

Let's Go Deeper...

Wednesday, December 2

Advent has begun. The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming." During these four weeks leading to Christmas Day, the church looks back upon Jesus' *first* coming in Bethlehem while at the same time looking forward to his *second* coming to consummate God's purposes.



Jennie and I were driving back to Lexington Sunday morning from a week on the North Carolina coast with family. We spent Saturday night in Jennie's hometown of Abingdon, VA. Our plan was to leave Abingdon at 7 a.m., weave our way north through Virginia coal country into Eastern Kentucky, continue through Pikeville to the Mountain Parkway, and be near enough to Lexington at 11 a.m. that we could listen to the radio broadcast of Central's worship service on 1580 AM. Our plan worked. At Campton, KY, 60 miles east of Lexington, the voice of Elizabeth King welcomed us to Central's 11:00 a.m. worship service followed by the sound of the choir and congregation singing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Listen to an arrangement of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" by John Ferguson and sung by the Georgia Boy Choir. Dr. Ferguson is advising us on needed renovations to the organ. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNLUxwTb6QI>

Elizabeth's sermon ("A Change Is Gonna Come: in the Chaos"; [Luke 21:25-36](#)) focused on the mystery and promise of Christ's Second Coming. Her introduction couldn't have been more apt for two returning beachcombers. "I love the beach," she began, "It's the sea that frightens me." She continued, "We stand at the edge of dark and murky waters" and then enumerated the personal, social, and global ills that vex us. It is in the midst of such chaos, she proclaimed, the promise of Advent comes to us: "[Raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.](#)"

Bob Cueni's Pastoral Prayer echoed the themes of Elizabeth's sermon. I asked Bob for the manuscript of his prayer so I could reflect on it more deeply:

Eternal God, in the midst of this Advent Season of expectation, we confess that we are worried. Sometimes things seem to be spinning out of control. Every day we are bombarded with news of conflicts over race, refugees, religious differences and radical terrorists. These are added to stresses accompanying issues of immigration and significant social change. All this seems to have boiled into a bubbling stew of gnawing fear.

To paraphrase Yeats, the Irish poet, “The best people have lost all convictions while the worst are full of passionate intensity. O God of peace and hope, it seems that things are falling apart, the center cannot hold, anarchy threatens our nation and our world.”

Read and listen to Yeats’ classic poem “The Second Coming,” written in the wake of World War I, upon which Bob drew for his prayer:

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/172062>

Ponder the verse: “*The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.*” Pray for verve and courage in these tumultuous times.

O Come, O come, Emmanuel, God with us, come into these moments when we feel insecure and frightened. Come to us in those hours when disappointment and loneliness as well as suffering and pain appear poised to triumph over wholeness. Come to us, Lord God Emanuel, in all those places where we need healing.

Come, O come, Emmanuel. Disperse the clouds of darkness in a nation and world where our political and religious differences make meaningful compromise and resolution improbable if not impossible. Lord God, in these troubled times, reveal to us glimmers of new possibilities for peace and harmony. Guide us Lord through the darkness of the present by the shining star of Christmas...

At Noon when the broadcast of our service cut to Fox Sports Radio coverage of the National Football League, I turned off the radio, grateful to have been brought home on the wavelengths of worship.

Let's Get Ready **for This Sunday...**

8:30 a.m. I'll be preaching on the Annunciation (**Luke 1:26-38**)

11:00 a.m. The **McDaniel Memorial Choral Presentation of Magnificat** directed by Johnie Dean with Central's Chancel Choir, the Midway University Women's Choir, and orchestra.

Join me in inviting a friend, relative, neighbor, or friend!

Download a copy of the Elders' Advent Devotional here:

<http://centralchristianlex.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-Advent-Devotionals.pdf>

Pastor David