourself. Try to eliminate “I” from your conversations as much as possible. Listen to what others say. Then see them as Christ does and love them. At the end of the day, write down your experiences and how, if any, your day turned out differently. Then try it again tomorrow and the next day. You may even add it to your New Year’s resolutions, if you are so inclined to make them.

When people celebrate your life, will they state your testimony was true and you were someone whom Jesus loved?

Exodus 33:18-23; Psalm 92; 1 John 1:1-9

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kitgum - (Uganda) [Vacant](#)

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: Wedding anniversary of Karyn Smith and Robin Levine, Woodie Shadid’s birthday.

Wednesday, December 28

Matthew 2:13-18 *When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.* (v.16)

Today is a sad day. We commemorate the slaughtering of the innocent baby boys by Herod. As a mother of a son, it churns my insides to think about it. How could God allow such a horrific thing to happen?

Whenever tragedy strikes, that is a common question, isn't it? Many people turn away from God out of hurt, confusion, and anger that He would let such a calamity happen. However, others do just the opposite. They run to Him. Their faith strengthens in their weakness, and their lack of understanding makes them rely more on God's wisdom, comfort, and peace.

I recall watching two families lose a husband and father to cancer. One family regularly attended church and gladly gave their time, talents, and treasures. Their outlook contrasted greatly to the family who rarely prayed outside of the pew and went to a socially acceptable church in order to be seen as outstanding members of society.

When tragedy strikes, will you clench your fist and shake it at heaven, or open it and ask for God to grab hold?

Jeremiah 31:15-17; Psalm 124; Revelation 21:1-7

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kitgum - (Uganda) [Vacant](#)

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.

Thursday, December 29

Isaiah 12:1-6 *"Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."* (v.6)

Tucked in the first third of the book of the Prophet Isaiah is this chapter. Just reading it is uplifting. Now, go back and read it out loud. Go ahead. You can finish reading this devotional in a minute.

One time in our Alpha class, our priest asked us all to just praise God out loud in prayer for several minutes. Slowly our voices grew louder. I could feel the energy in the room, and envisioned throngs of angels whirling around us as our prayers whiffed through the rafters toward heaven. I'll never forget that evening.

Have you ever prayed only praises to God? Have you prayed them out loud? The next time the weight of the world is slumping your shoulders, try it. Even if you have to get in the shower so the stream of water drowns out your voice to others in the house. It is amazing how praising our Lord diminishes every other

thought in our heads. It puts things in perspective and reminds us not only who He is, but that we are His.

Psalm 18:1-20; Revelation 1:1-8; John 7:37-52

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kivu - (Rwanda) [The Rt Revd Augustin Ahimana](#)

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.

Friday, December 30

Psalm 20 *Some trust in chariots, others in horses. But we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*” (v.7)

Who do you trust, really? Your spouse, your parents, your priest? Do you trust yourself? Tough question if you truly think about it. Actually, we trust in many things. We trust the sun to rise, the storm clouds to lift and the moon to guide the tides. We even trust the traffic light will turn green, eventually.

Trust is different than hope. We hope we will get a refund on our taxes and our kids will turn out okay. We hope our marriage survives the bumps that jostle us on this life's roads and all works out okay for our friend going through a tough time.

However, those who trust in the Lord possess a different sort of hope. I saw a posting on Facebook that stated that we should trust in God as much in the good days as in the bad. That is the hope He offers. He walks with us, lives in us, and sends His Spirit to comfort and guides us, no matter what life dolls out. I truly hope you can trust in that.

Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 21; Revelation 1:9-20; John 7:53—8:11

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Kobe - (Japan) [The Rt Revd Andrew Yatuka Nakamura](#)

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev. Geoffrey E. L. Scanlon, Urbana.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Wedding anniversary of Grace and Bill Johns.

Saturday, December 31

2 Corinthians 5:16—6:2 *So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.* (v.16)

Today is the last day of the old year to much of the world. All await the clock to dong midnight. Television cameras will capture different cities welcome in the start of a new year. Tomorrow begins a fresh start. Resolutions will be made, and hopes are elevated.

The Christian is already well into the new year. It began the first Sunday in Advent. More than that, each dawn we can confess our sins, resolve to live more as He would have us do so, and receive His mercies which are new every morning, not just once a year.

TV cameras will most likely not zone in on us as we stretch from our bedclothes and thank Him for a new chance to serve Him, but that's okay. There is plenty of fanfare and rejoicing in heaven when a person of faith prays. In fact, I'd venture to say any New Year's celebration pales in comparison.

Isaiah 26:1-9; Psalms 46, 48; John 8:12-19

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Koforidua - (Ghana, West Africa) [The Rt Revd Francis Quashie](#)

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Abba Father, may your continual blessings guide the laity, priests and bishops in the Diocese of Springfield. Bestow upon us the vision and wisdom to see, ears to hear, and lips to express love for one another as a new year begins. In Jesus' name we give thanks and praise. Amen.

by Julie B Cosgrove

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For St. Matthew's Community, please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Pray for the sick and those in distress: Wendy R., Jarrett H., Greg P., the R. family, Don E., Jeff L., Russell H., two local families in crisis, Tabitha, Linda S., Huff family, Lavikoff family, Reva, Margaret M., Susan K., Shayne, Andrea W., Diane B., and Carlos L.

Pray for those in military service: Runyon H.

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

Please pray for: patients and staff of Advocate BroMenn Regional Medical Center, Advocate Eureka Community Hospital, and OSF St. Joseph Medical Center.

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