

Sermon Notes

Daily Bible Readings (December 14-20)

Sun:	Philippians 4:4	Rejoice in the Lord Always
Mon:	Romans 12:12	Rejoice in Hope
Tues:	John 16:22	No One Will Take Away Your Joy
Wed:	Hebrews 12:2	Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus
Thurs:	Philippians 4:10-14	Learning to be Content
Fri:	1 Thess. 5:16	Give Thanks in All Circumstances
Sat:	Romans 15:13	Be Filled With Joy and Peace

Life Notes

Experience the Gifts of Christmas #3:
"Joy" - Philippians 4:1, 4-9

Opener:

Think about a time that you received a gift that brought you joy. What was it about the gift that brought you this sense of joy? How long did the feeling last?

Go Deeper: (Exploring the Bible)

- Read Philippians 4:4-9. What in this passage immediately jumps out at you? Read it again. What did you hear this second time? Read it a third time focusing on the "why" Paul was rejoicing. What did you discover?
- Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians while he was in prison. What does this unfortunate circumstance tell you about Paul's source of joy?
- Read Luke 2:10-12. You are very familiar with this verse. What is the reason for the "great" joy? Who is this great joy for?
- Read Psalm 118:24. How can we feel joy on this day even if it contains troubles? What is the difference between joy and happiness?
- Read Nehemiah 8:10. Who gives us strength? What are the pitfalls of believing we can do things on our own?

Live It: (Applying to Our Lives)

- Describe a time when you felt the burden of having to put on a facade and faking joy that you didn't feel. What happened?
- Reflect on the understanding that joy isn't a feeling. It's a gift. It's a state of being. In what ways does this change your perception of joy?
- In the sermon it was said that the Holy Spirit brings the fullness of joy to believers, giving us an inner sense of well-being, peace, and joy that are not dependent on external circumstances. How does this truth change you in your current circumstances?
- We often think we have to do things - pray more, forgive more, be grateful more, in order to experience God's gift of joy. With your new understanding that joy is a gift that comes from God without strings attached (because it is a gift), how does this change your "To Do List?"
- This is a difficult time of year for so many. Who do you know who needs to hear this message that "the joy of the Lord is our strength"?

Upcoming Week

Sunday, December 14

"Meet A Pastor" (following each service)
8:30-11am Morning Fellowship, FH
8am Worship & Communion, WC
9:30am Worship & Children's Church, WC
11am Contemporary Worship & Children's Church, WC
3pm Christmas Concert, WC

Monday, December 15

9-11:30am Food Pantry
12:30-2:30pm GriefShare: Loss of Spouse, C4
4pm Confirmation Class, C1

Tuesday, December 16

3pm Council Meeting, B7
5:30pm Christmas Lights Bus Tour, FH
6:30pm "Seekers" Small Group, B7
7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5

Wednesday, December 17

9-11:30am Food Pantry
10am Men's Bible Study, C1
12:30pm Al-Anon, C4
1pm Bell Choir Rehearsal, WC
6:30pm Choir Rehearsal, WC
8pm AA Meeting, C5

Thursday, December 18

10am Prayer Group, B7
11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5
11:30am Stephen Ministry, C4
5:30pm Christmas Lights Bus Tour, FH

Friday, December 19

OFFICE CLOSED

Saturday, December 20

8am Men's Bible Study, C5
4pm Worship, WC
"Meet A Pastor" (following service)

CH = Chapel
FH = Fellowship Hall
C5 = Fireside Room
NR = Nursery
WC = Worship Center
C4 = Community Room

Victory Lutheran Church

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Office hours: Mon-Thurs, 8am-4pm
(Closed on Fridays)

VictoryLutheran_Guest
Password: Victory_46

EXPERIENCE THE gifts OF CHRISTMAS

JOY

Philippians 4:1, 4-9

December 13 & 14, 2025

THE PULSE

Todd Mathison, Lead Pastor
Denton Bennet, Associate Pastor
Renée Bennett, Discipleship Pastor
Dirk Duhlstine, Chaplain
Kristin Holton Prouty, Director of Worship & Music

Connect with us!

QR code and social media icons (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)

GOD TIME: The Joy of Being Loved

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." – John 3:16

Joy seems like an odd word for people who know pain. Yet the angels announced Jesus' birth with "good news that will cause great joy" (Luke 2:10). Not happiness dependent on circumstances, but joy—the deep gladness that comes from knowing we are loved by God. This is the joy Mary sang about, the joy shepherds ran to find, the joy that drew wise men across continents.

Because here's the truth Advent screams: Love came down at Christmas. Not just any love, but the kind that leaves heaven's glory for a manger. The kind that seeks out shepherds and sinners. The kind that won't let death have the final word.

This is why joy and love are inseparable in the Christmas story. We experience true joy when we grasp how deeply we are loved—not for what we've accomplished, but simply because we are His. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Our joy isn't manufactured; it's the natural response to being found, known, and cherished by the God who came near.

As we light the final candles of Advent, we celebrate this: You are loved with an everlasting love. That love took on flesh and entered our darkness. And because of that love, joy—real, lasting, unshakeable joy—is yours.

Reflect: How does knowing you are unconditionally loved by God change your perspective today? Where might His love be inviting you to experience deeper joy this Christmas?

Prayer: Loving Father, thank You for loving us enough to send Your Son. Fill our hearts with the joy that comes from knowing we are Yours. Help us share this love and joy with everyone we meet. In Jesus' name, Amen.

In Christ's Service, *Deborah Smith*



GATHER TIME:



12/10/25 - Advent Communion Service

Helpers Needed

Christmas Eve Services - Wed, December 24

Experience the Gifts of Christmas at one of our Candlelight Christmas Eve services! We celebrate the true gift - Jesus Himself. This Christmas, receive the One gift that changes everything. Each service features beloved carols, beautiful music, scripture, and a fresh, thought-provoking retelling of the greatest story ever told.

Children are welcome at all services and will receive a special activity bag. Be sure to pick up invitation cards at the Welcome Center to share with friends and neighbors as we spread the joy of the season throughout our community!

Christmas Eve Service Times:

- 1, 3, 5pm – Traditional Worship with Choir, Organ & Strings
- 7pm – Contemplative Christmas with Guitar & Violin
- 9pm– Candlelight Communion with Organ & Handbells

Christmas Day with Communion
Thurs, December 25, 10am

Volunteers needed for all Christmas Eve Services 1, 3, 5, 7, 9pm AND Christmas Day 10am (acolytes, greeters, ushers, Welcome Desk, candles, Communion). **SIGN UP** at the Welcome Desk.

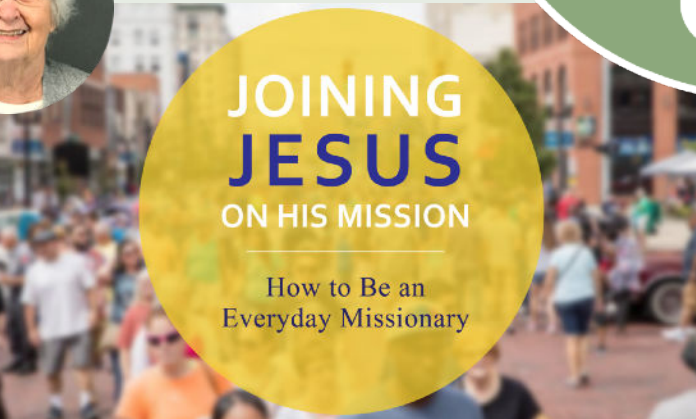
GO TIME: Joining Jesus on His Mission

Witnessing does not have to be knocking on doors or a formal testimony. We can witness through small acts of kindness and sharing more as the opportunity arises. If we wait and listen we will find more ways to deepen this, to answer questions, to pray with or for someone. It gets easier the more you do it.

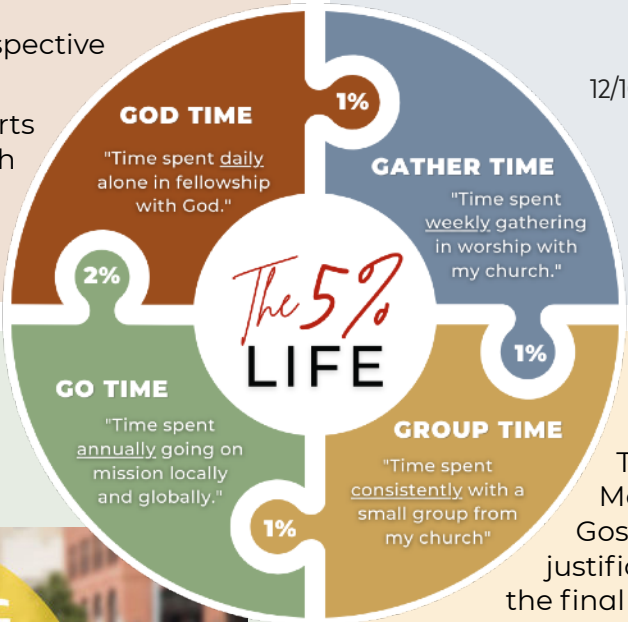
I have a troubled granddaughter, age 33, in upstate New York. At age 14 she lived with me for a few months and again at 17. She came to Victory with me during this time. I was recently talking about church and what I've been doing here. She said she misses going with me and I asked her if she would like to receive the daily Bible verses, Daily Hope and online links to watch the services. She said, "yes." Yeah! ~ Sharon Keran



JOINING JESUS ON HIS MISSION
How to Be an Everyday Missionary



I'm sure most of us were "Joining Jesus" on His mission before this class, but in my case it was not intentional and definitely at my convenience. This class has opened my eyes and ears and made me more intentional about looking for opportunities to mission with Jesus. It has also provided me the initiative to pursue these opportunities. ~ Denis Schneckloth



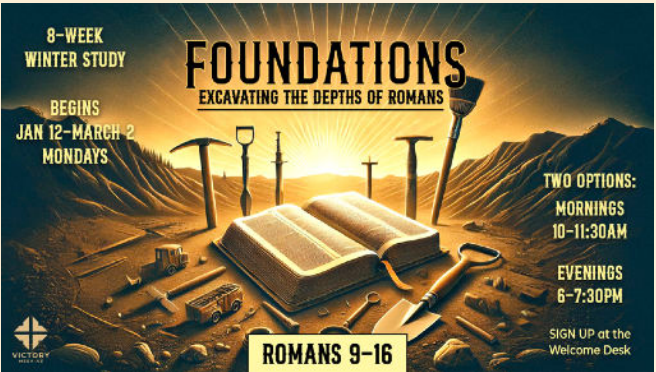
GROUP TIME: Winter Bible Study in Romans 9–16
January 12-March 2, Mondays @ 10am & 6pm

This winter, we step back into the depths of Paul's Letter to the Romans—a book Martin Luther once called "the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel." Last year, our study of chapters 1–8 helped us lay bedrock truths about sin, grace, justification, and life in the Spirit. Now we continue the journey with Foundations, exploring the final eight chapters, Romans 9–16.

If Romans 1–8 gave us the solid footing, then Romans 9–16 call us to keep excavating—digging down into the layers of God's mercy and the shape of Spirit-led living. In Romans 9–11, Paul opens the mystery of God's sovereign purpose: His unwavering faithfulness to Israel, His patience with all people, and His relentless commitment to redeem through Christ. Romans 12–15 then move from doctrine to daily life, showing what happens when the Gospel is poured into the cracks and corners of ordinary living: presenting ourselves as living sacrifices; being transformed in mind and character; using our gifts humbly; loving sincerely; blessing enemies; submitting to authorities; resisting the darkness; and pursuing unity within Christ's Body. Chapter 16 closes by naming ordinary believers whose lives became part of God's sacred foundation stones—reminding us that doctrine always leads to discipleship.

Luther said of Romans: "The more one deals with this Epistle, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes." My prayer is that as we keep digging, you will discover even richer treasures of God's grace.

SIGN UP at the Welcome Desk or scan the QR code.



Mornings
10-11:30am



Evenings
6-7:30pm