

Lisa Yungel – OT Project – Fall 2004

Hymns and Readings for Advent Services:

Wed., Dec. 1: Hymn: *LBW 26*. Readings: Matt 24:32-35 & Isaiah 40:3-8.

Matt 24:32-35 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 24:33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 24:34 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Isaiah 40: 3-8 "A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 40:4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 40:5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." 40:6 A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. 40:7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever."

Wed., Dec. 8: Hymn: *LBW 23 & 29 or WOV 62*. Readings: Rom 15: 9b-13 & Isaiah 25:8-9.

Rom 15: 15:9b As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name 15:10 and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people 15:11 and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him 15:12 and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 25: 25:8 Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. 25:9 It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Wed., Dec. 15: Hymns: *LBW 24 & 36*. Readings: James 5: 7-10 & Isaiah 11:1-4.

James 5:7 Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. 5:8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 5:9 Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! 5:10 As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Isaiah 11:1 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. 11:2 The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 11:3 His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; 11:4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Wed., Dec. 22: Hymns: *LBW 25, 28 & 30*. Readings: Gal 3: 23-29 & Isaiah 9: 6-7.

Gal 3:23 Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. 3:24 Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. 3:25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, 3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 3:27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 3:28 There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Isaiah 9:6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 9:7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Church Bulletin Announcement: To be published continually starting 2 Sundays prior to the first week in Advent.

'Tis the season for waiting - waiting in line, waiting for a phone call, waiting for a ride. In this season of rush, rush, rush, you may be waiting for the spirit of Christmas to overtake you. Why not take an opportunity to enjoy the wait that is the Advent Season! Starting on **Wednesday, December 1 at 7 pm** and continuing on **Wednesday, December 8, 15, and 22 at 7 pm**, Advent services will give you that opportunity to slow down that rush and wait in restful anticipation for something worthwhile, the coming of Jesus Christ.

The readings for this Advent season are:

- Wednesday, December 1: Matthew 24: 32-35 & Isaiah 40: 3-8;
- Wednesday, December 8: Romans 15: 9-13 & Isaiah 24: 8-9;
- Wednesday, December 15: James 5: 7-10 & Isaiah 11: 1-4;
- Wednesday, December 22: Galatians 23: 23-29 & Isaiah 9: 6-7.

Informal Outline of Service for Wed., December 1

Sanctuary dimly lit w/ candles and decorative white lights, if possible; baptismal font in back at entrance w/ spot on it. If screen is available, have responses, lyrics, etc. (ordo of service) on screen w/ quiet images in between; try to connect images w/ scripture readings & homily. As people enter, have quiet instrumental background music.

(Stop background music.) **Stand as you are able.*

* **Evening prayer and response** (sung). *LBW*, pg. 142.

* **Hymn:** "Light One Candle..." *WOV 630* (Light brought in from back and candle lit on Advent wreath. Hymn started by choir/singers when candle is about to be lit.)

Please be seated.

Readings (read over sound system):

Matt 24:32-35

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 24:33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 24:34 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

(Silence)

Isaiah 40: 3-8

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 40:4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 40:5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." 40:6 A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. 40:7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

(Silence)

Homily (5 mins.)

(Silence)

Prayers of the Day: Heavenly Father, we come before You today to ask You to prepare us to make a way for the Lord in this season of Advent. We know that in all things you are near. Help us to slow down and to pay attention to Your nearness and to Your words that we may reach others through You. Help us to find this Advent the straight, smooth path which leads to Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Silence)

***Hymn:** “Prepare the Royal Highway” *LBW 26*

(Silence – Congregation may sit quietly and meditate, leaving at will.)

Informal Outline of Service for Wed., December 8

Sanctuary dimly lit w/ candles and decorative white lights, if possible; baptismal font in back at entrance w/ spot on it. If screen is available, have responses, lyrics, etc. (ordo of service) on screen w/ quiet images in between; try to connect images w/ scripture readings & homily. As people enter, have quiet instrumental background music, which will stop at beginning of the service.

**Stand as you are able.*

***Evening prayer and response** (sung). *LBW*, pg. 142.

***Hymn:** "Light One Candle..." *WOV 630* (Light brought in from back and 2 candles are lit on Advent wreath. Hymn started by choir/singers when candle is about to be lit.)

Please be seated.

Readings (read over sound system):

Rom 15: 9b-13

As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name 15:10 and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people 15:11 and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him 15:12 and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Silence)

Isaiah 25: **8 -9**

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. 25:9 It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

(Silence)

Homily (5 mins.)

(Silence)

Prayers of the Day: Heavenly Father, You who wipe away our tears, fill us with the joy and peace of believing that this Advent season may be just the beginning of a year of rejoicing in Your salvation. In this season you prepare us to greet Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, bring to us also the power of the Holy Spirit that we may listen for the voice of our Lord while we are waiting. Amen.

(Silence)

***Hymn:** “People, Look East” *WOV* 626

(Silence – Congregation may sit quietly and meditate, leaving at will.)

Informal Outline of Service for Wed., December 15

Sanctuary dimly lit w/ candles and decorative white lights, if possible; baptismal font in back at entrance w/ spot on it. If screen is available, have responses, lyrics, etc. (ordo of service) on screen w/ quiet images in between; try to connect images w/ scripture readings & homily. As people enter, have quiet instrumental background music, which will stop at beginning of the service.

**Stand as you are able.*

*** Evening prayer and response** (sung). *LBW*, pg. 142.

***Hymn:** “Light One Candle...” *WOV 630* (Light brought in from back and 3 candles are lit on Advent wreath. Hymn started by choir/singers when candle is about to be lit.)

Please be seated.

Readings (read over sound system):

James 5: 7-10

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. 5:8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 5:9 Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! 5:10 As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

(Silence)

Isaiah 11: 1-4

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. 11:2 The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 11:3 His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; 11:4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

(Silence)

Homily (5 mins.)

(Silence)

Prayers of the Day: Eternal Father, You are the Judge of all things on Earth and in Heaven, grant us patience and the wisdom that comes from patience. During this Advent season we asked that you help us to extend that wisdom & patience to others so that they too may learn about the fear of the Lord. Let us await the coming of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ in the spirit of the knowledge that we already have – the knowledge that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Amen.

(Silence)

***Hymn:** “On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry” *LBW* 36

(Silence – Congregation may sit quietly and meditate, leaving at will.)

Informal Outline of Service for Wed., December 22

Sanctuary dimly lit w/ candles and decorative white lights, if possible; baptismal font in back at entrance w/ spot on it. If screen is available, have responses, lyrics, etc. (ordo of service) on screen w/ quiet images in between; try to connect images w/ scripture readings & homily. As people enter, have quiet instrumental background music, which will stop at beginning of the service.

**Stand as you are able.*

*** Evening prayer and response** (sung). *LBW*, pg. 142.

***Hymn:** "Light One Candle..." *WOV 630* (Light brought in from back and 3 candles are lit on Advent wreath. Hymn started by choir/singers when candle is about to be lit.)

Please be seated.

Readings (read over sound system):

Gal 3: 23-29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. 3:24 Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. 3:25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, 3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 3:27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 3:28 There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

(Silence)

Isaiah 9: 6-7

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 9:7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

(Silence)

Homily (5 mins.)

(Silence)

Prayers of the Day: Heavenly Father, Abba, You sent your Son Jesus as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the Godly life. Authority rested on His shoulders and that authority freed us from bondage to sin and declared to us that we are no longer slaves, we are all equal in God's eyes, and that through Christ, we also are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to Your promise. Let us celebrate all that you have given us during this Advent season. Amen.

(Silence)

***Hymn:** "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers" *LBW 25*

(Silence – Congregation may sit quietly and meditate, leaving at will.)

E. B. Yungel
Wednesday, Dec. 1 homily

It was not a chore – it was something that she didn't mind doing, making cookies as presents for Christmas. In fact, Martha enjoyed every element of it from buying the ingredients to mixing the dough to baking to decorating. The preparation, the making of the cookies, was as enjoyable to her as the expressions on the faces of those who were lucky enough to receive them as gifts. The preparation, the making was her act of love, the actual gift, and she felt as if it was this time that was the secret ingredient which made the cookies as delicious as everyone said they were.

“Where do you find the time to put up so many lights and decorations?” was a question Joe fielded every year around Christmas. “Not a problem” he would reply and, if the inquisitive had the time and inclination, he'd show them all the hidden hooks, the wire guides, and the little secrets he had for making the job just a bit easier every year. He enjoyed making the house look special for Christmas. In the daytime, it was such an ordinary-looking place but, during the weeks prior to Christmas after the sun went down, Joe's place was special with its thousands of lights and multitudes of decorations. In fact, he didn't even mind the money spent, as long as the decorations would fit in nicely with what was already there. People came from all over to see Joe's house. He saw the preparation not only as enjoyable but also a way of artistic expression for which he gave as much enjoyment as got.

Many marveled at the ease with which Lori could shop. While others spent time wracking their brains for gifts and huffing and puffing through stores looking for the right gifts and the best bargains, Lori seemed to handle all of it with a spectacular ease. Her secret? Lori would never tell, she liked the reputation of being a cool character under Christmas pressure, but Lori always prepared for the Christmas shopping season with a military-like precision. All year long, Lori did the type of preparation everyone wants to do but no one really does. She made lists of what people liked and wanted. She did shopping reconnaissance at the local stores, checking prices and making notes about where she would buy. Then, when the Christmas shopping season came, she was able to swing into action effortlessly from one store to the next, purchasing the right gifts for the right people. Lori could make Christmas shopping look like the commercials you saw on TV, easy and even pleasurable.

These are some images of Christmas which most of us share – preparing cookies, making displays of beautiful lights, preparing for Christmas shopping – and envying the Marthas and Joes and Loris of the world who find enjoyment in what we now see as Christmastime chores. We claim that all this preparation is necessary for an enjoyable Christmas but, even if we enjoy doing these things, where is Christmas in all this preparation? It's not that we're not supposed to

be making time to do these chores but in the Bible, the Living Word of God, the prophet Isaiah tells us that what we should be preparing is the way of the Lord. We should make straight a highway for our God. Yes, we say, nodding our heads in agreement, that's what we should be doing but... We don't often like to think about how little time we do spend preparing the way of the Lord because if we match that against the time spent doing all those other things, well... So, we suppose we *could* spend more time during Advent preparing the way of the Lord but we're not sure what we should be doing. How can we find out what God wants us to do in this Advent season? How can I recapture Christmas so that it's a little less about cookies, lights, and shopping - and more about Christ?

This evening's reading from Matthew ends with the proclamation that the Lord's "words will not pass away". Isaiah too informs us that "the word of our God will stand forever." Do we see a way with these words? Simply taking a few minutes each day to sit in the quiet reading of the God's Word may bring back how we can make straight our highway, how we can prepare for the Lord. To read the Gospel taking in, whether for the first time or with familiarity, the Sermon on the Mount, the tale of loaves and fishes, the healing of the demoniac, or the birth of Jesus. Or maybe to spend time reading the prophetic writings about the coming of our Lord or the celebratory Psalms which await the Messiah. Truly, like Martha, taking time to read God's Word should be part of our preparation to the Lord, this *time* is the gift we are given. Lori knows the value of preparing in advance, which is what *we* do when we read God's Word during Advent. And like Joe's lights, it should be shared with others. The word of God **will** bring you "near, at the very gates" of the Advent season and come Christmas day "the glory of the Lord **will** be revealed."