Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Advent I November 29, 2026

Prayer of the Day
Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

The Holy Gospel: Mark 13:24-37
"But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.
"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.
"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Homily

I greet you in the name of Jesus: the Gift of Hope! Amen.

Today the struggle begins. The church year is now Advent and we, begin our time of waiting for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas.

From the fourth century, the season was kept as a period of strict fasting; as strict as Lent. Advent became known as a "Little Lent." As time progressed fasting was relaxed. You know, fasting may not be such a bad idea before all the heavy eating of Christmas day.

Today in our worship, the paraments will change to either purple or blue. Lutherans prefer blue for the color of Advent: blue representing hope. The blue candles on the Advent wreath will be lit each week representing; hope, peace and love. The special rose or pink candle named joy will be lit on the third Sunday of Advent.

Advent is a time for penitence. So here at St. Timothy's, the Call to Worship has been deleted and each week we will share in the Confession and Forgiveness of Sins.

Many churches hold special musical events; choirs spend countless hours practicing the intricate runs of Handel's Messiah. Additional services such as Evening Prayer in the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Churches are planned while the Anglican Church marks the coming birth of the Messiah with Evensong.

For us, as Christians, the season of Advent anticipates the coming of Christ from different perspectives. The readings and teachings offers the opportunity to share in the ancient longing for the coming of the Messiah and to be alert for his Second Coming.

The early church, like us, struggled with this idea of eschatology (es-ca-tol-o-gy);the expected return of Jesus. It is echoed in our reading from Mark.

Mark seems to sit on the fence like a middle child trying to keep peace between two opposing brothers. In those early days, the church struggled with two views of the second coming of Christ: one of imminence and one of the future. Some perhaps like Apostle Paul, expected Jesus to return soon. Others, thought Christ's return was delayed or would be in the future because they had already experienced a longer than expected delay and many of the original eye-witnesses had long past away.

In Mark, rather than the larger one found in Revelation, we have elements of both traditions as well as draws from the Passion story which immediately precedes this passage.

Did you hear the revelations?

Jesus warns that the servants do not know whether the master will come back to the house in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn.

Notice how Mark foretells of the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion:

The Last Supper beginning with....."when it was evening he came with the twelve.

Jesus' prayer and betrayal: "and once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy" because it was the middle of the night."

At the close of Jesus' trial, Peter denies Jesus for the third time just as the cock crowed for the second time."

Lastly, Jesus is delivered to Pilate for trial "as soon as it was morning."

Yet in the end, maybe, Mark realizes that neither tradition has the last word on Christ's return. It comes from one of the verses from this morning's passage; "But about that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Yes.....no one knows! And that includes Paul and Mark and us. So you see, for this reason we are always waiting, always watching, always preparing for Christ's return.

So the more I thought about this week the more I have come to the thought that while even today many of us are living in these two traditions; imminent and distant future of Christ's return, we all are living in the **whenever** Jesus may come again! No matter when the second Advent will occur, Jesus will come as he did before; in the form of a vulnerable infant and a man hanging from a cross. This will not change because Christ will not change.

The hectic days of Advent are before us in the preparation of the celebration of Christmas. This is the struggle for me as a Pastor and you as a follower of Christ. There can be a feeling of protecting and preserving the past and the traditions it holds. I will encourage you to wait and watch for Jesus' coming in this world that bombards us with advertisement upon advertisement for the right gift. I will agonize that we may indulge in too much Christmas and betray our theological and liturgical commitments to Advent. I will worry, and I know some of you do to, about poinsettia plants, Christmas trees arriving too early and Christmas carols being sung by the choir before the holiest of holiest nights.

My friends in Christ. Advent has become a rather ambivalent season that is marked by equal amounts of waiting, anticipation and even pressured preparation along with buying gifts, parties, cards, and Sunday School programs. In this struggle may you live in the presence of Christ.

Welcome to Advent.

Amen.

Lord's 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction
The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

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STTLC Communique

In Our Prayers Today.....
Casey Wierzbicki, Joanna Spencer, Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Tracy Schori and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

Poinsettia Plants for Christmas…. Those wishing to donate towards the purchase of poinsettias to adorn the chancel area and Jubilee Hall, please contact the church office by Monday, December 1th and mark your donation "Poinsettia" on your offering envelope.Thank you for your consideration.

The 2027 Offering Envelopes are available at the back of the church. If you can deliver any, please do so. Thank you.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism
Receiving God's gift of baptism at the font this morning is Kippen Donald Zadow, son of Sam and Nick Zadow. We welcome Kippen into the body of Christ and our community of faith. We rejoice with the Zadow family on this special occasion.

