



METROPOLITAN  
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SYNOD ELCA

## People Get Ready

An Advent Message from Bishop Hirsch

**December 2025**

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When living in times of great turmoil and despair, it is vitally important to remember that the world as it is with all its violence and displacement, deception and evil, will one day come to an end. We believe that when Christ comes back, He will bring a great change. That day will come unexpectedly and will finally bring final peace and wellbeing to the world.

We remember these things to help us now. So that the evil we see in this present time does not work its way into the core of our being and take our hope and love. To get ready in Advent means to guard against what Howard Thurman called "the great deception" that destroys not the body but the soul. He said:

"There is no need to fear evil. There is every need to understand what it does, how it operates in the world, what it draws upon to sustain itself... Over and over we must know that the real target of evil is not destruction of the body, the reduction to rubble of cities; the real target of evil is to corrupt [the spirit] and to give [the soul] the contagion of inner disintegration...the evil in the world around us must not be allowed to move from without to within. This would be to be overcome by evil." (*Meditations of the Heart*)

God overcomes evil by giving us Christ as the way of truth and light to follow. In Advent, we remember that these ways are more powerful than those that deceive. We put on the armor of light and with prayer and fasting to get ready for this change that is coming.

We carry within us the power to confront the forces that would pull us away from God, and the power to reorder our lives and testify so that the graces of God can be more real, more present and transformative. These are often revealed to us in small, beautiful things like a kind word or a simple smile.

For all of this we pray, Come, Lord Jesus.

*People get ready, there's a train a-comin'*

*You don't need no baggage, you just get on board* (Curtus Mayfield)