



“Rejoice: The Lord Is at Hand”

When was the last time you felt like rejoicing? In society today, we don’t always feel like we have a lot to celebrate. Our newsfeeds are constantly filled with stories of wars, disasters, strife in our neighborhoods, illness among our loved ones. Most of us carry this conduit of “bad news” around in our pocket all day every day, and we’re quick to look every time our phone dings. We even invented a new word, “doomscroll,” to describe how it feels to spend a lot of time scrolling through social media. It’s no wonder that rates of anxiety and depression are skyrocketing, especially among young people.

Things were not perfect during the apostle Paul’s time, either. In the Book of 2 Corinthians, Paul wrote of “a thorn ... given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me” (2 Corinthians 12:7). Later, he would be martyred for the faith in Rome. Even so, he wrote to the Christians in Philippi: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ... The Lord is at hand” (Philippians 4:4–5).

This Advent season, we rejoice because the Lord is at hand — even for us today. Jesus Christ came to earth as a baby born to the Virgin Mary some 2,000 years ago. Even though He was the Son of God, He took on human flesh and blood in order to also take on the sins of every person who would ever be born. By dying on the cross on Good Friday and rising again on Easter Sunday, He conquered sin, death and the devil — for us.

That’s something truly worth celebrating! Because Jesus came, we have the assurance that God loves us and keeps us in the palm of His hand, no matter what may come. That’s also why we take time during the busy month of December to study God’s Word in the Bible. Take a break from doomscrolling and join us in reflecting on the enormity of what it means that God sent His Son to earth — for us. We call the Gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ the “Good News,” but it’s really the best news in the world, and it’s worth sharing with everyone.

I invite you to find a local congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod this Advent and Christmas. While there, you’ll hear the truth about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. You will also learn about why Christians can rejoice, even amid trial and hardship. “The Lord is at hand” for us today, tomorrow and always.

In Christ Jesus,

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod