

November 30, 2014
Advent Service

Well folks, advent is upon us. That wonderful time of year when we get to celebrate our Lord Jesus Christ's first coming as a little babe in Bethlehem is here. But, that is not our final focus during this time of jolly-making. As we remember with thankful hearts the first coming of Christ, we also turn our hearts in faith toward our Lord and King's second coming.

Just as God promised to send a savior and did in that little bundle that Mary laid in a manger, Jesus also promised that he would come again. When he does that, he will usher in a new and glorious Kingdom ruled only by God. There will be a New Heaven and a New Earth, and sin and death, pain and tears will be abolished forever. That is the time that we look to in faith during Advent.

As Christians, our faith always grasps this promise of Jesus and turns our hearts and minds to that future time. But, we are also called to remember everything God has done for us and share those things with the world. So, today we turn our hearts to the future in faith, we turn our minds to the past in Bethlehem all those years ago, and turn our hands to the tasks at hand. Today, we have some special tasks at hand.

As always during the Christmas season there is a lot to do. It is no different here at *Tree of Life*. Because of that, we are going to be using today as a day of preparation. We are going to be using our various gifts and talents to

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prepare for the Advent of our Lord. That means we will be decorating the church, preparing flyers and cards, making ornaments and so much more. Please stay a while after church if you are able to and help us ready our church for the coming of the ultimate King.

Now that being said, this day of preparation gives me a chance to talk about 5th Sundays here at *Tree*. Today is the 5th Sunday in November, and it will be our Servant Sunday to prepare for Advent. I think it is a great idea that we make all 5th Sundays "Servant Sundays." By doing that we can, once a quarter, take that odd and extra Sunday to ready the church for upcoming events and, if all goes well in the future, use these special days as a way to reach out into the community with other various acts of service.

Today, we will be readying the church for the Advent and Christmas season, but in the future I hope to use our talents and gifts to reach out into the community around our church and offer Christ's love and our faith in him through service. Some of you may ask, "What will this look like?" Well, I have to save some information for future *Roots*, don't I? For now, thank you for your help in today's Servant Sunday service, and please look forward to future Servant Sundays. God's peace to you my dear flock.

Pastor *Carl O. Johnson*

