**Church of the Divine Love**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**NOVEMBER 27, 2022 10:15 AM**

**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

 THE WORD OF GOD

 Prayer before Worship – on insert

 Processional Hymn #**56 vs. 1&2 – O come, O come, Emmanuel**

Opening Acclamation page 355

 Collect for Purity page 355

 Kyrie page 356

 Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

 First Lesson: **Isaiah 2:1-5**

 Psalm 122

Second Lesson: **Romans 13:11-14**

Gradual Hymn **#57 – Lo! He comes, with clouds descending**

 Gospel: **Matthew 24:36-44**

 Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

 Nicene Creed page 358

 Prayers of the People, FormVI page 392

 Prayer for Storms and Hurricanes – on insert

 The Peace

 Welcome and Announcements

 THE HOLY COMMUNION

 Offertory Hymn **#59 – Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding**

Doxology (sung)

 The Great Thanksgiving:

 Eucharistic Prayer D page 372

 Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 362

 The Lord’s Prayer page 364

 The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer page 337

 The Communion of the People

 Communion Hymn **#11 – Awake, my soul**

 Post Communion Prayer page 365

 Prayer for Peace – on insert

 Prayer of St. Francis page 833

 Dismissal Hymn#**68 – Rejoice! Rejoice, believers**

 Dismissal

 **Sermon Sunday November 27, 2022**

Isaiah 2: 1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

**Sisters and brothers in Christ**,

The first Sunday of Advent always puts us in the tension of a world that seems to be changing, a future that is not predictable, and the promise of divine presence. The Season of Advent is upon us, not just for the Church but also for the world.

My friends, each one of us lives in the shadow of the apocalypse - the dark reality of the end of our time and the end of the world's time. That is the warning of Advent. But there is also good news. There is also the promise of Advent - the promise that in the darkness, in the shadows, in the unpredictable anxiety of our unfinished lives, God is present. God is in control, and God will come again. With each candle we light, the shadows recede a bit, and the promise comes closer. With each candle we light, we are proclaiming that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overcome it. The promise is that wherever there is darkness and dread in our lives, wherever there is darkness and dread in the world around us, God is present to help us endure. God is in charge, and hope is alive. And as long and as interminable as the night seems, morning will come - in God's good time and God's good way.

The day and hour about which we do not know comes to us in a thousand different ways. It comes to us as an unexpected gift, an unwanted loss, an unimagined future, a dream come true. Regardless, we had no way of knowing when, how, or if it would come. And we had no way of knowing what it would bring. Despite our best efforts to plan and prepare for the future, we live in the midst of uncertainty and unknowing. There are days and hours that take us completely by surprise, in good ways and in not so good ways. The day and hour of uncertainty and not knowing are what Advent is about. Advent isn’t just a season in the church year. It describes our life. The seasons of the Church year are a lens through which we see and reflect on our lives. Advent, whether in the Church or in life, always begins with the day and hour about which we do not know. Nobody knows when, where, or how that day and hour will come. It is unforeseeable and unpredictable. It comes, Jesus says, like a thief in the night or a sweeping away flood.

We must first be watchful of what is going on inside of us; our thoughts, fears, anger, the emotions that overtake us, the choices we make, the words we speak, the actions we take. Do they align with our baptismal vows? Are they congruent with the life of Christ? Do they show us to be followers of Jesus or partisan proponents? We must also be watchful for the divine presence in the other; the divine presence in our neighbor, in the stranger, in the foreigner, in our enemy; the divine presence in those who think and act differently from us; the divine presence in Republicans, Democrats, Independents, protesters, and non-participants; the divine presence in those who do not worship or believe as we do; the divine presence in the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the refugee, the marginalized, the oppressed; the divine presence in those whose choices and lifestyles are not our own; the divine presence in humanity.

Every year the gospel for the First Sunday in Advent sounds ominous and threatening. We call texts like today’s apocalyptic, and we tend to hear them as end of the world texts. That’s often how it feels when life is uncertain, the future is unpredictable, and we are powerless to control what comes next. It can feel like the world is ending. But in today’s gospel Jesus never says that the world is ending. Jesus is not predicting the end of the world. He’s talking about how to live in the face of impermanence and changes that are neither predictable nor controllable. Impermanence and uncertainty characterize today’s gospel. It begins with the day and hour about which we do not know and ends with the unexpected hour. And everything in between is about not knowing. Jesus speaks about not knowing five times. We do not know the day, the part of the night, or the hour in which it, whatever it is, will happen. What we do know is that it, whatever it is, happens in the ordinariness of life: eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, working in the fields, and grinding meal.

And that makes me wonder if we’ve misunderstood what apocalypse is really about. What if apocalypse is not about some unknown day in the future but about today, and every day? Maybe every day is an apocalypse. Maybe we are always living in apocalyptic times. Look at the world today. Read the news. If there is a theme it is uncertainty, not knowing, a feeling of chaos and powerlessness. So, what if apocalypse is not about the grand finale, the end of the world, but about living in the midst of uncertainty and unknowing, living with the unpredictability of the future, living in the midst of chaos?

Apocalyptic days and hours are difficult ones. Life feels chaotic and out of control. We often don’t know what to say and sometimes we don’t know what to pray. Questions abound and answers are few and far between. Explanations neither satisfy nor make sense. That day and hour is not so much about what is happening in our head but what is happening in our heart, that deep place where the mystery of God and our own life meet. The question then is not about the end of the world, but about how we live with uncertainty, not knowing, and powerlessness. What does faithfulness look like in those times? How do we live in the midst of impermanence? Where is our center on that day and hour?

The challenge of Advent, of that day and hour about which you do not know, is to cultivate what the poet John Keats called “negative capability.” Negative capability is the ability to sustain uncertainty, to live with not knowing, to stand in the mystery, to keep the questions and possibilities open, to embrace ambiguity, to not be too quick to resolve or shut down doubt – and to do all this without running away and trying to escape, without grasping for facts and reason, without blaming others and justifying ourselves. I think that’s what Jesus is getting at when he says we are to keep awake and to be ready.

Keep awake and be ready for what? I wish I could tell you, but I can’t. I don’t know. It’s the day and hour about which no one knows. The most I can tell you is to keep awake and be ready for whatever comes to you, and what does not come to you. It is the unfolding of your life. These days and hours are unpredictable, unknown, and impermanent. That does not, however, diminish life. It intensifies life. It heightens its value. It deepens its meaning. It opens us to the possibility of the impossible, to life and more life. Everything matters. And we don’t want to miss a moment. **Amen**!

 1 ADVENT 10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

 COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

 MONDAY 8:00 AM AA MEETING

 WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

 THURSDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE

 8:00 PM AA MEETING

 SATURDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE

 2 ADVENT 10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

 COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

 Today Next Week

Eucharistic Minister Deb Giordano Roe Prosser

Coffee Hour Jess Berbeck Nolans

 **PARISH PRAYER LIST**

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella Harriet Capers Bob Curley

John Mulligan Arlene Goodenough Celeste

Chris Dickson Kate Jones Deb P.

Michael Echevarria John Rocco Gabriel

Barbara Stinson Michael & Family Warren

Charlotte H. Bernie Walther Anthony

Mo (Rachael) Bill Conklin Sr. Carolyn

Anthony Paribello Barbara Curran Del

Ciara Robert Sweat Aidan

Elodie Sophia Carol K.

People of Haiti Christopher & Family Julia

Maggie & Family People of Ukraine Tim

Nathan Treadwell Bob Lazevnick Art

Margaret Victims of Hurricanes Richard & Family

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the

spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you,

from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that

with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may

worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ

our Lord. Amen

Storms and Hurricanes

O God, you rule over all creation, which you have set free

to act according to its nature. We know and love your world, which is also a world

 of randomness and chance. You are

Lord of chaos as well as order. We pray to you for people

caught in storms and hurricanes. We remember particularly

those whose work is dangerous, police and firefighters,

rescue workers of all kinds. You are known in storm and in

calm, you are Lord of thunders, you moved across the hills

of Judea. You are also a presence in stillness, a voice from

silence. You spoke to Job in the whirlwind and quieted the

Sea of Galilee. Wherever we are, in storm or calm, we know your presence. Call us

sometimes to storm, sometimes to calm, sometimes to wilderness, sometimes to

silence. Call us always to yourself, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn

but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So

 mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that

all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince

of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions

and glory, now and for ever. Amen