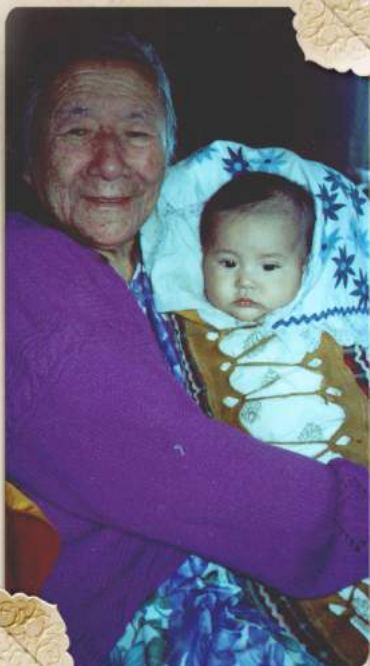


2016 ADVENT DEVOTIONS



Isaiah 9:6 'For a child will be born to us, a son
will be given to us; And His name will be
called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.'

inside front cover

Thank you for your prayers, volunteering, and financial support of LAMP's mission to share the love of Christ in northern Canada. Please continue to join us in praying for God's people in all of the communities that LAMP serves.

Our gift to you is a devotional reading for each day during the Advent season, written by LAMP volunteer missionaries, staff, and/or board members. We pray these devotions help you prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth and enable you to have a joyous and growth-filled season of enlightening grace and love.

A blessed Christmas to you!
From LAMP Staff



Introduction

Dear Friends in Christ and Friends of LAMP

Have you ever noticed how “Christmas” never gets old? I don’t know about you, but I still get as excited about Christmas and celebrations of the Saviour’s birth as I did many years ago! My family always kept Jesus at the very heart and core of our celebrations. When I was little, I did get excited about the fable of Santa Claus, but my parents were careful to impress upon me that we were celebrating the birth of our Saviour Jesus at Christmas, not the gifts delivered by Santa. And so when I became aware that Santa was merely a myth, I had no problem processing that information, since Christmas at our



house was and still is all about Jesus.

Our Advent devotions are also once again this year all about Jesus. Actually, they are all about God’s plan to save sinners through the birth, life, death and resurrection of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ! Every day in Advent we will be reminded of that reality and also of the reality that Good News, that we are saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, is being daily impressed on our brothers and sisters in Christ in Canada’s northern Indigenous communities through the witness of pastor/pilots, volunteers, and vacation Bible school leaders. Stories shared by our authors will be a great reminder how God works through proclamation of His Gospel also among our Indigenous Canadian friends.

Our prayer for you is that the Holy Spirit will fill your hearts with great joy, contentment, and peace this Advent season as you remember what God in Christ did for you on the cross of Calvary, and as you celebrate His coming to you in His birth in Bethlehem so long ago.

*Rev. Bill Ney,
Volunteer Pastor/Pilot
LAMP*

“I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark.”

John 12:46 (NLT)

When the principal invited us to attend the school Christmas pageant it was met with mixed emotions—the weather, roads, distance, leaving and arriving in the dark. Yikes! We loaded our Jeep with warm gear, quilts, and oranges and prayed that we were hearing God correctly.

Monday, we walked into the school, and she met us with apparent relief saying, “You came!!” The next two days were hectic—wrapping gifts, feast preparations, dress rehearsals but little evidence of Jesus. Had we misunderstood?

Wednesday, with Bible in hand, she walked on stage to open the pageant. She shared the Christmas story to the entire community and prayed openly that they put their trust in God and allow Him into their lives. The rest was kind of a blur for us as we watched heads bow and tears flow. Afterwards, she told us she couldn’t have done it if we hadn’t been there to support her. We finally knew why we were there.

As you prepare to celebrate our Savior’s birth this Christmas, take time to be there for others. You may be that spark they need to begin to shine into someone else’s darkness.



Dear Father, please help us to share the Good News of Your Son in all that we say and do, and in whose name we pray. Amen.

*Judi Luckhardt
LAMP Director &
Volunteer Missionary
Hall Lake, SK*

"...This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Acts 1:11 (NIV)

As we get ready for Christmas, we bake, buy presents, and get a Christmas tree. Are we ready? We decorate, break out the Christmas music, and attend gatherings, concerts, and programs. Are we prepared? What will we be cooking or wearing? We spend

quite a bit of time in preparation.

We know the day we are getting ready for—December 25. But, we know not the day or the hour when Jesus will come again. And are we ready? Are we telling others that Jesus' death and resurrection has saved the whole world so they too can live eternally? Are we reading God's word so we can be prepared to lead others to Christ, so we ourselves can strengthen our faith and fulfill our purpose?

It's so easy to get caught up in the busyness of today, the busyness of life. Yet Jesus' last words to us were instructions to tell everyone, everywhere, the good news of God's love. That's how come we continue to take the light of Christ to the people in the North.



Lord, help us prepare for Your coming. Give us opportunities to tell someone about You, to serve someone in Your name. Thank You for the promise of Your return and Your plan of eternal salvation. Amen.

Kolette Kramer
Volunteer Missionary
Moose Lake, MB

“He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Revelation 22:20 (NIV)

Beginning with the first Christmas—from Mary and Joseph awaiting the arrival of the promised Messiah to the Wise Men searching the stars for this prophesied coming of the King of the Jews—Christmas has been a time of anticipation. The children of the North also express this same anticipation for the LAMP team’s arrival and especially for Vacation Bible School. The question repeatedly asked after our arrival is, “When will Bible School start?” One young girl asked us this question on Friday. When told it would begin on Monday, she responded, “In three sleeps Bible school starts!”

Another young boy at the end of the week saw several of our team members walking back to the rectory. He called out, “When are you leaving?” When they replied, “Tomorrow,” his next question immediately followed, “When are you coming back?”

This is what Christmas is all about. The anticipation of Jesus’ birth is only paled by the next question, “When are you coming back?” As LAMP teams strive to be a picture of Jesus for the people of the North, we anticipate the coming of Jesus in the manger while we yearn for His second coming and the opportunity for our friends in the North to join us in this anticipation.



Father, help us to always live with eager anticipation and preparedness for your second coming. Guide us in being a model to others about who you are and your love for all people. Amen.

Dana Naumann
Volunteer Missionary and
LAMP Ministry Director
Lac Brochet, MB

"...so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."

Hebrews 9:28 NIV

Have you ever waited for something for a long time? Typically, we live in a world of instant gratification, driving through our favorite coffee shop line-up for our morning java or searching on the Internet to obtain information. It's difficult to imagine waiting a whole year to hear the Gospel message.

And yet, that's what a lot of the communities where LAMP serves in the North do. With no regular Sunday school, Bible studies or church services, families anxiously await the return of the LAMP team from one VBS season to the next for one week. For the children it seems like an eternity!

Advent, too, is a time of waiting, expectation and longing. Believers who want to grow in their relationship with Christ find Advent a meaningful time. So often we are too busy preparing for Christmas that we forget about Christ, and yet Advent is a time for us to slow down and listen to God who helps us get ready for the coming of the Christ child.



Dear God, Teach us how to wait and to give thanks for Your amazing plan to save us from our sins by sending Your Son Jesus to be the ultimate sacrifice. Help us to trust in Him. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Catherine Williams
Executive Assistant
LAMP

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14 (NIV)

Each summer, for the last fifteen years (except one) I have served with a team in northwestern Ontario. We move into that community for one week, not just to teach VBS, but also to experience the joys and challenges of living in a remote, northern community.

This past year, we had an opportunity to connect in new ways with our friends in Bearskin Lake. We were touched to be included in a memorial service for a young sister, now with the Lord. We were blessed by discussions with those involved in local church ministry and honored as they shared ways we might structure our ministry of co-operation with them. We long to be more impactful and effective in the future. These dear women love the Lord and their community so deeply.

During our last night in the community, we were treated to a feast of moose stew and bannock. The food was delicious, but the fellowship was even sweeter. The conversation was a mixture of English and Ojibwe, and it really didn't matter. A taste of our heavenly homecoming, when God will gather all nations and tribes together!

Lord, in these dark days of waiting for Christmas and Your coming again, we pray You would strengthen Your people to the task of proclaiming Your Word to the lost and the hurting, and that churches in the North be a light in their communities. Amen.

Tamara Alkema, Volunteer Missionary
Bearskin Lake, ON



“...Love your neighbors as yourself.”

Luke 10:27b (NIV)

As I prepared to teach VBS, I thought of Jesus, our Teacher, and the years from His birth to His resurrection. Jesus came to serve and to teach us how to

love one another.

As our team drove to South Indian Lake on Sunday morning, we saw a vehicle stopped along the side of the road. Should we stop or continue on our journey? After all, we were on a ‘schedule,’ but as we approached we could clearly see the man had a flat tire. As Roger slowed to stop, I wanted to continue, but the rest of the team reminded me of the story of the Good Samaritan -- how could we drive by?!

As Roger and this man were changing the tire, I asked where he was going. His reply was Nelson House. My curious nature asked why he was going to Nelson House, and he replied that he was the Catholic priest going to say mass. I explained that we were a LAMP VBS team going to South Indian Lake to teach Bible school. His response, “We are all on the same mission to share the love of Jesus.”

Jesus taught me that Sunday morning we aren’t just sharing Bible stories, but we must practice what we teach. This is a lesson I will always remember because of the priest with a flat tire on the side of the road.



Lord, as we prepare in Advent for the coming of Christ our Savior, let us not skip to Easter without remembering the teachings of Jesus. Remind us to love as You loved us. Amen.

Pam Heiden
Volunteer Missionary
South Indian Lake, MB

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.”

Luke 1:14 (NIV)

On one of the first mission trips I made to northern B.C., the team I tagged along with stayed at the campground in Old Hazelton. Oftentimes, local teens would come and hang out with us late into the evening. One of the teens ended

up helping the cooks and serving meals to team members the whole week. He felt comfortable being around us. He wasn't so alone anymore. He was at peace, knowing that so many Christian young people cared about him.

God, in his infinite wisdom, love and care, came to earth in order to become like us. Here in Jesus, in God's Son, born of a woman, we have the glory of God's infinite love. We have peace with God.

Life is often difficult for the people of the North, especially in the long and dark days of winter. The things of this world often become more than we can bear, but as we look ahead in this season of Advent to Christmas Day, we can go back to a manger and see the Child, God's Son there and know that God's love for us will never fail.



Most loving God, thank You for caring for us when we needed it the most. May we ever behold Your glory in the highest and find Your presence and Your peace in Jesus. Amen.

Andy Kahle
Former BC Missions Partner

“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto the, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

Luke 2:9-10 (KJV)

wraps the little tree in his blanket (the Gospel), and the little tree becomes glorious (the Resurrection). Eyes opened, the characters break out in a song of praise and thanksgiving towards the Lord (Epiphany).

In our increasingly secularized culture, the power of that message -- that Jesus, by His death on the cross and His resurrection, has literally paid for our sins is still needed today, both here and especially in the North.

Did you ever wonder about Charles Schulz' A Charlie Brown Christmas? The Peanuts characters are caught up in the commercialism of the season, and they want a shiny fake tree. To their dismay, Charlie Brown chooses the seemingly puny real tree (Jesus). Then Linus recites the passage from Luke, which points them to that real tree, the one bent over and almost broken when Charlie Brown hangs an ornament (sin) on it. After Charlie apparently kills it (the Crucifixion), Linus



Lord, in this season of glitz and distractions, help us remember the true gift of your Son, Jesus, and let us not be afraid to share the real story of Christmas. Amen.

Dave Smith
LAMP Missionary Pilot

“The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”

Proverbs 16:9 (NASB)

After our fourth year of VBS in Garden Hill, I was reflecting on all that we had experienced. Remembering back to our first year, we had it all planned out: the lessons, crafts, activities, puppet shows, etc. Just like VBS in our home church, right?

Let's just say things didn't go as planned. Don't get me wrong -- it was a wonderful experience, but not anything close to what we had planned. We were reminded very quickly that this was God's work, and we were to follow His lead. This ministry was more about building relationships and showing God's love than just teaching.

The more trips I make to Garden Hill, the more I can't wait to go back. Our team has grown to love the people of this northern community, and we have some dear friends, children and adults alike.

Isn't it like us to jump into something with our own plan? Many times, God has to remind us He already has a plan, and we are to follow it. When God sent his Son into the world, He was born in a manger. Not likely how we would have done it.

Many didn't believe baby Jesus was the Messiah, including the religious elite of that time. When He went to the cross, even His own disciples couldn't understand or believe this was God's plan.



Dear God, help us to know that You have a perfect plan even though we can't always see what it is. Amen.

Shane Anderson
Volunteer Missionary
Garden Hill, MB

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true...He is the true God and eternal life.”

1 John 5:20 (NIV)

On January 23, 2004 I sat in a doctor's office. I was in my second semester at Bible college, and a few weeks away from my private pilot licence flight test on my journey to becoming a missionary/pilot. Then the words came out of the doctor's mouth...“You have cancer.”

Suddenly, everything fell apart. How could this possibly be a part of the plan? I would never become a pilot or be a missionary. In a split second, it all seemed hopeless.

On January 23, 2009 I stepped off a plane in Botswana, Africa as a missionary/pilot. Five years to the day when I thought God didn't have a plan, I was proven wrong. Today I serve as a LAMP missionary pilot, flying to remote northern communities in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario.

Roughly 2000 years ago, the Jews were awaiting their Messiah. They expected a mighty warrior or king to save them from the Roman oppressors. But, God had a different plan...

Jesus, born in a stable, the humblest of places, not as a king or warrior but a helpless babe. How could this possibly be a part of God's plan? But, He did, with much greater things in store. He sent

Jesus to save the whole world from their sins and give us hope and eternal life through His death and resurrection.

Father God, grant us a greater understanding and guide us through the maze of life's struggles. Increase our faith as we trust in You, knowing that You are the true source of eternal life. Amen.

Andrew Anstey
LAMP Missionary Pilot



“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence”.

Acts 2:28 (NIV)

When we arrived in our northern community it was a whirlwind of uncertainties – a lesson in trust. That first night around midnight, I woke to find the power out, and it would remain out for 40 hours! This was a great hardship. Our

house had boarded windows so it was dark inside, day and night.

People in the community brought us supper and frequently checked on us. One lady came often, and I felt the urge to talk to her. When she brought us coffee one morning, she explained that she had been with Father Bob, their community priest, before he died. He had told this lady that if Kathy (my co-leader) and I were to come back to the community that she was to promise to make sure we were taken care of.

We were in awe. I stood there with tears in my eyes, thanking and praising God for His constant provision through Father Bob and this grandmother of children who had attended VBS.



Dear God, thank you for always being Immanuel, God with us. Help us to cherish and remember that this holy season. Please be with our families in the North so that they can always feel Your presence and be filled with joy. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Roxanne Theroux
Volunteer Missionary
Wollaston, SK

*"I am the Lord's servant,"
Mary answered. "May it
be to me as you have said."
Luke 1:38 (NIV)*

We had not planned on doing VBS that summer. However, due to circumstances, plans changed. So, within three weeks the three of us booked our tickets, prepared the curriculum and were on our way up North, trusting God that things would work out and He would provide.

Our contact person had left the community. Nobody knew we were coming; however we had a place to stay. On Sunday morning we heard that we could teach in the school gym.

During the weekend we had gone on a prayer walk through the community and met many people. We prayed with them and showed them we care. That week many parents told us how much they appreciated that we came; they thought everyone had abandoned them.

We taught the children in Muskrat Dam an old hymn we all know:

*Trust and obey, For there's no other way,
To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey.*

Mary also had to trust and obey God – first when the angel told her she would become pregnant and later when her and Joseph had

to go to Bethlehem, so close to her giving birth. God had a plan for Mary and Joseph. He also had a plan for us that summer just as He has a plan for each of us.

*Heavenly Father, may we all learn
to obey, going wherever You want
us to go. May we be more like
Mary, trusting You in all that we do
and be a blessing to others. Amen.*

Gerry DeBoer
Volunteer Missionary
Muskrat Dam, ON



Bring God's love to the North...

HOW?

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- A volunteer missionary
- A partner (in prayer and financial support)
with a missionary or pastor/pilot
- A donor (call to discuss options)

OR all of the above!

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Saskatchewan (SK)

- 1 Wollaston
- 2 Southend
- 3 Grandmother's Bay
- 4 Sucker River
- 5 Hall Lake
- 6 Deschambault
- 7 Pelican Narrows
- 8 Sandy Bay

British Columbia (BC)

- 1 Gitanyow
- 2 Kispiox
- 3 New Hazelton
- 4 Old Hazelton
- 5 Moricetown
- 6 Kitamat*
- 7 Klenut*

Manitoba (MB)

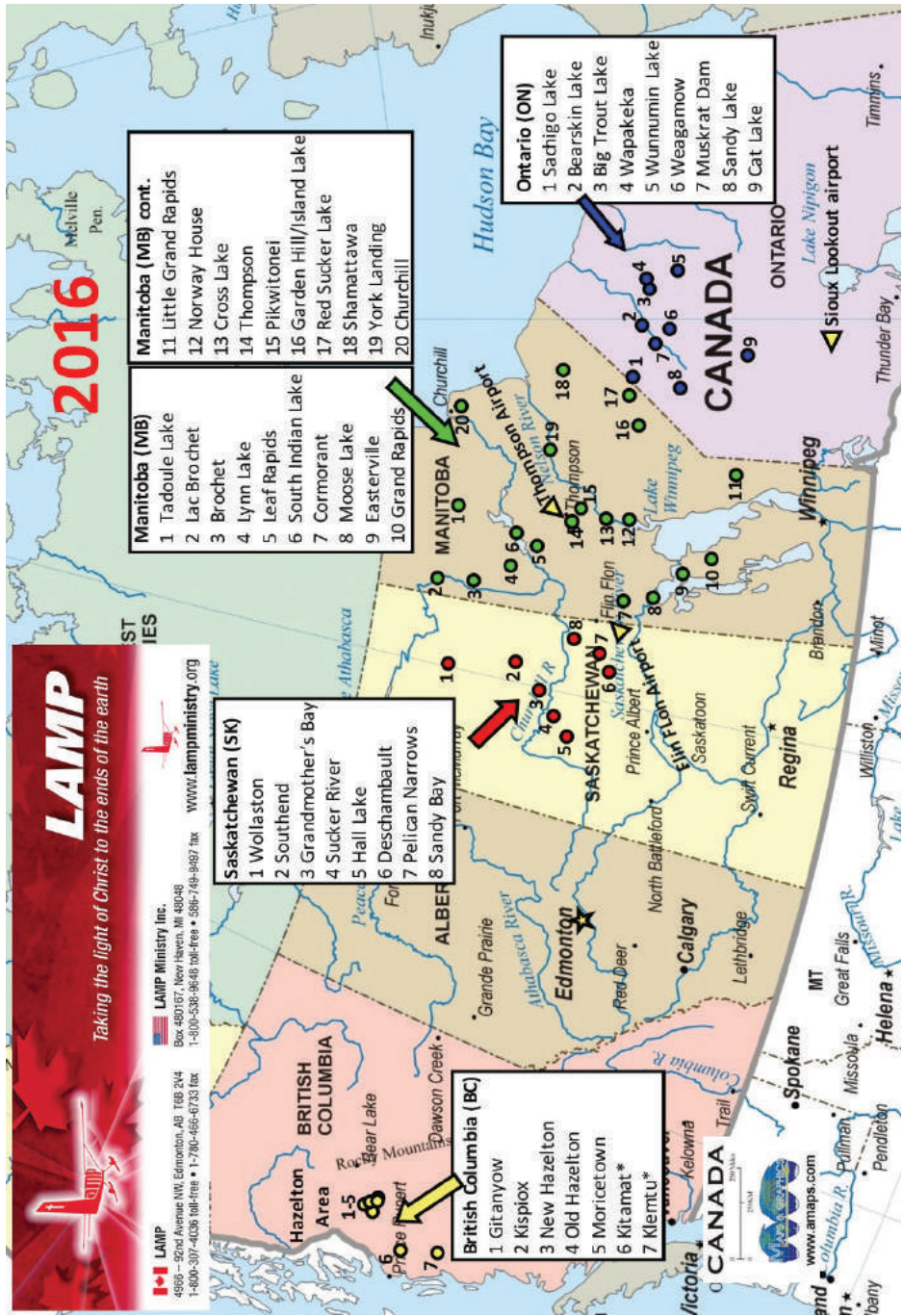
- 1 Tadoule Lake
- 2 Lac Brochet
- 3 Brochet
- 5 Leaf Rapids
- 6 South Indian Lake
- 7 Cormorant
- 8 Moose Lake
- 9 Easterville
- 10 Grand Rapids

Manitoba (MB) cont.

- 11 Little Grand Rapids
- 12 Norway House
- 13 Cross Lake
- 14 Thompson
- 15 Pikwitonei
- 16 Garden Hill/Island Lake
- 17 Red Sucker Lake
- 18 Shamattawa
- 19 York Landing
- 20 Churchill

Ontario (ON)

- 1 Sachigo Lake
- 2 Bearskin Lake
- 3 Big Trout Lake
- 4 Wapakakea
- 5 Wunnumin Lake
- 6 Weagamow
- 7 Muskrat Dam
- 8 Sandy Lake
- 9 Cat Lake



"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6 (NIV)

Samantha recently told me of her new job. She is driving the school bus in Tadoule Lake in northern Manitoba. I imagine my cheerful friend warmly greeting the kids each morning, bringing them safely to school. Rather than leave them to take their own chilly path, she willingly leaves the comfort of her warm home to assure their safe arrival.

Imagine the spectacular throne of God, "flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze"! (Daniel 7:9) And yet, Jesus left the far-surpassing greatness and wonder of heaven to save us by showing us the way. After rising from the dead, Jesus sits at the right hand of God and is interceding for us. He warmly welcomes us to trust that He is the way for our heavenly opportunity.

As we await Jesus' return, we can provide opportunities for others to believe in Jesus. With confidence in the truth you know, you are equipped to follow in His steps in this important work. Reach out of your comfortable place so those near you can be shown The Way.



Dear Jesus, Thank You for leaving the wonder of Heaven so we can have access to it, now and for eternity. Use us to spread the light of Christ so others may believe too. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Maura Leinonen
Volunteer Missionary
Tadoule Lake, MB

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

Matthew 24:35 (NIV)

My family has gathered china, silverware, antique clocks, and other articles of value that belonged to grandparents and great grandparents. They are items of quality, of lasting value.

They also remind us of our ancestor's values.

Like many people of this generation, my children are not that interested in family heirlooms. Today, electronics are only meant to last until the next and newest model is introduced.

What I treasure most to pass on to my children and future generations is the Words of Jesus my grandmother taught me. Those words have sustained me in faith; have been my hope in times of struggle and joy during the most precious times of life.

The Indigenous people who continue to inhabit the far northern reaches of this continent do not value material things like the European settlers that arrived after them. They were largely nomadic following their wildlife food supplies. They did and do value family, tradition and faith. They respected the earth, the Creator and received with faith the greatest story told – Jesus a Savior born for all.

Elders in these communities know in this fast changing world that Heaven and earth will pass away, but Jesus words will never pass away. What they too treasure most is passing on to their children and future generations the Words of eternal life that came through the Savior Jesus.



Lord Jesus, we know that your words will never pass away. Grant us the firmness in faith in you our ancestors held, to be the legacy our children inherit and value above all other treasures. Amen.

Ron Ludke
LAMP Executive Director

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given..."

Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV)

Heading home after VBS, one of the other passengers on the small plane was a young mother heavy with child and one of our faithful VBS helpers. Though basic care is provided in her village, she

was on an hour's flight to the hospital as the time drew nearer for her child to be born.

It was two years before I could join our team again, and one of my great expectations was to see this child; so when an opportunity arose to pay her a visit, my spirit leaped. Her little boy was sitting in a high chair. His first reaction upon my drawing near was to choose one of his snacks and offer it to me. Reflecting on that moment, like Simeon and Anna when the infant Jesus was first brought to the temple, I marveled that my long wait of expectation had been fulfilled in the flesh and yet also in the symbolism of a gift being offered through this child whose coming we had eagerly anticipated.

Those very gifts of God embodied in His Son—new life, salvation and eternal kinship—shared by our LAMP team will ever repeat and yet ever be new, for us and for our friends we serve in the fly-in community in northern Manitoba. Each year on our visit, we can hardly wait to see what God will conceive and breathe life into.



Lord, keep our sense of expectation kindled, heedful of Your promises, Your leading, and Your incomparable Gift of New Life, during Advent this day and in Your service every day. Amen.

Carolyn Horne
Volunteer Missionary
Lac Brochet, MB

“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, ‘God with us.’”

Matthew 1:23 (NIV)

It’s almost too much to comprehend. God almighty, the Creator of the universe, sent His one and only Son to be one of us—to live among us. God, in Jesus Christ was truly with us. He walked with, taught and healed us. He touched and fed us. He lived the perfect life for us. But most

importantly, Jesus took the punishment for our sins upon Himself, nailing that sin to the cross to bestow upon each of us the complete forgiveness for our sins.

It’s difficult to go into a northern community that is experiencing tragedy (suicide crisis) and expect to see much hope. However, Jesus promised everyone who trusts and follows Him, a life in His presence for all eternity. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit and gave us His Word to create and sustain us in our faith in Him. No matter where our walk in life takes us—through the good and the bad—through the happy and the sad—through the regular routines of life and through extraordinary moments, God in Jesus is with us.

Jesus himself said that He would be with us in Matthew 28:20 (NIV): “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” As each of us celebrate the Christmas Christ, also remember that Jesus is always with us—Immanuel!

Heavenly Father, help us remember daily that You are always with us in every part of our lives, that You will never leave or forsake us because of your Son Jesus who came to take away the sin of the world. Amen.



Dennis Ouellette
LAMP Pastor Pilot

“Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.”

James 5:13b (NIV)

One of my favorite aspects of VBS is singing. I don’t play an instrument. However, some years we are blessed with a musician to lead the children in song.

Still, numerous times we have lifted our voices a cappella – singing the notes from memory as best we can. The children don’t really seem to mind, and sometimes it seems even more glorious to hear their voices without the accompaniment of our beloved music or a musician.

In our home church, we have the Christmas Eve tradition of singing Silent Night with the last verse absent the organ. We simply praise Jesus, “Lord at thy birth,” without all the pomp and circumstance of a perfectly delightful Christmas orchestra.

God’s word reminds us that we are proper to sing songs of praise anytime. As the joy of Jesus’ birth lifts our hearts and minds toward Him, may we unite our voices in glorious songs of praise this Christmas.

Jesus, Your deity, as Word become flesh, is the proper substance of joyous songs of praise. May we glorify You with our humble voices in exuberant praise for Your birth, sacrificial death and our eternal salvation. Amen.

Jonathan Leinonen
Volunteer Missionary
Tadoule Lake, MB



“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

Hebrews 13:16 (ESV)

Last summer, our team prepared with excitement and anticipation for our trip to northern Ontario. Little did we know, God had deliberate plans for this small community through us.

On our second day of Vacation Bible School, we learned of the death of a young boy. Our team was filled with grief alongside of the community. We discussed ways to show our respect and love toward the family. We decided to cancel VBS on the day of the funeral and focus our attention on serving the family through God's love.

The evening of the wake, we took our snacks to the family home and were asked to sing songs. One song we chose was, “Jesus Loves Me.” The child's grandfather sang along with tears streaming down his face, touched by God's presence.

The day of the funeral, we were called to serve lunch following the burial. Once again, our mission trip plans were not guided by our own selfish ambitions, but were embraced through God's deliberate plans for this family and community. Naturally, our purpose to bring God's love through VBS, unfolded through God's love and healing.

God provided compassion, encouragement, kindness, and love to this family and community which validated our purpose in a way we never anticipated. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas this year, let's serve by giving more of ourselves away.



Father, may our eyes be open to the countless rewards that await us when we do it Your way and not our own. Amen.

Joan Gehrke
Volunteer Missionary
Sandy Lake, ON

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

Ephesians 2:8 (NIV)

The first year or two we went up North, the reality of what we had been told in advance came true. It takes the children time to trust and believe us. Their questions – When do you leave? Are you coming back? How many sleeps until you come back?—led to our biggest question—How

to earn their trust? The answer was simple. We come back year after year and build relationships by loving the kids, spending time with them, sharing the story of Jesus, and ultimately earning their trust and the trust and respect of the community.

As we share the message of grace with communities in the North, this simple childlike trust and faith should also be duplicated in each of our lives as we enter Advent. We are so blessed each and every Advent to experience His Son’s humble birth. This Christ child came into the world with purpose—to take on the sins of the world by dying and rising victoriously from the grave so we can spend eternity with Him in heaven. What an awesome gift from God that we can share with everyone, whether in the North or around our home community.



Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us so much that You sent Your only Son into this world on Christmas to ultimately die so that all of our sins are forgiven, allowing us to spend eternity with You. Help us to spread this message to everyone, trusting in your precious name. Amen.

Dave Schneeberger
Voluntary Missionary and
LAMP Ministry President
Shamattawa, MB

“And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, ‘We have seen extraordinary things today.’”

Luke 5:26 (ESV)

This was my first time serving with LAMP. After Sunday worship, we were chatting with a young girl about why we were in her community. In the sanctuary there hung a portrait of Jesus with an eagle. We asked her if she knew who’s in the picture. She responded that it was an eagle. By the end of the week, she was

saying, “That’s my friend, Jesus!”

Although VBS numbers were lower than hoped for, we were amazed at the extraordinary things God was doing through His Word. The children all grew in their faith and knowledge of who Jesus is and what He did for them. When I reflected on my week there, I was reminded of this verse from Luke.

The children that attended were filled with awe as they learned about Jesus and for that we give God all the praise and thanks! One of the leaders from Fisher River who helped us during the week told me her niece and nephew were still singing the songs about Jesus that they had learned *long after* VBS was over. And that is why we go, to teach the children who their Savior is, so they can be a witness to their families and communities!



Dear God, may the seeds of the Gospel grow in everyone’s hearts in the North and fill them with awe. May we give God the glory for sending His Son Jesus to give us hope through His death and resurrection. Amen.

Pastor Brett Hartwig
Volunteer Missionary,
Fisher River, MB

“He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces.”

Isaiah 25:8a (NIV)

When a child is born the parents often experience tears of joy and gratefulness. Mary and Joseph most likely experienced the same feelings when their son Jesus was born. When a child dies tears of sadness and sorrow are the

normality.

Our team arrived in Sandy Lake just at the time of a funeral held for an adult son, and a few days later another funeral was held for an 11-year-old boy. We, as a team, were privileged to be invited to the house of the boy's grandmother to bring snacks and eventually to serve hot food to the mourning people.

Mary and Joseph did not know what the future would hold for their baby Jesus. Prophecies were made hundreds of years prior to His birth about the arrival of God's Son. Although the prophets mentioned Him as being a King and comforter, this was forgotten at the time of His crucifixion. Then Jesus rose three days later, His death and resurrection washed away our sins and gave us a new birth.

It was encouraging to see the focus at both funerals that Jesus triumphs over death, and there will be no tears in Heaven. Jesus was born to be the true deliverer for all who are weary! Praise Him for that!



Dear Lord, as we await your return, may Your Spirit bring comfort and joy in all circumstances. Amen.

Christine Lindner
Volunteer Missionary
Sandy Lake, ON

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)

As our team prepared to go to northern Canada, we had many challenges to overcome – would we be able to raise the funds needed, would we have all the right supplies, would we be able to fly all our supplies, luggage, and food stuff in? That is when we decided to turn it over to God and say, “Here I am. Send me!” This was our theme verse for our trip.

When we were about to leave, we found out that our housing was in question and that we would need to stay at the church. Just a couple of issues existed – no water and no beds. Our team said, “Cool. Camping for a week!”

When we arrived, the community had set up beds for us and did what they could to make us feel welcome. We were reminded why we were there. It was not for us, but for the Indigenous people to hear that God sent His only Son for us to die on the cross for our sins and rise again to bring us eternal life.

So when God calls, we need to listen and remember to say, “Here I am. Send me!”



Dear God, help us to listen when You call and help us to do Your will, not ours. Amen.

*Jim Frederick
Volunteer
Missionary
Wunnumin Lake,
ON*

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

Isaiah 11:1 (NKJV)

For our daughter’s wedding, we displayed wedding photos of the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of the bride and groom on a family tree. It was heartwarming to see the roots of rich heritage for this new couple as they now began their “new branch” on the family tree.

Baby Jesus was the new green Branch that grew from the family tree of Jesse—new growth from an apparently dead stump. Jesus, our Savior, can bring forth life in us, too, even when we are going through dry, “dead” times in our lives. Because Jesus came to earth as a baby, grew up teaching others about God Our Father, died a cruel death on the cross, and rose again in glory, we can receive forgiveness for our sins and “sprout” a new life of hope and joy in Jesus! What great news!

We share this hope of Christ with the children to whom we are privileged to teach in our northern community, and we pray that the truth of God’s love will take root in their lives, that they might become “mighty oaks” for God’s Kingdom.



Dear Jesus, Branch of Jesse, thank you for saving us and for giving us a new, vibrant life in You! Help us to boldly proclaim this Good News to others. In Your precious name, Amen.

Lori Dawkins
Volunteer Missionary
Shamattawa, MB

“I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”

Luke 2:10 (NIV)

Our team from a small church in Edmonton has the opportunity to bring the Good News to the people of the northern community of Deschambault Lake. When sharing the Good News,

we remind ourselves, fellow believers in the North, and those than have heard but not yet believed, that the Good News is exceedingly Good News.

The Good News that will cause great joy for all the people is that Jesus came into the world on Christmas Day bringing precious gifts:

- The gift of securing our souls with God in heaven for all eternity
- The gift of forgiving and taking all our sins and wrongdoings upon Himself so that nothing can separate or stand between us and God. When we confess our sins, God gives us a fresh start.
- The gift of a new life as the Holy Spirit makes His home in us and helps us to turn away from our old ways to follow Jesus, and
- The gift of being part of God, building His Kingdom here on earth.



Father, it is with great joy we receive the Good News that Jesus came into the world so that we might be part of God's kingdom. We ask for more opportunities to share this Good News with Your people in the North. Amen.

Joan Walker
Volunteer Missionary
Deschambault, SK

“For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

Luke 2:30-32 (NIV)

If we could see God’s tapestry of our lives from the “back side,” I believe we would be completely awed at the way He connects everything. In addition to going to share God’s love, I also believe that praying for the needs of the northern communities is one of the most important things we can do.

One night, our team spent time with some youth feeling very hopeless. We asked God for wisdom on how to encourage them and discernment regarding how to pray for them and their community as a whole.

That evening we shared some powerful testimonies of God’s involvement in areas of our lives. Unbeknown to us, God orchestrated prayer over us at precisely that time through one of our prayer partners back home, who had awoken and written, “God, open their eyes to what’s really going on. Give them extra wisdom and discernment. Show them how to respond, proceed, and pray.” We were amazed!

God, fulfilling His purposes and perfect timing, orchestrated the most amazing event ever—the birth of His Son. At just the right time, Jesus was born. He died on the cross, and then rose triumphantly from the grave at just the right time. (See Romans 5:6) Thanks be to God, the amazing Orchestrator!



Heavenly Father, thank you for orchestrating the details in our lives. Help us to be faithful in following Your timing to share Your great love and peace that passes all understanding. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Jeanne Johnson
Volunteer Missionary
Wapekeka, ON

“While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:6-7 (NRSV)

The anticipation was high as the ferry to York Landing made its approach and docked. It was the 30th trip for Al and Linda and Terry’s first. We were excited and grateful that the boxes of craft supplies, the computer, the projector, our guitars, and music booklets were unloaded and ready for the week!

The anticipation was high as Joseph and Mary made their way up from the Jordan Valley to Bethlehem of Judea. They made it! They were grateful and tired. Mary was due!

As we settled in, our hosts began to explain that there were some changes. There was a death. The funeral was in process. Due to the funeral, *Indian Days* (an annual community celebration) was postponed one week – to our week of Vacation Bible School.

Joseph and Mary looked hard for a place to stay. Finally, they were given a stable near Bethlehem. They were exhausted, relieved and grateful.

In spite of the changes, we had a great week. While the numbers were down, several children came every day. We were thrilled and grateful for their smiles and receptiveness to the Gospel stories.

Mary and Joseph had a great night! A baby boy was born. They named him Jesus!

Sometimes when things change, great things happen.



Lord, help us to trust always in your presence and to be grateful, especially when things change. Amen.

Al & Linda Larson and Terry Frovik
Volunteer Missionaries
York Landing, MB

“...And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:11 (ESV)

The first coming of Christ our Savior had been promised and prophesied since man's fall into sin. God's people, however, had been given no timeframe for this event to take place. So when Jesus was born into this world, many people were in disbelief.

Our LAMP team has been teaching Vacation Bible School in the same northern community for eight summers. As we depart to go back home each year, we promise the children and adults that—YES!—we will return next summer. Our friends there have learned to trust in that promise; they know what to expect from us as we bring the message of Jesus' saving love. They know that we love them just as they are.

God has shown His amazing love to us by sending his One and Only Son to die for the sins of the whole world. But, more specifically, for me and you, and you, and you (for infinity). In this Advent season, let us trust in the promise of our Savior as He comes to us.

*Just as I am without one plea,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise, I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

(Lutheran Service Book #570 v.5)



Lord, I believe in your promise! As we go about our busy lives this Advent season, prepare our hearts and minds to receive your amazing Gift of Salvation. All Glory to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Leon Dawkins
Volunteer Missionary
Shamattawa, MB

“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

Galatians 4:4-5 (NIV)

Our 2015 summer VBS trip needed to be postponed to the fall since our accommodations were used to house water bomber pilots fighting the Saskatchewan forest fires. When planning our October weekend trip to the North we had no idea how many kids to expect, so we settled on 32.

The morning after arrival in Grandmother's Bay, we were told a teacher had been murdered the previous night. We knew this teacher and her family. Suddenly our purpose switched from teaching to loving, from sharing God's stories to being compassionate.

Our congregation, families, and LAMP staff buoyed us up in prayer. God equipped us with words, energy and strength. He sent us, not when we had planned to go, but when He determined we could serve the community best with His love. How many children did we serve? Yes, 32!

God's fullness of time is the fulfillment of His promise in the incarnation of His son Jesus. God sent Jesus into our world when He felt the time was right. Throughout our lives God's timing is always perfect. He sends and equips each one of us in our various tasks and missions. During this Advent season let us ponder on what the Lord has done for us.



Thank you, Heavenly Father, for sending Your Son into our broken and hurting world to redeem each one of us. Please let us reflect Your light and love in our daily lives. Amen.

Anke Berner
Volunteer Missionary
Grandmother's Bay, SK

inside back cover



Taking the light of Christ
to the ends of the earth



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