

**WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, December 1, 2020**  
**Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN**

**“He’s Coming!”**

**READING:** Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-10 – Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken...You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God!” See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him, and his recompense accompanies him.

On my trip home from deer hunting in English, Indiana, a couple of weeks ago, I was driving on I-64 when once again I marveled at the engineering that produced that road. You drive along on a wonderfully smooth road through hill and dale, with gentle upsweeps and gentle downhill, hardly aware of the topography that had to be overcome in order to make an expressway on a fairly level plane. There were hills that had to be cut through, sometimes forty or fifty feet deep or more. Those were followed by valleys that had to be raised up forty or fifty feet or more. There were creek bottoms that had to be bridged. There were twists and turns that had to be straightened out. When the hills were dynamited and excavated, all the overburden was moved into the valleys as fill. Pay attention the next time you have reason to drive out that way. It’s truly amazing, and it always reminds me of our text for today.

Isaiah declares, “Make straight...a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low, the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.” In his prophetic utterance he presages the great building projects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his day the people couldn’t have imagined a highway like I-64. Their road building was limited to animal and manpower. But, it’s not the building project that’s the focus of his prophecy – it’s the LORD GOD COMING TO HIS PEOPLE! “Here is your God!” Isaiah is prophesying the coming of the Messiah to the aid and comfort of his people.

John the Baptist, as he preaches and baptizes along the Jordan, is recognized by St. Luke to be the very voice of the one calling in desert, “Prepare the way for the Lord!” John says the time is at hand. John says Isaiah’s prophecy is about to be fulfilled. “HE’S COMING!” Get ready! Prepare yourselves! Cut down the hills of your arrogance and pride. Fill in the low places of unrighteousness in your lives. Repent of your sins and watch for his appearance. And, REJOICE! Because when the Lord comes in the little town of Bethlehem, he comes with one purpose, one intent. He comes to save his people from their sins.

**Advent starts tomorrow. And, boy, can we use some Advent! After the year we have endured with all its noise, confusion, fear, and rancor; after riots, demonstrations, debates, polls, lockdowns, cancellations; after charges and countercharges, daily death tallies, mail-in ballots and e-learning, we need Good News! We need to hear the Baptist say again, "...One more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." We need to hear Isaiah whisper to us, "Comfort, comfort, ye my people!" We want to watch again for his coming as a babe in Bethlehem, God veiled in flesh. We need to hear the angels say to us again, "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men!"**

**He's coming! So lift up your hearts. Rejoice once again that the God of all Creation, the God of power and might, deigns to join his sinful, fallen creatures as one of them. He puts his glory aside, he lays down his power, he leaves behind the majesty of heaven in order that he might show the great riches of his love, the depth of his mercy, and the sacrifice beyond all knowing. He's coming to save us. He's coming to give us hope. He's coming! Thanks be to God!**

**PRAYER:**

**ANNOUNCEMENT(S):**

**ADVENT SERIES: "Act Justly, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly with Your God" (Micah 6:8)  
Wednesdays, 7:00 P.M. – December 2, 9, and 16**

**"GIFTS FOR KIDS" – We intend to gift 45-60 children and teens again this Christmas by the purchase, wrapping, and distribution of toys, games, and clothing needs for children in needy families – both within the congregation and in our community. I'll need shoppers and wrappers. If you can one or both, write a little note and get it to me, or call Karen and ask her to put a note on my desk. You'll hear from me. And, you can make donations for this worthy cause by envelope or internet. Simply indicate "Gifts for Kids" on the envelope or on the website. We'll use every dollar to make a child's Christmas a little brighter.**