

CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION 1988
At St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church of Coney Island
Pastor Peter D.S. Krey
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Introduction

This beginning of the new calendar year for the church, I printed up the proclamation delivered in St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church of Coney Island. Attendance was very low, perhaps averaging 35. In Bible studies perhaps four or five attend. A sense of loss has been experienced by us, because our whole Puerto Rican Spanish service left us for a Pentecostal church. People become inactive in our church and leave at a very high rate. So these words are mostly comfort and challenge.

Behind the Sunday proclamation is a Bible study on the Psalms. Some thoughts on Psalm 114 are presented, because in this study the gentle conviction and anticipation of what the Word of God could do was again felt. We also studied Psalms 118, 36, 65, Isaiah 12, and The Magnificat. The searching power of these Psalms plays a role in the fertile way the proclamation blossomed over this Advent, Christmas and Epiphany season this year. Privately I also read and studied Luther's Commentary on Romans and his work on the Magnificat.

Always this season is my favorite time, as it was for my father, The Rev. Rudolf E.M. Krey, before me. He always felt that God gave him a special Christmas gift at this time of year: a new insight into the meaning of Christmas. I remember one time his elation at seeing evangelical pastors (ie. shepherds) following the shepherds of Bethlehem, and receiving their character from them for the new covenant, as opposed to remaining priests. So from Bethlehem, the shepherds are still going out in all the world today, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2.v.20)

What my father experienced seems to have become a tradition, because I feel blessed the same way: and the crucial thought came from relating the redemption and creation following comments by Bishop William Lazareth about the Small Catechism and how the three articles of the Creed tended to separate what remains related for all three persons of the Trinity: Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification. This is quite a fertile ground for proclamation.

These sermons are offered to share some of these insights - and if you do not wish to read them now, you could lay them aside for a perusal next year before Christmas. Much rather would I have you read them now and give me some response, and then next year you could easily give them a reperusal. (I like that word!)

The first sermon on the Baptism of our Lord was not delivered because I was dissatisfied with it. The second sermon on Christ's Baptism tends to recapitulate and summarize many of the Christmas and New Year's insights. Like the first Baptism sermon, the Christmas Message delivered Christmas Eve was never sent out as the Christmas Letter, because it too seemed very caught up in the political orders, and the festive proclamation of the Gospel needs to transcend these as our Messiah did.

There is a high degree of self exposure in the second John the Baptist sermon. (Advent III "Alone from God comes Life") But the truth in all its vulnerability is a prerequisite for our

refuge in God's love. The Highway sermon (Advent II) has the Psalm Study 114 behind it and God's breaking the way for us into a new communion.

Psalm 114 has inspired me again and again to preach on it as have several other Psalms, eg. 126 and 23 of course.

Introduction

1. Psalm Study 114: Word Event
2. All Saints Sunday: A Beatitude for the Beaten
3. First Advent: It's appointed once to die and then
Judgment
4. Second Advent: The Royal Highway
4. An Advent Message (Sent as a letter)
5. Third Advent: Life Comes from God Alone
6. Fourth Advent: Mary, the Mother of God
7. Christmas Message and Christmas Eve Sermon:
In Bethlehem where the Morning Stars sang together
once more
8. Christmas Morning Sermon: Redemption's Paradise
9. New Year's Eve in Massachusetts: God's New Time
10. Baptism of our Lord: (Undelivered sermon)
Singing the New Song of Salvation
11. Baptism of our Lord/2: The Christmas of Baptism

Conclusion