

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Watching in Hope

Loving Father,
you have revealed yourself to us
and even now you call us to you.
You call us to:
wait
watch
look for signs.

You call us to hope.
Help us to remain in you.
Help us not to lose heart.
Keep our eyes toward heaven.
Make us ready for your coming.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, November 28, 2021 Promises Fulfilled



Today's readings: Jeremiah 33:14–16; Psalm 25:4–5, 8–9, 10, 14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12–4:2; Luke 21:25–28, 34–36. Advent, the start of the liturgical year, is a season of preparation for Christ's coming. The decorations that are out already may make it appear that Christmas has arrived. But without anticipation, our celebration cannot be full. In fact, the first two weeks of the season of Advent do not focus on the birth of Jesus at all, but on our hope for his coming at the end of time.

What is it that we hope for?

When we look around, we see that the world is not as it should be. There is illness, suffering, poverty, and injustice. People die. Grief and loss are real. Too often, death comes violently, leaving a different kind of pain in its wake.

Sometimes we think that this cannot be what our loving God intended for the world.

Indeed, God promises something different. Throughout Scripture and history, we know that God is a keeper of promises. It is in those promises that we hope. Jesus and the prophets describe perfect justice, the end of suffering and pain, peace among people, a new heaven and a new earth. The world portrayed in the readings cannot come without disruption. The old must fall away. What is not of God must fall away to make way for the completely new thing that God is doing.

Is there anything that must fall away for God's light to live fully in you?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, November 29

The Advent Wreath

Set up an Advent wreath if you have not already. You will need four candles, three violet and one rose, and a base to hold them. Advent wreaths often incorporate evergreens. Decide when you will light the candles each day. At this time, the family might read the day's Gospel. Singing even the same simple song every day can create a lovely rhythm for the season. Many resources with daily Advent prayers for adults and children are available in print and online. A piece of purple fabric to place the wreath on will add to the environment. Nearby, consider placing a small statue or picture of Mary, on whom we meditate frequently during the season of Advent. *Today's readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9; Matthew 8:5-11.*

Tuesday, November 30

St. Andrew

St. Andrew, one of Jesus' first disciples, was called while fishing in the Sea of Galilee. In today's Gospel, we hear that he and his brother, St. Peter, "immediately" left their old lives behind to follow Jesus, who called them to be "fishers of men." The Feast of St. Andrew is traditionally the first day of a beautiful devotion, the Christmas novena, a short prayer that is said fifteen times each day from this day until Christmas. *Today's readings: Romans 10:9-18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11; Matthew 4:18-22.*

Wednesday, December 1

Miracles

Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee when he went up on the mountain and healed many, many people from the crowds who came to him. There, he also feeds thousands of people, multiplying the loaves and the fish. Isaiah foretold that the Lord "will wipe away the tears from all faces" on the mountain, a vision of the messianic kingdom. Jesus reveals that vision when he heals bodies and then offers a feast, an

abundant celebration made from humble things. When might we experience that kind of healing and celebration? *Today's readings: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Matthew 15:29-37.*

Thursday, December 2

A Solid Foundation

What does it mean to have a solid foundation? Imagine a beautiful sandcastle on the beach, and next to it a humble stack of rocks with a wide base. If a large wave comes unexpectedly, the sandcastle is gone. A few of the rocks might be washed into the water, but much of that structure will still stand. In our lives, the waves will come. Each one of us will face difficulties, big and small. But the more we center our lives on love of God and neighbor, the better we will withstand the currents. *Today's readings: Isaiah 26:1-6; Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a; Matthew 7:21, 24-27.*

Friday, December 3

St. Francis Xavier

St. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary, traveled extensively in Asia, devoting most of his life and mission to spreading the Gospel. His practice of engaging with the culture and language of the people whom he served was later developed into what we call inculturation of the faith. Honor St. Francis Xavier today by supporting the Church's mission work around the world. *Today's readings: Isaiah 29:17-24; Psalm 27:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Matthew 9:27-31.*

Saturday, December 4

Advent Music

Make a playlist of music that is focused on preparation with Advent songs found online. Consider more meditative instrumental music for the playlist as well. Listening to this music in the car or while making dinner can balance the excitement and bustle of December. As much joy as we have for the coming of Christ, we still wait in hope for something more, and music can help us be present to that reality. *Today's readings: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8.*

