

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

DECEMBER – 2025

SCHEDULE

Sunday Bible Study and
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Service: 11: a.m.

Wed. Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

SPEAKERS

December 7: Ivan Niemela,
Holy Communion

December 14: Ivan Niemela,
*Service & Sunday School
Christmas Program with
Meal to Follow*

December 21: Ivan Niemela

December 24: Christmas Eve
6:30 p.m. – Caroling
7:00 p.m. – Ivan Niemela

December 28: Paul Coponen

CONTACTS

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God's Gift: A Plan Before Creation

*"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for
he shall save his people from their sins"- Matthew 1:21*

Jesus Christ came into the world to save humanity from the bondage of sin. Since the fall of Adam and Eve, mankind has been burdened with a sinful nature that separates us from God. Our own efforts cannot bridge this chasm between man and God, nor can we repay the debt caused by sin. Yet, God predestined a plan for reconciliation with Him through His infinite wisdom and love—a plan that demonstrates His divine mercy and grace to us.

Our sinful nature, inherited from Adam and Eve, makes it impossible for us to please God or achieve salvation through our own efforts, though many have tried. Isaiah 64:6 makes this point clear, declaring, *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."* This verse reveals the futility of relying on human works to earn God's favor; only His mercy and grace can provide salvation.

This reality of being unable to please God is aptly illustrated in the story of a rich young man who once approached Jesus, asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. This encounter with Jesus reveals his profound misunderstanding that salvation could be earned through good works (Luke 18:18-30). His question likely reflects a mindset shaped by Pharisaic teachings, which emphasized strict adherence to the Mosaic Law as a means of justifying oneself in the eyes of God. The Apostle Paul refutes this misguided notion in Romans 3:20, stating, *"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."* While the law reveals our sin, it cannot cleanse or justify us. Only through the sprinkling of Christ's blood can we attain forgiveness for our sins and receive the promise of eternal life in heaven.

In His foreknowledge, God knew that humanity would eventually turn away from Him. Therefore, He established His plan of salvation through His Son's blood even before the creation of the world. This plan was first revealed in the Garden of Eden, as noted in Genesis 3:15, where it was foretold: *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* This verse prophesies that Jesus would defeat both sin and Satan through His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. As Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:9, *"Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."* Thus, Paul affirms that we are reconciled to God solely through the blood of Jesus—not by any merit on our part, but by His unchanging love for us. Through this divine plan, God has revealed His boundless grace and the eternal purpose of His salvation for humanity.

From the very beginning, God's plan for salvation has always been based on sacrifice, confession, and forgiveness of sins. In the Old Testament, a penitent person would bring an animal to the entrance of the Tabernacle to confess their sins to a priest. The priest would then sprinkle the animal's blood on the altar to atone

for their sin, effectively proclaiming forgiveness before God. This act foreshadowed the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Today, Christ has entrusted His believers with the keys to the kingdom of heaven, saying, *“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained”* (John 20:23). In the New Testament, confession is made to another believer of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), just as sins were confessed before the Temple priest in the Old Testament. Through His grace, God convicts us, leading us to repentance and confession. Scripture refers to this conviction as godly sorrow, which Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 7:10: *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”*

God’s greatest gift to humanity is His Son, Jesus Christ, who willingly shed His blood on the cross as the perfect payment for the sins of the world. Anyone who confesses their sins to another believer and receives the grace from God to believe the word of reconciliation proclaimed to them is forgiven by God. Freed from sin, they are welcomed into the eternal joy of heaven, where they will dwell with Jesus forever. This is the unshakable hope and assurance believers have in Christ, who has redeemed us and gifted us with everlasting life.

God’s Peace,
Charles Korhonen