

Sermon Notes

Life Notes

Experience the Gifts of Christmas #4: "Love"  
Ephesians 3:14-21

Opener:  
When you hear the word love, what is the first image, song, or memory that comes to mind?

Go Deeper: (Exploring the Bible)

- What does agapē (Greek for "love") reveal about the kind of love God has for us?
- Why does John emphasize that love begins with God, not us?
- How does Ephesians 3 describe the experience of Christ's love?
- What does it mean to be called "beloved"?
- How does the cross define love differently than culture does?

Live It: (Applying to Our Lives)

- What makes it difficult for you to receive God's love fully?
- Where do you most need to experience Christ's love right now?
- Who might God be inviting you to love sacrificially this week?
- How does knowing you are already beloved change your faith?
- What would it look like to let Christ's love overflow naturally?

Daily Bible Readings (December 21-27)

Sun:	Ephesians 3:14-21	Rooted in Love
Mon:	1 John 4:7-12	Beloved by God
Tues:	John 3:16-21	Love Given
Wed:	Luke 2:1-20	Love Incarnate
Thurs:	John 1:1-14	Love Made Flesh
Fri:	Romans 5:6-11	Love Proven
Sat:	Romans 8:31-39	Love Unbreakable

Upcoming Week

Sunday, December 21  
"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

Monday, December 22  
9-11:30am Food Pantry

Tuesday, December 23  
7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5

Wednesday, December 24  
FOOD PANTRY CLOSED  
CANDLELIGHTS CHRISTMAS EVE  
1pm, 3pm, 5pm with Choir, WC  
7pm Contemplative, WC  
9pm with Communion, WC  
8pm AA Meeting, C5

Thursday, December 25  
10am Christmas Worship w/ Communion, WC

Friday, December 26  
OFFICE CLOSED

Saturday, December 27  
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

Merry Christmas

8-WEEK WINTER STUDY  
FOUNDATIONS  
EXCAVATING THE DEPTHS OF ROMANS  
BEGINS JAN 12-MARCH 2 MONDAYS  
TWO OPTIONS:  
MORNINGS 10-11:30AM  
EVENINGS 6-7:30PM  
SIGN UP at the Welcome Desk  
ROMANS 9-16

Victory Lutheran Church  
5946 E. University Drive, Mesa, AZ 85205  
hello@victorylutheran.com  
480-830-5024 | VictoryLutheran.com  
Office Hours: Mon-Thurs, 8am-4pm  
Closed on Fridays

WiFi  
VictoryLutheran\_Guest  
Password: Victory\_46

EXPERIENCE THE  
gifts  
OF CHRISTMAS

LOVE  
Ephesians 3:14-21

December 20 & 21, 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

QR CODE  
Connect with us!  
YouTube Facebook Instagram Twitter



GOD TIME: X Marks the Christ  
Todd Mathison, Lead Pastor

Every December, the shorthand “Xmas” shows up—on cards, signs, and store displays. For many Christians, it can feel like a loss. Replace *Christmas* with *Xmas*, and it seems as though Christ Himself has been crossed out. Another reminder, perhaps, of how easily the holy can be reduced to the hurried, the sacred trimmed down to save space.

That concern is understandable. Words matter. Names matter. And the name of Jesus matters most. But there is also another way to see that X—one that actually leads us deeper into the story of Christ, not farther away from it.



The X in *Xmas* comes from Greek, the original language of the New Testament. Christ in Greek is Χριστός (Christos). The first letter of that word is Chi, which looks exactly like our English X. Early Christians often paired Chi with the next letter, Rho (P), forming the Chi-Rho symbol.

This ancient symbol was one of the earliest visual confessions of faith, proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ. Far from erasing Jesus, the X was once a bold declaration of Him.

The apostle Paul writes, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). Whether spelled out fully or written in ancient shorthand, Christ remains the foundation, the center, the meaning.

So perhaps this season, when you see *Xmas*, let it be a reminder—not of what’s missing, but of what cannot be removed. Christ is still there. He always is. And He always will be.

Pastor Todd Mathison



GATHER TIME: VLC Christmas Concert  
December 14, 2025

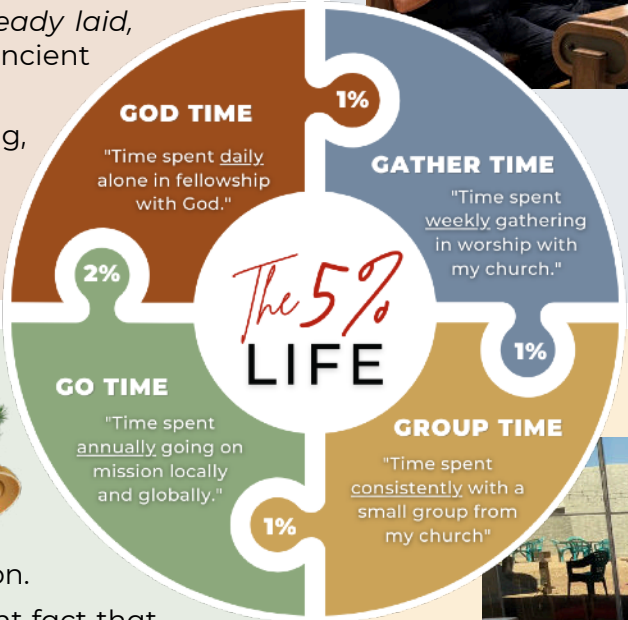


Scan QR code to watch again!



SCAN ME

Share this video with a friend and celebrate Christmas in a truly memorable way.



GO TIME: A Life Ringing with Praise!  
Vicki Bickle



I love music! Listening to it, playing it, sharing it with others. And I realized at an early age that God had given me an incredible talent that made sense for me, certainly more sense than science or mathematics. Hence, music became my passion.

Many of you have seen me in the Victory Choir or playing handbells, but one important fact that you may not know is that I had a job similar to Kristin's (on a much smaller scale) when I was Kristin's age – organist, choir accompanist and handbell director. In fact, I've been playing handbells for over 40 years. More than 25 years ago I played with a handbell choir that had purchased an assortment of Christmas carols, all written in the same key, that required only four ringers – one bell in each hand, no tables, just a music stand and music. We were asked to play in the skyway outside of Macy's at the Mall of America and helped raise extra money for the Salvation Army.



When Ron and I came to Victory, I made certain that these Christmas carols were included in Victory's handbell music library. So after a few practices, four of our Victory ringers entertained shoppers at the December 6th Market in the church parking lot. The ringers included Darla Groat, Darlene Felker, Becky Peters and Linda Horn.

Then on December 16th we rang outside the doors of Walmart on Southern. We had a great time and thoroughly enjoyed sharing our love of Jesus through music with the community, as well as raise a little extra money for the Salvation Army.

God has been exceptionally good to me and I will be forever grateful as I continue to share music with others.



GROUP TIME: A Heartfelt Thank You



Christmas Stocking Club

Founded 20 years ago by Carol Taddon, the club began with just 300 handmade stockings. Today, dedicated volunteers create stockings that are given to underprivileged children through local churches, food banks, low-income elementary schools, and the Gilbert Lions Club.

They have about 50 volunteers—some helping year-round, others joining in the winter months. The group meets Fridays at 10am-noon in the Victory Courtyard, Room C5.

For more information, contact Mary Lou Burgess at mburg37114@aol.com.

Dear Victory Lutheran Church Staff,  
On behalf of everyone involved in the Christmas Stocking Project, we want to extend our deepest gratitude for your generous hospitality in sharing your space with us. Your kindness and support have made a profound impact — thanks to your willingness to open your doors, our volunteers were able to create over 4,200 Christmas stockings for children in need.

Each stocking represents more than just fabric and thread; it's a symbol of hope, joy, and compassion. Your room became a place where community spirit flourished, where laughter and purpose filled the air, and where countless children will feel remembered and cherished this holiday season.

Dianna, Susan & Mary Lou

