

Cycle A – First Sunday of Advent – Nov. 27, 2022

“One will be taken, and one will be left ...”

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 122)

Leader: I rejoiced when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”

**All: And now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem!**

Leader: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you,

**All: Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.” Amen**



First Reading – Isaiah 2:1-5

In the form of a majestic, hope-filled poem, Isaiah’s vision for the future opens this new liturgical season. The prophet proclaimed these words to the people of Israel in a time of hopelessness and despair, and the prophet’s words have long been part of the Advent season that opens the new church year. New beginnings are a great time to remind us of God’s vision for all the earth: with God’s authority, there is no place for war or training for war. In God’s world all opposites are reconciled and harmonized.

1. How might the people of Israel have responded to Isaiah’s words? How do we respond?
2. Why is it important to remind ourselves of God’s vision, especially in times of calamity and violence?
3. What are your hopes for this Advent and Christmas season?

Second Reading – Romans 13:11-14

Paul contrasts darkness and light, sleeping and awakening, putting on and taking off garments. These action words indicate that the waiting for *kairos* – or God’s appointed time – is an active rather than a passive state. The active component manifests itself in living “honourably,” according to Paul. His last line, putting on Christ, refers to the paschal dimension of our baptism when we died and rose with Christ.

1. In Paul’s time Christians literally expected Christ to return soon. Is our time different or not?
2. In what ways do images of light and darkness symbolize this season?
3. How does Paul’s admonishment challenge us?

Gospel – Matthew 24:37-44

Jesus' call to keep awake is a stark reminder that Advent/ Christmas, are not simply seasons of pregnancy and a little baby in swaddling clothes. Beginnings are always tied up with endings, and the "end of time" is prefigured in the birth of God's Son. Following on the heels of the end-time readings in November ending the church year, these readings want to make sure that we do not slack off and become complacent. Although the arbitrariness of who will be taken and who will be left feels disconcerting, the Christian imperative to live "honourably" as Paul summons us, will make these words both consolation and warning. If we are living as we should, it becomes irrelevant that we "do not know the day or hour".

1. What part of this reading speaks to you most strongly?
2. How do we view the second coming of the Lord? What feelings are evoked by that thought?
3. Is the "end of time" really any closer today than it was in Jesus' time? Explain.
4. What does "getting ready" mean for you?

LIVING THE WORD

What is God's challenge for me/ for us this coming week?

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: For those who despair and have lost their trust in God and in themselves, and for those who bring peace and mercy to a world in turmoil.
We pray to the Lord.

Invite other intentions, end with "Our Father ..."

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Bless us, Lord,
As we gather to wait and pray around the advent wreath.

**All: Let it be a sign to us
of your coming again in glory.**

Leader: May we walk by your light,
and be instructed in your ways.

**All: For you are Lord forever and ever.
Amen.**

Leader: Let us share with one another a sign of peace.