

Another new Beginning

Yes, Advent in its reading from Isaiah, Chapter 2, this Sunday offers us the second beginning to the book of Isaiah. Wasn't the first beginning in Isaiah chapter one enough? Why offer a new beginning in the second chapter? One should be enough, and if we don't succeed in fulfilling God's desire for us to have faith in God's love, then are we simply awarded a failing grade in Advent growth. God can retreat out of our minds and hearts to heaven. We can proceed in searching humanity for answers and eat, drink and be merry with no fear of a God who judges us.

If that experience and attitude takes over who might fear God's judgment of the judgment of church folks. But then God says through the writer of the part of Isaiah, "Hey, they may not have understood and known my love the first time, so begin a second time.

And then we are reminded not only that Isaiah could begin his hopeful message in the midst of terrible times. And hold out for us to know God's love. And to begin doing so **two times**. Isaiah gives us hope and anticipation that we may rediscover Christ's coming into our community and personal lives. And have faith that God's faithfulness to us, allowing us a scripture that has to be said and heard again and again and again and again. Not because we are slow but God is love that does not stop even when we ignore it.

Advent season, the season of new beginnings. is here again so that we can take this busy season as a time to know the story and experience of Jesus each year! We pray and hope for Jesus coming to us each year with the Advent reminder so that Jesus is for us a daily presence. This repetition of Advent each year helps us RE -MEMBER that incarnation of God in ordinary human flesh. Here's a little reminder stimulation list for us:

1. Pick up a copy of *Forward Day-by-Day*. Use its daily readings posted at the top of each page as a prep for Christmas.
2. Build an Advent wreath of four candles in a circle, with evergreen branches shaped into the circle. In the center place a white candle to be lighted on Christmas Eve and burned for the twelve days of Christmas.
3. I will be emailing a little set of prayers for each week of Advent to all for whom we have email addresses. Say the prayers as you light the candle of the week each day.
4. Take time each day for some silence in which silence God's presence can be given space in our thoughts.
5. Come prepared for Sunday Eucharist. Read the Sunday scriptures ahead of time. Sit with them and ask them questions.
6. If you find time, join us for Wednesday midweek Eucharist 5:30-6:00 P.M. in Willard Hall.

So yes, Advent has come again. A new new beginning with God revealing more of God-self to us each year.

(Use the prayer below every day)

A Prayer for Advent (from *Liturgy for the Whole World* by Susan R. Bock)

We are waiting, O God, for the day of peace.

Give us the grace to bring that day through our own simple goodness and hope.

Fill us with patient desire that our work may be holy,
and our holiness bright, through the Christ for whose coming we
long,

and the Spirit in whose presence we live. Amen.