

First Sunday after Christmas January 1, 2017
Circumcision and Name of Jesus

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the
rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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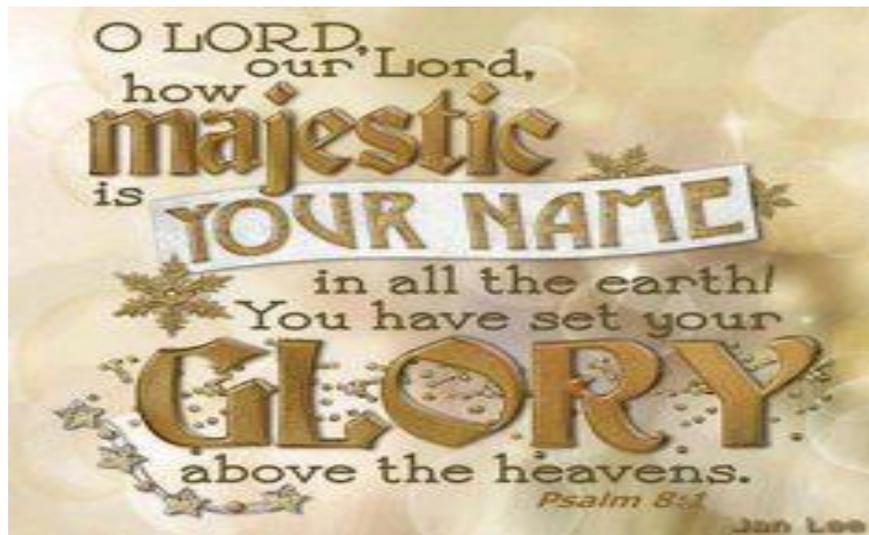
**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

December 29 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship midweek service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church
setting, a newly formed assisted living site and used by Lutherans in Africa.*

E-mail puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/26036504065265925/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 389 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 105

“Let altogether praise our God”

“Author, Nicolaus Herman, c. 1480-1561; Translator (sts 1, 3-7) F. Samuel Janzow, 1913-2001; Translator (st. 2) August Crull, 1845-1923.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmM8Pea8m2s> “Chorale prelude by John Eggert and verse setting by Richard Gieseke. Mark Peters playing the Immanuel Lauck organ”. [One LSB Hymn a Week](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIUhy7b5EXw> “Polyphonic setting of this well-known Christmas Carol. Thanks to the Wyoming Catholic College Choir for the kind permission to post this recording.” [ludustestudinis](#)

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

Numbers 6:22-27; RCL (Revised Common Lectionary), the same verses (Next Week: Isaiah 42:1-9; RCL, the same verses) The first reading will be from Isaiah through January 22.

The Revised Common Lectionary also has reading for this Sunday as the “First Sunday after Christmas” and “New Year’s Day”. These readings came be found at

<http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/lections.php?year=B&season=Christmas>

“The year begins with a benediction!

This familiar benediction has long been used by the church (and Jewish communities) to conclude services of worship. But it is wise to remember that this blessing stands at both the beginning and end of our life with God and in the world...” (continued after reading)

Aaron's Blessing

²²The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²³“Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

²⁴The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶the LORD lift up his countenance^[a] upon you and give you peace.

²⁷“So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

a. [Numbers 6:26](#) Or *face*

“...This text is located in the middle of a major section of Numbers (1:1-10:10). It describes Israel's preparations for leaving Mt. Sinai (where the people have been camped for almost a year) and the continuation of its journey through the wilderness to the land of promise. This blessing is designated for Israel's time of departure from Sinai, and was to be used daily throughout their journey. This is a blessing for a journey!...

... Putting God's name on the people (supremely by means of the word) emphasizes the divine source of all blessings. It is as if the people now wear God's name, and that it should be worn so that all will see and believe. Putting the name of God on the people may have been understood literally, given that the blessing is inscribed on two cigarette-sized silver plaques found near Jerusalem, dating from the 7th-6th centuries BCE -- the earliest known fragments of a biblical text (see Jacob Milgrom, Numbers [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1990] 360-62).

That this text is chosen for the "name of Jesus" Sunday is especially appropriate. In Jesus Christ, the "name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9), the Christian community encounters the gracious face of God in an unsurpassable way. This benediction is a deeply appropriate way to being the service of Christian worship in God's name to a gathered conclusion.”
https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1096 **Terence E. Fretheim**,
Elva B. Lovell Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

The main body of this article has a detailed analysis of the significance of word choice and structure. Worth the read.

Psalm 8; RCL, the same Psalm (Psalm 29; RCL, the same Psalm)

“This psalm of praise is unique in the Psalter in that it is addressed directly to the Lord throughout.

With no asides to the congregation calling them to participate in the psalmist’s praise, no descriptive passages in the third person, nor even any inward conversation on the psalmist’s part (“O my soul”) as are seen in other psalms, Psalm 8 conveys a distinctive sense of intimacy and directness. We are here invited to listen in on and participate directly in the writer’s private prayer, and it is therefore the task of the interpreter to lead the congregation into that prayer as participants, taking up the psalmist’s meditations as their own...” (continued after reading)

“...To the chief musician, for liturgical performance, upon Gittith, a form of zither, named from the Philistine city of Gath, where the author had lived for some time ...”

<http://www.kretzmannproject.org/>

How Majestic Is Your Name

To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith.^[a] A Psalm of David.

8 O LORD, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

² Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
you have established strength because of your foes,
to still the enemy and the avenger.

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?

⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings^[b]
and crowned him with glory and honor.

⁶ You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,

⁷ all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,

⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

⁹ O LORD, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

- a. [Psalm 8:1](#) Probably a musical or liturgical term
- b. [Psalm 8:5](#) Or *than God*; Septuagint *than the angels*

Further comments on GITTITH (גִּתִּיתָהּ): **By: [Emil G. Hirsch](#), [M. Seligsohn](#)**

“A musical instrument mentioned in Ps. viii. 1, lxxxi. 1, lxxxiv. 1. The word is explained by Gesenius (“Thesaurus,” *s. v.* גִּתִּיתָהּ) as meaning “striking instrument,” but it is now generally held to denote a zither. Rashi, following the Targum, derives the name from “Gath”; it would then mean “fabricated by the people of Gath.” He also quotes a Talmudic saying that “Gittith” is an allusion to Edom, which will be trodden down like a wine press (גִּת; compare Isa. lxiii. 3), and combats this view by arguing that the context of the chapter has nothing to do with Edom. Ibn Ezra explains the name “Gittith” as referring to the fact that the above-mentioned psalms were composed for the sake of the descendants of Obed-edom the Gittite, who was a Levite. The interpretation (also found in the Septuagint) that “Gittith” means “to be sung to the tune of the wine-presses” is ridiculed by Ibn Ezra.” <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6693-gittith>

“...The psalm opens and closes with a well-known evocation of God’s majesty: “O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” The transcendent glory of God is thus set forth as the defining context of the psalm, so that the other matters it raises must be

considered in relationship to God's overarching lordship. When we turn to the central subject matter of the psalm in verses 3-8, we will see why it is crucial to keep this context in mind. The other major concern of Psalm 8 is the vocation of humankind in the creation. This vocation is described in terms of "dominion" over the rest of creation, given to human beings by God. There are, therefore, two relationships in view in the psalm, that between humankind and the rest of creation, and that between the Creator and his human creations..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2643 **Matthew Stith**, *Pastor, Round Hill Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth, Pa.*

For those who would like to dig deeper:

"...This essay sets forth a case study of the use of the biblical commentary for confessional formation through an examination of the significant differences between Lutheran and Reformed exegeses of Psalms 8 and 16 by looking at the commentaries of Luther, Bucer, and Calvin. Furthermore, it investigates the variations within the Reformed tradition itself through a comparison and contrast of Calvin and Bucer's interpretations of Psalms 8 and 16. Three main questions become prominent in the comparison and contrast of these three exegetes: the questions of a Christological-prophetic reading versus a historical reading, the use of Jewish exegesis, and the teachings found in these psalms — whether these are teachings concerning Trinity and the two natures of Christ (Luther) or teachings for the society of the saints (Bucer) or teachings on God's providence (Calvin). The varying answers to these three questions demonstrate some of the distinctive elements of Lutheran and Reformed confessional identities..." <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/187607505x00100>

Galatians 3:23-29; RCL, Galatians 4:4-7 or Philippians 2:5-11 (Romans 6:1-11; RCL, Acts 10:34-43)

"In Galatians 3, Paul makes an intricate exegetical argument about the priority of God's promise to Abraham and its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, and about the provisional function of the law in relation to God's promise.

Since verses 23-29 bring this argument to its climax, it will be helpful to review briefly the groundwork Paul has laid earlier in the chapter..." (continued after reading)

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave^[a] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

- a. [Galatians 3:28](#) For the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface*

*“...a particular difficulty is presented when words in biblical Hebrew and Greek refer to ancient practices and institutions that do not correspond directly to those in the modern world. Such is the case in the translation of ‘ebed (Hebrew) and doulos (Greek), terms which are often rendered “slave.” These terms, however, actually cover a range of relationships that require a range of renderings — either “slave,” “bondservant,” or “servant” — depending on the context. Further, the word “slave” currently carries associations with the often brutal and dehumanizing institution of slavery in nineteenth-century America. For this reason, the ESV translation of the words ‘ebed and doulos has been undertaken with particular attention to their meaning in each specific context. Thus in Old Testament times, one might enter slavery either voluntarily (e.g., to escape poverty or to pay off a debt) or involuntarily (e.g., by birth, by being captured in battle, or by judicial sentence). Protection for all in servitude in ancient Israel was provided by the Mosaic Law. In New Testament times, a doulos is often best described as a “bondservant” — that is, as someone bound to serve his master for a specific (usually lengthy) period of time, but also as someone who might nevertheless own property, achieve social advancement, and even be released or purchase his freedom. The ESV usage thus seeks to express the nuance of meaning in each context. Where absolute ownership by a master is in view (as in Romans 6), “slave” is used; where a more limited form of servitude is in view, “bondservant” is used (as in 1 Corinthians 7:21–24); where the context indicates a wide range of freedom (as in John 4:51), “servant” is preferred. Footnotes are generally provided to identify the Hebrew or Greek and the range of meaning that these terms may carry in each case...” <http://www.esvbible.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/preface-to-the-english-standard-version/>

“...The categories that divide us today may be different than in Paul's day, but divisions persist in congregations and in the broader church -- divisions that run along lines of ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, ideology, political affiliation, and any number of other factors.

Paul reminds us that whatever human categories may describe us, they do not define us, "for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." All human categories are subordinate and ultimately irrelevant to our primary identity as members of the body of Christ.

Recently a woman in the congregation I serve was questioned by a fellow member who was trying to pin down her stand on a particular issue -- to figure out whether she was "conservative" or "liberal." Refusing to be labeled, she responded by saying simply, "I am a child of God. That is what matters." Her interrogator was left flustered and speechless...

...Yet Paul's message to the Galatians cautions us against allowing the law to annul the promise and destroy the freedom, unity, and mission to which God has called us in Christ. God's mission to bless "all the families of the earth," begun with the promise to Abraham and bequeathed to us as children and heirs, takes priority over all human agendas.

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=610 [Elisabeth Johnson](#),
Professor, Lutheran Institute of Theology, Meiganga, Cameroon

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd Chapter”

“Glory to You, O Lord”

Luke 2:21; RCL, Luke 2:15-21 (Matthew 3:13-17; RCL, the same reading)



¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

Circumcision and the Gentiles is frequently discussed in the New Testament. Jesus was not a Gentile and the following comment on circumcision demonstrates how his one side of his dual identity, true man, validates His fulfillment of the law.

“...Every man who becomes circumcised . . . is a debtor to keep the whole law: When we embrace the law as our rule of walking with God, we must embrace the **whole law**. We become debtors to keep the **whole law**, and that is a heavy debt.

i. Again, the legalists among the Galatians wanted them to think they could observe some aspects of the law without coming under the entire law. But when we choose to walk by law, we must walk by the **whole law**.

ii. If we come to God on the basis of our own law keeping we must keep the **whole law** and our law-keeping must be perfect. No amount of obedience makes up for one act of disobedience; if you are pulled over for speeding, it will do no good to protest that you are a faithful husband, a good taxpayer,

and have obeyed the speed limit many times. All of that is irrelevant. You have still broken the speeding law and are guilty under it..." <https://enduringword.com/commentary/galatians-5/>

"The **Feast of the Circumcision of Christ** is a Christian celebration of the circumcision of Jesus in accordance with Jewish tradition, eight days (according to the Semitic and southern European calculation of intervals of days)^[1] after his birth, the occasion on which the child was formally given his name.^{[2][3]}

The circumcision took place, not in the Temple, though painters sometimes so represent it, but in the home.^[3]

The circumcision of Jesus has traditionally been seen, as explained in the popular 14th-century work the *Golden Legend*, as the first time the blood of Christ was shed, and thus the beginning of the process of the redemption of man, and a demonstration that Christ was fully human, and of his obedience to Biblical law.

The feast day appears on 1 January in the liturgical calendar of the Eastern Orthodox Church.^[4] In the General Roman Calendar, the 1 January feast, which from 1568 to 1960 was called "The Circumcision of the Lord and the Octave of the Nativity", is now named the solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God and the Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord. It is celebrated by some churches of the Anglican Communion and virtually all Lutheran churches. In these latter Western Christian denominations, the Feast of the Naming and Circumcision of Jesus Christ marks the eighth day (octave day) of Christmastide.^[5] ...

...Since it was a feast of Christ and related directly to Scriptural passages (notably Luke 2:21), the Feast of Circumcision was retained by churches of the Lutheran Reformation. It remains on most Lutheran liturgical calendars to this day, although there has been a general move to call it "The Name of Jesus."^[9] Martin Luther preached at least one notable sermon on this feast day which is still available in his Church Postils, and up until the late 1970s, Lutheran hymnbooks would contain several hymns relating to this subject..." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feast_of_the_Circumcision_of_Christ

For the Roman Catholic perspective of naming this "Mary, Mother of God" Sunday read the article at <https://churchmouse.wordpress.com/2010/12/31/january-1-feast-of-the-circumcision-of-christ/>



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