

Community of Christ

Fairbanks Congregation Happenings

November 30, 2006

The theme for this Sunday is "The Kingdom of God is Near" First Sunday of Advent

Never too far to
Each and everyone who
Allows His Kingdom and presence to be
Right here and now

This week I am cheating and using the Help from the world church webpage – I hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving holiday last week.

This is the first Sunday in the church liturgical year or lectionary year as stated below. It is also the first Sunday of Advent. The theme for this Sunday is Peace- I hope that all find the peace in knowing that the kingdom of God indeed is near. Sometimes nearer than what we want it to be. Sometimes so near that we cannot see it.

As we start the new church year and prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, may we look beyond the obvious and the mundane and contemplate on what we want to accomplish in our lives – spiritual and mortal.

May the peace of Christ be with you and your families during this Advent season and throughout the coming year.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NEAR – Do you see it? Are you prepared?

The following was excerpted from the Community of Christ webpage.

We begin this lectionary cycle with the anticipation of gaining an understanding of the gospel from the perspective of the writer of Luke. Throughout the year we will be confronted by Luke's central affirmation that God has in the past, does in the present, and will in the future bring God's work of redemption to bear in the lives of all people. Thus, Luke's Gospel will connect the life and ministry of Jesus with God's ongoing plan of salvation. Luke will point out that salvation is God's gracious gift to all people, and he will especially show Jesus standing for the outcast and the marginalized. We should keep this constantly before us as we move week to week through the year.

A new liturgical year begins with the season of Advent. Advent is a season of contrasts—despair and hope, longing and fulfillment, or in the case of this year's lessons, the desire to look backward **and** forward. In the course of this season, we will look back fondly at the beautiful story of the anticipated coming of the babe in Bethlehem, but just as surely our focus will be directed to the coming again of the One who is both our judge and our savior.

Today's theme scripture from Luke is a clear look toward the future. In ringing, apocalyptic terms the writer implores us to "Be on guard," "Be alert." Since most of us

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are less familiar with the apocalyptic messages than those in Jesus' day, what are we to make of these admonitions? The truth being conveyed is that Jesus, who came as our savior, will return as our judge. Probably every generation from Luke's time to now has seen itself as living in the times described in this passage. The kingdom of God continues to draw near, and Christ's judgment continues to refine the lives of those who believe. If the kingdom of God is near, then those who follow Jesus will be found living in such a way that God's reign of peace and justice can indeed be realized in their lives and in the life of the community.

In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he blesses them for their faithfulness and instructs them in their response as they await the Lord's return. Both the scriptures from Jeremiah 33 and Psalm 25 serve more for Christians as a look back at the promise of the Incarnation. Jeremiah prophesies the coming of life out of death as a righteous branch springs up out of the house of David. Psalm 25 sounds the note of forgiveness extended to us as we recognize God coming into our lives. Similarly the sacrament of the Lord's Supper symbolically represents our repentance and God's forgiveness. II Nephi 8 quotes Isaiah and describes the establishment of God's kingdom of peace and justice. Doctrine and Covenants 152 reminds us as we look at God's promises that they are sure.

Central Ideas

1. The kingdom of God is near to us as we recognize God's claim on our lives and respond with commitment to the call to help establish peace and justice in our world.
2. Advent calls us to recognize God's saving acts in the past and anticipate God's continuing work of bringing salvation to us.
 1. How are you preparing for Advent this year?
 2. How does Advent represent both the past and the future?
 3. When have you felt the kingdom of God near to you? How did you respond?
 4. How is your congregation seeking to help bring God's kingdom to your community?
 5. How does the Lord's Supper bring the kingdom of God near?

Let me know what is happening so I can include it in the newsletter.

Announcements:

Ragamuffin Gospel class – 10:00 Continuation of Chapter 11 –

December 3rd - Hanging of the Greens – 11:00

December 10th – Business Meeting to discuss budget 2007 10:00 a.m.

Fairbanks is still collecting for Outreach International

The North Houston Satellite site of HOT is in severe need of children's clothing. Contact Dorothy Hibbard

See Mission Center web page for more information
See the mission center web page for camp and reunion information

The following is a schedule of those that are currently scheduled to deliver the message for the 4th quarter. This is not the “official list” and is for informational purposes only. Please refer to the worship schedule in the fellowship hall for changes.

December 3rd – Carole and Leo Caesar

December 10th – David Romig

December 17th – Sue Turner

December 24th - Ruth Chatburn

December 31st – David Watson

The nursery schedule cannot be posted in the family center for October - December 2006. Please contact Andrea if you are interested in volunteering in the nursery this quarter.

Nursery Schedule:

We need volunteers for the nursery. Please see Andrea Watson.

Please review the prayer list in the Sunday bulletin. If you have added someone to the list please update Leo Caesar with any new information and current status of the prayer concern. Please contact Leo Caesar if you wish to add/remove someone from the list.

Calendar & Mission Center News:

The Coastal Bend Mission Center is proud to announce that the Coastal Bend web site is up and running! You can visit the site at www.coastalbendmc.org

I will be sending out periodic e-mails letting everyone know what is “HAPPENING” at Fairbanks. Please let me know if your e-mail or other contact information changes. Mark your calendars and **participate, enjoy, reach out!!!!!!** I pray that everyone have a safe and happy week.

Martha Romig