

This downloadable resource from Concordia Publishing House includes fully customizable resources for the pastor and musician, designed to lead the Christian congregation through the season of Advent in preparation for the Christmas celebration. Concordia Publishing House also offers coordinated Daily Devotion booklets and standard size bulletin covers that may be used to enrich the worship of those congregations using this series. More information about coordinated products may be found at cph.org/advent. This preview document contains excerpted portions of the major components for Midweek of Advent 1.

HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED

Resources for Advent–Christmas Preaching and Worship

Sermon series by Rev. Thomas Eckstein

Additional contributors: Rev. James Pierce, Mary K. Laesch, and Edwin T. Childs

SERIES INTRODUCTION

[For use in newsletters or announcements of the Advent–Christmas series:]

HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED

OVERVIEW OF THE SERMON SERIES

[PASTOR: ADAPT AS USEFUL FOR YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.] During the season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of God’s Son, who was given the name Jesus—a Hebrew name that means “God saves.” In addition to His earthly name, Holy Scripture calls Jesus by various titles which describe something about His person or work. In this year’s Advent series, we are going to examine four titles given to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6. Those titles are “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Everlasting Father,” and “Prince of Peace.” We will learn how each of these titles describes something about who Jesus is and what He did for our salvation.

FEATURES OF THE SERIES

His Name Shall Be Called: Resources for Advent–Christmas Preaching and Worship, and Children’s Service from Concordia Publishing House includes fully customizable resources for the pastor and musician. It is designed to lead the Christian congregation through the season of Advent in preparation for the Christmas celebration. It consists of the following components:

PREACHING AND TEACHING RESOURCES

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

Sermon: Wonderful Counselor
Children’s Message: Wonderful Counselor
Bible Study: Wonderful Counselor

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 2

Sermon: Mighty God
Children’s Message: Mighty God
Bible Study: Mighty God

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 3

Sermon: Everlasting Father
Children’s Message: Everlasting Father
Bible Study: Everlasting Father

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Sermon: Prince of Peace
Children’s Message: Prince of Peace
Bible Study: Prince of Peace

WORSHIP AND MUSIC RESOURCES

The hymn “The People That in Darkness Sat” (*Lutheran Service Book* [LSB] 412) is suggested as a theme hymn to use throughout the series. The text of stanzas 3 and 4 especially echoes the Isaiah reading used throughout the series. Several new musical resources composed by Edwin T. Childs have been provided to add additional variety for use with this hymn.

The People That in Darkness Sat_Choral Stanza.pdf: SATB choral stanza

The People That in Darkness Sat_Choral Stanza.mp3: SATB choral stanza (recording)

of reduction of parts)

The People That in Darkness Sat_Harmonization 1.pdf: Harmonization 1

The People That in Darkness Sat_Harmonization 1.mp3: Harmonization 1 (recording)

The People That in Darkness Sat_Harmonization 2.pdf: Harmonization 2

The People That in Darkness Sat_Harmonization 2.mp3: Harmonization 2 (recording)

The People That in Darkness Sat_Prelude.pdf: Organ prelude

The People That in Darkness Sat_Prelude.mp3: Organ prelude (recording)

The People That in Darkness Sat_Postlude.pdf: Organ postlude

The People That in Darkness Sat_Postlude.mp3: Organ postlude (recording)

WORSHIP NOTES

His Name Shall Be Called: Resources for Advent–Christmas Preaching and Worship incorporates the readings that are referenced with the sermons.

The working assumption of this worship resource has been the availability of *Lutheran Service Book* in the congregation. All the suggested hymns can be found in *Lutheran Service Book*. The more general liturgical practices of Advent and Christmas are assumed and considered, but they are not necessarily specified in connection with each of the particular services of this series.

This resource provides a full set of both traditional worship services and creative worship services for Advent and Christmas. The traditional services use Vespers and the Divine Service from *Lutheran Service Book*. The order of Vespers (*LSB*, pp. 229–34) has been followed for the midweek offices, and Divine Service, Setting One (*LSB*, pp. 151–66) has been followed for Christmas. The Order of Vespers should be easily adapted for use with Matins, Morning Prayer, or Evening Prayer. Likewise, while the order for the Divine Service is modeled on Setting One, it can be easily adapted to work with any setting of the Divine Service.

Worship services in the second set are generally more creative in their setting and are less demanding musically by having both the congregation and the pastor speak their parts of the service.

TRADITIONAL SERVICE RESOURCES

Midweek of Advent 1

Midweek of Advent 2

Midweek of Advent 3

The Nativity of Our Lord

CREATIVE WORSHIP SERVICE RESOURCES

Midweek of Advent 1

Midweek of Advent 2

Midweek of Advent 3

The Nativity of Our Lord

Those planning the worship can choose freely between the resources offered in both sets of services as fits local customs and needs.

Finally, the services are also available through *Lutheran Service Builder*. [Links for the services, list of additional resources, and summary of additional Advent resources from CPH are all available with purchase]

CHILDREN’S WORSHIP SERVICE AND RESOURCES

The Children’s Christmas Service provides speaking parts, rhymes, and songs and hymns for children of all ages, from preschool age to youth. Additional resources include leader notes, a children’s message, song lyric pages, digital images, a planning timeline, and recordings of the songs and hymns.

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

TEXT: ROMANS 11:32–36

OBJECTS: GAVEL, MEGAPHONE, CRAYONS

Ask the children this: Have you ever heard the word *counselor* before? Sometimes, there are school counselors. They can listen to problems, give advice, and sometimes do fun activities like drawing. *Hold up crayons.* There are also camp counselors. *Hold up megaphone.* They often lead games, make sure you’re safe, and help you learn and have fun. Sometimes, lawyers are called counselors. *Hold up gavel.* These counselors can stand up for you in a courtroom because they know the law very well. They help you understand what you need to know.

Today, we learn that one name for Jesus is “Wonderful Counselor.” Let’s see. Does Jesus listen to your problems? Does He lead and guide you? Does He keep you safe? Does He give good advice? Does He stand up for you? Yes, He does all of these things, and more!. . .[Full children’s message available with purchase]

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: SERMON AND NOTES

SERMON BULLETIN INTRODUCTION

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

During the season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of God’s Son, who was given the name Jesus—a Hebrew name that means “God saves.” In addition to His earthly name, Holy Scripture calls Jesus by various titles which describe something about His person or work. In this year’s Advent series, we are going to examine four titles given to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6. Those titles are “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Everlasting Father,” and “Prince of Peace.” We will learn how each of these titles describes something about who Jesus is and what He did for our salvation.

OVERVIEW

Text: Isaiah 9:1–2

Sermon Theme: Jesus is given the title “Wonderful Counselor” because His Word rescues us from the lies of the devil and our own self-deception and leads us into God’s wisdom which results in our salvation.

Sermon Goal: Through God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will move people to repent of their trust in the evil counsel of this world and trust in Jesus’ wonderful counsel—especially the good news that our many sins are forgiven because of His work for us!

Service Lectionary:

Midweek of Advent 1 readings: Isaiah 9:1–2, 6–7; Romans 11:32–36; Matthew 7:24–29

The Midweek of Advent 1 readings are set within the readings for the Sundays in Advent, Series B. The readings for the three-year lectionary for the First Sunday in Advent are

Old Testament: Isaiah 64:1–9

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:3–9

Gospel: Mark 11:1–10 or Mark 13:24–37

SUMMARY OF THE SERMON THEME

During the season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of God’s Son, who was given the name Jesus—a Hebrew name that means “God saves.” In addition to His earthly name, Holy Scripture calls Jesus by various titles which describe something about His person or work. In this year’s Advent series, we are going to examine four titles given to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6. Those titles are “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Everlasting Father,” and “Prince of Peace.” We will learn how each of these titles describes something about who Jesus is and what He did for our salvation.

SERMON STUDY NOTES

ISAIAH 9:1–2

The historical setting of Isaiah chapter 9 is during the reign of Ahaz, who ruled the Southern Kingdom of Judah from 735 to 720 BC (see 2 Kings 16:1–2). In Isaiah 7:1–2, we see that Pekah, who ruled the Northern Kingdom of Israel (see 2 Kings 15:27), and Rezin, king of Syria, were planning to attack the Southern Kingdom, then ruled by Ahaz. Isaiah warns Ahaz to trust God for protection, but Ahaz ends up trusting in the pagan nation of Assyria for protection and adopted the worship of the false gods of Assyria (see 2 Kings 16:1–16). Assyria begins invading the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Pekah (see 2 Kings 15:29), and Assyria completely overruns the Northern Kingdom in 721 BC (see 2 Kings 17:6–23)—an event predicted in Isaiah 7:16. Isaiah tells Ahaz to trust that the Lord will protect the Southern Kingdom from Pekah and Rezin (see Isaiah 7:5–9) and also from Assyria (see Isaiah 8:1–10), but Ahaz does not trust the Lord and the Southern Kingdom continues to reject God’s counsel and trusts the counsel of false prophets (see Isaiah 8:11–22). The sign of salvation that God gave to Ahaz (see Isaiah 7:14) is rejected by Ahaz, and yet God brings this sign to fulfillment when His Son is born of the virgin Mary (see Matthew 1:18–23). God’s Son will save His people from their ultimate enemy—their own sin against God! (See Matthew 1:21; see also Luke 1:76–79.)

Isaiah 9:1–2 speaks of a future hope for the region of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, which was devastated not only by the Assyrian armies but also by the evil counsel of their false prophets. Isaiah promises that this region’s spiritual darkness will be blessed by the light of God’s counsel—and this is fulfilled when God’s incarnate Son begins His ministry in Galilee (see Matthew 4:12–16). . . [Full sermon notes available with purchase.]

SERMON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION: Various titles have been given to famous humans.

- I. Jesus is the Savior promised in Isaiah chapter 9, which describes His person and work by giving Him various titles.
- II. The reason Jesus is called “Wonderful Counselor.”
- III. We sin by listening to the sinful counsel of the devil and the world.
- IV. Jesus’ wonderful counsel rescues us from the sinful counsel of this world and blesses us with the forgiveness of sin and the wisdom of God.

SERMON

How many here have heard of the professional wrestler called Hulk Hogan? Many have heard of him. But “Hulk Hogan” is not his actual name. The reason people call him “Hulk Hogan” is that this title describes his intimidating physical appearance.

How many of you have heard of the musician named Johnny Cash? Most have heard of him. His music is even more popular now that he’s dead. However, Johnny Cash is called by another name: “The Man in Black.” This title describes the color of the clothing he usually wore. Most of you also remember the famous singer named Elvis Presley. But Elvis is also known as “The King.” People call him “The King” because he became known as the king of rock and roll music.

Now, I could spend all night [day] giving you examples of unique titles given to people who already have names. These titles are given to them in addition to their actual names because those titles describe something about themselves or their work.

About 2000 years ago, a man named Joseph was about to break off his wedding plans with his fiancée named Mary. Why? Joseph found out she was pregnant, and Joseph knew he wasn’t the father because he had not yet had sexual relations with her.

But now Mary is pregnant! So Joseph could only assume that she had cheated on him. However, God then sent an angel to Joseph and explained that Mary was still a virgin. The reason she was pregnant was that the Holy Spirit had worked a miracle and conceived a child in her womb. Then the angel said this to Joseph: “She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

The name Jesus is a Hebrew name that means “God saves”—an appropriate name for the Son of God who took on human flesh so that He could save us from our sin by dying on the cross in our place of punishment.

After Matthew recorded those words of the angel, he went on to write the following: “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name “Immanuel” (which means, God with us)’” (1:22–23).

The words Matthew quoted were from the prophet Isaiah, who lived about 800 years before Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. By the Holy Spirit, Isaiah was able to prophesy that one day in the future a virgin would give birth to a son whom some would call “Immanuel”—a Hebrew word that means “God with us.” Even though this child’s actual name would be “Jesus,” people would also call Him by other titles because those titles would describe something about His person or His work....[Full sermon available with purchase]

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: BIBLE STUDY

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: LEADER’S GUIDE

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Text: Isaiah 9:1–2

OPENING PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, we thank You for Your wonderful counsel given to us through Your Son and written for us in Your Holy Scriptures. Forgive us for the times we have doubted Your Word and trusted our own wisdom. Give us a humble faith so that we trust Your wonderful counsel which not only shows us Your will for how we are to live and what we are to believe but especially proclaims to us that we have forgiveness of sin and eternal life with You because of Your Son and all He has done for our salvation. Be with us as we study Your written Word today, and we pray that Your Holy Spirit will bless us with Your wonderful counsel. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

The first title for Jesus given to us in Isaiah 9:6 is “Wonderful Counselor.” We will learn how God rescues us from the wicked counsel of the devil and blesses us with the wonderful counsel of His Son, whose Word of truth sets us free from sin and its damning deception. (See John 8:31.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1. Read Isaiah 9:6. Isaiah gives four titles describing the person and work of God’s Son. What is the first title Isaiah gives to God’s Son? What does this title say about God’s Son?

A1. Isaiah teaches that God’s Son would be called “Wonderful Counselor.” This title informs us that God’s Son speaks to us on behalf of the Father and teaches us God’s truth through His Word. In John 1:1–3, we see that the apostle John calls God’s Son “the Word” (Greek = *logos*) because He speaks to us on behalf of the Father. (Also see Hebrews 1:1–3!) In John 8:31, Jesus says that we are His disciples if we remain in His Word. Jesus also says that His Word will give us God’s truth, which sets us free from slavery to sin and death. (See John 8:34–36.)

God’s wonderful counsel reveals truths to us that we could not know otherwise—such as details about how God created the world and the first two humans, the origin of sin and death, the mystery of the Trinity, and the Good News that we have forgiveness of sin and the hope of eternal life through the death and resurrection of God’s Son for us.

Q2. Read Genesis 3:1. What question did “the serpent” (the devil) ask Eve in order to tempt her to doubt God’s wonderful counsel? How does the devil tempt us in the same way today?

A2. The Old Testament doesn’t tell us much about the being Scripture calls “the devil” or “Satan”—a being the New Testament teaches is one of the angels God created who rebelled against God. (See Matthew 25:41; 2 Corinthians 11:14; Jude 6; Revelation 12:9.) A being known as Satan (a Hebrew word that means “accuser”) is mentioned in Job chapters 1 and 2 as well as 1 Chronicles 21:1.

As for “the serpent” in Genesis chapter 3, some believe “the serpent” was an actual animal through which the devil spoke and tempted Eve whereas others think “the serpent” was merely a title given to the devil himself—as when Jesus referred to King Herod as a “fox” (Luke 13:32; see 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14; Revelation 12:9). In Genesis chapter 3, we see that the devil tempts Eve to doubt God’s wonderful counsel by asking her this: “Did God really say?”

In Matthew 4:1–11, we see that, just as the devil tempted Eve, he also tempts Jesus, God’s Son, to rebel against God’s Word and put His own Father to the test. In fact, in Matthew 4:1–11, we find both titles “the devil” (from the Greek word *diabolos*—which means “accuser”) and “Satan” (from the Greek word *satanas* which comes from the Hebrew word *שָׂטָן* [*satan*]—which also means “accuser”).

When Peter questions Jesus’ teaching about His upcoming death on the cross, Jesus rebukes Peter by saying, “Get behind Me, Satan!” (Matthew 16:23). In Luke 22:31, we see that Satan asks for Jesus’ permission to tempt the disciples just as Satan asked God’s permission to tempt Job. The devil or Satan works through false teaching and false teachers to tempt us to doubt God’s wonderful counsel so that we rebel against God and decide for ourselves what is good and evil. (See John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 Corinthians 10:20–21; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 2:1–2; 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 5:8–9; 2 Peter 3:17–18; Revelation 20:10.)...[Full Bible study (both Leader and Student sections) available with purchase.]

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED

Children may process to the front of the church during the processional hymn.

+ PREPARATION +

HYMN

“Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising” (*LSB* 375)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Isaiah 9:6, adapted

P To us . . .

C a child is born!

P To us . . .

C a son is given!

P His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,

C Mighty God,

P Everlasting Father,

C Prince of Peace.

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

The pastor may offer a brief meditation or use the children's message for this service.

OFFERING

Preschool–kindergarten children and Readers 1–3 assemble during the offering.

THE MESSAGE PRESENTED BY THE CHILDREN

+ IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US +

Project the Immanuel image or display the Immanuel poster or banner.

Reader 1: Creator. Heavenly Father. Good Shepherd. Lamb of God. Holy Spirit. Jesus. These are just a few of the many names of God that we read in the Bible. Each name describes our one true God and what He does for us. At Christmastime, we hear special names of God from the prophet Isaiah: Immanuel, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. But what do these names mean, and why does Isaiah use them to describe the promised Savior? Today we will find out!

- Reader 2: In Old Testament times, God sent the prophet Isaiah to unbelieving King Ahaz and God's people living in Judah. Ahaz and the people did not trust that God could save them from their enemies. They had turned away from God, just as people have done since the time of Adam and Eve and the first sin in the garden. But God would not give up on His people! He had promised Adam and Eve that He would send a Savior to bring all people back to Him. Through the many years that followed, God continued to remind His people about the Savior He would send.
- Reader 3: God sent Isaiah to King Ahaz and the Israelites, telling them to repent of their sins and turn back to the Lord. Only the one true God could deliver them from their enemies. And one day, God would deliver all people from our greatest enemies: sin, death, and the power of the devil. God gave them a sign to show He would do this. Isaiah 7:14 says, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." The name *Immanuel* means "God with us." God Himself would come to earth and be born a human baby in order to save us and to bring us back to Him. What wonderful, happy news!

Preschool–kindergarten children recite and sing.