

Advent 1

November 30, 2025



The Spirit, however, creates a willing and unconstrained heart, such as the Law requires; and then good works spring directly from faith.

– Martin Luther –

PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

Isaiah 2:1-5

The description Isaiah provides for the coming day of the Lord is a hope-filled image. The nations will finally recognize the sovereignty of the Lord. They will seek to be instructed in his ways.

- Does the day of the Lord sound more inclusive or exclusive?

When the nations finally come to know the Lord the drive toward war and strife will cease. They will trade the tools of war for the tools of peace because they will all be united in the one kingdom of God.

- How do religious differences contribute to war? How might religious unity bring peace?

Isaiah speaks first of the turning of the nations to worship the Lord, but he recognizes that there's also a problem at home. Israel, too, must come to know the ways of the Lord.

Psalms 122

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." There are some things that haven't changed much in the generations that have passed since the writing of this Psalm. We continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. And we continue to wait for the promised Day of the Lord.

- How do you pray for peace in your daily devotional life? What fruits of that prayer have you experienced?

Romans 13: (8-10) 11-14

In this lesson, Paul tells us to "owe no one anything, except to love one other." When the love of God is at work in us, the law's demands are fulfilled. Sin emerges when we fail to love as God loves us. Dishonor, stealing, cheating, envy and malicious talk all cause us to hurt one another. Love is different; it puts the best interests of others ahead of our own interests.

- Is it possible to fulfill the Law on our own? How is our ability to love dependent on the love of Christ?
- Why is it often hard to put the interests of others before our own?

The word advent means "coming." In this lesson, Paul makes the promise that "salvation is nearer to us now than when we first became believers." This does not mean that somehow we have made it farther on the path of righteousness by our own works, but that Christ himself is "closing in on us" – coming closer to us each day. That is why, in the time between now and the end, we strive to live

in a manner that befits our faith, trusting that even when we fail, the promise of our future rests in Christ.

- In your faith journey, do you find yourself relying less or more on the grace and mercy of God?
- In what sense do you feel Christ drawing closer to you than when you first believed?

Matthew 24: 36-44

In our gospel lesson for this Sunday, Jesus tells us that the end will come swiftly and surely, like in the days of Noah, when the flood swept away all living things. We've all seen horrific images of terrible hurricanes and tsunamis that come onto land so quickly that nothing escapes destruction. Jesus tells us that "about that day and hour, no one knows."

- If it is true that no one will know the day of his return, how can we be ready?
- How does one "prepare" for a surprise?

Contrary to the way in which some Christians warn against being "left behind" — in this passage, to say that some will be "left" means that some will be spared the wrath of God.

- In the days of the flood, who were "taken" and who were "left" after the deluge swept over the earth?
- When it comes to the wrath of Judgment days, on whom or what does our hope depend? Do we want to be taken or left?

One of the primary themes of Advent is "waiting." When we go to places where we know there will be waiting involved we might take along a book or activity to make the most of our time.

- What might be the "book" God would want us to read while we wait for Christ? Why? How does it help?
- Read ahead in verses 45-46. What are the kind of "waiting activities" that God wants us engaged in?

Think about the phrase, "In the meantime." We live in the time between Jesus' resurrection and ascension and his imminent return. On the cross, Christ has won for us the victory of sin, death, and the devil. However, in this time of "already but not yet" there is strife, terrorism, disease and death to deal with on a daily basis. For many, it is a "mean" time, filled with pain and heartache.

- What is the promise of God for us who believe, as we intentionally spend this time waiting and watching?
- How can we bring hope and be of service to others who are also experiencing the present life as a "mean" time?