

## Contributors

Rev. Matthew Brackman  
Peace Lutheran Church, Texas City, TX

Rev. Richard Gizynski  
Peace Lutheran Church, Warren, MI

Rev. A. Daniel Guagenti  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Shelbyville, KY

Rev. Andy Guagenti  
Pastor Emeritus, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, KY

Rev. Philip Hoppe  
Peace Lutheran Church, Finlayson, MN  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Bruno, MN

Rev. Jonathan Mueller  
Peace Lutheran Church, Louisville, KY  
Risen Lord Lutheran Church, Taylorsville, KY

Rev. Wm. G. Sabol  
The Lutheran Church of the Triune God, Brooklyn Center, MN

Rev. Charles St-Onge  
LCMS Office of International Mission  
Ascension Lutheran Church, Quebec, Canada

Rev. David Tannahill  
Pastor Emeritus, Vine Grove, KY

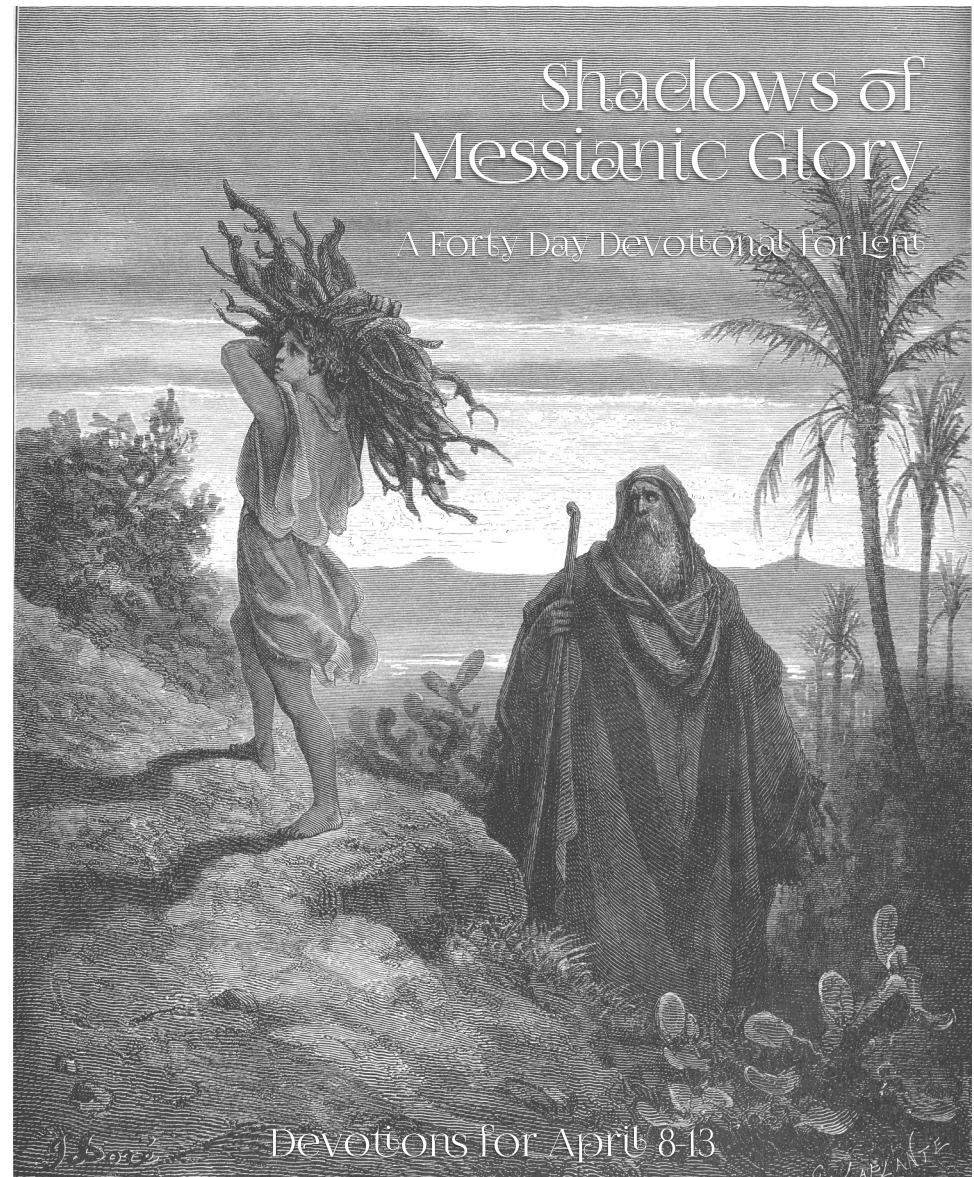
Rev. Christopher Truelsen  
Christ Lutheran Church, Brownsburg, IN

## Editors

Rev. A. Daniel Guagenti  
Alena Guagenti

## Cover Art

Gustave Doré



*"God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."*

*Genesis 22:7*

Ruth 4:18-22

Isaiah 61:1-2

Isaiah 53:10

Genesis 22:1-14

Numbers 21:9

Zechariah 9:9

April 8

Ruth 4:18-22

Timeline  
1000 years before  
Christ

Prophet  
Unknown

Fulfillment  
Matthew 1

Prayer  
*Jesus, You are our  
God and King. Be  
with us as Your  
people and lead us  
safely into Your  
presence. Amen.*

Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse  
fathered David.

Oh drat, there's another "begat." The "begat" is a reference to how the KJV translates "fathered." We usually sigh when we come to a genealogy section of Scripture. It's a bunch of names we can't pronounce and boring to all except the nerdiest amongst us. However, even with the challenging names, the genealogies serve a profound purpose within God's Word.

We marvel at God speaking the world into being from nothing. We should also marvel at how our Lord brought together a man and a woman to produce a child, generation after generation, so that in the fullness of time the Virgin would bring forth her firstborn son. Think of how our God worked with sinful people stumbling and grumbling their way through life in order to accomplish His work of salvation.

The book of Ruth teaches this. A famine drove Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons to Moab. The boys married. The men died, and the Lord led Ruth, one of the wives, to cling to Naomi and return to Israel. He preserved her in her journey. He allowed Boaz to meet her. He provided sage advice from Naomi. He led Boaz to redeem her, and, ta-da, there's David's grandfather.

It is essential that Jesus be a part of David's line to fulfill His office as King. Jesus is the King of the Jews. He did not just claim to be the King of the Jews; He has the genealogies to prove it. Joseph's blood does not literally flow through Jesus' veins, yet by Joseph's bloodline Jesus is a King. He is a King by blood, and by His blood we are brought into His Kingdom.

Our God continues to work out His plans, preparing for the return of His Son. He works within our lives as we grumble and stumble along, and by His Holy Spirit He will lead us safely into His Kingdom.

By Rev. Matthew Brackman

Rejoice greatly, O daughter  
of Zion!

When are the times in our lives that we rejoice greatly? Weddings certainly come to mind. In Old Testament tradition, the bridegroom would parade through town to the bride's home. The guests accompanied him with music and shouts of joy until they returned to the groom's home. The wedding celebration would continue for a week with food and wine at great cost for the bridegroom.

Early in Jesus' ministry, Jesus and His disciples attend a wedding celebration in Cana that John recounts. The wedding feast has been in progress for several days but the wine has run out. Jesus is a guest with no responsibility to provide for others, yet Mary implores Him. So Jesus turns ordinary water into the very best wine, wine befitting a king's table.

Three years later, another celebration takes place. John tells us, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" (John 12:15). This time a King is coming into Jerusalem. The palm-covered streets are lined with people. The king's warhorse is replaced by the peaceful donkey. The spoils of war are replaced with salvation. Kingly pride is replaced with humility. Jesus enters Jerusalem with the accolades of the people and knows the cross that is to come.

John bookends Jesus' ministry with celebration. Jesus' first miracle is performed at a wedding so a celebration can continue. Then another week-long event begins at the Triumphal Entry and ends at the empty tomb. The King's victory over the people's real enemies of sin, death and the devil has been completed. The cost of victory—Jesus' own death—was devastating. He paid the bride price with His blood so that we can join the Easter celebration.

By Rev. Andy Guagenti

April 13

Zechariah  
9:9

Timeline  
500 years before  
Christ

Prophet  
Zechariah

Fulfillment  
Matthew 21:5  
John 12:15

Prayer  
*Thank You, Jesus,  
that You are in  
our midst, a  
mighty one who  
will save. You  
will rejoice over  
me with gladness;  
You will quiet me  
by Your love; You  
will exult over me  
with loud singing.  
Amen. (Zeph.  
3:17)*



April 12

Isaiah 53:10

Timeline

700 years before  
Christ

Prophet  
Isaiah

Fulfillment  
Luke 9:21-22  
1 Corinthians  
15:20-22

Prayer  
*Heavenly Father,  
Your ways and  
purposes are mysterious. I will  
never fully understand Your great  
sacrifice for me,  
yet I thank You  
for Jesus' great  
love for me, and  
for all humanity.  
Help me to make  
Jesus' grace and  
mercy clear to  
others that they  
might believe in  
Him, and be  
saved, to live to  
all eternity. In  
Jesus' name,  
amen.*

Yet it was the will of the LORD to  
crush him; he was put to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering  
for guilt, he shall see his offspring;  
he shall prolong his days.

Foreshadowing is a technique writers use to prepare readers for chapters yet to come. It's one thing to do this in a novel; can we appreciate how intricately God has authored holy history?

Jesus told Nicodemus what was to come in John 3, describing how the Messiah must be lifted up like the bronze serpent in Moses' time. That bronze serpent itself was describing how God has loved the world, sending Jesus to redeem us all.

In just the same way, in Isaiah 53:10 God lays out the purpose of the cross, hundreds of years before it comes to pass. The Messiah would be crushed and suffer terribly. For what purpose? With His perfect life, Jesus makes an offering sufficient to pay for all sins everywhere, for all time.

Since all people die, the resurrection isn't a foregone conclusion for humanity. Yet Jesus will conquer death. He will see His offspring, that is, all who believe in Him for all times to come. His days will be extended. Even after He dies, the Christ is going to live again, and He is going to fulfill the will of the Father.

The resurrection of Jesus is a watershed in all of history. Though others had been raised, some notably by Jesus Himself, all of the others would return to the grave eventually. But Jesus is the firstfruits of those to come who will be raised from the dead. Because Jesus has done this, you will one day rise to eternal life through Him. Because God fulfills all things, you will live again in Jesus.

By Rev. Chris Truelsen

God will provide for Himself the  
lamb for a burnt offering, my son

Abraham promised provision, even as he prepared to raise the knife. Looking back, we see the wonderful prophecy. In the moment, did Abraham believe a ram would appear in the thicket? Hebrews suggests Abraham believed Isaac could rise from the dead after the knife fell (Heb. 11:19).

In Silicon Valley, the term "vaporware" describes advertised products that aren't actually completed and may never materialize. As innovation moves so fast, people are willing to invest in concepts that may turn out to be impossible. The promisers may not intend to defraud anyone; they may actually believe that, given enough investment, they can make it work.

In some ways, faith in God can feel like that. We're not sure how God can make this all work out, but we're confident in Him. Maybe once we reach the top of the mountain there will be a lamb. Maybe my son will rise again.

The great difference—and surely not the only difference—between code programmers and the Lord is that He has created all that is. He can always deliver on His promises. "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

His almighty power is revealed in the details of Biblical prophecy. He has hidden "Easter eggs" throughout His Scripture to strengthen our faith. Not just the big picture of a father giving up his son, but also the little touches reveal His skill. Moriah is where the Jerusalem temple would be built. Isaac bears the wood for the sacrifice as Jesus bore His cross. Abraham promises a "lamb," teaching us to look for more than the immediate ram.

Do you see? Salvation is not just a concept, details TBD. He has written the entire masterpiece, and the program is running effectively through time even now. Our Lord's salvation is exactly where we should invest our faith.

By Rev. A. Daniel Guagenti

April 9

Genesis  
22:1-14

Timeline  
written 1400  
years before  
Christ

Prophet  
Abraham

Fulfillment  
John 1:29  
1 Peter 1:18-19

Prayer  
*"Were the whole  
realm of nature  
mine, That were a  
tribute far too  
small; Love so  
amazing so di-  
vine, Demands  
my soul, my life,  
my all!" (LSB  
425)*

April 10

Isaiah 61:1-2

Timeline

700 years before  
Christ

Prophet

Isaiah

Fulfillment

Luke 4:16-22

Prayer

*Dear Jesus, You  
are the Living  
Word, both mes-  
senger and mes-  
sage to the bless-  
ing of my sin sick  
soul. Open my  
ears to You by the  
power of Your  
Spirit. Amen.*

The Spirit of the LORD God is upon  
me, because the LORD has  
anointed me to bring good news  
to the poor.

Jesus read these words from Isaiah in the syna-  
gogue of His hometown of Nazareth on the Sab-  
bath. When He had finished reading, Jesus told  
those assembled, "Today this Scripture has been  
fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:22). With this  
declaration, Jesus was telling the people He was  
the one prophesied about over 700 years earlier.  
But the people were unable to understand and  
grasp what Jesus was saying. They rejected His  
message, they rejected Him as the messenger, and  
they drove Him out of town.

More than just a mere messenger, Jesus was  
also the message. As the Word of God incarnate,  
Jesus both brings and *is* the Good News for those  
who are poor, that is, afflicted with the curse of  
original sin. He is the balm that heals and restores  
our sin-broken hearts and opens our blinded eyes.  
He breaks the yoke that Satan uses to hold and  
bind us, and He sets us free from the prison of our  
own sinful nature. He has lifted us to safety, mov-  
ing us from death to life.

By His life, death and resurrection, Jesus has  
fulfilled the demands of God's righteous Law and  
paid the price for our sins. By our Baptisms, we  
are the recipients of God's grace, and we live in  
His favor now and for all eternity. We need not  
fear when on the day of vengeance of our God He  
comes in judgment, because the Word has worked  
saving faith in our hearts through His means of  
grace, and He continues to maintain and strength-  
en our faith through those same means. Let us re-  
joice in Him, the Good News, this Lenten season.

By Rev. Richard Gizynski

So Moses made a bronze snake  
and put it up on a pole.

In the fight against ebola, which is currently  
ravaging the Democratic Republic of the Congo,  
health professionals face frustration as many of  
the dying refuse the aid which could save their  
lives. Researchers discovered that one quarter of  
the people living in the epicenter of the outbreak  
do not believe the problem is real. According to a  
recent study in the Lancet Infectious Diseases  
journal, it means that people with the disease  
were 15 times less likely to trust medical treat-  
ment.

We live in a world which doubts that sin is re-  
al. However, the rebellious children of Israel no  
longer had those doubts. As snakes attacked them,  
the results were fatal. Our sins, and the pain and  
separations they have caused in our lives and the  
lives of those around us, are undeniable. David  
said, "I know my transgressions, and my sin is  
always before me" (Ps. 51:3). Nevertheless, it's still  
tempting to dismiss God's cure.

You can be sure that some terrified Israelites  
may not have trusted the remedy that God Him-  
self provided. They may have thought that look-  
ing *up* at a snake on a pole was a ridiculous, and  
even dangerous, diversion. Wouldn't it make  
more sense to look *down* and keep the focus on the  
snakes slithering around your ankles?

The temptation for us is to fix our focus on our  
sins and what we're going to do about it. All man-  
ner of trying harder, and better living to make up  
for our sins, seems like the best course of action.  
God, instead, calls us to look to His Son, raised up  
on the cross, as the only antidote for sin and  
death. In repentance and faith, here is where we  
find God's forgiveness—the treatment for our  
transgressions and the cure for our souls.

By Rev. David Tannahill

April 11

Numbers 21:9

Timeline

1400 years before  
Christ

Prophet

Moses

Fulfillment

John 3:14-16

Prayer

*Gracious Savior,  
thank You for  
providing me  
with the real rem-  
edy. Surely You  
are the God who  
forgives all my  
sins and heals all  
my diseases.  
Amen.*