

Sunday December 2 through Sunday December 9

- ◆ Pastor Robert will begin a new sermon series (outlines on the table in the narthex). The Choir will be performing their Christmas Cantata during the service.
- ◆ Tuesday morning will be the last meeting of The Ugly Mug group until next year.
- ◆ The NOW Team will be meeting Tuesday evening at 7 pm.
- ◆ Wednesday is a busy evening with Prayer Team at 6 pm, the Fellowship Dinner at 6:30 pm, and Choir at 7 pm. We hope that everyone comes out to enjoy an evening of food, family, and friends.
- ◆ The Susanna Wesley/Wesleyan Circle will be meeting Thursday morning at 11 am.
- ◆ Next Sunday, Pastor Burlingham continues his Advent Sermon Series. At 7 pm, the Administrative Board will be meeting.



This WEEK at Trinity

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Sunday December 2

First Sunday of Advent
10:00 am—10:45 am Sunday School
11:00 am—12:00 pm Morning Worship

Monday December 3

7:00 pm—Boy Scouts

Tuesday December 4

11:00 am—Study Group at Ugly Mug
7:00 pm—Girl Scouts
7:00 pm—NOW Team

Wednesday December 5

6:00 pm—Prayer Team
6:30 pm—Fellowship Dinner
7:00 pm—Choir Practice

Thursday December 6

11:00 am—Susanna Wesley/Wesleyan
Circle

Friday December 7

9:00 am—MEOC in Fellowship Hall

Saturday December 8

No Scheduled Activities

Sunday December 9

Second Sunday of Advent
10:00 am—10:45 am Sunday School
5:00 pm—UMYF
7:00 pm—Administrative Board Meeting

Signs of Redemption
Luke 21: 25-36

On this first Sunday of Advent, we discover Hope in the midst of chaos, crisis, and end-times prognostication. Fearful people run from, freeze in apathy, or fight against today's passage. It's the last place fearful people look for Hope. Therefore, let's remember that we Hope for things that we cannot see or do not possess. Hope immerses our souls in a Spirit of Longing, a Spirit of Hunger, and a Spirit Love. Hope, therefore, is the threshold of Faith. Our faith is in the One we know, not what we know!

Faith in self leads to narcissism. Faith in a nation leads to nationalism. Faith in an institution leads to institutionalism. Ponder on these "isms" and eventually we will understand Columbine, Wars, rumors of wars, and various addictions.

In Luke 21, Jesus covers a multitude of our current "-isms." "For many will come in my name claiming...the time is near." The Narcissist sees self as god! "Nation will rise against nation." Leaders use Holy War to justify their actions. "They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors..." History reveals Religion's obsession with institutional greed, control, and power.

In stark contrast, Faith denies self, nation, and institution. Faith takes up these crosses to follow Jesus. In other words, faith places its Hope in the Grace God reveals through Jesus Christ. Faith holds these apocalyptic distractions in the tension of what we see with Hope in what cannot be seen. Jesus calls us to faith in this hope saying, "When these things begin to take place, stand up, and lift your heads, because your redemption is drawing near"

Our broken human nature constantly judges things in terms of right and wrong. Therefore, we have a difficult time accepting certain facts. Jesus flies in our faces with facts that in our self-righteous pursuit seek to change, fix, and judge.

Fact: Nation will rise against nation.

Fact: There will be earthquakes, famines, and pestilence in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

Fact: They will seize you and persecute you.

Fact: They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, all on my account.

Jesus is a realist. These things are facts. We have all fallen short of the Glory of God. When we accept the facts, we are ready for the truth!

The Truth: But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you the words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

Therefore allow me to suggest five words: Hope; Love; Joy; Peace, Holy Communion. These Advent Words work together to shape and form the Way to the Truth of Life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven is NOW! Hope lives by faith Now. It lives as if it already has that which cannot be seen. Let's stop waiting for death to swallow us up. Christ was resurrected to life on earth. Such Hope waits on ascension while joyfully celebrating daily newness of life.

We repeat this Triumphant Kingdom refrain most Sundays: "I believe in the Holy Spirit," who leads us be One in Christ, "The Holy Catholic Church," which is now and shall always be "the Communion of the Saints," who maintains the unity of the One Body through "the Forgiveness of Sins." Isn't it time we stopped gossiping and walking around like "Chicken Little" shouting the sky is falling?

Let us tell Chicken Little the Good News. "Chicken Little, when you see these things stop, stand up, lift up your head, and see that your redemption is drawing near." Chicken Little places his or her faith in fear. The Saints place their faith in Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. Saints are not perfect. Saints have faith the size of a mustard seed! The size and quality of our faith has nothing to do with Jesus' mercy, grace, and love. That is a fact that places its Hope in the Truth!

One in Christ,

Robert