

December 2, 2018

First Sunday of Advent

Luke 21:25-36—The Anticipation of Hope

Fear is all around us. Fear of flying, spiders, public speaking...

We've failed—we fear failing again.

We've been mistreated—we're afraid we'll be hurt again.

Money is tight—do we have enough to get by?

Relationships are hard—is it worth trying?

Nations at war. Global warming. Natural disasters.

Scripture references to the “signs of the times”, are often framed with fear. Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18-20; Zechariah 1:14-15

But the Day of the Lord is described with words of mercy and blessing. Isaiah 4:2-6; Amos 9:11-15; Zechariah 14:6-9

For those who know and follow Jesus Christ, fear is not the way to live. God wants to replace fear with hope.

Jesus came to bring redemption. He calls us to stay awake, stand tall, look up, trust His words, and pray always.

Fear wonders if God will ‘come through’ for me.

Hope Instead of Fear

Find ways—this week—to demonstrate hope, mercy, and blessing to someone. It can be done secretly or relationally.

Bring assurance of God's presence to a hopeless or uncertain situation. Pray for the person or persons involved, whether you know them or not. (Pray with them or silently for them.)

Jot down the circumstances and your feelings.

Next week: *2nd Sunday of Advent, Children's Program*

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SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

Today: *Psalm 95* (Ask God's Spirit to speak to you.)

Monday: *Matthew 3*

Tuesday: *Colossians 1:9-23*

Wednesday: *John 18:33-37*

Thursday: *Isaiah 43:1-21*

Friday: *Hebrews 10:11-25*

Saturday: *Zephaniah 3:14-20*

Almighty God, Who came to us long ago in the birth of Jesus Christ, be born in us anew today by the power of You Holy Spirit. We offer our lives as home to You and ask for grace and strength to live as Your faithful, joyful children always. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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