**SUNDAY, 11/28/21**

**SERMON**

**LUKE 21:25-36**

The church year doesn't begin with Christmas.

It begins with Advent.

It is interesting that the Church year starts not on some great high point,

or with some fervent celebration, not with fireworks, and marching bands,

not even with the birth of Jesus or with his resurrection,

but with a period of waiting and preparation,

with a sense of emptiness, and wondering, and hope.

Advent begins our journey towards Christmas.

Advent is a time to accept, unwrap, and enjoy God's many gifts for us.

Advent is a time for us to anticipate Christmas.

In a Peanuts comic strip, Snoopy is thinking about his state in life.

"Yesterday I was a dog," he thinks.

"Today I am a dog.

Tomorrow I'll probably still be a dog.

Oh, there's so little hope for advancement."

It is so easy for us to fall in to the same trap Snoopy fell into.

We give up, we have little hope.

We know we have failed often.

The confusion, and doubts, and problems, in our lives makes it difficult to hope.

Advent is a time to remember all God has given to us, and done for us.

It is a time to ponder all that Christmas means to us, and brings to us.

Christmas is meant to be a celebration of the coming of Jesus into our lives. .

The name Immanuel means "God with us".

We couldn’t get to God, so God came down to us

He came close to us bringing us hope and joy, peace and love.

Advent is a time for pondering the meaning of Christmas,

of God coming close to us,

and the difference it makes in our lives.

It is a time to think back over the past year,

remembering all God has done for us,

and everything he has given us.

Because of Christmas we have hope,

God's light shines in our darkness.

Advent is a time to view our lives from God's perspective.

It is a time to remember why we are here on this earth.

It is a time to share God's love with family, friends, neighbors and strangers.

It is a time to experience the meaning of the birth of a baby, so long ago.

Advent is a powerful reminder of what was, what is, and what is still to come.

It is a time of waiting,

a time of preparation,

a time of wondering,

and a time of preparing ourselves for the celebration

of God coming into the world in human form.

If we wait, if we watch patiently,

then the picture of Jesus is revealed to us

it becomes clearer and clearer

until we rejoice on Christmas Day.

Advent is an invitation to wait, and wonder, watch and ponder,

as the truth about the incarnation, about God coming to earth is unveiled.

As we journey through Advent the image of Jesus becomes clearer.

He is no ordinary baby, despite the surroundings of his birth.

This Jesus we wait for is the one who will come again

to redeem the world,

and bring in the new heaven and the new earth

at some time in the future, a time unknown to us.

We wait and watch and live our lives each day for him.

Advent begins our annual journey towards Christmas.

Advent means " coming" or "to come".

The coming of Jesus into the world.

Take time this Advent to prepare, and remember the meaning of Christmas.

Jesus came into the world as a baby to live and die for us.

Jesus wants to come into our lives now.

Jesus will come back to the world as King and Judge.

AMEN