

November 29nd Worship
1st Sunday in Advent

Introduction to the Day

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

Lighting the Advent Candle – A Light of Hope

We encourage you to find some form of Advent Wreath in your own home.

Today we light a candle of hope.

We bask in the extraordinary glow of the HOPE that we find in Jesus Christ.

We wait for the coming Messiah at Christmas

The heavens are torn open and the Hope of Christ comes among us

This is Extraordinary HOPE

Let us carry this light of HOPE into the world for all to see.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lesson – Isaiah 64:1-9

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence

²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.

But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Gospel – Mark 13:24-37

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN.

I had an extra helper in the office with me this week and at some point during the week, the dry erase board in my office became an art easel. It is typical that when that happens the art remains for some time. And in all honesty, it's from this artist and people like her that I find hope in these times that are most certainly different. So as I sat down to think about this week's sermon, and pondering this call to which we are called to be a hopeful people – hearing this prophetic message of hope from Isaiah – as Jesus calls us in Mark's gospel to be a people who keep awake and wait in the hope of Christ – I couldn't bring myself to erase the feelings flower or kitty or the rainbow.

I've seen so much hope and I've seen so much keeping awake and I've seen so much preparation and wondering when what is going to happen next will happen from the young people in my life. The truth is throughout the month of November, it's been a continual time of, “are we there yet?”

As I tucked Jackson into bed on October 31st I said, “Jack, guess what tomorrow is? It's birthday month.” And for the next 24 days, he asked, “mom, dad, is it today?” “No, buddy, it's not until the 24th.” And on the morning of the 24th as the balloons cascaded into his bedroom when he first came out that morning – He realized it had arrived.

The past few days we've been living on the edge of our seats as we've discovered the first loose tooth amongst our children. “Dad, is it looser today? Dad, can you pull it out yet? Do you think if I have an Apple that we'll get it out?”

We have lived this “keep awake” life. We have lived and experienced this “be prepared” way of being and we've waited. It reminds me of when I was a child growing up in our home on Luther Park Road, where from the big kitchen window you could see out to County Highway M and when we knew that we had company coming to visit.

From the moment we knew that our company had left their home in the Twin Cities we would look out the kitchen window thinking every single headlight was theirs, and we would announce it to the whole house, “THERE'S A CAR COMING DOWN HIGHWAY M! Nevermind, it kept going.”

“THERE'S A CAR COMING DOWN HIGHWAY M! THIS ONE IS SLOWING DOWN. Nevermind, not their headlights.”

Until that moment when we would see the car coming down Highway M, and would turn onto Luther Park Rd, and would slow as it made the corner right in front of our house. And we would see the silhouette of the family that we were waiting for. The excitement would reverberate through the house!

You see, as people of faith, we live out this – be prepared – keep awake – when is what is going to come going to come. We know it so well.

And the prophet Isaiah speaks of this Extra Ordinary, anything but normal, hope. “Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down so that the mountains would quake at your presence.” That is the hope that we seek and that we find Advent season – this season of preparation and waiting and hope – that the coming Messiah would cause mountains to quake.

We know it so well.

Jesus talking to his disciples about the hour that the Son of Man will come. Nobody knows when it will be, but we are to be prepared for it. He tells them to keep awake.

People of God in this Advent season, again the words of the Prophet Isaiah bring us into the extra ordinary – They bring us into this anything but normal feeling as people of faith, that the heavens of our lives would be torn open, and Christ would come in among us. That the mountains in our lives that seem insurmountable would tremble at Christ's presence.

That is what this advent season is about. The presence of our Savior, our Messiah, who comes to us at Christmas, that we are called to look for, to seek out in our every day. We are called to look out that kitchen window at the cars coming wondering if that is it. We are called each and every morning to wake up and ask, “is today the day?” We are called and reminded and urged every chance we get to ask, “is that loose tooth going to come out?”

We don't know when those things will happen, but as people of faith, we wait in extra ordinary for the day when Christ will come, because, we trust the words of the prophets, who point to the coming Messiah and say, “when that day comes, the mountains will tremble.”

What does it mean for us then in this time of being apart, as we, as people of faith, try to live into this extra ordinary life that God has given us. As we bask in the glow of the extraordinary grace that's been given to us. As we light candles to mark our calendar until that day when Christ comes at Christmas.

We are to be hopeful. We know it's not that simple. We know it takes more than simply saying, “be hopeful.” And it's in those days that we lean on the community that we've been given. I know we can't be together, but that doesn't mean that we aren't community.

That doesn't mean that we aren't surrounded by a people who care.

That doesn't mean that we aren't surrounded by a community and a people who are hopeful for us when we don't feel it.

That is what is meant by the heavens being torn up and Christ coming down and the mountains trembling. Because the prophet Isaiah knew that God's people would be surrounded by a community that when one doesn't feel hopeful the others do.

People of God, we hear the words of Jesus as he talked to his disciples about that day, that hour, that time when the Son of Man would come saying none of us know when it is. But we are to keep awake. And he says to us, as he says, to all, “be prepared, keep awake, be hopeful, for when you don't feel that you can be someone else is for you.”

That is the power of the extraordinary grace hope and love that we find in community.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN.

Nicene Creed

Prayers

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all people who care for others in our community and around the world. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for people who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. (*Local feeding or housing ministries may be named*). Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the people in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses (*especially*). Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Offering and Offertory Prayer

Our 4th Quarter Well Offering / Mission Offering:

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season.

Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing.

In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray.

Amen.

At Home Communion Liturgy

+WORDS OF INSTITUTION+

(Holding the bread) In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

(Holding the cup) Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me." When we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(Tear the bread, share with each person – invite them to dip into the cup of wine/grace juice) +

LORD'S PRAYER +

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION +

Gracious and abundant God,

you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING EACH OTHER +

(Using your pointer finger, dip it in the bowl of water, and make the sign of the cross on another's forehead or the back of their hand)

"Child of God, marked as God's own, Jesus loves you, and will love you forever. AMEN"

Take turns until each person has been blessed.

Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,

the long-expected Savior fill you with love,

the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,

✠ now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!

We will be suspending our in-person “Opportunities to Connect” until further notice.

Last call for the purchase/claiming of Church Pews

Please contact DeAnne in the church office if you would like to claim or purchase a church pew.

Funds received over the cost of new chairs will be used towards eliminating the debt from the purchase of the new boilers.

Advent t Good Shepherd

Carport Communion THIS SUNDAY, November 29th, and on December 13th from 9:30 to 11.

Come for communion following worship and receive communion elements for At-Home Communion for the coming weeks

Starting Monday, November 30, and going through Wednesday, December 23rd be a part of the Good Shepherd Extra Ordinary Community Secret Santa gift exchange

Rule #1:

- **Purchase a reasonably priced gift and wrap it. Include with your gift an anonymous note for the recipient – something to brighten someone’s day.**
 - **Adults provide a gift for adults. Children provide gifts for children**
 - **If purchasing a gift is easy for you, purchase multiple and drop them in the office. If purchasing a gift is difficult for you, that’s okay, we’ll have extras.**

Rule #2

- **Bring your gift to the table located under the carport at church.**
 - **Drop off Monday – Thursday between 8 am and 7 pm**

Rule #3

- **When you drop off your gift take the gift that is there.**
 - **In it, you will find the note that the person who gave the gift left for you, the person that found it.**

Rule #4

- **There is one other option/invitation when dropping off your gift**
 - **Our Christmas Food Box efforts will look different this year thanks to COVID.**
 - **In lieu of us delivering boxes, we will be purchasing food to be delivered to families in need.**
 - **Give a monetary gift towards the purchase of Christmas Food Box meals**

Ideas for what your note might include:

- **A favorite family holiday recipe**
- **A holiday memory from Good Shepherd Christmases past**

- **A favorite family tradition**
- **Anything you can think of that will brighten someone's day**

Good Shepherd Christmas Boxes

Christmas Food Boxes will be happening this year, but it will look different. Instead of asking for food donations to be put into boxes and then delivered, we are asking for monetary donations to purchase boxes/gift cards. Those donations can be sent to the church office. Be sure to mark your checks in the memo.

