

# 2017 ADVENT DEVOTIONS



WHEN THEY SAW THE *star* THEY  
*rejoiced* EXCEEDINGLY WITH  
*great joy*  
MATTHEW 2:10

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## Introduction

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*Dear Friends in Christ and Friends of LAMP,*



**T**he season of Advent lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas. Advent allows us to look back in history and see the Israelites waiting and hoping in prayerful expectation for the coming of the Messiah. At the same time, Advent also allows us to look forward with longing and anticipation to the return of Christ in glory to consummate His eternal kingdom.

The concept of waiting is familiar to the people of the North. There are many people who are waiting in the sure and certain hope of Jesus' return and also many others who are waiting for Jesus' hands and feet here on earth (you and me) to come to them with the good news of salvation. There are more communities that are inviting LAMP to come and share Jesus than there are volunteer teams. God is at work in this world and the hunger for Him is great!

Through my experiences with LAMP, I was always amazed at the hospitality shown and at the hunger and thirst for Jesus that the people of the North have. God's grace and mercy shines through the LAMP staff, volunteers and prayer partners as they reach out to our northern sisters and brothers.

Contained in this devotional book are some of the stories of God's breaking into this world as witnessed by His people who serve with LAMP. In this Advent, I pray that God would continue to bless the work of LAMP and that He would continue to form our hearts, minds, and lives after His own.

*Pastor James Avery  
Bethel Lutheran Church  
Sherwood Park, AB*



*“For the creation waits in expectation for the Son of God to be revealed.”*

Romans 8:19 (NIV)



Each year as we drive to Grandmother's Bay, I anxiously anticipate how God will use me. Each year, my expectations are so different from reality. Yet, I rest in Jesus' assurance that I am there to do His will.

When we arrive at the school in the community, no matter what the hour, there are always a few children waiting — expecting us. It is such a blessing to feel welcomed!

Although she was greatly troubled when the angel announced to Mary that she was going to give birth to the Son of God, she submitted to God's will. Throughout Jesus' life on earth, Mary continued to have faith and love her son, while "expecting the unexpected".

As LAMP volunteers, we prayerfully submit to God's will and God's plan. "Follow first, serve second," continues to help me remember that I am there to follow His plan even though I might feel challenged by the unexpected.

What about you this Advent? What do you expect? Certainly one expectation is the celebration of the birth of our Saviour. How can you show Him you are expecting Him? Are you following first?



*Lord, open our eyes to see you in unexpected ways and places this Advent season. Let us find joy in your unexpected challenges as we share your love. Amen.*

*Marilyn Witte  
Volunteer Missionary  
Grandmother's Bay, SK*





**“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”**

2 Corinthians 9:15 (NIV)

**A**n email from one of LAMP’s northern friends described how her heart ached for a young mother who couldn’t afford presents for her family and had cupboards that were bare.

She explained that both parents of this young mother had died within a few years of each other, and this mother struggles to survive amidst the many social problems existing in this remote Indigenous community in northern Canada.

The woman’s family did what they could for this single mother—buying food for Christmas dinner and enough to last the holidays. She purchased a few presents for the young mother’s family as well.

I know that LAMP’s presence in this northern community over the years has encouraged this Indigenous woman and her family. She has shared that with us numerous times. She asked us to pray with her by “praying against the things that are threatening to destroy our communities...to remember His promises...and worship Him by helping others.”

During Advent season, let us reflect on the gift of God’s only Son, Jesus, and ask Him to reveal ways to share this gift and His bountiful blessings with others.



**Dear Lord, thank you for your love and all that you provide. Show us how to love others by sharing the gift of Your Son, His love and our many blessings with those in need. Amen.**

*Catherine Williams  
Volunteer Missionary  
Hall Lake, SK  
Executive Assistant, LAMP*



**“My command is this, love each other as I have loved you.”**

John 15:12 (NIV)



**J**esus valued relationships. He spent much of His time here on earth investing in other people’s lives. One of our main focuses these past 9 years in Wollaston Lake has also been relationships. Love first, then plant the seed of God’s love and salvation for all.

During VBS, I was invited to Grandma Mary’s house for tea. We sat in her kitchen, which was streaming with activity from her children and grandchildren. They were coming, going, eating, doing dishes, etc. Love was truly present in this home.

Mary shared many of her hardships and sufferings with me. As I listened, I was in awe of her strength and trust in God for His provision. After a few hours of visiting and praying, it was time to leave.

When sharing with the team, I recall saying that we go to serve and bless our northern family, but truly they bless us far more than we can ever imagine!

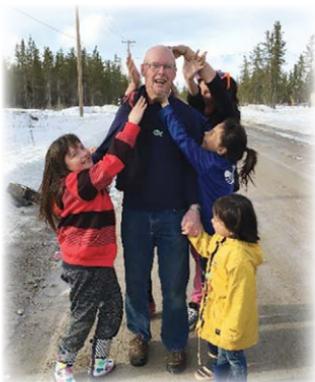
As we prepare our hearts for the coming of baby Jesus, let us remember how much He valued and loved each of us. Go and share His love with all you come in contact with this Christmas!



**Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for every person you have placed in our lives. Help us to love each one of them as you have first loved us. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.**

*Roxanne Theroux  
Volunteer Missionary  
Wollaston Lake, SK*





(Jesus said) "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown."

Revelation 3:11 (NIV)

One of the questions I'm most likely to be asked from adults and children in the communities occurs right before I leave, "When are you coming back?" That is a similar question asked for

millenia by God's people who were waiting expectantly for the Christ to come. "When will the Messiah come?"

Jesus did come to fulfill the prophecy God, the Father, had made to Adam, Eve, and generations that followed. Jesus became flesh and blood, which he later shed on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. He suffered the eternal punishment all of us will never have to endure. Jesus came back...risen from the dead! He promised to come back to take us, who trust in him as our Lord and Savior, to be where he is in heaven (John 14:3).

As each of us prepares for the coming celebration of Christmas, we also look forward to Jesus coming back, as promised, to take us to our eternal home in heaven. As Jude 21 tells us, "*Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*"



Heavenly Father, help me not only to prepare to celebrate the birth of Your Son and my Savior Jesus, but also to be prepared when he comes again to take me and all followers of Jesus to our eternal home with you. Amen.

Dennis Ouellette  
Pastor-Pilot, LAMP



“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)



In July 2016, our LAMP team went to Cat Lake for the 4th year to provide Vacation Bible School. Upon arrival, we were informed of a death in the community, and the funeral would be on Tuesday. We cancelled Vacation Bible School and prayed for the community, the family and for us to be used to show God’s love.

The night before the funeral, a neighbor called at 10:30 p.m. and asked if we had room in our fridge to make and cool some Jell-O. We responded emphatically, “Of course, we would love to!”

While we waited for supplies to arrive, in our pajamas, we reorganized the fridge (full of food for the week for the 10 of us) and began heating water. We made 10 packages of Jell-O and put them in individual cups which were served for the funeral lunch the next day. We thanked God for this relationship and that we were allowed to show God’s love and grace to serve the community by making Jell-O!

God uses us where we are in unexpected ways. Ask God to help you always be available to use your gifts to show His love and grace.



Heavenly Father, thank you for using us to show others your love. Help us to be available and willing to be used by you in any way. Amen.



Lynne Rustad  
Volunteer Missionary  
Cat Lake, ON



“...a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb... And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Revelation 7:9 and 17 (NIV)

I have an Indigenous friend named Maurice who lives on a reserve in northern Canada. I first met Maurice when my wife and I taught VBS in his community. He is often the first to text me to wish me a Blessed Christmas on Christmas morning.

In the summer of 2016, he led a firefighting crew. He delayed his flight out just to have coffee with me and a new mission team from Michigan.

Over the years, we often have prayed for each other and have shed some tears when tragedy has struck. We have been an encouragement to each other along our journey of faith, in good and in difficult times.

We are from a different tribe and nation sharing a common hope and faith in Jesus. My friend is a witness to his people, active in the Lutheran church, and a mentor to the youth. I feel privileged to have shared Jesus with him at a young age and grateful for how his strong faith has been a blessing to me and others.

Because our hope is in Jesus, we know we will share eternity together around the throne of God, where there will be no more tears.



Lord, thank you for Christian friends from all nations. Continue to use us to share the good news of our Savior Jesus with every tribe and nation. Amen.



Ron Ludke  
Executive Director, LAMP

“Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Philippians 4:4-6 (NIV)



When I volunteered to go to Sandy Lake as a LAMP missionary, I was hesitant and anxious about what to expect. God filled me with His spirit to do His work. I returned the following two years with anticipation. Those three mission trips were the most spiritual times of my life. I rejoice the Lord provided the opportunity to serve Him and His children.

In 2012, I had to cancel due to a family emergency, which deeply frustrated me. With prayer and petitions taken to the Lord with thanksgiving, I became content with God’s new mission for me. Unable to return to Sandy Lake, I became a prayer partner and pray daily for LAMP and especially my friends of Sandy Lake.

Advent is a season of longing for our Lord’s return. As I long for the opportunity to return to Sandy Lake I rejoice, knowing it will happen in God’s time. If not, I am content knowing I will see my brothers and sisters in Christ in Heaven.



Dear Lord, thank you for the many blessings of Advent and throughout the whole year. Send your Holy Spirit to help us see your wisdom and grow contentment in us. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

Bill Gabert  
Former Volunteer Missionary  
Sandy Lake, ON





“Just as each of us has one body with many members and these members do not all have the same function so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others...”

Romans 12:4-5 (NIV)

**T**wo long days of driving in one vehicle and sharing accommodations provided intimate bonding time on our

mission trip — time to create team spirit for our work with the community. When we arrived and started our walk to meet, greet and invite children and their families to our VBS, there seemed to be an apathy, in addition to a lack of visible residents. So we prayed.

During this week, we discovered there was also a full-day, week-long science camp, plus a Vancouver Christian youth group arriving on Thursday to run their full-week program.

Day one collapsed; however, a seed of hope was planted, so we changed our time to 3- 5 p.m. The pastor agreed to facilitate the movement of children from the science camp to the VBS at church. On Thursday, we greeted the Vancouver group to share what we were doing. This team enthusiastically supported our last two days of VBS, and then suggested we coordinate calendars for the following summer. What an opportunity—three very different groups serving, one God being served, within the same community!



Gracious God, you call us to serve and through our service you weave the various threads into a fabric that binds us all into a closer relationship with you. Amen.

Nadine Lung  
Volunteer Missionary  
Kitamaat Village, BC



*"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy"*

Isaiah 9:2-3a (NIV)

Lac Brochet's summer days are long, and the sun is often shining brightly. It's easy to forget that for most of the year the sun sets not long after it rises. This makes for many long, lonely nights of darkness, physically as well as emotionally and spiritually. The extreme cold and light deprivation leads to boredom, substance abuse, and sometimes despondency and suicide. They are literally people in darkness.



The good news of great joy celebrated at Christmas and always is *"the people walking in darkness have seen a great light."* Jesus came for people of the far North, and all people far from God, everywhere. The Light of life dawned with the birth of our Savior and dispels the darkness in our souls.

Since our last night in Lac Brochet was cloudless, I hoped to see the northern lights. Because this meant staying up after midnight, some team members grumbled. A local man came to our door with cake so we stayed up late talking with him and eventually looked out into the night sky. There it was – a great light reminding us of the greatest Light of all!



*Thank You Father, for showing us the Light of Your glory in the face of Your Son. Continue to use us to bring the Light of Your truth into the North to give them hope, love and joy through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*



Pastor Paul Naumann  
Volunteer Missionary  
Lac Brochet, MB



“And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”

Luke 2:10 (ESV)

**F**or the past nine years, our team has had the privilege of sharing Jesus for a week of VBS in Cross Lake, Manitoba. Most of the 300+ kids arrive enthusiastic, boisterous, and all smiles – especially those who have attended before.

Each summer there are a handful of reserved kids. Two sisters arrived in tears on the first day. We learned their mother had died the day before. God used a new team member (who lost her mom when she was a little girl) to love on those girls who were facing incredible uncertainty in their lives, and it was terrifying!

It isn't just kids who have fears. As missionaries, we often have fears about the work God calls us to do. “Will I be able to hold up to the physical and spiritual demands of the trip? What if I can't get along with my team? Will I have the right words to share?” A host of questions flood our minds.

Thankfully, God's message from the angels to the shepherds that first Christmas is also His message to us – “Fear not!” Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose victoriously so we do not need to fear sin, death, or hell (and mission work!).



Dear Lord, thank you for sending Jesus to wipe away our tears and fears. Grant us boldness to share the great news of Jesus with all people. In His name we pray, amen.

*Jonathan Boll  
Volunteer Missionary  
Cross Lake, MB*



“...during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east arrive in Jerusalem, asking, “Where is this One who has been born King Of the Jews?...”

Matthew 2:2 (BSB)

**A**s we teach about Jesus in our northern community in Canada, we share the fact that Jesus came to earth in the form of a human child, born of the virgin Mary. I’m sure as we share this, many children do not understand what really happened. Questions are asked, and we simply say, “Jesus was born, He died on the cross, and He rose again to save us from our sins”. We tell the children that He is in Heaven with God the Father and will come again to take all believers to Heaven to live with Him forever. We can be certain, because God’s Word tells us this!



Even if we only plant the seed into the hearts of our Cree Nation friends, we just pray the Holy Spirit will foster the faith of these children and adults.



Pray with me: Born thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a King! Born to reign in us forever, Now thy gracious kingdom bring. By thine own eternal spirit, rule in all our hearts alone; By thine all sufficient Merit, Raise us to thy glorious throne. (LSB 338 V. 2) Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus, amen.

Leon Dawkins  
Volunteer Missionary  
Shamattawa, MB  
LAMP (US) Director



# Like kids?

***Volunteers needed to teach Vacation Bible School for LAMP's mission trips to northern Canada.***

Talk, laugh, and share Jesus' love with the Indigenous peoples of the remote communities we serve.

Call **1-800-307-4036** today to find out how!

*Be the someone to make a difference!*



[www.lampministry.org](http://www.lampministry.org)



If you want to be involved but are unable to volunteer, you can still be a supporter by:

- signing up to be a prayer partner
- becoming a donor
- supporting a missionary



[www.lampministry.org](http://www.lampministry.org)



“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”

Isaiah 9:2 (NIV)

According to the Internet, Tadoule Lake, Manitoba, has just about 6½ hours of daylight during the shortest days of winter. Our VBS program is normally held toward the end of July when daylight covers the North late into the evening.

Even in the last moments of the evening, twilight is a comforting gift, but God’s greatest gift shines with everlasting brightness.

Isaiah prophesied that a light has dawned with the anticipated coming of the Christ child who would redeem his people and those walking in darkness, including the darkness of death.

In 2016, our VBS team met with a community mourning over the accidental death of a teen a couple of weeks earlier. We were filled with humility in knowing that he had attended our VBS, hearing about the Light of salvation. Darkness had not overcome the family that could be assured of eternal life through the Light of the World, who penetrates even the deepest darkness.

Through Advent and the darkness of winter, we look forward to Christ’s return and anticipate the eternal glory where darkness will be cast out forever.



Lord Jesus, thank you for coming to drive the darkness out of our hearts and to fill us with your truth so that all the world would know your eternal light. Amen.

Jonathan Leinonen  
Volunteer Missionary  
Tadoule Lake, MB



*“Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up just as you are doing.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV)

**I**n my 2nd year with our church’s LAMP team, a family in our community made us a homemade meal of fish and bannock. They also took us fishing and swimming. It is a huge blessing for us to be served by the community in this way. It is very encouraging to sit and learn what God has been doing in their lives since we were there last. The rest of the week was spent bonding and caring for the kids in Vacation Bible School as well as sharing our faith stories.



When embarking on a mission trip, it’s important to keep in mind that the people are not helpless. Since serving in northern Canada with LAMP, I have learned we are not there to save them from their own suffering but to encourage and remind them God is the key to freedom from suffering (that all people go through).

A major blessing is our church’s continuing mission in the North, because many of the Indigenous kids now know about God and how he sent His Son to be their Savior. We share salvation in Jesus, encourage them in their faith walk, and simply show them love. And, whether we realize it or not, we are encouraged and grow in our faith in return.



*Dear Lord, be with those that don’t know you and lead them to find you. Help us encourage them to remember you are always there. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

*Elison Wagner  
Volunteer Missionary  
Cormorant, MB*





“And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:7 (RSV)

**J**esus – King of kings and Lord of lords – surely He would be born of prestigious parents? Rather, God chose a humble teenage girl to be His mother and a common, God-fearing carpenter to be His earthly father.

As future king, He would be born and raised in a palace in the important city of Jerusalem, right? No, our Savior was born in the insignificant town of Bethlehem, among animals in a stable manger.

Obviously, the birth of this new king would be proclaimed from balconies, with heralding trumpets, to rulers and dignitaries, correct? Not at all; the first to hear of Jesus’ birth were lowly and despised shepherds.

This story of how God so loved all of us that He sent His only Son into this world as a little baby, eventually to die a horrendous death on a cross, and rise again, in order to forgive us of our sins, must only be preached by the most learned and scholarly theologian, right? Absolutely not! Although God uses trained pastors and teachers, He takes ordinary people (like you and me) to tell the Good News of His amazing Son, Jesus Christ, to a waiting world. Let’s go!



Heavenly Father, though at times we do not feel qualified, make us bold witnesses to share your salvation story to those who are hungering and thirsting to hear it. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Lori Dawkins  
Volunteer Missionary  
Shamattawa, MB



“When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.”

Luke 2:17-18 (NIV)



It's absolutely amazing to see the astonished looks and excitement shown by the children when they see us in the communities during the off-season. In spite of how much we tell them we care and love them, they found it hard to believe we'd choose to come all that way in the middle of the winter just to spend time in their community!

To share the gospel in the school classrooms is truly a God-send from administration, who has been extremely open to this. The enthusiasm exhibited is similar to feelings felt as we move through Advent season in anticipation of the birth of our Lord and Savior.

The joy we've experienced from the smiles and amazement shown by the kids is beyond words and so hard to explain. It also can be difficult to find words to describe the wonders and blessings God has shown to each one of us. The love and joy brought to us on a daily basis, not only during Advent, should provide us with similar amazement, excitement, happiness, and hope.



Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunity to share your awesome message of hope and love by telling the beautiful story of your son Jesus. All glory and honor to you for allowing us to be your good news messengers. In the name of your precious and perfect son, Jesus, we pray, amen.

David Schneeberger  
Volunteer Missionary  
Shamattawa, MB  
LAMP (US) Board Director





*"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."*

*Luke 1:38 (NIRV)*

**I**n Lancelot Andrews' Christmas sermon to King James I, he wrote about Joseph and Mary's journey, "A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year; the very worst time of the year for a journey . . . The ways deep, the weather sharp, the days short – the very dead of winter."

It is an evocative description – a powerful reminder of the human reality of Advent.

We rightly think of Advent as the coming of Jesus into the world. But, this blessing required the involvement of Joseph and Mary. God chose to limit himself to human form and involve human beings in His plan for the redemption of His rebellious creation.

Joseph and Mary set off to Bethlehem, in obedience to the Roman order, knowing that strange and momentous doings were underway in their lives. Uncertainty about details and specifics combined with certainty God had a purpose – a comfort when the way was hard, and there was 'no room at the inn'.

It isn't presumptuous to see parallels in visits to northern communities: difficult travel, God's working and calling, uncertainties, surprises, and unexpected divine provision. For me, the deepest and most unbelievable parallel is the blessing of obedience – the only action required to be used for God's purposes – and without which there would have been, and is, no Advent.



*Heavenly Father, may we too follow Joseph and Mary's example for obeying Your will in our lives. Amen.*

*David J. Higgins  
Volunteer Missionary  
Deschambault Lake, SK*



**“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances...Hold on to the good.”**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 21 (NIV)



**F**acing challenges builds character when serving in the North: two hours of driving detours, a canceled flight in, a conflicting community program, finding last-minute transportation to the airport, and a nine-hour delay for our flight out! Our challenges weren't ended: driving to the wrong hotel in the middle of the night and having to drive even further.

Yet, our gracious God is good beyond compare. For each of our difficulties, we saw multiple blessings that were far better than our preconceived plans could have ever brought about.

God calls us to let go of our own will, our own ideas on how life should happen. All too often we find ourselves resisting His will by our negative attitudes, complaining, or attempting to force a change in our circumstances.

No doubt Jesus faced daily difficulties when He walked the earth, yet He set for us the perfect example. As we await His return and travel this life's journey, let us joyfully grasp with thanksgiving every circumstance our Sovereign Lord permits. May we pray continually and hold on to the good. It's all good...because HE is good.



**Heavenly Father, we praise You that in all things You are good, especially in giving us eternal life through Your Son. Help us to hold on to that truth. In Jesus' name, amen.**

*Maura Leinonen  
Volunteer Missionary  
Tadoule Lake, MB*





“I have come as 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)

**I**n April of 2016, I was picked up at the Flin Flon, Manitoba airport and driven to Deschambault Lake, Saskatchewan by LAMP mission

field staff. Upon arrival, we were greeted by a LAMP Vacation Bible School team from the Edmonton, Alberta area who were spending a week in the community. They agreed to introduce me to the Indigenous people in the community and publicize my bereavement workshop.

This was my first time to mingle and share with adults and teens in a northern community. (I had taught VBS for five summers to children in Kingfisher Lake, Ontario). I came to help the locals with their mourning but instead learned much more from them. Many of them live in a dark world, surrounded by feelings of hopelessness. Yet, I saw family and friends love one another in the midst of this world they live in.

One mother, who had lost a daughter to suicide, asked me to pray in her daughter’s bedroom, which another daughter found extremely hard to enter. God surrounded us with love, as He does each and everyday. That was driven home to me in such a powerful way.



Dear God, thank you for providing opportunities to share His light and love with others regardless of where we are. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

Pastor Harry Huff  
LAMP (Canada) Director



“And Mary said, “Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.”

Luke 1:38 (ESV)



**W**hen Mary received this unexpected calling, she initially reacted with fear and trepidation, which changed to acceptance and humility to be and do whatever God requested. This calling was not based on Mary’s standing with God but rather on His grace to use her in spite of her failings and sin. Like us, Mary needed the Savior that she would carry.

When Mary accepted this special mission, little did she know it would lead to a stable as her birthing room and society’s outcasts as baby’s first visitors. Then she would be forced to flee to a foreign land to protect her precious child. Subsequently, her life was filled with twists and turns she never could have imagined, culminating in seeing her son on the cross and raised from the dead.

As a LAMP volunteer, we too may hear God’s call to serve in the North and also be struck with the fear and trepidation which often comes when called to serve outside the box. In the North, where many things change from what we expect or plan, we see how God uses these twists and turns to give us more opportunities to trust Him and share His love with others.

God used Mary’s willingness to carry Jesus into the world, the same as He uses LAMP’s volunteers to carry Jesus into the North.



Dear Father, lead more to answer Your call to volunteer with LAMP, with humility like Mary, being willing to carry Jesus wherever He leads. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Dana Naumann  
Volunteer Missionary  
Lac Brochet, MB  
LAMP (US) Director





*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”*

*Proverbs 3:5 (NIV)*

**E**asier said than done! Yet, that’s exactly what we experienced this past year as we planned and presented VBS in Grand Rapids, Manitoba.

For the past five years, our team had seen God at work in many ways. But, as we planned for a sixth year, our team numbering in the twenties suddenly became only five or six. After praying about whether to go or not, we made one last appeal for people to join us in this unique and faith-building experience.

God opened hearts, and a total of twenty-two new team members came aboard! Our final team totalled thirty! That was just the beginning of God at work.

The community opened up the school for us to use as we had outgrown a local church’s hall. We were blessed with a **WHOLE** school to use! Now were able to share the Good News of Jesus’ love with even more of the First Nations children. Plus, we could room at the school and have everything in one location.

Finally, a community carnival was held the evening before the last day of VBS. Between 200 to 250 people of all ages from Grand Rapids experienced games, food, prizes, and an evening of fun!

We were reminded—God has a plan; all He asks is that we trust in Him!



*Lord, help me to trust in You and Your plan for my life, and not depend on what I think I know. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

*Mark Noennig  
Volunteer Missionary  
Grand Rapids, MB*



**“Let all that you do be done in love.”**

1 Corinthians 16:14 (ESV)



**W**hen we arrive in Wollaston, my main goal is to show the community God’s love. There are many ways of doing this. It might be as simple as playing Go Fish outside on the stairs or listening to what the kids have to share when walking around the community.

During our walks, each Bible teacher has four or five kids trying to hold on to their hands or arms. Sometimes, it seems frustrating to have so many kids hanging off of us. However, we are reminded that they want us to love them.

They get out of bed to attend VBS and help us get set up each day. The kids and the teens help us clean the school just so they can be close to us. We’re constantly asked in Dene if we love them. They have taught us how to say “I love you” in Dene, so we can respond back. They feel that we do love them, and they trust us.

I have learnt to be patient through the love these kids have shown to me. It is so important to show love in your everyday life. Sometimes it may be difficult, but God is always there for us.



**Heavenly Father, help us be able to show Your love to everyone, and let us remember that love is the reason You sacrificed Jesus for us. In Your name we pray, amen.**

*Madysan Theroux  
Volunteer Missionary  
Wollaston Lake, SK*





“...to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.”

Luke 1:77 (NIV)

**M**any Christmas songs are about wishes, gifts, and for sure Santa Claus with his “Ho, Ho, Ho”. No doubt, it is a very busy time preparing feasts, shopping for gifts, and hosting gatherings.

Originally, Advent’s meaning was that of reflection, forgiveness, and anticipation. John the Baptist’s preaching mirrored Advent by reflecting and preparing to meet the coming Messiah. Unfortunately, we tend to forget this in the midst of all the preparations.

Some of our team members stayed an extra week after VBS to build relationships with adults in the community. During that time, we experienced great trust and hospitality, and because of this we had the opportunity to freely express ourselves. We talked about our individual struggles and recognized the importance of forgiveness. To know that we all fall short of God’s glory, regardless of views, race, or age, is powerful and at the same time freeing. We all are in need of repentance, forgiveness and particularly reconciliation (when talking with residential school survivors).

Take time during this Advent season to contemplate its real meaning, by loving one another as Jesus loves us, forgiving your debtors, and in preparation, clearing your conscience with repentance.



Lord, give us a forgiving heart that strives for reconciliation with You and others. May we see with open eyes where and how You want us to minister to people deeply hurt by sin. Amen.

Christine Lindner  
Volunteer Missionary  
Sanday Lake, ON



# *Merry Christmas from LAMP!*

As Christians, we are all part of a huge family. We love how LAMP's ministry connects those of us in Canada, the United States, and our brothers and sisters in Christ in the North.

At Christmas, we celebrate what has brought us all together — **God's precious gift of His only Son, Jesus Christ.**



[www.lampministry.org](http://www.lampministry.org)

Taking the light of Christ  
to the ends of the earth



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