

THE
BEACH CHURCH
Pensacola Beach · Florida

Serving as a Beacon for Christ
Following Jesus' Call to Love
God, Neighbor and Self

Hope
thebeachchurch.com
850-932-6628
Worship 9:00 am
Pastor Jim Coyl

Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

November 28, 2021

PRELUDE

WELCOME

SONG *In The Bleak Midwinter*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

SCRIPTURE READING Jeremiah 33:14-16

33:14 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

33:15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

33:16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

SERMON *Expecting Interruption* Jim Coyl

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORDS PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever. Amen.

SONG *O Come, O Come, Emanuel*

BENEDICTION

Celebrating an Eternal Advent (A reflection by Fr. Richard Rohr)

In the first 1200 years of Christianity, the greatest feast was Easter with the high holy days of Holy Week leading up to the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. But in the 13th century, a new person entered the scene: Francis of Assisi felt we didn't need to wait for God to love us through the cross and resurrection. Francis intuited that the whole thing started with incarnate love, and he popularized what we now take for granted as Christmas, which for many became the greater Christian feast. The Franciscans popularized Christmas. Maybe their intuition was correct.

Francis realized that if God had become flesh—taken on materiality, physicality, humanity—then we didn't have to wait for Good Friday and Easter to "solve the problem" of human sin; the problem was solved from the beginning. It makes sense that Christmas became the great celebratory feast of Christians because it basically says that it's good to be human, it's good to be on this earth, it's good to be flesh, it's good to have emotions. We don't need to be ashamed of any of this. God loves matter and physicality.

With that insight, it's no wonder Francis went wild over Christmas! (I do, too: my little house is filled with candles at Christmastime.) Francis believed that every tree should be decorated with lights to show their true status as God's creations! And that's exactly what we still do 800 years later.

Remember, when we speak of Advent or preparing for Christmas, we're not just talking about waiting for the little baby Jesus to be born. That already happened 2,000 years ago. In fact, we're welcoming the Universal Christ, the Cosmic Christ, the Christ that is forever being born in the human soul and into history.

And believe me, we do have to make room, because right now there is no room in the inn for such a mystery. We see things pretty much in their materiality, but we don't see the light shining through. We don't see the incarnate spirit that is hidden inside of everything material.

The early Eastern Church, which too few people in the United States and Western Europe are familiar with, made it very clear that the incarnation was a universal principle. Incarnation meant not just that God became Jesus; God said yes to the material universe. God said yes to physicality. Eastern Christianity understands the mystery of incarnation in the universal sense. So it is always Advent. God is forever coming into the world (see John 1:9).

We're always waiting to see spirit revealing itself through matter. We're always waiting for matter to become a new form in which spirit is revealed. Whenever that happens, we're celebrating Christmas. The gifts of incarnation just keep coming. Perhaps this is enlightenment.

Reference:

Adapted from "An Advent Meditation with Richard Rohr" (Center for Action and Contemplation: 2017), [Richard Rohr Video](#).

FAMILY CORNER

Have you ever had to wait for something? What are some things we have to wait for? Birthdays, right? We might have to wait our turn with a toy or on a playground. When we go to a restaurant, we probably have to wait just to sit at a table, and then we wait again for someone to take our order and cook our food. If you're at Disneyworld or Universal, you have to wait in long lines for the best (scariest) ride. If you go to a doctor

or dentist, you have to sit in a waiting room. You have to wait when you're taking a long car ride to visit your grandparents in another state.

Waiting can be hard! It's especially challenging when you're waiting for something you really want or need, like when you're hungry and need food. Good things are worth the wait. People are willing to stand in long lines or spend two hours at a restaurant if they know that they are waiting for something wonderful. We are in the season of Advent now, and Advent is a time for waiting.

The word "Advent" means coming. What is the coming we are celebrating in these weeks? That's right, the coming of Jesus! Right now, we are waiting for Christmas, which can also seem tough. But we shouldn't just be anticipating presents or fun activities. This is a season when we celebrate Jesus. When He was born, it was the fulfillment of a promise that God had given long before. He promised a Messiah to rescue His people from sin. Prophets had spoken of the coming of Christ, and people waited for hundreds of years. They knew a savior was coming, even if they weren't sure exactly how or when it would be. They were willing to wait because they knew it would be worth it.

At Christmas, we celebrate that God kept His promises. He sent Jesus as a savior, and His presence is still with us today! So, we remember the joy of the coming of Jesus. However, we are also waiting, because He has promised to come again! Jesus will return some day, and all things will be made new. We don't know when this will be or exactly how it will happen, but we know we can trust God's promises. It might be tomorrow; it might be in 200 years. We know that His coming will be worth the wait! In the meantime, what can we do? How do we pass the time while we wait? We wait with joy, and hope, and with thanksgiving.

We recognize that Jesus is present with us now, and we seek to glorify Him with our lives, through service and worship. We pray, attend church, and read God's Word to know His heart. Waiting for something great takes time...Jesus is worthy of our patience and eager anticipation! Let's pray and thank God for fulfilling His promises and sending Jesus

Prayer:

Dear God,

Thank you for keeping your promises.

Jesus is worth waiting for!

Help us to trust in you
and to await you with hope and joy.

Thank you for your love.

We love you, God!

In Jesus name

Amen!