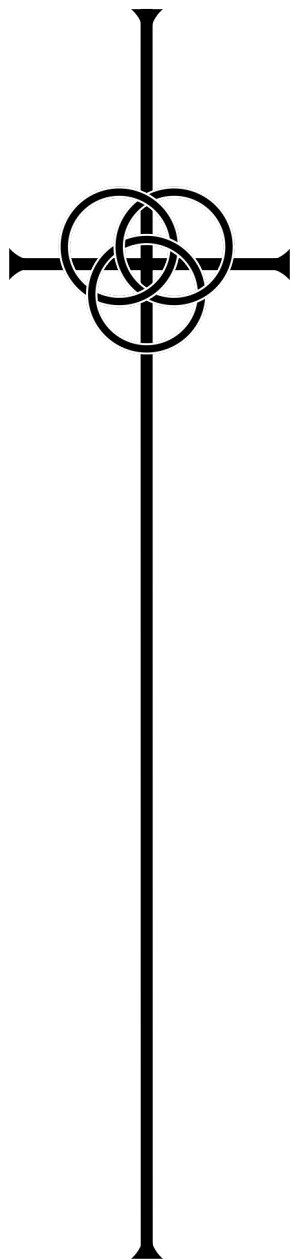


# LIFE TOGETHER

RECEIVING GOD'S GIFTS ✝ SHARING GOD'S GIFTS



Dearest Saints of Holy Trinity,

And so a new year has already dawned upon us. Happy Advent, and, when the time comes, Merry Christmas to you. What a beautiful beginning to the year are these four weeks of longing for Jesus to come. Faith is always rewarded. On December 25, faith is rewarded with a tiny child born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the Savior of the Nations, come.

There is no greater gift than Jesus, of course. But, for me, especially after these last few weeks, a close second is all of you. This community of believers that is Holy Trinity is so very dear to me. I pray that these words never desensitize you to their reality.

Come celebrate with me, and with the whole catholic and apostolic Church through time and space. Come fast and feast with us. Come pray and praise. Come give thanks. Come walk the Way through Advent into Christmastide. Jesus is coming. Soon he will be here.

This should certainly go without saying, but this time of year does then necessarily bring with it quite a few extras. The calendar is always your friend and companion and guide. Take note of all the extras, and avail yourself of them all. Make time in your day to pray. Arrange your schedule around the Church. Come and celebrate. Jesus is coming.

“Let every heart prepare a throne, / and every voice a song.”

In Christ,

*Pastor Ferguson*

# Why the God Man?

## St. Anselm and the Church Proclaiming the Mystery of the Incarnation

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*Pastor Ferguson*

In the eleventh century, the archbishop of Canturbury, Anselm of Canterbury, wrote a book in defense of the Atonement. That book is called, *Cur Deus Homo*—“Why the God-Man?” or, less roughly, “Why did God become man?”

This book proved so important for the Church and her doctrine that it is still held in high regard to this day. In fact, everything you know or think about the Incarnation and the Atonement is in Anselm’s words, even if you have never read him (though, if you have the chance, you *should* read him).

*Cur Deus Homo* is one brilliant man’s answer, from Scripture, to the question of the Incarnation. Could God not have saved by any other means? Must he have become man and died? Why could he not simply speak things right, or destroy everything, take notes, and create the heavens-and-earth 2.0? The main answer to all of this is found in God’s love for man, and for his desire for communion with man.

From the beginning, God intended to become man purely for the purpose of receiving created man into full communion with him. Man is made in the image and likeness of God, after all, and how can this image and likeness reflect God if God does not already have or intend his own image and likeness? St. Paul alludes to this when he says that Jesus is the image, or ikon, of God. Truly, you are the way you are because Jesus is the way he is.

However, what takes place in the fall of man is the incurrance of debt. Hence, in so many of Jesus’ parables sin is depicted as debt, and why Jesus, in providing his disciples with a prayer to pray, includes the phrase, “Forgive us our *debts* as we also forgive our *debtors*.” The debt incurred with God by man is not one man can repay. It is a debt of love and of honor—the latter is of special importance to St. Anselm. How do you repay misplaced love or honor? How do you return what was taken? How do you make right the wrong? How do you repay your parents for the love they showed you during your years as a belligerent and rebellious teenager? How do you recall words or deeds that have already concluded? The answer to all of these questions is the same: you cannot. This is one of the many points Jesus makes in his parable about the unforgiving servant.

That servant has incurred a debt of 10,000 talents with his

master. A single talent is comparable to one year’s worth of wages—your annual salary. How do you repay that? The magnitude of the debt is a spotlight on man’s debt to God.

God meant man for himself, and himself for man. To make things right, he demands you, who did not give yourself to him. But he demands you perfected, which you cannot accomplish. Even were you to work diligently for 10,000 years, you still would never be able to pay off your 10,000 talent debt. Think of the interest and the inflation. It simply never ends. Unless, of course, your life is offered. That is the only solution. Therefore, the penalty for sin is death, not because God wishes to see death, but because the laws of repayment written into the deepest layers of creation demand it. There simply is no other way.

Man incurs a debt he can never repay to the God who cannot abandon him into death for the great love he holds for him. Yet, God cannot ignore the debt because he is righteous and just. Neither can he pay it himself, for it is owed him by man. Only the God-Man can save. Thus, the necessity of the Incarnation becomes clear. In Jesus, God who is man pays the debt to God, and God who is God exercises his nature as just and righteous. In other words, Jesus pays as God what man must pay but cannot, and as man, he submits to the righteousness of God’s justice perfectly.

Still, Jesus must become man, not as a creative solution to an unforeseen problem, but because *he always was to do so from the beginning*. God who made man becomes man to receive man into full communion. What good is a God so big and great and grand that you cannot hug, kiss, hold, touch? Jesus is born and dies for the same reason: to ensure that man may still be received into God’s communion—to ensure that his house is filled with dear children to love and by which to be loved.

What good is a Jesus only as an image and likeness? What good is a Jesus only crucified? What good is a Jesus without suffering and death? And it all begins in the womb. For, what good is a Jesus who is not conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary? What good is God without man or man without God? The God-Man is our perfect union of the divine and human. He is our cause, our sustenance, and our goal. He is our atonement. He is our life. He must be born, and thank God he is.

Come, Lord Jesus!

# THIS MONTH AT HOLY TRINITY

## Food Pantry Donations

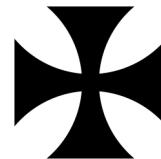
Please help to provide for our hungry neighbors in need by donating goods to the food pantry. This is an easy addition to your regular monthly alms.

**Food pantry needs for the month of December** include crackers, chili, tuna, canned chicken and hamburger helper.

**For more information** contact Debbie Ohlensehlen

## Backpack Buddies Program

Holy Trinity is responsible for collecting individual after-school snacks for the Backpack Buddies program during the month of December. These snacks will be sent home with students in need during the school year.



### Anniversaries of Baptism

- 1 Liam Ellis
- 3 Grant Kent
- 4 LeAnn Ohlensehlen
- 13 Jeff Livengood
- 14 Carol Sharp
- 24 Adelais Johnson
- 24 Regan Cope
- 24 Jessica Livengood
- 25 Craig Heits

### Birthdays

- 2 Memphis Mick
- 4 Trudy Heitman
- 5 Adelais Johnson
- 7 Nancy Peters
- 9 Reagan Cope
- 11 Nolan Waigand
- 17 Spencer Gibson
- 17 Justin Thurnau
- 18 Clifton Robbins
- 21 Ryan Long
- 22 Marita Stevens
- 24 Cameron Tally
- 28 Jan Lewis
- 28 Janah Kent
- 31 Liv Johnson
- 31 Lane Zembles

### Anniversaries of Marriage

- 8 Cameron & Amy Tally
- 16 Josh & LeAnn Ohlensehlen
- 22 Ian & Brandy White
- 27 Emmett & Connie Windhorst



### Saints' Days and Commemorations

- 4 John of Damascus, *Theologian & Hymnwriter*
- 6 Nicholas of Myra, *Pastor*
- 7 Ambrose of Milan, *Pastor & Hymnwriter*
- 13 Lucia, *Martyr*
- 17 Daniel the Prophet and the Three Young Men
- 19 Adam and Eve
- 20 Katharina von Bora Luther
- 21 St. Thomas, *Apostle*
- 26 St. Stephen, *Martyr*
- 27 St. John, *Apostle & Evangelist*
- 28 The Holy Innocents, *Martyrs*
- 29 David
- 31 Eve of the Circumcision

### Serving This Month

**Worship Preparation:** Carolyn Ferguson

**Ushers:** *Volunteers Needed*

**Refreshments:**

- 3 Marla Voltmer
- 10 Jennifer Biermann
- 17 Bee Nelson
- 24 Carolyn Ferguson
- 31 Jennifer Biermann

# DECEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>3</b></p> <p>9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service Board of Education Meeting 1:00 p.m.—Lessons &amp; Carols Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins 6:00 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins Driver's License Testing 6:00 p.m.—Midweek 7:00 p.m.—Vespers</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins Council items due to Secretary's office</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins Pastor Gone to Conception Abbey 2:00–6:00 p.m.—Food Pantry Open</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>10:00 a.m.—Catechumenate</p>
<p><b>10</b></p> <p>9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service Council Meeting 1:00 p.m.—Lessons &amp; Carols Rehearsa 2:00 p.m.—Youth Group Christmas Caroling</p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins 6:00 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins 6:00 p.m.—Midweek 7:00 p.m.—Vespers</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins 2:00–6:00 p.m.—Food Pantry Open</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>10:00 a.m.—Catechumenate</p>
<p><b>17</b></p> <p>9:15 a.m.—Children's Christmas Program 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service</p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins 1:00 p.m.—Ladies Guild 6:00 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins Driver's License Testing 6:00 p.m.—Midweek 7:00 p.m.—Vespers</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>7:30 a.m.—Matins Pastor Gone to Conception Abbey</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>10:00 a.m.—Catechumenate 1:00 p.m.—Lessons &amp; Carols Dress Rehearsal</p>
<p><b>24</b></p> <p>9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Divine Service 5:30 p.m.—Lessons &amp; Carols followed by soup supper</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>10:30 a.m.—Christmas Day Divine Service</p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b></p>
<p><b>31</b></p> <p>9:15 a.m.—Sunday School 10:30 a.m.—Service of Prayer &amp; Preaching Board of Elders Meeting</p>						