



## The Gift of the Present Tense

Dear Friends in Christ,

The day of Christmas is barely in our rear-view mirror and 2024 looms on the horizon. The annual retrospectives of 2023 are coming out in print and video as historians and pundits seek to make sense of the year that has passed. Futurists are busy too, trying to predict what the year ahead holds economically and politically. Wars rage in Ukraine and Gaza, neither with a resolution in sight. Elections are coming. What will our world look like 12 months from now?

As the calendar New Year approaches, we spend a lot of time looking either backward or forward in time to make sense of our reality. What has happened? What will happen? I think this is true of the church as well.

In Advent, we had Sunday Gospel readings that focused on the coming of Christ; both as proclaimed by John the Baptist in the past and the Christ who comes at the end of time. Even some of our hymns seem to live in the tension of past and future...

## Readings for the Month

January 1  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Psalm 8;  
Revelation 21:1-6a;  
Matthew 25:31-46

January 2  
Psalm 148;  
Proverbs 1:1-7;  
James 3:13-18

January 3  
Psalm 110;  
Proverbs 1:20-33;  
James 4:1-10

January 4  
Psalm 110; Proverbs 3:1-12; James 4:11-17

January 5  
Psalm 110; Proverbs 22:1-9; Luke 6:27-31

January 6  
Isaiah 60:1-6  
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14  
Ephesians 3:1-12  
Matthew 2:1-12

January 7  
Psalm 72; 1 Kings 10:1-13;  
Ephesians 3:14-21

January 8  
Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36;  
Genesis 17:1-13;  
Romans 4:1-12

January 9  
Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36;  
Exodus 30:22-38;  
Acts 22:2-16

January 10  
Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36;  
Isaiah 41:14-20;  
John 1:29-34

## The Gift of the Present Tense

"O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home;" ELW #632.

Humanity in the twenty-first century seems to spend a lot of time focusing on either the past or the future. Nostalgia for what was or hope for what will be or could be.

But what about the present? It seems to get short shrift. Where are the songs and poems written for the present?

One in our hymnal comes to mind.

"Here in this place, the new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away; see in this place our fears and our dream-ings, brought here to you in the light of this day." Gather Us In, ELW #532

Here. Now. This Day. Where are you God in the midst of this day?

There is a denomination of Christians called Moravians. They originated in what is now the Czech Republic in the fifteenth century and later moved to what is now Germany. Although relatively small in number, they have had an outsized influence on denominations like the Methodist and Lutherans because of their witness. They are known for their strong commitment to living out the gospel and for working for justice and peace in their communities.

In 1728, Moravians began the practice of sharing a common "watchword", a short biblical text to accompany them for the day. At the conclusion of the day, members of the community would share how that scripture had revealed itself that day.

Almost 300 years later, the Moravian Church provides Daily Texts that can be found online. They refer to these texts, chosen randomly at the beginning of the year, as a "daily message from God that is new every morning."

As 2024 approaches, I find myself ruminating on the last few years and the profound changes that have been brought about. I also spend a fair amount of time wondering what the future holds for the church and the world.

However, I find myself hungering for God in the here and now. Where is your light and love at work in the world today? What message do you have for your people today? Am I taking time to see it? Am I taking time to celebrate it? Here in this place?

I think my New Year's Resolution for 2024 is to try to live more fully in the present. To take each day as it comes and to look more expectantly for the daily messages from God that are all around me. To let my "watchword" text for 2024 be from Lamentations 3:22-23

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

May we find God to be fully present to us all in 2024.

Peace!

Pastor Craig

## Oreo Cookie Balls



January 11  
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;  
Judges 2:6-15;  
2 Corinthians 10:1-11

January 12  
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;  
Judges 2:16-23;  
Acts 13:16-25

January 13  
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;  
1 Samuel 2:21-25;  
Matthew 25:1-13

January 14  
1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)  
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18  
1 Corinthians 6:12-20  
John 1:43-51

January 15  
Psalm 86;  
1 Samuel 9:27-10:8;  
2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

January 16  
Psalm 86;  
1 Samuel 15:10-31;  
Acts 5:1-11

January 17  
Psalm 86;  
Genesis 16:1-14;  
Luke 18:15-17

January 18  
Psalm 62:5-12;  
Jeremiah 19:1-15;  
Revelation 18:11-20

January 19  
Psalm 62:5-12;  
Jeremiah 20:7-13;  
2 Peter 3:1-7

January 20  
Psalm 62:5-12;  
Jeremiah 20:14-18;  
Luke 10:13-16

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 pound vanilla-flavored candy coating, melted

### INSTRUCTIONS

Place the creme cookies in a gallon-sized bag and remove all the air. Using your hands or a rolling pin, crush the cookies to a fine powder. You can also use a food processor.

Transfer the cookie crumbs to a large mixing bowl and add in the softened cream cheese. Mix well.

Line a tray or baking sheet with parchment paper. Form the dough into small (1-inch) balls and place on the baking sheet. Freeze the Oreo balls for 20 to 30 minutes.



Jan 1 Norman Colvin  
 Jan 3 Ginger Adney  
 Jan 4 Kristi Zwicker  
 Jan 7 Monty Zwicker  
 Jan 10 Tom Colvin  
 Jan 12 Troy Bayless  
 Jan 18 David Staehely  
 Jan 27 Ilene Marnella  
           Richie Snell  
 Jan 28 Jeff Groner

### Service Helpers for January 2024

#### January 7

Reader: Marvis Gilnett  
 Ushers: Lynn Bloomfield and Ilene Marnella  
 Donuts: Mary Wolfe

#### January 14

Reader: Burt Aus  
 Usher: Burt and Judi Aus  
 Coffee Host: Marie Gunther

#### January 21

Reader: Doris Grider  
 Usher: Kenton and Mary Wolfe  
 Coffee Host: Susan Williamson

#### January 28

Reader: Carolyn Popma  
 Usher: Lance Lyon  
 Coffee Host: Sonya Johnson

January 21  
 Jonah 3:1-5, 10  
 Psalm 62:5-12  
 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 •  
 Mark 1:14-20

January 22  
 Psalm 46;  
 Genesis 12:1-9;  
 1 Corinthians 7:17-24

January 23  
 Psalm 46;  
 Genesis 45:25-46:7;  
 Acts 5:33-42

January 24  
 Psalm 46;  
 Proverbs 8:1-21;  
 Mark 3:13-19a

January 25  
 Psalm 111;  
 Deuteronomy 3:23-29;  
 Romans 9:6-18

January 26  
 Psalm 111;  
 Deuteronomy 12:28-32;  
 Revelation 2:12-17

January 27  
 Psalm 111;  
 Deuteronomy 13:1-5;  
 Matthew 8:28-9:1

January 28  
 Deuteronomy 18:15-20  
 Psalm 111  
 1 Corinthians 8:1-13  
 Mark 1:21-28

January 29  
 Psalm 35:1-10;  
 Numbers 22:1-21;  
 Acts 21:17-26

January 30  
 Psalm 35:1-10;  
 Numbers 22:22-28;  
 1 Corinthians 7:32-40

January 31  
 Psalm 35:1-10;  
 Jeremiah 29:1-14;  
 Mark 5:1-20

<b>Prayers for</b>	<b>Requested by</b>	<b>Prayers for</b>	<b>Requested by</b>
Abraham	Barb B.	Kim	Lisa
Amy	Barb B.	Kimberly Kyser	Cindy C
Anna (Grider) Westcott	Jim & Doris Grider	Kyla	Jordain
Beth Brandt	Mary W.	Larry Marnella	Ilene Marnella
Betty Gerhardt	Kenton and Mary Wolfe	Larry Townsend, family	PC
Bob and Sally Boonstra	Doris Grider	Laurie Boyce	PC
Brian Wolfe	Kenton & Mary	Lawson Roberts	PC
Brooke	Heather W	Linda Bradley	Susan W
Carol Smith	Helen D	Lynn Bloomfield	Lonnie and Dan Harms
Charles G.	PC	Margaret Schultz	Marie Gunther
Colin Brown	Heather W	Marie G	Barb B.
Cyndy Caufield	Susan W.	Martin Nygaard	Barb B.
Dave Stegmeier	Dan and Lonnie Harms	Matt H	PC
Dexter Walter Family	Kay	Mike Harms	Dan and Lonnie Harms
Ellen Paulson	Lorrie Dyrdaahl	Mike McCue	Heather Wechter
Eric Wechter	PC	Neal McLain	PC
Evie Berg	PC	Nicole Callahan	Sharon G.
Frank Cutsforth Family	PC	Norman Colvin	Nancy
Gene Free Family	Ilene Marnella	Pastor Christine Core	PC
Heidi Daniel and family	PC	Piper	Heather W
Howard & Kathy Brandt	Mary W.	Robert	Jordain
Jan G	PC	Roy Steven	Joyce
Jenno	Heather W	Sandra Villegas	Barb
Jill & Ray Goodness	Mary W.	Shannon	Barb
Jill Weygandt	Dan H	Shirley Ann Andreason	Ilene Marnella
JoAnn Caufield	Cindy C	Summer Railey, Family	PC
Joanna Painter	Dixie	Sylvia Peter	PC
Joyce Colvin	Susan W	Teresa Condon, Family	PC
Julie (Bayless) Coffey	PC	Traci	Barb B.
Kate	PC	Vi Anderson	Judi

- Those with memory care issues and those who care for them.
- Those receiving radiation or chemotherapy.
- Those who are in hospice care.
- Our loved ones serving in the armed forces, especially those serving overseas.

# January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Happy New Year	2 AA 6 pm	3	4	5 Wellbriety 6-8 pm	6
7 Worship 10 am Anniversary Team 11:15 am AA 7pm	8 AA 6 pm	9 AA 6 pm	10	11 Council Meeting 6:30 pm	12 Wellbriety 6-8 pm	13
14 Worship 10 am AA 7pm	15 AA 6 pm	16 AA 6 pm	17 Marion Polk Food Share 3:30 pm	18 Backback Buddies 10 am	19 Wellbriety 6-8 pm	20
21 Worship 10 am AA 7pm	22 N.Marion Service Team 9 am- 3 pm AA 6 pm	23 AA 6 pm	24	25	26 Wellbriety 6-8 pm	27
28 Worship 10 am AA 7pm	29 AA 6 pm	30 AA 6 pm	31			



# New Year Prayer

Thank you Lord for giving me

The brand new year ahead.

Help me live the way I should

As each new day I tread.

Give me strength and courage

So a shoulder I might lend.

The year ahead is empty,

Help me fill it with good things

Each new day filled with joy

And happiness it brings.

Amen

The text 'Happy New Year' is written in a large, blue, 3D-style font. The letters are decorated with small, colorful circles (red, green, blue) and stars, giving it a festive, bubbly appearance.

Happy New Year

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# COURIER



*January 2024*

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AURORA

