

1 Advent 28 November 2021

Jeremiah 33:14-16 / Psalm 25 / 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 / Luke 21:25-36

Theme: We look forward to Jesus' return / Object: Christmas decorations

Did everybody enjoy Thanksgiving? Did you have tasty food to eat? Now that we just celebrated Thanksgiving, what's the next holiday that's coming??

That's right, it's Christmas! Christmas is coming soon. It's easy to tell, right? We see the signs all around us. [Show Christmas decoration object.] Are there any Christmas signs in church? (kids answer) We see Christmas decorations on houses; we hear Christmas songs in the car; we see Christmas ads on TV, and Christmas movies...

You know, Jesus was born a very long time ago. Back then, about two thousand years ago, there was no TV announcing a special child would be born and that he would be coming to save the whole world. There were no decorations in peoples' homes. When Jesus was born, almost nobody even knew about it. But it was something God had promised, and it was promised by prophets, people who could see the future, many years before. So lots of people were looking forward to the coming of the Savior, but they didn't know when he was coming.

Here at church we're entering the season of Advent. *Advent* means "the coming of something very important." It's a time when we look forward to celebrating of Jesus' birth at Christmas-- and we also look forward to when Jesus returns.

Jesus promised he will come again, and we're looking forward to it, the same way the people 2,000 years ago looked forward to Jesus the Savior being born. No one knows exactly when Jesus will come back. It isn't marked on the calendar, but we're watching and waiting.

So as we get ready to celebrate the birthday of our Savior Jesus on Christmas, let's also be sure we prepare for His exciting return.

Tell me, when you look around the church, what else do you see besides the Christmas decorations? (accept all answers – piano, organ, font, altar, pews)

We see all kinds of things in here! And you know what? All of these things and people tell the story of God's love. They teach us to look around to look for love, because love is ALWAYS a sign of Jesus in our world.

Do you ever see things during your day, or maybe on tv that scare you? Yes, I do too. But whenever I feel scared. I remember to look for signs of love around me.

In our Bible story today, Jesus says we will see things in the world that we don't understand or might even scare us. But he says, "That's okay! Look for signs of love and hope!" Jesus reminds us that when things feel scary or sad, that he is with us forever.

Nothing can make Jesus go away. And Jesus says there's something that we can do, to help us look for signs of God's love and new life everywhere: we can pray.

Praying isn't just asking God for what we need or a friend needs, it can also be talking to God, and listening for where God might tell us to look for signs of love. Sometimes we can say words when we pray, and sometimes we can be silent when we pray. It doesn't matter what kind of prayer you say or do - all prayers connect us to God and help us to see signs of God's love in the world. Let's say a prayer now.

[Start by saying "Dear God" and then telling the children we will be quiet for a minute.]

*Dear God, (silence is kept) we see things that we don't understand. Open our eyes to see more of your love. Thank you for this special time of year. Thank you for keeping your promise to send us Jesus, our Savior who will come back again. In Jesus' name, Amen.*