

Advent Devotional December 1, 2024

Weekly theme: Hope

Scripture

2 Peter 3:1-10

1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; in them I am trying to arouse your sincere intention by reminding you 2 that you should remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken through your apostles. 3 First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!" 5 They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, 6 through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless. 8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Devotion

The Rev. Dr. Alan D. Olson '14/'24

The author of 2 Peter states that he is trying to arouse our "sincere attention" to remember the words of the prophets, the apostles, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Does he know that this is Advent?

Does he know how busy we are?

I have it easy. I'm 53 and I don't have kids; I don't have a lot of shopping to do. Yes, I'm a pastor, so I'm busy at this time of year, but all of the planning is done. All I have left to do is show up and follow the plans that we've made.

You, dear reader, are probably much busier—between Christmas shopping and holiday parties—to think about the second coming of the Lord, or how God marks time. You are busy managing the expectations (and perhaps the anxieties) of a family for a merry Christmas. You have to get all the right gifts, the right food for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. You have sooooo much to think about, sooooo much planning to do. It's overwhelming!

We spend so much time and energy chasing material things. Lots and lots of money, too!

Why do we do this to ourselves?

Perhaps we focus on the material things because we're attempting to see the wonder in the eyes of our children or grandchildren. Perhaps we wish to recapture that sense of wonder we felt when we were younger. Perhaps it's harder to live as these scriptures call us to do, when year after year, we wait for Jesus' return.

Wonder is a holy and sacred thing!

Don't beat yourself up for not getting the perfect gift for someone else. Also, do not beat yourself up for not being a "perfect Christian" during Advent. Or any other season. Study the scriptures as you can and remember that the Lord is patient with us (1 Peter 3:9).

Breathe.

Remember that God is merciful.

The coming of the Christ is a reminder of that mercy.

Remember that God loves you—all of us—so much that God entered the world in the person of Jesus, so that we would all know God's love and mercy. I hope that inspires some awe.

Prayer

Lord, in this time of watching and waiting, please restore our sense of wonder. Take away our cynicism and our sense of having seen it all before. Give us new eyes and ears and hearts that we may see you, that we may see your coming and your return in all the people that we meet. Help us to share the gift of your love everywhere and to everyone. Amen.