

ADVNT1.A1

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 2, 2007

Isaiah 2:1-5

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:36-44

This is the first day of the year. That news may get your attention because this is December 2 and that is **not** the first day of the year unless you have a specialized calendar – which I do. It is the first day of the *church* year. Get your red worship book and look on page fourteen in the front of the book. At the top of the page it says *Calendar*. There, at the top of the left column, it says *Advent*. And the very first day is *First Sunday of Advent*, which is today, and then there is a little red *B* which, if you read at the bottom of the page you will learn, means *blue* and that's the color that dresses our chancel this morning.

We use different years for different things. The school year starts in August. The car model year starts in September. It seems like the Texas football year never started at all and the political campaign year never ends. The church year starts with Advent.

The church year rehearses the history of God's relationship with his people. It's all based on Jesus. The first thing God's people did in relationship to Jesus was anticipate his coming. That's Advent. Then he was born and we celebrate that at Christmas. The wise men came and we knew that Jesus had come to all people of all races; that is the theme of Epiphany. Jesus suffered and died as we remember in Lent. Jesus rose from the dead which we celebrate at Easter. The Holy Spirit came and started the Church, which we remember at Pentecost. The Church lives today as Jesus' disciples; that is the theme of the Sundays after Pentecost, also called "The Time of the Church". At the end of history, Jesus Christ will finally be recognized as King of all creation so, on the last day of the Church Year, we celebrate Christ the King – which was the festival we celebrated last week.

Today we start over again with a new year. It is the First Sunday of Advent and the paraments are blue.

There are lots of different places to get paraments. Ecclesiastical arts stores sell them. Some churches buy new sets and give their old sets to other congregations. My daughter made this stole for me and gave it to me for my birthday last year. You can get them on e-bay. Peace Lutheran is particularly blessed. We have people who are both creative and talented. It's not easy to find people who are both.

Diana Acker and Jenna Bruns have created almost all of our paraments, often with the designs of Sara Slaughter. They also did the fabric panels on the south wall. Their talent not only praises God, they also do this for a living. They go around to church meetings of all denominations and churches and pastors want to have their work to help their congregations worship God. Their creations grace worship spaces all over the world. And, of course, they have made a set of paraments for Peace Lutheran to use during all the different things we remember during the church year.

Pastor Rodger Ericson and his wife, Marge, are not fiber artists. They are stained glass artists. Being creative people of faith they had an idea to make stained glass panels to hang in our narthex where the sun could shine through them. They would make the panels according to the five colors of the church year with appropriate symbols for the anticipation of Jesus, his birth, his suffering, his resurrection, the church, and discipleship. Today, we will begin the year by dedicating those glass panels.

They hang in the narthex and I hope you got to see them before our worship service; you can look at them after worship is over. In the meantime we have photographs of them that have been distributed to each family. Pastor Ericson has written some notes that are included next to the picture of each glass panel, how it was made, how the symbols were designed, how the glass was selected and so forth.

REMARKS FROM PASTOR ERICSON

Time takes on a peculiar quality in the season of Advent. We remember the **past**. The generations of God's faithful people waiting, and preparing for the coming of a Messiah whom they would not recognize when arrived. We live in the **present**, empowering today with the hope of God that can make this world a better place. We look to the **future**, knowing that the power of God will continue to bless his creation in generations beyond our sight.

These beautiful reminders of God's time will hang in our place of worship. God's time goes back before time began and it extends forward beyond the end of all things. When we live in God's time, we are part of eternity.

DEDICATION OF STAINED GLASS