

November 30 Worship
1st Sunday In Advent- Hope
Greeters/Readers- Battersby Family

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”*
Romans 15:3

Lighting Of The Advent Candle- Hope- Battersby Family

Opening Scripture- Isaiah 2:1-5(page 587)

Opening Chorus- 69- O Come Let Us Adore Him(vs 1)

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: From places deeply rooted.

People: We gather to light our advent candles.

Leader: From places yet undiscovered.

People: We gather to sing our advent songs.

Leader: From places still hidden in plain sight,

People: We gather to read our advent texts.

Leader: From places tangled with disappointment.

People: We gather to share our advent prayers.

Hymn of Praise- 278- Lo, He Comes With Clouds Descending

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- You, O God, illumine our world with the light of a new day, the day of our salvation in Jesus' name. Bring his presence here as we lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light and truth. It is by the eternal hope of Jesus we pray in the way He taught, saying...*Lord's Prayer...*

“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Psalm 122(page 536-537)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Matthew 24:36-44(page 859-860)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 121- Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

New Testament Scripture- Romans 13:11-14(page 987-988)

Message

“Hope For The Future, Promise For Today”

There are two kinds of hope, worldly or temporal hope and the hope of believers. In a general sense, hope is a mental focus or feeling of anticipation regarding a future outcome, either of something we want to happen or wish to be true or don't want to happen or be true. Secular hope is a subjective expectation; it may be solidly based or misguided, as it does not consider God's will. We hope for things we want (I hope I get the job; I hope she'll marry me). We hope for good outcomes (I hope my child returns home safely; I hope I don't get sick). But worldly hope is not a virtue, as it usually contains some degree of uncertainty, doubt, and personal bias and can often be misdirected and selfishly motivated. The biblical definition of hope is “the sure and confident expectation of receiving what God has promised us in the future.” The believer's hope is not a faint or obscure wish but “an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews 6:19). In Scripture, hope is a virtuous quality because it contains no doubt, always trusting in God's faithfulness and presence no matter the circumstances, whether good or bad.

The apostle Paul includes hope among the three indispensable Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love. Hope is the greatest because God values it most and because it is eternal. Neither faith nor hope will be needed in heaven; we won't have to trust an unseen God or anticipate His appearance because we will see Him and be with Him in the perfection of His presence forever. We will not need faith or hope since all will have been fulfilled.

Hope is tied to promises made by God since what God has promised leads us to

hope and faith in our lives. There are many, many promises of God in Scripture. In each promise, God pledges that something will (or will not) be done or given or come to pass. These are not flippant, casual promises such as we often make; these promises of God are rock-solid, unequivocal commitments made by God Himself. Because God is faithful, the recipients of the divine promises can have full assurance that what God has pledged will indeed be realized. There are 2 kinds of promises given in the Bible; general promises and specific promises.

A general promise is one that is given by the Holy Spirit to every believer in every age. When the Spirit made these promises, he set no limitations on time period or recipient. An example of a general promise is 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” This promise is based on the forgiving nature of God and is available to all believers everywhere. Another example of a general promise is Philippians 4:7, “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” This promise is made to all believers who, refusing to worry, bring their requests to God.

A specific promise is one that is made to specific individuals on specific occasions. The context of the promise will usually make clear who the recipient is. For example, the promise of 1 Kings 9:5 is very specific: “I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever.” The preceding and following verses make it clear that God is speaking only to King Solomon. Luke 2:35 contains another specific promise: “And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” This prophecy/promise was directed to Mary and was fulfilled in her lifetime. While a specific promise is not made to all believers generally, the Holy Spirit can still use a specific promise to guide or encourage any of His children. For example, the promise of Isaiah 54:10 was written with Israel in mind, but the Holy Spirit has used these words to comfort many Christians today: “my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed.”

There are certain rules regarding God's promises. God's promises are often conditional. Look for the word “if” in the context. God gives us promises to help us better submit to His will and trust Him. A promise does not make God bend to our will, they are meant to bring us under His will. We cannot presume to know precisely when, where, or how God's promises will be fulfilled in our lives. All that we know is that God has spoken and God does not lie. The more we study God's Word, the more that we realize the depth of God's love for us. God does not make promises that create false expectations, His promises are meant to lift up our faith and make us understand that this world is not the culmination but is the beginning of our relationship with Him.

How many promises have we made in our lives that never stood a chance of

being fulfilled? I know that I do not even want to consider how many. We make promises all the time and those we have made the promises to simply hope that we will come through. During this season of Advent we will be exploring themes that have already come to pass but only partially. The hope that people had regarding the birth of a Savior came to pass over 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem. The fulfillment of the full promise of God is yet to come, so how are we to know that we are not hoping in vain. We know because God's record in keeping His promises is fairly impressive. God does not make promises that He does not keep, we just don't know when.

The Bible has quite a lot to say about hope. Biblical hope has as its foundation faith in God. The word hope in English often conveys doubt. For instance, "I hope it will not rain tomorrow." In addition, the word hope is often followed by the word so. This is the answer that some may give when asked if they think that they will go to heaven when they die. They say, "I hope so." However, that is not the meaning of the words usually translated "hope" in the Bible. Biblical hope is a confident expectation or assurance based upon a sure foundation for which we wait with joy and full confidence. In other words, "There is no doubt about it!" Biblical hope is a reality and not a feeling. Biblical hope carries no doubt. Biblical hope is a sure foundation upon which we base our lives, believing that God always keeps His promises. Hope or confident assurance can be ours when we trust the words, "He who believes on Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47). Accepting that gift of eternal life means our hope is no longer filled with doubt but, rather, has at its sure foundation the whole of God's Word, the entirety of God's character, and the finished work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

During this Advent Season, let us all understand that the hope that God will send a Savior has been fulfilled but there is more to come. Allow your faith in God's promises to grow and hope for the time yet to come when hope will lead to the realization of the New Kingdom of God. Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the People- God of light and life, you set before us today the challenges of laying aside the works of darkness; of putting on the light of Christ; of being watchful and prepared for your coming in our midst in the person of Jesus Christ. As the people of God in this place, we know that a crucial part of our witness is in revealing Christ to the world through the way we love and care for one another. Forgive us when people do not see any evidence in us of the One who is to come. So many people, young and old, grope helplessly in the gloom of despair and suffering, yearning for the light of hope to dawn in their lives. Remind us that the light of Christ shines through people like us. Merciful God, cleanse our hearts and minds of all that hinders us from loving you and loving our neighbor so that our

lives radiate faith active in love, as we watch and wait for your breaking into our world once more in the person of Jesus Christ. Amen

Closing Hymn- 120- O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Benediction- Go forth and walk the path of the Lord. Go forth and live as one instructed in the ways of the Lord. Take the weapons of your life and turn them into instruments of peace and justice. Praise be to our God who shows us the way! Go in peace. Amen.