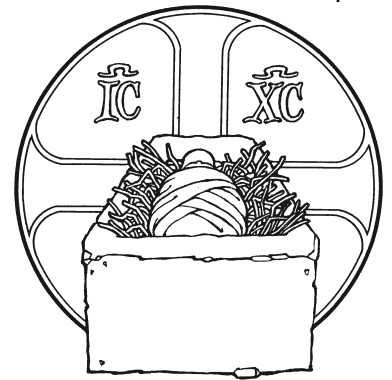


December 2022

The season of Advent is not a bah humbug to Christmas, it prepares us for it. Advent forces us to long for our Lord's return even as we wait to celebrate the fact that He has already come in the flesh. Within Advent, we are called to consider Jesus' return on the final day and in the midst of our lives lived out in faith we are given the answer to John the Baptist's question from prison when he inquires of Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (John 11:3). The answer is yes. Jesus is the one to come and will come again.

How can we prepare for His coming on the final day? We are prepared when we live in repentance and faith clinging to His promises which are given out through His Word. So it is that there are Midweek Advent services to give you more hearing of that Word, prayer with your church family, singing of the things of Christ, and Advent devotional books to aid you in the home. This is how Jesus tells us to watch for Him and to stay awake, by lifting our heads to where His voice is heard. His coming on the final day will be a day of great joy for us who have been bought back from our sins and find salvation in Him alone.

This brings us to another aspect of Advent. That God, the Son of God, has to come in our flesh and die for us in order for us to be released from the bondage of our sin. This is no small thing to reflect upon. That my sins require divine blood to be spilled. This is a humbling reality. It should make us pause and consider what it is that we rejoice at on Christmas. The Son of God comes in the flesh to die our death. It's not simply a cute baby in the manger, but a sacrifice, a perfect lamb born to redeem wayward sheep. And that's what He does. Comes to be our substitute in whom we have life - who brings us out of the darkness of death and into His marvelous light of life. This is what Christmas is about and Advent helps prepares us for this most beautiful news. That we have a God who dwells with man to be our Savior by being born, dying, rising from that death, and will come back for us. Could you wrap a better present than that? No, you could not.



Among the bustle of this time of year, slow down and ponder these sacred and holy things. Prepare joyously for our Lord's return even as you prepare to burst forth on Christmas morning about His birth in the flesh. These are eternal things which remain true even after the radio stops playing Bing Crosby and Johnny Mathis. They will fortify you during your work party, your third family gathering, and one more trip to the store because you will be heartened by that which never fizzles out: Christ comes even for you. Not only at His birth or on the final day, however. But now. This Advent, if your considering the best way to keep Christ in Christmas as it approaches, then come to church. You will be blessed.

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Suggitt

PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

From the Small Catechism: Confession

What is confession?

Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

Private, or individual, confession and absolution is available by appointment with Pastor Suggitt. You may call him at 989.551.3976 to set up a time.

Want to listen to good theology concerning current topics, the Bible, and Christ crucified for you? Check out *Issues, Etc.* on your computer or smartphone.



LutheranPublicRadio.org