

Advent—Awaiting the Coming Messiah

Advent is a time of waiting. It reminds us that Christ is coming just as He promised. It is also important how we wait. Are we just killing time anticipating His return or is there something we are supposed to be doing as we wait? How should the hope within us inform our minds and enflame our hearts as we wait? What if it doesn't? God has given us His Word, Spirit, and Church to help us rightly understand and apply this hope in life. Want more information? Call Pastor Doug @ (802) 457-1304.

Matthew 1: 18 – 2: 6

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because **he will save his people from their sins.**”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

²³ “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.”

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

^{2:1} After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶“**But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.**””

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
December 22nd, 2019
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Morning Service:

Matthew 1: 18 – 2: 6

The God from the Wrong Side of the Tracks

1. What's in an Address?
2. The Messiah Will Save His People From Their Sins.
3. Bethlehem Points to His Purpose.

Why is it significant that Jesus was born in Bethlehem? Why the connection with David? Why did God come as a weak human being at all? Do you (we) realize the impossibility that only God can make not only possible, but reality? Receive Him. Worship Him!

Evening Service:

Hebrews 13: 20 – 25

Supernatural Shalom

1. Christ's Peace Is a Supernatural Gift of God.
2. Christ's Peace Is Lived Out in Community.
3. Christ's Peace Is Only Available through Resurrection.

Hebrews draws to a close with a blessing for the readers and a final exhortation to receive its teaching. The promised peace (shalom) that is the Jewish hope is shown to only be available in and through Christ. Living out this hope together is what these brothers and sisters are called back to by the grace of the gospel. How are we doing the same?

The Fourth Week of Advent—December 22 – 24 am Taking Gathered Worship Home

Sunday AM

READ **Matthew 1:18-2:6; Second Samuel 7:12-29**. DISCUSS, What does God promise David? Why? How does that relate to Christ's birth? THANK God for His promises and His forever faithfulness.

Sunday PM

READ **Hebrews 13:20-25**. DISCUSS, What does peace mean? How is it acquired? THANK God for giving us the Prince of Peace.

Monday – Tuesday morning

1. READ Candle Lighting litany—**The Bethlehem Candle**

Leader: Why do we light the Advent candles?

Family: Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life."

Leader: What is the meaning of the fourth lighted candle?

Family: The fourth candle is the Bethlehem candle whose light bears witness to the Savior born in Bethlehem according to His promises to his people.

Leader: Why was He born in Bethlehem?

Family: King David had been born in Bethlehem a thousand years before Jesus, and God highly honored David by promising him that the Messiah would come from one of his descendants and from the city of Bethlehem. David's greater son, Jesus, is also a King who reigns over His Kingdom, a Kingdom that has no end.

Leader: What do the Gospels say concerning Bethlehem?

Family: According to the book of Matthew, the prophets had foretold:

*'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah;
For out of you shall come forth a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'*" (Micah 5:2)

2. LIGHT the four Advent Candles on the outside of the wreath.

3. READ aloud Matthew 1:18-2:6.

4. SING *O Little Town of Bethlehem*.

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Brooks, Phillips / Redner, Lewis H.

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by.
Yet, in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years,
Are met in thee tonight.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in;
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

5. Closing prayer for fourth week to be read in unison:

“Lord Christ, we exalt You for laying aside Your glory by making Yourself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant and offering Yourself in humble obedience by a shameful and cruel death on the cross. Forgive us when we despise Your glory by veiling our hearts with sin and pride. Give us new eyes to see the brilliance of Your glory in all things. Make our hearts sensitive to Your unsurpassed greatness that we might reflect the image of Your powerful and magnificent glory. Amen.”

Please see *FCCW 2019 Advent Devotional* for more information.

December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ 7pm