

RADISSON-LANGHAM LUTHERAN PARISH

First Saskatchewan Lutheran Church
Langham, SK

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Radisson, SK

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

November 29, 2020

St. Paul, Radisson/First Saskatchewan, Langham
Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Ministers: Members of the Congregation
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***** Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

Let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,

We confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free-free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day:

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Holy Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Reflection: "From darkness into light"

It seems puzzling, sometimes, that the four Sundays of Advent lead us to the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus, but at this time the language of the Scriptures seems very dark, telling us to watch - not for the birth of a baby - but to watch instead for a return: the Second Coming of a King.

Dr. Paul David Tripp (Visiting Professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a pastor at Tenth Presbyterian Church), offers a clarification: "Although it isn't Christmas Day yet, I want you to look beyond the Manger and consider the Cross. Why? Because while the birth of Christ is amazing, without his death and resurrection, Jesus is just another baby and Advent isn't worth celebrating."

So that helps with understanding the special significance of today's Gospel reading, in which Jesus, of course, takes the long view, saying, *Take heed, watch, and pray; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.*

Pastor Donald Peterson of Emmanuel Lutheran in Lake View, Iowa, looks at what we are to do between now and Christ's Second Coming: "Knowing that Christ may return at any time gives us perspective in life. Time is a gift and we're to use our time in faith towards God and love toward one another... God calls you to use the time He has given you wisely and faithfully."

Pastor Peterson emphasizes that we are to do precisely the work Jesus has entrusted to us: *It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake.* "We all have an assigned task. For some it's service in the Church, for others it's in service to those around them, for still others it's sharing the love and forgiveness of Christ with those who need to hear it." If we look around us in times like this, with social strife everywhere and a pandemic to boot, we may see these things as signs of the end. Jesus tells us *Take heed, watch, and pray; for you do not know when the time will come.* Pastor Peterson, too, urges us to stay awake: "We keep His return in the forefront of our minds, and we let it guide the way we live in the time we've been given."

From First Corinthians, then, **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

pgk

The Advent "Adventure"

Pastor Bruce Ehlert was prepared to come to our Parish this First Sunday in Advent to bring God's word and Holy Communion to First Saskatchewan. Sadly, we are all again caught up by the impact of the Covid pandemic, and again we will be unable to worship together in church. Happily, Pastor Bruce had prepared a brief reflection for our bulletin, with some wonderfully interesting ways to celebrate the season of Advent; we share it with you here:

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, a wonderful and challenging season. Advent marks the beginning of the church year while the world is finishing the calendar year. Through history, Advent has been a time to slow down, to watch, and to wait. In most years that contrasts with the Christmas season in stores, encouraging us to hurry and spend. But this year? Maybe the

pandemic will give us all an opportunity to slow the pace of our lives, and take a little more time to reflect on the important things.

One of the traditional ways to observe the season of Advent is by lighting candles on an Advent wreath, and pausing to pray. There are devotions available on-line that provide a passage of scripture and a meditation to use with an Advent wreath. I recommend the devotional from "On Eagle's Wings", an ecumenical missionary outreach to Canada's north, which can be found at this link: <https://www.oneagleswingsnorth.com>

A few years ago, I was looking for a simple way to remember the seasons of Advent and Lent that I wouldn't have to search for each day. Maybe there was something that I could receive automatically each day via email? After all, I read my email first thing every morning, and it would be a good reminder to observe the season. When I couldn't find an email devotional, I created one! I collected some concise, meaningful prayers from ancient and modern sources, then emailed them to friends and colleagues. When I included a picture along with the prayer, more and more people asked to receive the emails. Now, I send out "a picture and a prayer to ponder" to over 900 people, all over the world.

If you'd like to get a prayer by email each day during Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas, contact me at: pbprayer@telus.net

May God bless us all as we prepare for the coming of Jesus in Advent!

Pastor Bruce Ehlert

Prayers of Intercession:

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A Brief Silence

We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-

lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all people who care for others in our community and around the world. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for people who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the people in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses (especially...). Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Blessing: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Saviour fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Let us remember in our prayers: Andrew Nosterud, Edwin Loessin, Lisa Hamp, Gloria Hamp, Sonia Zacharias, Darren Wilkie, Carla Wilkie, Susan Wonko, Guy Norton, Heather Penno, Inga Abrahamsen, Genie Thompson, Linda Hartshorn, Logan Kane, Lynn Sherstobitoff, Don Wenner, Alma Krueger, Anthony Flath, Elsie Flath, Conrad Olson, Ethel Kuny, Mark Anderson, Roger Wilkie, also everyone affected by Covid 19, especially the Regional Psyc Centre and the Luther Special Care Home.

THIS WEEK:

Tuesday, December 1: 7:30p - St. Paul Church Council via Zoom/telephone

Wednesday, December 2: 1:30p - Cotton Pickin' Quilters at St. Paul

For at-home worship services/devotions you could check out the following:

- Livestreams are available at:

<https://elcic.ca/publichealth/livestreaming.cfm>

- Pastor Randy Fiege is live on Facebook, Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

A Covid Update:

On Wednesday November 25, Bishop Sid and epidemiologist Pastor Ali Tote held Zoom meetings for council chairs and rostered leaders. Eric (Chair from First Sask), Peter from St Paul, and Lynda Erlandson attended.

Synod is strongly recommending that churches shut down in-person services at least until late January or possibly beyond. As Eric at First Sask wrote to the First Sask congregation after the meetings, "This will not change with whatever the Provincial Government does or does not announce today," a prescient comment indeed, since the government announcement changed little.

So for the people at St. Paul there is, of course, no dramatic change since their Council had previously decided to stop in-person worship. We know that our neighbours at First Sask will be disappointed. Eric and I are going to look into some possible virtual services we could invite or generate, for both congregations.

Thanks to Doris, there will still be bulletins every week, and we will try to make them useful and newsworthy (with "newsworthy" in mind, please let Doris know any news about our community that

you feel is useful.) Blessings ... and stay well and safe! pgk

First Sask & St. Paul: Anyone wishing to let their name stand for church council for 2021, please contact: at First Sask - Roxanne, 306-384-9930 or Eric, 306-960-7114 and at St. Paul - Cathy Flath, 306-827-4611. A Parish Treasurer is also being sought from First Sask congregation.

St. Paul - there will be no mitten tree up this year, but if you have some mittens, toques, etc. you would like to donate to the less fortunate, please bring them to the church by Sunday, December 13.

Christmas Goodwill at Radisson and area: Due to Covid 19, there will not be Christmas hampers delivered; instead there will be gift cards for food. If you wish to make a financial donation, you can leave it at Wenner Foods or at the Radisson Town Office if you wish an Income Tax receipt for any donation over \$20.00. If you have any questions or have someone whom you know may benefit, please contact Gertrude at 306-827-7408 or Leona at 1-306-202-6844.

Appeal for your old DVDs/VIDEO CASSETTES: NUTFLAKES is coming soon to Christ Church in Saskatoon, the first video movie rental store in Saskatoon in many years. Operated as a cooperative, the store will open to one customer a day to mitigate Covid risks; while rentals are 'free', customers are invited to make a donation to CHEP Saskatoon to fight hunger in Saskatoon. Right now they are building inventory and asking for donations of any DVDs, VHS &/or Beta tapes you can share. For more info contact them at nutflakesyxe@gmail.com, or call 306-222-3844. CHEP Good Food Inc.: <https://www.chep.org/about/>

Donations to your church can still be given: First Sask - You can mail your cheque to Roxanne Elke, P.O. Box 272, Grandora, SK S0K 1V0 St. Paul - You could send your cheque to Darlene Kindt, Box 97, Radisson or drop it off at the church.

St. Paul - if you are not receiving the bulletins by email and would like to add your name to the

list, please give Doris your email address by sending it to the parish address found at the beginning of this bulletin.

Happy Birthday this week: Jasmine Fortier, Raylene Rothenburger, Eileen Fountain, Erwin Hamp, Kyra Brown, Darlene Chamberlain, Gwen Chappell, Tristan Schreiner, Elsie Flath, Helen Farthing

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 64:1-9

64 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—

2 as when fire kindles brushwood

and the fire causes water to boil—

to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

4 From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.

5 You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.

6 We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

7 There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

8 Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-9

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, **5** for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— **6** just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— **7** so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. **8** He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL: MARK 13:24-37

24 “But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

25 and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

26 Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. **27** Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

28 “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. **29** So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. **30** Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. **31** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

32 “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33** Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. **34** It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. **35** Therefore, keep awake— for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, **36** or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. **37** And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”