

# First Sunday after Christmas December 31, 2017

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

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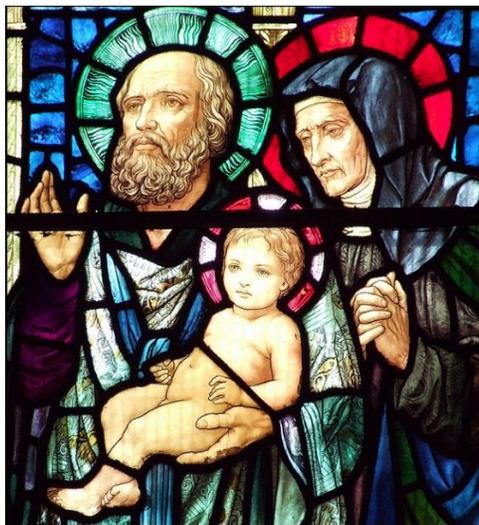
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**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,  
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

December 28, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134

*Presented as a part of the bible study/worship at a weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, bi-weekly at an assisted living site, St. Philip Lutheran Church, Cleveland (First Sunday of the month at 11:00am) and used by Lutherans in Africa. Contact [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.*



<https://progressiveredneckpreacher.wordpress.com/2014/10/22/week-in-the-word-discovering-life-as-a-bundle-of-blessings/>

### **Hymn of the Day**

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

**“Let all together praise our God”**

The translator for all verses except verse 2 is Samuel Janzow. TLH uses the August Crull translation for all verses.

“An ordained Lutheran minister with a Ph.D. in literary studies, F. Samuel Janzow (1913–2001) served as pastor-poet throughout an extensive career. He shepherded parishes as well as taught English for more than a quarter century at Concordia University Chicago, then known as Concordia College, River Forest...Janzow drew from his pastoral and academic experiences when he concentrated on hymn writing later in his career. The son of a Lutheran pastor, Janzow grew up in Minnesota and attended Concordia, Saint Paul, for high school and junior college, and then graduated from Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, in 1936. He first served as pastor in pre-World War II London, at Luther-Tyndale Church. The senior pastor, a native German, returned to visit Germany just before Hitler invaded Poland and was not allowed to return. Young Janzow had to guide the congregation through the London blitz and the entirety of the war...Janzow emphasized both “Scriptural faithfulness and poetic excellence” in his hymn writing in which the “poet and pastor worked together to craft beautiful expressions of the grace of God”

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/643601/summary> Robin Gehl

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxjrJ2cdP5o> This (Paul Manz) arrangement is played on a 1966 Moller organ by David Christensen.

<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.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWKxzaSUs6Q> Notice anything about the foot pedals? “...Setting by John Eggert. Played by Miriam Shilling on the Allen organ at East Moriches United Methodist Church...” [Harpist-Miriam Shilling](#)

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

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

**Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next Week: Epiphany: Isaiah 60:1-6, Baptism of our Lord: Gen 1:1-5; RCL, the same readings)**

*“The lectionary's creators evidently viewed this portion of Isaiah as both eminently appropriate to Christmas and flexible in its boundaries.*

*The reading for this first Sunday after Christmas overlaps with the Isaiah reading just three weeks before, on the third Sunday of Advent (Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11). Isaiah 62:1-5 is read during Epiphany in Year C, and 62:6-12 on Christmas Day in all three years.*

*This passage begins with a hymn of thanksgiving (61:10-11) that concludes one passage, and continues into the first few verses directed to the city of Jerusalem in chapter 62...*

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1155](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1155) **Patricia Tull** A.B. Rhodes Professor Emerita of Old Testament, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, Jeffersonville, Ind

## 61 The Year of the LORD's Favor

<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;  
 my soul shall exult in my God,  
 for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;  
 he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
 as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,  
 and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,  
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,  
 so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
 to sprout up before all the nations.

## 62 Zion's Coming Salvation

62 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
 and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,  
 until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,  
 and her salvation as a burning torch.

<sup>2</sup> The nations shall see your righteousness,  
 and all the kings your glory,  
 and you shall be called by a new name  
 that the mouth of the LORD will give.

<sup>3</sup> You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,  
 and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The Lutheran Study Bible approaches this topic under the heading of “Challenges for Readers”. As it notes, “The latter two proposed authors are regarded as disciples or students of either the original Isaiah or of his school of thought... the critics’ divisions of the Book have become increasingly suspect. The traditional view – attributing the whole work to Isaiah – is again receiving favor...” LSB, 1085-6. Note how this commentator acknowledges this “trend”. Read his entire commentary.

“Our text falls within the central section (chapters 60-62) of what is traditionally known as Third Isaiah (chapters 56-66).

According to the historical-critical consensus, this portion of the book was written by disciples of Second Isaiah (chapters 40-55) after the return from exile. However, the return was not as glorious as Second Isaiah had envisioned (cf. 62:4). Therefore, Third Isaiah continues to articulate the hope of a full restoration of the people and nation, with special attention on setting things right for Jerusalem (cf. 62:1).

While this consensus is helpful and has not been abandoned, the past twenty years have seen the emergence of a new consensus— that is, the book of Isaiah should be read as a unity. Edgar Conrad, a major proponent of the unity of the book,<sup>1</sup> concludes that the shape of the book itself implies it was addressed to "survivors" (1:9; 66:19, although the Hebrew differs in each case). These "survivors" have witnessed the defeat of Judah by Babylon (39:5-8), and now await with hope for God to deliver them, just as Isaiah 1-39 (First Isaiah) recounted that God once delivered Judah from the Assyrians (chapters 36-39)...

The tension between "already" (61:10-11) and "not yet" (62:1-3) is important and instructive for Christian reflection upon and proclamation of our text. On the one hand, we affirm that Jesus proclaimed and embodied "the full rule of Yahweh," so that we can "greatly rejoice" in the ways that Jesus has set us and the world right. On the other hand, we (as individuals and as the people of God) are clearly works in progress, and there is much in our world that still waits to be set right. Thus, we live as the postexilic community lived, and as the final form of the book of Isaiah invites God's people in every generation to live. We live, entrusting ourselves to God, living in hope toward a future which is claimed and will be redeemed by God, and contributing by our words and deeds toward making the world right and life-serving, for God's sake, for our own sake, and for the sake of "all the nations" (61:11; see Isa 2:1-4; 42:6; 49:6; 51:4-6)."

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=213](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=213)

**J. Clinton McCann** Evangelical Professor of Biblical Interpretation, Eden Seminary, Saint Louis, MO

**Psalm 111; RCL, Psalm 148** (*Epiphany, Psalm 72:1-11 (12-15), Baptism of Our Lord, Psalm 29; RCL, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Psalm 29*)

*“The ABC's of Theology”*

*In his commentary in the Westminster Bible Companion series, James Limburg titles Psalms 111 and 112, "The ABC's of Theology" and "The ABC's of Anthropology," respectively.<sup>1</sup> The reason for this is that the two neighboring psalms are "twins." Each psalm is 22 lines, divided into 10 verses. Each psalm is an alphabetic acrostic -- with each half-verse beginning with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet, from alef to tav (from "A to Z," so to speak).*

*Psalm 111 is mostly about theology -- it is about God. Whereas Psalm 112 is mostly about anthropology -- it is about the human response to God. Themes introduced in Psalm 111 are echoed in Psalm 112. For instance, Ps 111:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 112:1 says, "Happy are those who fear the Lord." Or, Psalm 111 confesses about God's character: "The Lord is gracious and merciful"(verse 4b). Psalm 112 says God's people reflect God's character: "they are gracious, merciful, and righteous" (verse 4b).*

*Since the psalm for this week ...is Psalm 111, the focus is on God. On God's character, actions, promises. In short, the focus is on "the ABC's of Theology." This is appropriate in the Epiphany season, because the focus is not so much on us and our actions, so much as it is on God and who God has been revealed to be..." (continued after the reading)*

## Great Are the LORD's Works

111 <sup>[a]</sup> Praise the LORD!  
 I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,  
 in the company of the upright, in the congregation.  
<sup>2</sup> Great are the works of the LORD,  
 studied by all who delight in them.  
<sup>3</sup> Full of splendor and majesty is his work,  
 and his righteousness endures forever.  
<sup>4</sup> He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;  
 the LORD is gracious and merciful.  
<sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who fear him;  
 he remembers his covenant forever.  
<sup>6</sup> He has shown his people the power of his works,  
 in giving them the inheritance of the nations.  
<sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
 all his precepts are trustworthy;  
<sup>8</sup> they are established forever and ever,  
 to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.  
<sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people;  
 he has commanded his covenant forever.  
 Holy and awesome is his name!  
<sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;  
 all those who practice it have a good understanding.  
 His praise endures forever!

- a. [Psalm 111:1](#) This psalm is an acrostic poem, each line beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet

“Because of the psalm's acrostic structure, perhaps the best way to approach the psalm is thematically rather than structurally. Because the poet was constrained by the alphabetic structure, the poem does not develop logically -- from one logical development to the next, or from one theme to the next. Therefore, rather than moving from one section of the psalm to the next in an expository fashion, perhaps the most fruitful approach to preaching the psalm is thematic -- picking out key themes.

### Who God Is

A first theme to be considered is who God is. The psalm provides both metaphorical, creedal expositions of who God is. In terms of metaphors, in verses 3-4, the psalm draws first on terms drawn from the realm of royalty and then from the realm of parenthood (especially motherhood). Drawing from the realm of royalty, the psalm refers to God as "full of honor and majesty."

The image here echoes the common image in the Psalter of the Lord as king (see Psalms 93, 95-99). God is like a great king, ruling with power and might. But then the psalm moves toward a more domestic vision of God. Drawing from the realm of the family, the psalm refers to God as "gracious and merciful" -- note especially that the term *merciful* suggests the image of God as

mother, since behind the term "mercy" is the Hebrew word for womb -- *rechem*. The parental metaphor is continued, as God is described as one who provides food...

### **What God has Done**

The psalm also touches at multiple points on what God does and has done. Already above, it was mentioned that God provides food. As part of the divine creative agency, the Lord goes on working within creation -- providing food. But also suggested here is that the sustaining and renewing of creation are God's ongoing work. As it says in Psalm 104:30, "When you send forth your spirit, they [all "your creatures"] are created; and you renew the face of the ground." Among God's other actions, the psalm names:

"he is ever mindful of his covenant" (verse 5b; see also verse 9b) -- a reference to the covenant that was initiated at Mt Sinai

"giving [the people] the heritage of the nations" (verse 6b) -- a reference to the gift of the promised land

"all his precepts are trustworthy" (verse 7b ) -- a reference to the gift of the law

"holy and awesome is his name" (verse 9c) -- a reference to the gift of God's name, which the people can use to call upon God in "praise, praise, and thanksgiving," as Luther says in the *Small Catechism*..."

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1216](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1216) **Rolf Jacobson**

Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

**Galatians 4:4-7; RCL, the same reading** (*Epiphany, Ephesians 3:1-12, Baptism of Our Lord, Romans 6:1-11; RCL, Epiphany, the same reading; Baptism of the Lord, Acts 19:1-7*)

*"Besides being the second reading for the first Sunday of Christmas, this passage is assigned for "The Feast of Mary, Mother of Our Lord" on August 15th.*

*For those who may have missed Mary's feast day or any who are inclined to take this lesson as an opportunity for a meditation on Mary, feel free. After all, a church council meeting in Ephesus in 431 A.D. considered this passage (and others) in its theological deliberations regarding Mary. The consensus reached by this Third Ecumenical Council was that Mary is properly called theotokos (Greek for "God-bearer") rather than "merely" chrisotokos ("Christ-bearer"). In fact, you might offer a spell-binding sermon on the intricacies of the early Christological debates and how, in the fourth century, a bishop named Nestorius taught that Mary gave birth to the human Jesus but not to the divine logos, and how another bishop, Cyril, led the charge to keep the human and divine natures united within Mary's womb. You could do that.*

*On the other hand, it is likely that the Apostle Paul did not have the fight against Nestorianism and the consensus regarding Christ's "hypostatic union" in mind when he wrote "born of a woman." In fact, when the entire passage is considered, we see that it is less about the relationship of Christ's humanity and divinity, and more about the believer's relationship with God through Christ..." (continued after the reading)*

## Sons and Heirs

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

"...Fortunately, there is no shortage of things we think we can do to make God accept us into the household of Christ: be good people, go to church, assent to the creeds, give our hearts to Jesus, and on and on and on. Here the task is anything but abstract. You expose all of the subtle and not-so-subtle ways your hearers attempt to gain the divine inheritance via obedience to the law. Then you tell them, "Good luck with that." Then you hit them with the sweet gospel: "God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children."

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=208](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=208) [Hans Wiersma](#)  
Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN

## "The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd Chapter"

**Luke 2:22-40; RCL, the same reading** (*Epiphany, Matthew 2:1-12, Baptism of Our Lord, Mark 1:4-11; RCL, the same reading for both*)

*"The story of Jesus' presentation in Jerusalem is one of the few stories in the canonical gospels that have to do with Jesus' childhood.*

*Along with the stories of the circumcision and naming of Jesus (Luke 2:21, January 1 every year), the visit of the magi (Matthew 2:1-12, Epiphany every year), the slaughter of the innocents (Matthew 2:13-23, First Sunday after Christmas in year A), and Jesus in the temple as a twelve-year-old (Luke 2:41-52, First Sunday after Christmas in year C), this story gives one a rare opportunity to preach on Jesus' childhood on a Sunday..." (continued after the reading)*

### Jesus Presented at the Temple

<sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup>“Lord, now you are letting your servant<sup>[a]</sup> depart in peace,  
 according to your word;  
<sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation  
<sup>31</sup>that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
 and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup>And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup>(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

<sup>36</sup>And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup>and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.<sup>[b]</sup> She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

### **The Return to Nazareth**

<sup>39</sup>And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

- a. [Luke 2:29](#) Or *bondservant*
- b. [Luke 2:37](#) Or *as a widow for eighty-four years*

“...The scarcity of information about Jesus’ childhood reminds us that the gospels are not biographies, or at least not primarily that. They are kerygmatic narratives -- they seek to proclaim the gospel and to undergird and strengthen faith in Christ. The little information that they give us about Jesus’ childhood is not intended, say, to explain the development of his character or personality. It is clear that Luke’s childhood stories seek to make theological points: Jesus was born a Jew among Jews. He came under the law of Moses. And, although he fulfilled the law in honoring his father and mother (Luke 2:51), his ultimate obedience was to his heavenly Father (Luke 2:49; cf. Mark 3:35). As such, our Gospel lesson is easily linked to the epistle reading for the day, where Paul tells us that Jesus was “born of woman” and “born under the law” so that he might redeem those who were under the law (Galatians 4:4-5). (The same link is easily made on January 1, for which the Galatians text is appointed every year.)...

Luke has apparently taken this old idea of the first-born son being dedicated to God’s service and made it fruitful for his narrative. The Torah contains no requirement that the first-born son be presented at the temple. However, Luke alludes to the story of Samuel. When Hannah, who had no children, prayed to God for a son, she vowed that, if she had a son, she would give him to God for all his days (1 Samuel 1:11). And indeed, after Samuel was born, Hannah brought him to the temple, and he was “lent” to the Lord for life (1 Samuel 1:24-28). It is clear that Mary in Luke takes

the role of Hannah (cf. Luke 1:46-55 with 1 Samuel 1:11; 2:1-10) while Jesus takes the role of Samuel (cf. Luke 2:40, 52 with 1 Samuel 2:26). Thus when Joseph and Mary present Jesus to the Lord in Jerusalem, they are in effect dedicating his life to God (no redemption money is given). Jesus will be “holy to the Lord” (Luke 2:23). With these words Luke subtly alters the language of Exodus 13:2, 12 from a command to consecrate (*hagiazerein*) the first-born to God to a declaration about Jesus. Luke’s wording is reminiscent of Luke 1:35, where the angel Gabriel tells Mary that her son will be “holy” and will be called the “Son of God,” because he will be conceived by the Holy Spirit. Luke’s wording is perhaps also (though more distantly) reminiscent of other stories that speak of Jesus as a “holy one” with a special relationship to God (e.g., Mark 1:24). The story thus sets the stage for Jesus’ life dedicated fully to his heavenly Father (Luke 2:49).

As noted above, Paul speaks of Jesus as having been born under the law in order to redeem those who were under the law. Instead of being redeemed, Jesus himself will by his death redeem others. This happens when Jesus takes upon himself the curse of the law -- indeed, “becomes” the curse (of the law) -- by being crucified on the tree (Galatians 3:13). That is the scandal of the cross, by which God saves the world (1 Corinthians 1:21, 23). The idea is, to be sure, more Pauline than Lukan. Yet the scandal of the cross is hinted at in Luke 2:34. Jesus will be the cause of many rising and falling in Israel -- he will be both the stone upon which some stumble and the stone of salvation (Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6-8). In any case, Luke’s account certainly gives credence to Paul’s claim. The dedication of Jesus to God at the temple sets Jesus on the way to his work of redemption...

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2258](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2258) **Stephen Hultgren**

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Lutheran Lectionary: [2017-2018 Series B \(color-coded\)](#) | [MS Word](#)

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

## Finished with Chapter 1?

## THE MARK CHALLENGE – LECTIONARY YEAR B 2017-18



*Challenge yourself to produce a handwritten copy of the book of Mark by Christ the King  
Sunday, November 25, 2018.*

It's only 16 chapters long (678 verses or 11,304 words, subject to the translation and how you treat the 'extra verses' in the last chapter). Break that down to a schedule that works for you; a specific time or day each week, 3.25 weeks per chapter, or about two verses a day. . Use a spiral notebook or a journal. Decide if you want a "Red Letter" edition for the words of Christ. Invent your own illustrated manuscript style.

**How you do it is your choice, actually doing it is also your choice.**

### Suggested Schedule

December	Chapter 1	45 verses	completed _____
January	Chapter 2, 3	63 verses	completed _____
February	Chapters 4	41 verses	completed _____
March	Chapter 5	43 verses	completed _____
April	Chapter 6	56 verses	completed _____
May	Chapters 7, 8	75 verses	completed _____
June	Chapter 9	50 verses	completed _____
July	Chapter 10	52 verses	completed _____
August	Chapter 11	33 verses	completed _____
September	Chapters 12, 13	81 verses	completed _____
October	Chapter 14	72 verses	completed _____
November	Chapters 15, 16	67 verses	completed _____ 11/25/18