



ADVENT 2

Sunday December 6

Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 148,149, 150; 2 Peter 3:11-18; Luke 7:28-35

I was delighted to write a reflection from the writings of the Prophet, Isaiah. "The Unfruitful Vineyard" is a song he wrote and has a classic good news/ bad news message.

A rich man takes excessive pains to grow a fruitful and profitable vineyard. After his tireless labor, the vineyard produced only wild grapes. What would the owner do now? Whose fault is it that bitter grapes grew?

The owner reacted by demolishing the vineyard, allowing animals to trample the fields. He also tore down the stone walls and hedges that protected the fields. Whose fault was it that the vineyard failed? The farmer, of course.

Isaiah revealed the ruined vineyard was Judah. It's people received every blessing from God but tolerated social injustices and allowed idolatry to go unchecked. I envisioned a very disappointed God, not unlike parents whose children don't seem to value and share the good things given them by loving parents. God's reaction to the Judeans was Fatherly, giving Judah time to repent and change their ways. Unfortunately, Judah didn't comply and years later the temple, like the vineyard, was destroyed and the people were taken into exile to Babylonia.

Therefore, we are reminded that God is our benevolent Father, always willing to give us a second chance to quit our sinful ways and to ask Him for forgiveness. Giving God thanks and praise for His Blessings may go a long way towards harvesting sweeter grapes. Thanks Be to God.

-Ruth Barber, Church of the Redeemer

Monday December 7

Isaiah 5:8-12, 18-23; **Psalm 25**; 1 Thess 5:1-11; Luke 21:20-28

At times I am a doubting tom when I read or hear some religious messages. I'm often reminded by a Pastors message or friend that I must have faith to believe. The Psalmist experienced similar feelings and took his complaints to God asking for help. The Psalmist was concerned that God would mention his past sins and he was also afraid of his enemies. God does not dwell on past sins and will protect us from enemies as long as we trust his guidance which takes commitment and prayer.

We all need to trust God and allow him to lead and direct us in relationships, our work/play space and in our future. As we look ahead to the Good News we must do things God's Way and he will always send us help.

-Gene Cerutti, St. John Lutheran Church

Tuesday December 8

Isaiah 5:13-17, 24-25; Psalm 26,28; 1 Thess 5:12-28; **Luke 21:29-38**

This gospel reading reminds me that the season of Advent is a time of preparation. A time to be ready. During this time, every year people around us are shopping, rushing, baking, and wrapping. It can be crazy and chaotic. I don't think all of this helps us to prepare for Christ. This year, the coronavirus is changing everything we do. Maybe going to church in a virtual way will make it easy for everyone to "attend" church services during Advent.

Advent and Christmas always makes me think of family time and singing in church. Even though it is different this year, I look forward to this in whatever way we can have it. I look forward even more to "normal" celebrations next year.

I always loved that my mom allowed us to ask for only 3 gifts. She told us the wise men brought three gifts to Jesus, we should not ask for more. I hope we can focus on the gift of the Baby Jesus more than the gifts we receive.

-Caitlin Joyce, St. John Lutheran Church

Wednesday December 9

Isaiah 6:1-13; Psalm 38; 2 Thess 1:1-12; **John 7:53-8:11**

John 7:53:8-11 is the well-known story of the adulterous woman who is brought before Jesus as he is teaching at the temple. Since adultery was a crime, the Scribes and Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus to be punished by stoning her. This was not what Jesus had in his plan of teaching! To stone or not to stone? Either way, part of the gathered crowd would not be happy with his decision. Jesus put the burden of punishment back on the crowd by saying "Let you who is without sin be the first to cast a stone!"

Jesus was being tested at the temple. How many times, in today's life, are we tested? We all sin, even though we try our best to follow God's rules. It's so easy to look at someone else and judge them. Instead, we should be looking inward to make ourself a better person.

As we look toward the second coming, let us all do the good that we know is right. God is always there...he doesn't Judge, he doesn't condemn. He is there to give us strength to get up and continue on the journey that he has chosen for us. Today, and every day, we are a work in progress!

-Jim Mullen, St. John Lutheran Church

Thursday December 10

Isaiah 7:1-9; Psalm 37:1-18; 2 Thess 2:1-12; Luke 22:1-113

The readings for today all talk about how the faithful overcome evil. I think back at times in my life when I feel that life is so unfair. How can good people have bad things happen to them? I have asked this myself many times. I always turn to prayer and asking for guidance in these situations. Many times, I ask myself if these prayers have been answered. The song *Unanswered Prayers*, by Garth Brooks, always comes to mind. In the past, I feel that I have not received the answers to these prayers. After hearing this song, I finally realized that our prayers are not always answered the way we want, but they are answered. Sometimes they are answered by nothing changing. God has a plan for all of us. Sometimes we think that it is not fair, but sometimes we need to go through the “unfair times” to come out on the other side as better people. HE is present with us all the time. We just need to believe that what he has planned for us will always overcome the evil in this world.

-Doreen Marshall, Church of the Redeemer

Friday December 11

Isaiah 7:10-25; Psalm 31; 2 Thess 2:13-3:5; **Luke 22:31-38**

In Luke 22:31-38 Peter denies Jesus. He failed his teacher and Savior in those moments. And to make it even worse it is documented in the Bible for all to read for ages upon ages. I am eternally grateful that my failures and wrong doings are not documented for all to see as they are in the bible. I am also thankful that as with Peter I have a God that will forgive my faults. My faults that I have everyday. That I am not perfect yet I am forgivable in the eyes of the Lord. I am thankful for these Bible teachings and for the example of Peter. That God knows we may have times when we aren't the most thoughtful of others or the most righteous. Yet, we are forgiven when we come back to him in prayer. This is especially important in the last few months as we struggle to feel the same as our neighbor in both our convictions and our political views. We struggle to understand our leaders and struggle with not being able to be with our loved ones and Church family. Let us use Peter as an example that we may falter but we can return to our Lord Jesus Christ and always be forgiven and loved by him. Amen

-Abby Ryan, St. John Lutheran Church

Advent Reflections – 2nd Week of Advent

Saturday December 12

Isaiah 8:1-15; Psalm 30, 32; 2 Thess 3:6-18; Luke 22:31-38

At this time of Advent we need to reach out to God in prayer. How much easier life would be if we can learn to turn to God first. God knows our every need and what we are capable of doing in our life.

This is a time when we need to reflect on our church and what we can do to help others who are in need. This is a time we need to reflect and pray for all the people affected by COVID-19. This is a time to reflect on others, not ourselves and a time to pray for peace.

And last think of the Advent wreath and the meaning of it. Let us go forth to greet the newborn King with the true spirit of Christmas – which is selfless giving.

-Beverly Cornell, St. John Lutheran Church