

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E.
Schultz**

**New Year's Eve/Day
December 31, 2017 & January
1, 2018**

Isaiah 12:1-6



12 In that day you will say: "I will praise you, LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. 2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation." 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 4 In that day you will say: "Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

People of God-rescued from the flaming lake of fire in Hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

It has been said – there is no time like New Year's when we are so conscious of the passage of time! Thanksgiving – Black Friday – Cyber Monday – Christmas Eve – Christmas Day are all in the past! Last Saturday night – was the Packers and the Vikings – the Packers and the Lions and we have an end of the NFL regular season with fewer people watching all the time! God's people gather in Jesus' Father's House of Prayer for New Year's Worship and Lord's Supper – painfully aware of the mistakes – inexcusable and hurtful things we said and did during 2017 – yet filled with joy because of Jesus' unconditional forgiving love! We face the New Year with childlike confidence and hope that things will change for the better – because Jesus holds the future!

Jesus Is With Us

- I. Our Help In the Past**
- II. Our Hope Today!**

Context: at the Seminary – where they teach homiletics – Prof. Hoeneke and Prof. Balge and Professor Jeske and Professor Westendorf taught us – always be aware of the context. Prof. Jeske liked to say your text is not just some pottery shard – some sharp piece of a broken jar in a museum case – down some dark and dusty hall. The text is part of **the Word of God – living and active – sharper than any double edged sword – piercing even to dividing soul and spirit – joints and marrow – it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the ♥!** Chapter 11 – the chapter just before the one we are concentrating on – is about the blissful, universal reign of the Root of Jesse – to be established in “that day” – when from that old *long dead* stump – comes the King of kings and Lord of lords! In the video – John on the Island of Patmos – Dean Jones – the actor who portrays John says – the fruits of the Holy Spirit – wisdom and understanding, counsel and power, knowledge and the fear of the LORD – were not aspirations – goals – like we want to lose 5 pounds in January – or treat my spouse with more respect – or spend more quality time with my children – or read my Bible cover to cover in the new year. Not a goal or aspiration or New Year’s resolution – these precious things were all realities – realities in Jesus’ life! We read in Church just a few weeks ago Isaiah chapter 11. Remember: **The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together – the cow will feed with the bear – the infant will play near the hole of the cobra, the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain...** A picture of heavenly peace we look forward to!

Chapter 12 begins: **12 In that day you will say: “I will praise you, LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.** God would have every reason to be angry with us. Angry with us because of our sin – our ♥--cold and dead and hard. As you look back at time – there are horrible people – a man named Jack – who lived in England – back in Sherlock Holmes day. Bank robbers – named Bonnie and Clyde – standing on car running boards shooting at law enforcement. John Dillinger who had a still in my in-laws woods – who was betrayed by the lady in red. And when I was a junior in High School a little man born in Cincinnati named Charles – with a German symbol literally carved into the space between his eyes--and his so

called “family” committed such horrible crimes – he was locked up for the rest of his life. He passed away this year at the age of 83. As tempting as it is to think – now there is a truly horrible and unforgivable person – we need to confess with the Apostle Paul: **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst!”** Jesus died for my hurtful sins and your painful mistakes. Jesus died for Jack, for Bonnie and Clyde, for John Dillinger and John Wayne Gacey and Al Capone and Charles. Jesus died for all. His innocent blood covers every sin and each moral lapse! Jesus died so that His Heavenly Father’s anger is forever turned away.

² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.” Salvation – rescue – deliverance. I picked up a copy of USA Today at the *Piggly Wiggly*. On the front page were the words in large print that read: *From Captivity to hope: Nigerian student describes ‘miracle’!* The dateline is Abuja! If by the grace of God you have ever been to Nigeria – you are familiar with the name Abuja! A young girl named Amina – was 17 years old when she and 274 other girls were abducted from a school in Nigeria in 2014 by Boko Haram! Do you remember that? Mrs. Obama and many other very important people were outraged! But humanly speaking nothing happened to rescue them! Now – three years later Amina has escaped. A Church in California has paid for her rescue to the United States. They have paid in excess of \$30,000 to give her a safe place to live and food to eat—and tuition for college! \$30,000 a year! Would you pay that—could you raise that for one person’s earthly rescue? Think what Jesus paid for our eternal rescue! Jesus paid with his life! He died the most tortured death the human mind could conceive—and he did it to save you and me! Our soul’s salvation was bought by the death of the very Lamb of God!

³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. ⁴ In that day you will say: “Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. This is the time of year we sing, literally sing, *“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!”* Think about it! We have a new, beautiful sparkling pillow that has printed on the front the single word **Joy!** There is a house just down the road – that has a shutter painted Christmas red and Christmas green with the single word joy painted in white! But sometimes for all of us – it’s difficult to find joy in the midst of loss and troubles. When

someone we love goes home to Heaven around Christmas – we are reminded in the most powerful way – that the “things and stuff” of Christmas are not what gives us joy. It’s the Christ-child – the Tiny King – our Redeemer and Savior. When you have Jesus in your ♥ we can have a Charlie Brown Christmas Tree – all the wrapping paper torn and crumpled and in the recycle bin. All the cookies are eaten and all the herring gone – the egg nog and the Highlander Grogg – all the New Year’s shrimp dipped in cocktail sauce – the cards all read and it’s back to work and school. Still there is deep inside that most powerful comfort, **“Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord!”** Nothing in all the world can spoil the inheritance stored up for us in Heaven. We are redeemed for Jesus’ sake!

⁵ Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Sing... Do you do that...*sing*? We were watching TV the other day – when one of the skits showed a man at a red light – listening to one of those Christmas songs being played by a whole orchestra – with special emphasis on percussion – a whole bunch of timpani. I always loved the timpani – it’s like you can make it thunder whenever you want! And if there are a whole bunch of timpani you can literally rock the place. Add a whole bunch of electric bass guitars – and a whole bunch of French horns – and a whole bunch of strings – and the guy in the car is so joyful he can’t sit still. Do you know what I am talking about – or not so much? Sometimes – when there is pain and loss and grief in your life – and it seems like everybody around us is so happy – it can make it even more difficult to be happy. I saw a picture the other day of a guy named Chester. He was lead singer for a group and the picture showed him singing his ♥ out! And yet if you read the small print it said **Chester** was so sad he despaired – and as Paul Harvey used to say, *“Chester will not celebrate his 42nd birthday!”* I can think of nothing more tragic than that – to utterly despair! If we have family – relatives and friends and co-workers tell us that they are sad and discouraged and despairing we need to tell them in no uncertain terms Jesus loves them and we love them and – and He is their strength to go on – today – then tonight – and if there is a tomorrow---that too is secure in Jesus’ nail marked hands!

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you." There are lots of people – who by the grace of God – accomplish great things! There was a lady who was so gifted in **mathematic** that she could solve those equations where they use all kinds of symbols that I don't even know what they are – and the problem fills a whole white board – and she would know the answer to the point they literally gave her a medal. There was an astronaut who was so gifted that he actually went on a **space walk untethered** – not connected to anything – floating out into space – trusting that when the time was right – he would be sucked back into the space ship! There was a guy who used to be the **Prime Minister of Germany** – who was the ruler of most of our relatives back in the Fatherland! There were baseball players who could do what the famous Michael Jordan could not do – **hit a curve ball** – who pitched a perfect game and a no-hitter in the playoffs – yet his private plane crashed. How amazing – if the person who taught people to do the twist – is now singing with angels. The football player who was most famous for being on his knees – in the **endzone** – without his helmet – the look of utter sadness on his face – could be on his knees in the presence of the Lamb of God – on his face – joy that will never end! Did the guy who invented – **Let's Make A Deal** – the original – do you want the cash – or do you want what's behind curtain #3 – knows that Jesus sealed the deal so that going to Heaven is not a gamble – but a gift by grace through faith for Jesus' sake? A guy from the **Olympic Bobsled** team – you know how in shape those guys have to be – to run, run, run, run – then jump into their bobsled and go whipping through that course? This guy went to bed one night – at the Olympic Training place – and then **"if I should die before I wake"**... actually did! Little **Joannie Cunningham** – from Happy Days – they couldn't wake her up the other day either! A famous guy named **Bill** – rich and famous and handsome and gifted – had a ♥ operation – and 11 day later – just long enough for everybody to think was getting better – was made perfect – and so! As we begin this New Year – every breath we take – every beat of our ♥--every moment of every day are gifts of God's Grace. As the Sergeant on Hill Street Blues was wont to say at the end of each roll call, **"Hey! Hey! Hey! Let's be careful out there..."** **by the grace of God! Amen!**

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schutt

