

Scripture Lessons for   the First Midweek in Advent
Old Testament

Genesis 6:1-8 When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. 3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days - and also afterward - when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown. 5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His Heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, Whom I have created, from the face of the earth - men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air - for I am grieved that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

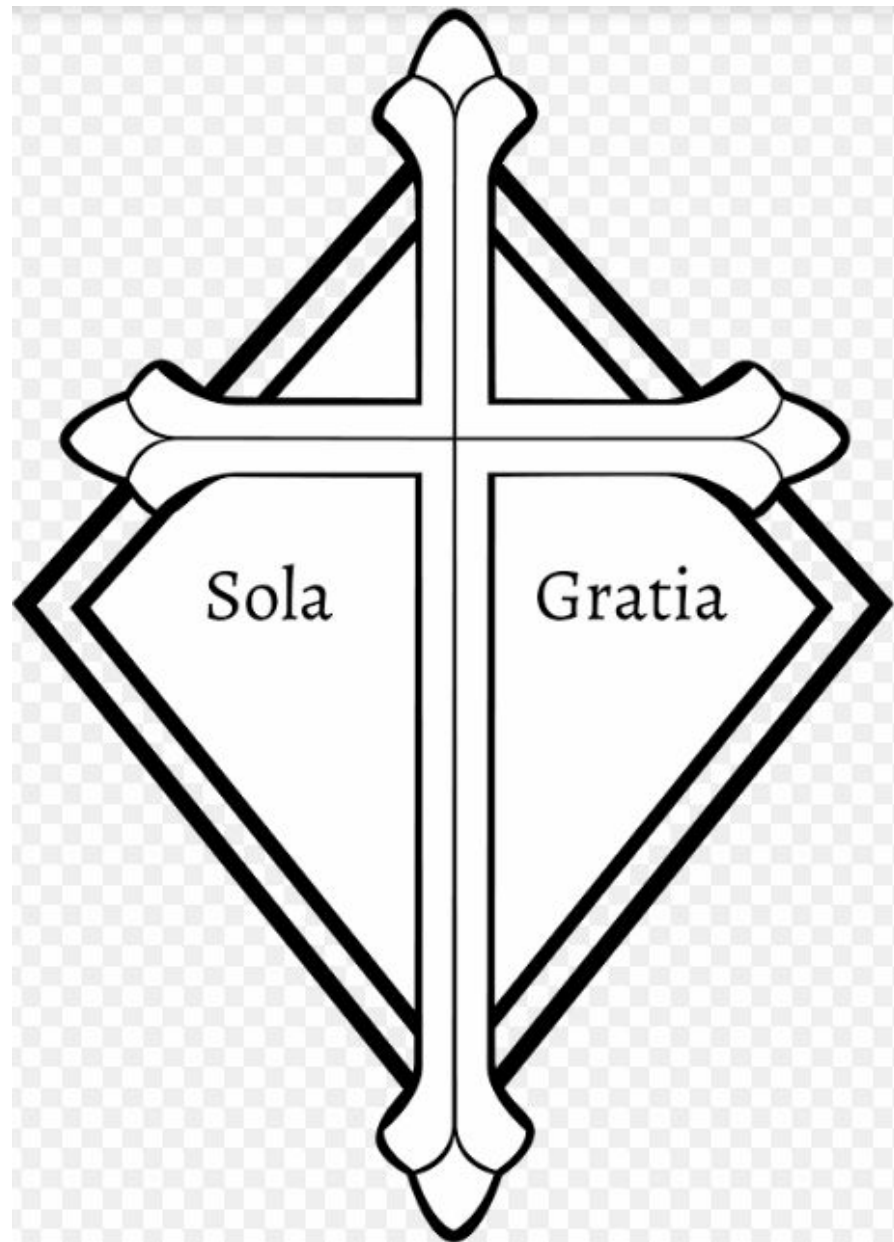
Epistle

Ephesians 2:1-10 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the LORD Jesus Christ. 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love 5 He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - 6 to the praise of His glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One He loves. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Gospel

John 1:14-18 The Word became Flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testifies concerning Him. He cries out, saying, "This was He of Whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.'" 16 From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, Who is at the Father's side, has made Him known.

Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL  ELS
1st Midweek in Advent   *Sola Gratia* – “Grace Alone”
Advent Solas ✘ November 30th, 2016, 4:30 pm



Historic Church Year Symbol Set for Advent-2 Midweek – Grace Alone

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ADVENT-1 MIDWEEK ADVENT SOLAS: "1. SOLA GRATIA" 11.30.16 OSL

Grace to you and Peace, from God the Father and the LORD Jesus.

PRAYER Everlasting God, Who, by the mouths of Your prophets and saints of old, proclaimed the advent of Your Son, our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ, the Desire of all nations, the Hope of Israel, the Redeemer of the world: Lead us to repent of all our sins, and so to humble ourselves that we may be prepared to receive Him with gladness and to join in singing: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the LORD! Amen.

"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.' " (Matthew 21:5)

During Advent we often talk about the three comings of Christ: 1) Christ came to us on that first Christmas morning. The Word became flesh for us so that He might suffer, die, and rise again for us. 2) Christ continues to come to us through the Word and Sacraments to give us forgiveness, life, and salvation. 3) He will come again to judge the living and the dead. No matter which coming of Christ we are talking about all of them are, for us believers, by grace alone.

Let's start by defining what we mean by grace. Martin Luther says, "Grace means that God is merciful to us, that He deals graciously with us for the sake of Christ our LORD, forgives us all our sins, and that He does not impute them to us or punish us with eternal death. Grace is the forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake, the covering of all sin. That is grace." (*Luther's Works*, 22:139)

All of Christ's comings are by grace alone because Christ has come, continues to come, and will return again so that we might receive the forgiveness of sin for His sake.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

When we say that salvation is by grace alone we mean that it is completely and totally a free gift of God. This means there is nothing anyone can do to earn it through their works or effort.

Salvation from beginning to end is all of grace. It is because of God's grace that He sent His Son to be our Redeemer. It is because of grace that Christ willingly suffers and dies. It is because of grace that we are given the gifts that Christ won for us on the cross through the Word and Sacraments. God's grace is a fountain that is always overflowing for us.

In the Smalcald Articles, Martin Luther talks about this overflowing fountain of grace this way, "God is superabundantly generous in His grace..." (III:IV:1) And then he lists all the wonderful ways in which God is gracious through His Word and Sacraments.

There is absolutely nothing we have done or can do to earn it and yet God in His grace keeps giving and giving and giving to us. He is "superabundantly generous in His grace"!

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

You have heard that Christ is full of grace and truth, and has redeemed us through His righteousness, innocence, and obedience, so that we also partake of these, as we take from His fullness as He continues to give us grace upon grace.

Here we see that the Law, the books of Moses and indeed the entire Old Testament, were not the final truth, but were pointing to Christ. Christ alone is the final and perfect revelation of God (see Hebrews 1:1-2). And so we now have the fullness of grace and truth revealed to us in Christ Jesus.

We no longer have just a man as our mediator; we have the One who is very God of very God. We have the One who is fully God and fully Man as our Mediator. It is only through Him that we receive grace and truth. He is the final and perfect Revelation of God. All that the Old Testament pointed to finds its fulfillment in Him.

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. (Psalm 25:16-18)

In Psalm 25 David cries out to the LORD to be gracious to him in the midst of all his afflictions and for the LORD to forgive him. David cries out for grace alone.

This is a theme that runs throughout the Bible — whenever God's people are hurting, troubled, afflicted, distressed, or weighed down by their sin they call on the LORD to be gracious to them. This is all by grace alone because Christ is our High Priest.

Because Jesus is our High Priest, because He has died for our sin, been raised from the dead, and ascended to intercede for us, because He has sympathized with our weakness, because of Him we can approach the throne of grace with confidence! And not only can we approach with confidence, but we are assured that we will receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Whatever it is we are going through we can boldly go before the throne of grace and know that because of Christ we will receive mercy and grace to help us. This grace is our anchor sure in the midst of all the storms of life.

By grace God's Son, our only Savior, Came down to earth to bear our sin. Was it because of your own merit That Jesus died your soul to win? No, it was grace, and grace alone, That brought Him from His Heav'nly throne.

Gracious Father, thank you for giving us Your Son that we might be able to come to you boldly in any and every time of need; through Jesus Christ, our LORD. Amen.