



Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church



The Current Word

Advent and more ~ 2011

Advent is perhaps my favorite time of year. And I'll tell you why.

Last year Jeanne pointed out to me that all these passages we read in Advent seem to say the same things. And she's right. That's part of Advent. We have artificially broken out these ideas into four weeks – hope, peace, joy and love – but they are all nestled in the darkness of Advent speaking out a reality that embodies the kingdom of God in full *hope*, and *peace* that floods the earth like water in the sea, and *joy* that springs never-ending from the souls of all the people on earth, and *love* that defines and defends everyone. They all have these grand and sweeping prophetic promises of God's coming future. And reading these things, week after week, can potentially begin to feel mocking if we actually listen to their words because they speak about things that are completely impossible, visions of peace beyond anything we could begin to fathom.

And yet we keep going with this, as though somehow saying that God came to the world to save us at Christmas, and then talking about this beautiful and peaceful world God promises makes any difference at all in our day to day lives.

So do we really believe in this idea put out there by scripture that seems utterly disconnected from reality? Advent can get messy.

We say, and sometimes even believe, that God has come and joined us even in this waiting, giving us in blood and flesh the promise of the future for which we wait, but nevertheless, we still wait.

Whenever we feel the horror that cancer still claims the ones we love and so does alcoholism, and anger, we are still waiting.

Whenever we feel that disconnect between the love we know ties us to each other profoundly and the terrible things that come out of our mouths instead, or the petty things that come between us, we are still waiting.

Broken hearts and broken bodies and broken promises and the general breakdown of just about everything and everyone around us means we are waiting waiting waiting and it's only so long you can wait before you start to ask, *where are you God?*

And the temptation with Advent and Christmas is to want to avoid this question and the deep and fearsome places it takes us, so we loiter in the shallows and stay surface, cheerful and strained, and we act like we're basically satisfied with how things are, and so thankful for the good old fashioned religion that Christmas gives us - it's just enough to dull the pain.

The truth is, Advent is the biggest joke around if every single year we say, *Yay! Jesus is coming into the world to save us!* and then we say it again the next year and again the year after that and in the meantime people still die and life is still hard and nothing at all ever changes, but we pretend every 12 months that somehow Christmas is supposed to be some big thing.

But when we turn from the darkness in favor of a cheap, flickering lightbulb then we are about as from Advent's true intent or the real meaning of Christmas as one can get.

So how do we keep waiting faithfully?

Or more to the point, how in faith, do we keep waiting?

The kingdom of God that is coming is also already here, we say. So, year after year, on behalf of a world that is mostly without hope we wait for hope, and live like it's real. And for a people nearly devoid of peace we wait for peace, and live like its real. And for a culture that is rarely truly joyful and very often unloving, we wait for joy and love, and live into the joy and celebrate the love we've sampled.

We wait for those who don't know there is something to be waiting for, and we wait for ourselves too because we need hope as much as the next person and peace is just as scarce in our own homes as it is anywhere else.

Because God *has* come, we wait as those with whom God waits. We wait as the community in which the Spirit of the living Christ dwells, and we long for the fullness of God because we have tasted it from time to time and we know it is good. As the people of the kingdom of God, waiting is something we *must* do.

Advent is the gift that rouses us from our complacency, when we start to accept the darkness as status quo, when we stop seeing the light or looking for it, and settle instead for a twilight existence. Advent's gift is that it reminds us to keep waiting.

So we wait as those impatient, urgent, saying, *Come Lord Jesus!* because we know God has come and is coming. We *know* that cancer isn't the final word and disease and despair are not what defines people. And so we, of all people, have a reason to cry out about the world's pain and darkness. We, of all people, have eyes to see that the darkness does not belong and so to rage against it even as we trust in the one who *is* the light whom the darkness can never overcome.

May we, with all the collective courage and conviction of a people who have glimpsed the future's peace in the person of Christ, again wait faithfully for the coming of our Lord.

(This article is adapted from a sermon Kara preached at LNPC last Advent, called "The Peaceable, Impossible Kingdom and we who hope in it")



On Saturday, November 12, we were joined in worship by a group of church leaders from South Africa.

Their leader, Pastor Deon Kitching, wrote, "I am bringing a group of 10 (myself included) sharp and mostly intelligent South African youth pastors on a youth- and family ministry research tour to the USA in November of 2011. I really admire your work and congregation in Minneapolis - Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church. We have put time aside to meet with you and members of your church - if you have time for us!"

We welcomed them, worshiped with them, enjoyed an amazing meal prepared by Cyndi (pumpkin mac and cheese recipe included later in this issue – look for it!), and heard their stories and shared some of ours. What a gift to be part of this global 'new thing' God is doing!



Razzle Dazzle Holiday Party!!



Friday, December 9 • 6:30pm - 9:30pm

Get out those fancy digs and pull on your dancing shoes... We're planning a Christmas party to knock your socks off!

Drinks, hors d'oeuvres, cupcakes... and a fabulous trombone quartet! Tickets \$15 (covers band, food and drinks)

Bring a pack of diapers (size 5 or 6 preferable) or a new toy for a child ages 3-12 to donate to Tapestry Pregnancy & Family Resource Center.

Childcare provided for \$8 per child.

Spread the word - invite your friends! See the facebook event page!

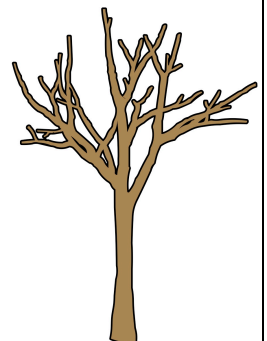
RSVP - number of adults, and need for childcare: jan@lakenokomispc.org

The Giving Tree ~

Bearing ideas of giving opportunities for the support of the congregation, the Giving Tree has found its way back to church. Whenever you're in the sanctuary, stop by, see if there is a need you would like to meet, take it from the tree and include the tag with your check, leaving them in the offering plate or in the office.

If you have ideas for items not 'leafing' the tree already, put a note on Jan's desk!

We give thanks, with grateful hearts, for the generosity of friends.



Biblical Preaching Project ~

Kara, Ben Masters, and Sue Hensel are 'TeamLNPC' in Luther Seminary's 'Biblical Preaching Project!'

Luther's original 'call for applicants' wanted to identify "congregations that *expect* and *nurture* preaching that invites *all* persons into the biblical story of God's redemptive love for the world. Congregations that –

- Believe that the biblical witness offers a narrative of God and the world that is engaging and compelling;
- Suspect that the biblical story currently has little hold on the imaginations of its people (including those who regularly come to church!);
- Believe that preaching should model and teach the art of biblical interpretation, not just perform it;
- Recognize Sunday morning [and Saturday evening!] worship as an essential time in which to learn and practice the skills essential to living a Christian life;
- Are open to experimenting with different forms of preaching in order to present the biblical story in a way that engages both heart and imagination;

- Affirm that the preaching and worship that draws us together on [Saturday evening and] Sunday morning serve the lives of faith Christians lead throughout the week."

Chosen from over 120 applicants, we are one of eight congregations nationally invited to participate in this two-year process of discernment. Within the context of their own congregations, the teams, individually and collectively, will explore ways that preaching might be nurtured so that all hearers are invited into the Biblical story of God's redemptive love – finding their *own* story wrapped up in that of God and God's people.

The congregation has begun our participation in this journey with an online survey in November, sharing those elements that make a sermon, and a worship service, 'sing' for us. Our Team will also be conducting interviews, looking to more personally hear stories of worship.

Everyone is invited to offer an interview – contact Sue H., Ben, or Kara, and share your story.

Election of Officers, and other fun stuff!

Will *coffee* get you to church at 9 on **Sunday, November 20**? How about a *muffin*?

The regular Education Hour will be transformed into a 'check-in' time for the congregation on our journey into being church with and for one another. Part of the regular – though intermittent – series of sharing opportunities, this will focus especially on the relationship of LNPC and St. Joseph's Home for Children and our '5th Sunday' worship with them.

Comehear.....share!

Following worship that same morning, the Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates for election to the Session – Class of 2014! All members are eligible to vote – and everybody can cheer!



Advent Quiet Wednesdays

Wednesdays | November 30, December 7 and 21 | 6:30 – 8:15 p.m.



The sanctuary will be open as candles, music, and text wrap us in the mystery and promise of Advent. The labyrinth will be available. A pocket of peace in the crazy Christmas season.

Come – Pray – Reflect

Because darkness seems at times to blanket our lives...

Blue Christmas **Wednesday, December 14, 6:30 p.m.**

*A worship service of solidarity, honesty and hope...
for those walking through the holidays with grief and loss.*

Christmas Eve Worship ~ Saturday, December 24 ~ 4:00 p.m.

Welcome God-with-us in a family-oriented service of lessons and carols, candles and stories. In the stillness of the early evening and the gathering night, the celebration of the coming of the Christ Child focuses our minds and encourages our hearts – God loves us!

Special musicians will join Jeanne as we celebrate together.

*And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.*

*By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Luke 1.78-79

With gratitude...

Dear LNPC family,

Words can not express the surprise and gratitude of being recognized for my 20 years here at LNPC. This was a total surprise and very much appreciated. This was a very well kept secret. I had no clue. *[good job, folks!]*

The lunch and cake was delicious and a special thank you for the kind words and Guthrie tickets.

Thanks again for everything and your kindness always shown to me.

Lovingly, Jan

Thank you! to Doug and Linda Leicht, for hosting an afternoon on their houseboat on the St. Croix River! There was good food, good conversation, and good weather – it doesn't get much better!



Can we look way ahead??

Worship with St. Joe's January 29 – the fifth Sunday of the new year.

Ham & Cherry Pie Dinner – Wednesday, February 15 – always room for happy workers and hungry eaters!

Mark your calendars: first weekend in October 2012 – All-Church Retreat at Clearwater Forest. The promise of beautiful colors, crystalline lake, and warm fellowship. There are few more wonderful places to be on a fall weekend!

As promised – the recipe: ****Baked Pumpkin Shells and Cheese****

Give mac and cheese a seasonal twist with this recipe for baked pumpkin shells and cheese from [Jenna Weber](#) of [Eat, Live, Run.](#)

Ingredients:

- 16 oz small shell pasta
- 3 tbsp butter
- 3 tbsp flour
- 4 cups milk
- 16 oz grated cheese blend
- ¾ cup pumpkin puree (1/2 15-oz can)
- 1.5 tsp minced fresh rosemary
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- ¼ tsp cayenne
- ½ cup panko breadcrumbs

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Cook pasta in boiling salted water. Drain and rinse with cold water. Set aside.
3. In a heavy saucepot over medium high heat, melt the butter and add the flour. Whisk together and cook for thirty seconds. Add 2 cups milk and minced rosemary and whisk until smooth. Add another cup of the milk (reserving one cup) and continue to whisk. Cook for four minutes while whisking. The mixture will get very thick!
4. Add 12 ounces of the grated mixed cheese (reserving about a handful of grated cheese) and stir well so that the cheese melts. Add the salt, pepper and cayenne followed by the additional cup of milk and the pumpkin puree.
5. Once everything is smooth, add the cooked macaroni and toss well. Pour into a 9"13" casserole pan and top with the remaining grated cheese and the breadcrumbs.
6. Bake for 25 minutes until golden brown and bubbling.

Yield: 8 servings

Poem of the Month:

Advent

The church is Advent.
The unwrapping of God's greatest gift is near.
Advent – coming.
God will take away the tinsel
and decorate our human hearts in hope
So that Christians can sit laughing in the rain,
knowing that the Lord is going to
shine in upon their being.
For no matter how long the darkness
God will send the Light.
In spite of cursing and violence and the massacring of human dignity,
we will dance in the streets of Bethlehem,
for He will be born!

Ann Weems

(from *The Church Year in Reaching for Rainbows*)

Kara Root – Pastor and Moderator of Session kara@lakenokomispc.org

Parish Associate – Rev. Theresa Latini

2011 Session:

Class of 2011:

Bill Fischer rbbt6@hotmail.com
Barb Day barbdayb@aol.com
Gary Johnson gjohnson442@hotmail.com

Class of 2012:

Sue Hensel susanhensel@yahoo.com
Sue Goodspeed ssgoodspeed@comcast.net
Jim Duncan jamesmackduncan@gmail.com

Class of 2013:

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Aleta Isaacson aletaisaacson@aol.com
Norm Petrik normpetrik@aol.com

Presbytery Commissioners:

Sue Goodspeed Norm Petrik

Clerk of Session: Barb Day

Treasurers: Jim Duncan and Bill Fischer

Staff: Jan Johnson – Office Administrator

Jeanne Rylander – Director of Music Ministries

Carolyn Cochrane – Children's Ministries Coordinator

Kathy Johnson – Custodian

Newsletter– Sue Goodspeed

REVISION STATEMENT
(as approved following the
reVision process, October 2007)

LNPC seeks to

- become a beacon of hope and a place of sanctuary
- reach out to the needs of neighbors, sharing our selves and our resources.

Committees of Session: Administration, Worship, Community, Education, and Personnel. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, interests or anything you'd like to share, please talk with a Session member!

Board of Deacons: The Deacons function as a unit, sharing responsibility for visitation and ministries of presence with those in transition. Members are: Alan Isaacson, Cyndi Wunder, Barb Wilson, Ben Masters, and Kathy Burton, with guidance from Rev. Theresa Latini.

Inside:

- Sunday | November 20 | Breakfast 'check-in' at 9 (*special focus on 5th Sundays*) | **Congregational meeting** following worship | election of officers
- Wednesday | November 23 | **Neighborhood Thanksgiving Service**
- **Advent Quiet Wednesdays** | November 30, December 7 and 21 | 6:30
- Friday | December 9 | **Christmas Party!**
- Wednesday | December 14 | 7:00 p.m. | **Blue Christmas Service**
- Saturday | December 24 | 4 p.m. | **Christmas Eve Service**

www.lakenokomispc.org

<http://www.kara-root.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/LakeNokomisChurch>

"True hospitality is welcoming the stranger on her own terms. This kind of hospitality can only be offered by those who've found the center of their lives in their own hearts."

– *Henri Nouwen*

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TO:

CALENDARS/SCHEDULES?