

*First Sunday of Advent
Sunday, November 30, 2025
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Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

³⁶But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. (Matt. 24:36-44, NRSV)

[if possible, speak this quote as if reading to a child]

“Once upon a time...”

[pause]

We hear these words and then a lovely magical story of castles and kingdoms follows.

Or at least it is likely intended to be lovely and have a “happy” fairy tale ending.

And maybe – if you’re a parent and it is bedtime – maybe, reading “THE END” the happiest part of the evening.

[pause]

...however, what I read for you in the moment before from the Gospel, this version of “The End” sounds grim or even worrisome.

We know that there are lots of jokes out there about the “rapture” as it is described, but mostly the jokes are to camouflage our fears of being left out.

There it is: “be ready!” This “be ready” is an anxiety-provoking statement especially when there are no instructions for what it looks like to “be ready.”

Noah and everyone around him;
then two unnamed women – these are all considered unprepared.

A house owner robbed by a thief leads us to consider that Christ – the Son of God – is being described in the same way. Yet he is not.

This whole passage is about preparation.

For all that is to come: prepare.

[pause]

Being unprepared doesn't feel great.

Shock hits us hard!

In every case where we feel overwhelmed because we didn't prepare – or we didn't even know how to prepare... it stays with us for a while and it does not feel good.

[*pause*]

So this Gospel-reading stands out: how *do* we prepare?

Visiting a craft sale; going to a Christmas market; decorating at home; putting up lights, yes these.

And also, each of our preparations is intended to point to something more- the hope we experience in the coming of Christ.

Because, it all will come to an end:

[*speak slowly as these are a lot to hear and each one will have different meaning for each person listening*]

Pain, suffering, chronic illness;

Harm, loss, broken relationships;

Exclusion, rejection, violence.

These will end.

This is not a fairy tale.

We are promised that we will return to the One who is Light, Life, and Hope.

That's why we have this season of preparing the way. Like Lent, we are being called back – we are invited to turn to God.

Light, Life, Hope:

Giving a little extra to the food bank or Christmas hampers;

Greeting neighbours and folks new in the community while out and about;

Offering prayers for loved ones, friends, and people we notice need prayer.

These share the Light, the Life, the Hope,
and these prepare our hearts to receive again - anew - the Child of Hope.

As Advent gets underway and we think about the end- the way the decorations should look; and how we want the meals to be; and to whom we will give presents; and whether we will go to parties... these are all part of preparing, yes. These can be the joys of our stories. But these also can point to the sorrow in our lives.

This is where Hope unites us.

Whether this season is bright, shiny, and exciting; or whether the grief and weight of the world are pressing in right now, we are offered hope.

Not off in the future, not far far away or once upon a time- but right now for today.

A breath. A pause. Gathered to worship.

In our journeying towards the new Life given for all, we are called together in Hope for this day and every day.

Because when my burden is heavy and yours is lighter, together we can bear this load. When fear is strong and faith feels weak, we can turn to each other.

May our preparations include each one, by offering ourselves to one another in community as a means and hope for Christ to be welcomed at Christmas.

As we prayed this morning: “enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation”
(Prayer of the Day)

Blessed Advent. May it be so.