

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, Wash
December 24, 2009**

“Names of the Messiah” – Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:6

**His Name Shall Be Called... Everlasting
Father!**

What this name reveals:

- 1. About what he has already done*
- 2. About what he will continue to do*

Hymns: 50 – 65 – The First Noel – 68 – 54 – 60

All Scripture quotations from the NIV

Isaiah 9:6 –

To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called... Everlasting Father!

Sometimes a nickname just doesn't seem to fit. For example, if you're familiar with the legends of Robin Hood, you know that he had a trusted sidekick as he carried out his daring work of robbing the rich and giving to the poor. Who was Robin Hood's sidekick? Little John. But John is anything but little. He's the biggest fellow in the whole band! Many a large man has been called "Tiny" by his friends as a joke.

During the Sundays of Advent, we have had the privilege of looking at *Names of the Messiah* from Isaiah 9:6. Each week we have examined a different name. "He shall be called..."

- Wonderful
- Counselor

- The Mighty God

What's the next name? You can almost hear the next one ringing in your ears from the familiar Christmas Messiah: **"The Everlasting Father!"**

The what? The Everlasting Father? Maybe there was a scribal error in copying this name onto manuscripts down through time. How can the Messiah be called "The Everlasting Father?" Yet there it is, right there on paper.

So on this Christmas Eve, let's take a few moments to consider what it means that he shall be called "Everlasting Father." We'll see what this name reveals:

- 1. About what he has already done**
- 2. About what he will continue to do**

Before we get too far into this, though, let's ask a background question first. How does this name affect the teaching that we've learned from Scripture about the Trinity? What can we say about this?

We certainly see in Scripture that God has a three-ness to him:

- *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*
- *"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you."*

I think all of us have realized this, and are well aware of his three-ness. But perhaps the mystery of his one-ness is forgotten at times. Scripture has much to say about this facet of God: *"Hear, O Israel,*

the Lord our God, the Lord is one.”
(Deuteronomy 6:4)

Jesus talked about this mystery too:

- *Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." (John 8:19)*
- *“Know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” (John 10:38)*
- *Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us. Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (John 14:8-10)*
- *“I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30)*

How can Jesus be called the Father? How could Jesus still be one with the Father when he came down to this earth to be the Savior of the world? That’s the mystery we can’t fully explain. Isaiah didn’t explain it here. Jesus didn’t go to lengths to explain it. But by faith we trust that what he says about himself and the Father and the Holy Spirit is true – Three distinct persons are included in the one indivisible God.

1 – As compelling as it is to talk about the identity of God, even more compelling are the lessons that we learn from the fact that the Messiah is called “Everlasting Father.” Literally here, he is called the “Father of eternity.” The point of Isaiah using this name isn’t to try to prove that Jesus is not his own person. His point is to emphasize the work that Jesus does. What does a father do?

We call George Washington the “father of our country.” What did our nation’s father do? He was instrumental in doing two things: He helped found our country and he ruled over it as its first president. It’s interesting that Isaiah had just said previously that “*the government will be on his shoulders,*” referring to the Messiah. **Jesus has been active in the creation of the world and the ruling of it.**

Colossians 1 tells us, “*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* (vv. 15-17)

Jesus is truly the “Father of creation,” the author of all that exists. He has made the universe!

However, we can’t forget the most important thing the Messiah has done in the past, as we marvel at him as the “Everlasting Father.” After all, what did God’s creation do to its Maker? It slapped him in the face by deliberately disobeying him as Adam and Eve committed the first sin. What should a father do? What did your father do when you disobeyed him deliberately? What would he have done if you ruined something of his and then ran from him? I shudder to think!

What did God do? Colossians 1 tells us, “*God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil*

behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.” (vv. 19-22)

God didn't overlook sin. He didn't ignore it like a spineless god. Sin needed to be paid for. But God knew that you and I couldn't bear the punishment for sin. It would take us an eternity in hell to pay for our sins completely. We could never do it. So in his wise plan the Son of God, our Messiah, would come to earth to redeem his ruined creation. **The author of creation would also save it.**

This is why we are here tonight! The author of creation has arrived. He has come to begin his mission of saving us. Have you ever seen a large crowd at the airport to welcome one individual? Maybe it was a renowned political figure coming to Seattle. Perhaps it was a celebrity or movie star. Maybe a sports hero or Olympic gold medal winner. And a crowd came to welcome them!

Tonight we gather as a crowd at the “airport” in the form of a stable, to welcome the One who is the author and Father of creation and its Savior as well. He has come miraculously in the form of a little baby that is born into our world of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit.

We also mentioned before that George Washington, the “father of our country,” ruled our country as our first president. Looking at our Everlasting Father, has he been placed as ruler of all? Paul wrote in Ephesians 1: *“He raised (Christ) from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in*

the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (vv. 20-23)

Praise his name as we can see in history what our Everlasting Father has already done!

2 – We said before that we also recognize him as “Everlasting Father” because of what he will continue to do. What does this mean?

Think again about an earthly father for a moment, not the father of our country, but about an ideal father in a family. What do we trust our earthly fathers to do? Thinking back to the time when I lived with my earthly father in my earthly family, I trusted him for:

- Food on the table
- To buy my shoes and help me learn how to tie them
- To fix what was broken in the house
- To keep the car running properly
- To pay the bills
- To play catch with me
- To provide me with a bed and tuck me in at night
- The ideal father conjures up many comforting pictures in our minds!

Do you see the comfort that we can know from the fact that the Messiah is called our “Everlasting Father?” Do you see how this affects our view of the future? He surely will provide for all our needs! In Matthew 6 we read, *“I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink;*

or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (vv. 25,26)
We also hear in Matthew 7: *“If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”*

Our God in heaven will provide us with our daily bread for our daily needs, even in an uncertain time!

One other picture of our earthly fathers is how they protect us. If there is ever a bump in the night or danger on the horizon, who is the one that checks it out and protects the members of the family? The father.

What do we hear about the one we call “Everlasting Father?” Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4, *“The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.”*

We trust the Lord to provide for our needs and to protect us from spiritual evil and danger until we are with him in his heavenly kingdom, just as a father would take care of us.

Finally, after recognizing the salvation and comfort we have in our Everlasting Father, let us have a childlike faith in him! After all, little children trust their earthly fathers implicitly. They look to him unquestionably. In their minds he can solve anything. He is stronger than anyone. In a very real way, **our Everlasting Father merits our complete trust:**

- 1. He has made everything and serves as our Savior**
- 2. He will continue to provide for us and protect us through this life**

Tonight, may we marvel at the manger as we see this miraculous individual who has come on his mission. And may we trust him for the future, for he has promised to be our Everlasting Father! Amen.