

Church of the Divine Love
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 3, 2023 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 64:1-9**

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Second Lesson: **1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Mark 13:24-37**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer B	page 367
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
Hymn during Consecration printed on insert	
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn #	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
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Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn #	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday December 3rd, 2023

Isaiah 64: 1-9; Psalm 80: 1-7,16-18; 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9; Mark 13: 24-37.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

The world can feel like quite a dark place, and from time to time, we may feel hopeless. The season of Advent is a time of hope for all of us who have felt overcome or burdened by the brokenness of this world. Kids and teens experience the ripple effects too. This is why we love this time of the year. Everybody loves Advent, right? It is a season we are reminded, over the course of 25 days, that Christ came into the brokenness of this world as a Great light. As no matter how dark the world may seem, God's light shines.

“In those days ... the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.” These are Jesus words to his disciples. The disciples have been admiring the temple and the large stones. They are impressed. Jesus, however, is telling them that change is coming. The temple of their life is coming down. If you have ever

experienced significant change in your life, whether desired or dreaded, you know about “those days.” You know about Advent. You know what it is like to enter the darkness of change. All change, whether welcome or unwanted, brings some kind of loss. It may be the loss of a relationship, the loss of a loved one, the loss of what is comfortable, familiar, safe. Regardless, the world as we have known it has ended.

The Advents of our lives set before us important questions. How will we find our way forward when the usual lights that illumined our path no longer shine? What do we do when it feels as if our world is falling apart? Where do we go when it seems as if darkness is our only companion and God is nowhere to be seen? The dark times of life are threshold moments. The temptation is to do something; to fix it, to ease the pain, to escape the uncertainty, and to get back to what used to be. The God of Advent does not allow that. We can never go back to the way it was before the lights went out. God does not undo our life. God redeems our life. Advent is not so much about the losses as it is about the hope and coming of what will be. That hope and coming is the Son of Man, Jesus the Christ. The presence of Christ is the ultimate answer to every prayer, to every light extinguishing loss, to every Advent of our life.

Every time we tell the Advent story of our life we echo the prophet Isaiah’s cry, “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down” (Is. 64:1). And God does. God is faithful. God strengthens us to the end. In the midst of our losses, we lack nothing as we await the revealing of Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 1:7-9). The Advent times of life are times of waiting. They are liminal times. In Advent we live in between what was and what will be. We are neither here nor there. We are betwixt and between. They are times of transition and it is hard, sometimes even impossible, to see the way forward. If we allow them to the dark threshold places of life can draw us deeper into the divine mystery. They remind us that we do not know everything. We do not see all possibilities. We can neither predict nor control anything. We are not in charge. Advent challenges us to give up our usual sources of illumination, to let go of our habitual ways of knowing, and to question our typical ways of seeing. Advent invites us to receive the God who comes to us in the darkness of life.

At some point our world falls apart, life changes, or the lights go out. More often than not we see this as the end. When these things happen, Jesus says, remember the fig tree. Read the signs correctly. When its branch becomes tender and it puts forth leaves you know summer is near. So also, when the darkness overtakes your life know that the Son of Man is near. Christ’s presence, our healing, and salvation, are always taking place in the dark and messy parts of life. We have not and never will be abandoned to the darkness. “Be alert,” Jesus warns. He commands us to “Keep awake.” Darkness is not our enemy as much as is falling asleep. We fall asleep whenever fear controls our life, when hope gives way to despair, when busyness is equated with goodness, when entitlement replaces thanksgiving, when we choose what is comfortable rather than life-giving. Whenever we think our life is over, that darkness is our final reality, that we have been abandoned, or that loss and darkness are our only reality then we have fallen asleep. We need to be reminded, to wake up, to reconnect to the beauty of life, the mystery of love, the wonder of creation. We need to be connected to that original goodness and beauty that resides in each of us, that has always been there and has never been lost; maybe forgotten, but never lost. We need to be reminded and connected to each other in a deeper way. We need to awaken to hope. We need to be

alert to the presence of God in unexpected places and surprising ways. We need to awaken to and be reminded that simple presence often says more than our word and does more than our actions.

So let me ask you this. What is the thing you most need to be reminded of today? I'm not asking about your to-do list or next week's schedule. I am talking about that one thing that would make a difference in your life today, that would change the way you see yourself, that would change the way you engage the world, that would change the way you see another, that would change the way you live your relationships. I am asking about that one thing you need to be reminded of that would awaken and reconnect you in a way that is life giving for you, another, and the world. What is that one thing for your today? And what if you took that one thing and carried it ever so lightly through this Season of Advent? I don't mean you go on a quest or make this just another task to be accomplished. I mean you take that one thing you need to be reminded of, that one thing you need to awaken to, and you let it guide your decisions, help choose the words you speak, be the lens through which you see life, others, yourself. Can you imagine the possibilities that might create for you on Christmas Day?

Too often we allow the darkness to deceive us into believing there is nothing worth waiting or watching for. So, we close our eyes. We fall asleep and we become part of the darkness. We refuse to see the One who is always coming to us. The danger in the darkness is that we do not give our eyes time to adjust. We do not trust our night vision. Night vision is not about the light around us but the light that is within us, a light that can never be extinguished. The Advents of our lives ask us to trust the Coming One more than the darkness. It means we must sit, listen, wait, watch. That is contrary to what most of the world believes and what our society rewards. We must show up every moment of our lives not just in spite of but because of the darkness. To show up and be present in the darkness of life is some of the hardest work we will ever do. Run from our darkness and we run from God.

In the darkness of Advent, we move slower, we listen more than we speak, we hold questions rather than answers. We wait expectantly but without specific expectations. Waiting in darkness is an act of faithfulness and surrender to the Coming One. Waiting becomes our prayer, a prayer that is and will be answered by God's presence. As we move from darkness to light during this season of Advent, this time of coming toward, may your hope be anchored in the good news that Jesus comes, just as he promised, and when he comes, he hopes for something, too. Beyond the season of Advent, the next generation needs to know that broken bits of life will not have the final word, for we have a God who holds the world in his hands. **Amen!**

1 ADVENT	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	
	11:15 AM	VESTRY MEETING	
MONDAY	8:30 AM	AA MEETING	

WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE	
	8:30 AM	AA MEETING	
SAURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE	
2 ADVENT	10:15AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Jess Berbeck	Deb Giordano
Coffee Hour	Jess Berbeck	Janet Croft

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella	Lourdes S.	Jess
Bob Curley	Michael & Family	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Judy
Christopher	Warren	Kristen
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Celeste

Mo	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Ciara	Dennis L.
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Jean Estinvil Quatorze	Jean Wildy Nicolas	

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disasters.

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

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,

Lay my life before you,

How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus
and third verse starting with Spirit.

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