

Springwater CURRENTS

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Promises at Advent

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The dictionary is both ambiguous and precise about the word "Advent." The first definition agrees with the Church—"Advent" is the season of the church year leading up to Christmas. But the next two definitions get a little muddy, suggesting that Advent is both about the Nativity and the coming of Christ as judge on the Last Day.

Maybe that explains why the lectionary readings begin at the end (at the Day of Judgment) and read back to the "reason for the season"—the birth of Jesus. Both meanings seem to speak of coming, approach, arrival.

What this means, then, from a Christian perspective is that Advent isn't about **Christmas coming**, but about the **future**, about the "**second coming**" of Christ to judge and prevail over evil. Advent celebrates the promise that Christ will bring about the end to things contrary to the ways of God.

The resurrection is the first sign of things to come. **Death has been overcome**. What we mean by the "end" isn't "end of time." What we mean is the **fulfillment of God's goal for creation**. History is headed somewhere, and so we begin at that holy intention, God's "end" for creation. Without this understanding, the promise of this baby's birth is totally insignificant.

We'll be looking at promises this Advent. Sermons will put the Incarnation into the perspective of "Promise" to help us prepare, starting at the end God has promised (the reign of God is coming; prepare!) and working the story backwards to the Promised One born in Bethlehem.

Promise of Pregnancy

Advent is a pregnant time. Not just the unplanned pregnancy of that poor girl in Nazareth. It is also our pregnancy—a time for **us** to prepare to receive the promised Incarnation. And because we're expecting the Promised Birth, that also means we'll need to receive good prenatal care.

The best kind of "prenatal care" is the kind you get in faith community. How else can we withstand the challenges of birthing a deeper faith, birthing a new way of accepting God's promises for our lives? We need to remind each other about good nutrition (reading scripture) and exercise (prayer, acts of compassion toward others). We need to support each other (again, prayer and compassion). See the lectionary readings for this season, elsewhere in this Currents, and then take your bulletin insert home from worship each week for mid-week ideas on unpacking God's promises for you.

The gospel of Luke gives us a couple of stories about reactions to God keeping promises. Zechariah (John the Baptist's father) could not receive God's promise without skepticism.

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springwaterpres.org

God kept the promise of the baby, but Zechariah had nine months of silence to learn how to live into that promise. Mary said “yes” to God’s promise—to the nation as well as to her—even though she wasn’t ready for quite how God brought it about.

Maybe these are stretch marks, but allow me to take this pregnancy image to the edge of reasonable. In her reaction to God’s promise, Mary shows us a new way of imagining faith. Mary’s unconditional “yes” to God meant that she promised to act as if “child support” would be there. God isn’t the only one making promises during Advent. We also make promises. When we say “yes” to God, we promise to act as if we believe we already are part of God’s coming kingdom. Each of us and together. This Advent, practice acting as if you believe that is true.

See you in church.



LIBRARY NEWS

Two new books in the library this month, and boy, are they fun!

Building on the popularity of the movie version of The Lord of the Rings, author Ralph Wood writes about seeing God’s Kingdom in The Gospel According to Tolkien. This book is more suitable for grownups, and might put to rest parental concerns about hobbits and the Middle Earth wars.

At the recommendation of Harry Hampton’s daughter-in-law, Springwater has acquired one of the volumes in the multi-volume Holy Happenings series. In a mixture of text and cartoon, Super Son is a breezy, fun

CHURCH CALENDAR AND BUILDING USE

Session has agreed to implement a new building use policy so that we can avoid conflicting uses. Committee chairs should notify Don Barbee of dates and times of meetings at church. If there are multiple meetings at the same time, Don will advise as to where the meetings can be conducted. We are currently developing a Building Use Request Form for outside groups. Stay tuned for further developments.

**We Are Doing A Bit Better
Financial Report as of October 31, 2003**

Now 83% of the year has come and gone and we are doing a bit better. Our General Funds income is keeping pace with our General Funds expenses. Here are the numbers:

General Funds Income	\$63,378.74
	73% of anticipated
General Funds Expenses	\$63,115.20
	73% of budget
Net gain	\$263.54

Thanks to all of you who have made an effort to catch up on your pledges. If you would like to see a detailed financial report ask any session member. At the beginning of December you will receive an eleven month report on your giving. Please make sure everything is recorded correctly. Remember you are responsible for auditing your giving records. This will also give you the opportunity to be where you want to be with your pledge at the end of December.

ADVENT ACTIVITIES

The Worship Committee has planned activities for the whole family every Sunday in Advent. Some will be directly after church and some will be later in the day.

December 7

2nd Sunday of Advent

Greening of the Church directly after Worship. Finger foods will be provided.

December 14

3rd Sunday of Advent

Christmas caroling. We will gather at the church at 4 PM to carpool. After caroling is finished we have been invited to gather at the Fisher's for potluck and fellowship.

December 21

4th Sunday of Advent

Telling the Story. A chance for all the children to participate in acting out the story of Jesus birth. Come and watch this special time for our children. It will begin at 3 PM. Refreshments will be provided.

Please mark these dates on your calendar. I hope our planned activities will help make this Advent Season special for you and your family.



The Bible from Scratch The New Testament for Beginners

Do you feel comfortable reading the Bible? Can you find a Bible passage when asked to look one up? Have you ever avoided a Bible study group because you were sure you would feel out of place or stupid? When you read a Bible passage or story do you ever wonder how it fits to the big picture? If these questions speak to you then this class is for you.

In eight weeks we will take a quick journey through the New Testament. More time will be spent on some books than others but we will become acquainted with the whole New Testament. The purpose will be to give you a sense of the story line of the NT and tools for you to do further reading and study.

The class will meet from 7-8:30pm each Tuesday night of January and February. We will be using the book *The Bible from Scratch - The New Testament for Beginners* by Donald Griggs and Nona Shearer has agreed to lead the study.

If you are interested we request that you sign up with Nona so that we can have enough books for the class. Talk to her, leave a note in her box at church or call her at 503-630-6759.

Heifer Project and the Holiday Season

Do you ever wish you could turn back the clock to a simpler time when the spirit of the holidays was expressed with hope rather than piles of presents?

Gifts from the Heifer Project are a great way to remind kids of all ages - and ourselves - what the holidays are all about. Why not take part in a growing holiday tradition by giving gifts that help people in need.

Our church has a history of participating in the Heifer Project. Our help is needed year-round, but it seems particularly appropriate to consider giving a Heifer Project gift at this time of the year.

The 2003-2004 Heifer Project Gift List is posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Let us serve.

Lloyd Olson



re-telling of the stories of Jesus. It is geared to appeal to youth, but grown ups will also like the insider's humor. Five more volumes (yet to be acquired by Springwater) complete this far-from-boring "Bible."

LECTIONARY READINGS

November 30, 1st Sunday of Advent

(communion): Luke 21:25-36; Jeremiah 33:14-16 (ANTICIPATED PROMISES TO KEEP)

December 7, 2nd Sunday of Advent: Luke 3:1-6; Malachi 3:1-4 (DREADED PROMISES TO KEEP)

December 14, 3rd Sunday of Advent: Luke 3:7-18; Zephaniah 3:14-20 (CELEBRATED PROMISES TO KEEP)

December 21, 4th Sunday of Advent

(communion): Luke 1:39-45(46-55); Micah 5:25a (AWESOME PROMISES TO KEEP)

December 28, 1st Sunday after Christmas:

Luke 2:41-52; 1 Samuel 2:18-20 (WE TRIED ON THE PROMISES)

January 4, 2nd Sunday after Christmas,

Epiphany (Communion): John 1:(1-9) 10-18; Isaiah 60:1-6 (ILLUMINATING THE PROMISES)

January 11 (Baptism of the Lord, Springwater

congregation's Annual Meeting): Isaiah 43:1-7; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 18 (Week of Prayer for Christian

Unity): Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 25: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

December Birthdays

Kathy Scott	6
Rod Ryan	10
Dana Shibley	15
Valerie Webb	26
Jim Roden	28

January Birthdays

Lucy Olson	6
Micah Shibley	7
Dorothy Sahr	15
Wilma Guttridge	16
Natalie Soule	16
Jake Soule	18
Jennie Lou Poore	24

**Introducing****Miss Adelia May Jeppeson**

born Nov 21 at 10:28 PM
7 lbs 3 ozs and was 18 1/2 inches long



Daughter of Greg and Renate Ryan Jeppeson
Little sister of Neal Jeppeson

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED