

November 29, 2020

Song: **I Lift My Eyes Up**

Welcome **(Not for on the Powerpoint)**

Today is the beginning of Advent, a new season in the church. Advent is the 4 weeks before Christmas when we wait for Jesus to come. God's people waited for Jesus to come since the beginning of time.

In the Old Testament, when God showed up people often did not recognize him. And sometimes God purposefully hid his identity from people. God often turned out to be so very different than people expected. We could say that God is strange or God is a stranger! In the next 4 weeks we will hear about people who encountered God in ways that made them uncomfortable or afraid or frustrated. But we will also see how God revealed himself to them in ways that were strangely surprising and wonderful.

Call to Worship

As Abraham welcomed the strangers

So God welcomes us.

God greets us with joy

and says, "rest here for a while."

God brings out water to wash our dusty feet.

God prepares a meal to nourish our weary spirits.

So let us receive the gracious hospitality of our God.

Let us rest in this holy place

where there is shade and water, food and laughter.

God's Greeting and Our Greeting To Each Other

Song: **My Soul Cries Out**

Candle Lighting (Ashley Den Oudsten) - [on video]

This first Sunday of Advent we admit that we do not always recognize the mystery of God's presence among us. As we journey with Abraham when he meets God in strangers and in wild promises of children, in hard demands for mercy, and God's mysterious moves of justice, we begin to see this stranger is the God who keeps turning up in wildly unexpected ways.

A candle of hope burns to remind us

that God's welcome and hospitality to us is mysterious and unexpected;

that our hospitality to others and to God is a sacred act.

We contemplate the strangeness of God and live in hope.

Today we light the candle of HOPE. (*light 1st purple candle*).

(congregation)

Dear Jesus,

**We seek to become a community of hope
as we wait for the mystery and strangeness of your appearance
in this world. Amen.**

Confession

Heavenly Father, you created us, you formed us together in our mother's womb, our days are numbered before one of them comes to be. We know this to be true, but Father, if we are honest with you today there are days when it feels like you don't see us and the daily struggle and anguish that life brings. There are nights when we wonder if you hear our cries, our whispers, our longings and like Abraham's wife, Sarah, we too may laugh at your promises. Forgive us Father, for the days and nights in which we doubted you, doubted your goodness, doubted your mercy, doubted your grace.

Assurance

The good news of Advent is that you do see our hearts of pain and longing. You hear our cries! You are a creative God and your creativity is displayed in using ordinary people to fulfill the plans of an extraordinary God.

***We thank you for choosing people like us to further your kingdom.
During this advent season we wait longingly and expectantly.
We wait for God the stranger, Immanuel, God is with us***

Prayers of the People

Children's Blessing

Prayer of Illumination

Scripture: Genesis 18:1-15

Sermon: Abraham and the Stranger

Communion

Song: **What Child Is This**

Time of Praise

Song: **Meekness and Majesty**

Song: **Shout To the Lord**

Offerings at the door

1. Woody Nook Ministries
2. World Renew - Hurricane Eta

Parting Blessing

Song: **Prepare The Way**