

December 17, 2023

Advent 3: "THE Gospel of Jesus, God's Chosen! So, Why Wait?"

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

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SEASON OF ADVENT

During Advent we are called to wait for the coming of God's Chosen One; the One who will help birth a new world, the world that God desires. We are simultaneously giddy with excitement and filled with anxiety since so many of the details still need to be worked out. But like intrepid investigative reporters, during our time of preparation, we must seek to uncover the who, what, where, when, and how of this great and radical Advent hope!

1. GATHERING

Musical Prelude (Steve and Cathy)

Call to Worship (based on Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11)

Leader: The spirit of the Lord GOD has anointed me and sent me to bring good news to the oppressed
People: and to suture up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to both the kidnapped and those who cannot escape destruction;
L: to break out those who are in prison and to proclaim the year when all debts are canceled and to announce the moment when God's upside down rule will begin;
P: to comfort all who are in mourning and toss them garlands instead of ashes;
L: to anoint them with the oil of gladness and to envelope them with praise so that they will not faint.

P: For the LORD God loves justice and hates oppression, robbery, and wrongdoing!
L: We greatly rejoice in the LORD, our whole being exults in God our savior, for God has done great things for all of us!
P: Just like brides and grooms, God has decked us out in garments for our salvation.
L: We are giddy with excitement and breathless with anticipation as our beloved arrives. Beauty and splendor are bursting forth from the garden.
All: So too will the Lord GOD cause true liberty, justice, righteousness, and praise to spring up before all the nations and people.

Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 126)

When the LORD restores creation, we will need to pinch ourselves since we will be convinced that we are dreaming. We will laugh and sing and shout for joy and all nations and people will agree, "That the LORD has done great things for us!" Restore all of your creation, O LORD God, just like overflowing streams bring life in the desert. May those who have sowed tears reap with shouts of joy.

Congregational Singing (Steve and Cathy)

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

All: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

"Bringing good news is imparting hope to one's fellow man. The idea of redemption is always good news, even if it means sacrifice or some difficult times." — Patti Smith

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: Mark 1:1-8

Now, the Good News of Jesus, God's Chosen One, begins with something that the Prophet Isaiah wrote long ago.

God says, "I will send a messenger on ahead of you, to prepare your way! A voice of one shouting from out in the wilderness: "Make ready the way of the Lord, clear out the way and make the road straight for him."

So, as predicted, someone named John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, baptizing folks and calling them to change their hearts through forgiveness. Pert' near everyone from the hills, the

farms, and even city folks from Jerusalem, were rushing out to see him, repent, and get into the muddy Jordan river to be baptized. And was he a sight to see, dressed in a camel hair robe, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate only locusts and wild honey.

He kept telling everyone that, "Someone more powerful than me is headed this way, someone so powerfully important that I am not worthy to serve him in anyway. Sure, I can soak you in the water, but he will baptize you with God's Holy Spirit."



SERMON: "THE Gospel of Jesus, God's Chosen! So, Why Wait?" (Steve)

It's the third Sunday of Advent and we will talk about the "why" of waiting. According to Mark, the arrival of Jesus is like nothing the world has ever seen before. He is so excited that he can hardly wait to share the good news!

He dispenses with any of the stories concerning Jesus' birth, runs roughshod over the Holy Scriptures, and devises a whole new genre of literature in order to tell this story! This is why his Gospel is called "THE Good News!"

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Congregational Singing (Steve and Cathy)

Response (everyone)

Joys and Concerns (everyone)

Offering & Music (Steve and Cathy)

Sending (based on 2 Peter 3:8-15a)

Beloved of God, do not ignore this one fact, that with the Lord one day can be a thousand years and a thousand years can pass just like a single day. Our God isn't as slow as you might think but is patiently waiting on us to repent and find true salvation. We may not know the exact day that the Chosen One will return, but we wait for a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness will reign. So may the Chosen One of God find us striving to live in peace.

"Good news is rare these days, and every glittering ounce of it should be cherished and hoarded and worshipped and fondled like a priceless diamond." — Hunter S. Thompson