

## The First Sunday of Advent 2020

### **Children's Message:**

Today we begin Advent. That time when we count down the days to Christmas. The day that the Baby Jesus was born in a manger in a cave. Our first Advent candle focuses on Hope. The hope that Jesus will return. Just as the scripture tells us He will. Hope is that desire or need for something we are expecting. Like the coming again of Jesus. Or the hope that Santa will bring that thing which we wanted and asked for. Hopefully we will find it under the tree on Christmas morning. The greatest gift we all receive is the Baby Jesus in the manger. That is the thing that we should hope for the most. What are you hoping for or expecting the most this Christmas?

### **Adults Message:**

This first Sunday of Advent we draw on the hope that is contained in the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. It is hard to believe that we have arrived again at the first Sunday of Advent. This past year has been like no other in our lives. Advent hopefully will be a comfort to many because it is familiar and something that resembles the old normal. I feel that its meaning could be deeper and more meaningful.

I have looked at many resources for Advent in the past few weeks. I have found two different sources that concentrate on the Advent wreath. I think it is something that we could all benefit from. Being a keener, I thought to combine the two and use the material from both.

This week as we would have lit the first Advent candle, we focus and think about Hope. Specifically, we reflect on hope as it relates to the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the coming of the Messiah. It does not hurt us to also reflect on the promises made by Our Lord concerning His return. Jesus is the focal point of our hope. The Old Testament prophets pointed to His coming and Jesus Himself said He would return. Hope is that expectation of something desired. Christian hope is trust and confidence in the eternal goodness of God. A faith that Jesus Christ has overcome the suffering of this world. God is both the cause and goal of our hope.

We remember the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7, " For a child has been born for us, a son given to us, authority rests upon His shoulders and He is named, Wonderful counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and His Kingdom." The prophet Micah uses the image of the Good Shepard who gathers His people in, 2: 12-13. Micah later prophesies that the Good Shepard would come out of Bethlehem as did the shepherd King David. Micah 5: 1-5. Matthew would also pick up on this quote and use it in chapter 2 verse 6." But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd My People Israel." These are just two of many hopeful quotes from the Old Testament about the coming Messiah. David encourages us to hope in the Lord. Ps 84:12, "O'Lord God of Hosts, Blessed is the one who hopes in You." Ps 91, "For You, O Lord are my hope, no evil thing shall come upon me. For they have hoped in Me and I shall deliver them."

Many of these hope filled prophecies were fulfilled in Bethlehem at Our Lord's birth. They point to the Manger in Bethlehem. However, they

also point beyond the manger. To the Cross on Calvary and then the empty tomb in the garden and ultimately to the second coming of Our Lord.

IN the New Testament we are told that Our Lord will return. We are warned not to worry about the actual day, but just that Our Lord is returning. In John's Book of Revelation, Jesus tells us three times of His return. Rev22:7, "Behold I am coming quickly, Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophesy of this book." Rev 22;12, "and behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to everyone according to his works." Rev 22:20, "He who testifies to these things says, "Surly I am coming quickly," Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus".

We are encouraged to remain hopeful that Our Lord will return. He fulfilled the prophecies of His first coming in a manger in Bethlehem. Our Lord is one whose word and promise is good. Have hope that He will again fulfill the hope filled prophecies found in the New Testament.

Advent is full of hope that these New Testament prophecies will be fulfilled. They will be kept in a manner and way that we least expect. When we deal with God, He always surpasses our hopes and expectations. That is just how He deals with us. This season continue to pray with hope for a return to the old familiar normal we knew. So that we may continue on with building the Kingdom here on Earth.  
God Bless, Pastor D