

## Kevin's Korner

“For Such a Time As This.” Our theme for Advent this year seems to be “spot on,” though I think Jesus would encourage his followers to “live in the present” every Advent season and not “worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own.” And what do we worry about today as we approach the Advent season? “Let me count the ways...” No, I think we do too much counting up our worries and probably not enough counting of our blessings, even in the season of Gratitude.

I hope we can be more mindful of the worries of others around us this Advent Season instead of focusing only on our own. I was pleased in worship on Sunday to hear Riecke Claussen bringing our focus to the very real worries of people in our community, some that we can name. The immense cuts that have been made to grant programs in America have hit hard on the Western Slope. Millions of dollars in grants are hard to make up with individual donors or churches, and most Non-profit agencies are struggling to fund their services. So Riecke was “spot on,” pointing out some of the needs that will be affecting people that we minister to, very likely reaching crisis levels, “very soon.” The homeless shelter closing is one of many challenges that our community will be facing this coming winter. “Soon and Very Soon” will be our song of invitation most of the Advent season.

“Where will a savior come from?” That was the cry of Advent, in Bethlehem and other communities struggling under the weight of the Roman Empire, waiting for a savior to come. “How long must we wait?” The season of Advent is a time of waiting, waiting for hope that seems far away, waiting for joy to fill our hearts, waiting for the promise of peace that silences violence, near and far; the promise of justice for every child born on this earth; the promise, finally, that the last will be first, not diminishing either the first or last.

Advent is also about celebrating what God has already accomplished, what God has already given: a baby, a message, a sacrificial gift, a glimpse of a kingdom and a new covenant. We are celebrating Thanksgiving this week and giving thanks for so many extravagant gifts. We are remembering that Jesus showed us what to do with gifts and blessings, especially extravagant blessings. We share them with others, particularly with those who seem to miss out on so many blessings.

We just celebrated in worship that Christ is King of our lives as we grow into kingdom of God living. God's kingdom grows when we grow into the kingdom of hope and peace and joy and love. In God's kingdom we receive these gifts. In God's kingdom we share them freely with others, some that we can name, many others that we never will. We enter the Advent season looking forward to the birth of God into our world in a new way. Along that way, we learn that God was born into each of us that is created in the image of God. God in us is what connects us with every person of every nation, religion, party, race or class. God in us also connects us with all that the Creator has made in this earth and this universe. All are dependent on our care. We are dependent on their role in creation, a million miracles enabling each breath and heartbeat.

I hope you will read and meditate on our Advent devotions this season! Their theme, “Soon and Very Soon,” invites us to live one day at a time, to wait upon our Savior even as we walk with, serve and share our Savior, even during difficult days which are all too real. I hope you will join us for Advent worship each week, beginning with the Hanging of the Greens service this Sunday. The Advent season is a gift “For Such a Time As This.” I am grateful to travel this journey with each of you and look forward to celebrating by candlelight on Christmas Eve! What a gift!

God bless you!

*Pastor Kevin*