

November 2021

My older sister used to work in retail. Namely in clothing stores located inside of malls in one city or another. As a manager she moved a few times to bring some new life to the place she was assigned. Although no longer in that business, I can remember her describing how things were about to shift immediately following October. After a brief stint of Thanksgiving decor, things would go full throttle to take advantage of the Christmas season. Decorations, sales, and music playing on a loop in the store would be all the rage for weeks and weeks and weeks until she would become numb to the whole thing. Christmas Day became a thing to look forward to only because it would all be over. The day after, one could be done with the music and be done with the decor. In fact, she needed to be. It was so busy and so all-encompassing she needed to move on from that overload to something new. December 25 finally brought a reprieve for another year or so unless, of course, there might be “Christmas in July.”

Thanks be to God the church has the season of Advent. Advent begins a new church year and is the four weeks prior to Christmas. It is its own season with its own decor, its own color, music, themes and things like the Advent Wreath. It is a season that makes us slow down while the world runs around like a chicken without a head. Advent draws us in to ponder and reflect upon the coming of our Lord. The anticipation it builds is not simply the coming of Jesus in the manger, but also about the final revelation of Christ when He leads His ransomed to the inheritance reserved in heaven. It's a time of humble repentance as we with anticipation hear John the Baptist cry out for us to confess our sins and prepare for the incarnate God to come. We contemplate the humility of Christ's first coming and we look forward in hope to the glory of His second. We anticipate that the Word made Flesh who came down from heaven, will come again for us on the final day. The subdued nature of Advent make us slow down and accept with patience and building joy what Christmas brings and the reality that Jesus will come again.



In Advent we gather more often around God's promises in mid-week services. We are reminded that God is faithful to deliver His people and remains true to His Word. Devotional booklets are made available to help in the home. Advent sets us apart from the world and its rush to get things done and over with and move on to the next thing because it is burned out. The church waits on Christ in prayer in this wonderful preparatory season. We rest as the world wrestles. We confess as they clamor. We hope as they hustle from one thing to another.

As a way to signal the season of Advent this year, we can gradually introduce the decor in the church leading up to Christmas. Through the four weeks of Advent, each week another addition can be made as we patiently wait for Christmas. For example, at first the color will change and the Advent Wreath will appear. Next, the tree with lights. Then, the Christmons (symbols of Christ) will be added to the tree and slightly more decor on the final week. When Christmas arrives, our anticipated yearning will be satisfied as the church breaks forth in full splendor at the Nativity of our Lord. It will be worth the wait to finally have the curtain pulled

back to reveal a full delight of the eyes as the congregation gathers at the high festival season of Christmas.

The world may rush from one thing to another and burn out easily for it has no sure anchor. But we do. We focus on Christ who patiently hears our prayer - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. And He does come. In word and flesh He comes. That we might quiet ourselves in Him, slow down for a moment, ponder and linger in the forgiveness and blessings He gives us along our way.

Peace to you in Christ and a blessed Advent,
Pastor Suggitt

LIFE QUOTES

“We ask for the ability to welcome and love and embrace and care for all children—our own included. We open our arms to the orphans, whether they are frozen embryos, babies with mental or physical challenges, or those placed for adoption by a young mother. We trust that the life God gives, in whatever stage and condition, is a blessing from Him.” – *A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

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