

Advent 2008 – Reflections on Year B

The gospel text for Year B, which begins with Advent, is Mark. The Good News that we find ushered by Jesus in Mark's gospel is that of transformative power. Mark has no birth narrative, no Christmas story. For Advent, then, the Lectionary gives us an apocalyptic text (Mark 13), then John the Baptist (Mark 1) and then shifts to John and Luke.

An insightful article on Mark's gospel by William Loader, *The Gospel of Mark* at www.staff.murdoch.edu.au, talks about the "transformative power" that is Mark's understanding of the good news to which Jesus points. If Advent is preparing for the coming of Jesus, the coming of Jesus' purpose/meaning/message, then our texts might encompass what we understand to be the purpose/meaning/message; for Loader this would be an image of the transformative power.

As an alternative to the Lectionary, in keeping with Mark's understanding of the good news that is born among us this holy season, I would offer the following four gospel texts for Advent.

Texts and Themes

- ✓ Mark 4:35-41 - The Good News crosses to the "Other Side"
- ✓ Mark 6:53-56 (10:46-52) - The Good News is Healing and Sight
- ✓ Mark 8:1-10 - The Good News feeds Them
- ✓ Mark 10:13-16 - The Good News is Power Inversion

The children's stories that illuminate these themes include:

- ✓ Mark 4:35-41 - The Good News crosses to the "Other Side"
When Christmas Came – Eileen Spinelli
- ✓ Mark 6:53-56 (10:46-52) - The Good News is Healing and Sight
Christmas Candle – Richard Paul Evans
Shoemaker Martin – Leo Tolstoy
- ✓ Mark 8:1-10 - The Good News feeds Them
The Give-Away – Ray Buckley
Shine Man – Mary Quattlebaum
- ✓ Mark 10:13-16 - The Good News is Power Inversion
The Last Straw – Fredrick Thury
Legend of the Pointsetta – Tomie dePaola

Worship Notes for these texts in Year B

November 30 - Advent 1 (Peace)

Text and Theme

Isaiah 64:1-9 and Mark 4:35-41
The Good News crosses to the "Other Side"

Children's Story

When Christmas Came – Eileen Spinelli

Advent Candle

Reading:

On this first Sunday of Advent, we light a candle for peace. Peace comes not with the destruction of the tools of war, the creator flows through relationships creating unity.
(one candle is lit)

Prayer:

Creating One, may we have minds limber enough to receive your coming in that which appears paradoxical.

Prayer of Dedication

*Dear God,
As we journey down this Advent road,
grant us the courage to make peace.
Peace in our hearts,
Peace in our homes,
Peace in our communities.
Amen.*

Hymns

121 All Earth is Waiting
345 Let All Mortal Flesh
108 Isaiah the Prophet

Music Responses

There are Choices (Patterson), v1
136 Jesus, Jesus
116 O Come, O Come Emmanuel v.1

December 7 - Advent 2 (Hope)

Text and Theme

Isaiah 40:1-11 and Mark 8:1-10
The Good News feeds Them

Children's Story

*Christmas Candle – Richard Paul Evans
Shoemaker Martin – Leo Tolstoy*

Advent Candle

Reading:

On this second Sunday of Advent, we light a candle for hope. Hope comes not from the absence of conflict, the sacred is revealed in the presence of the enemy.

(two candles are lit)

Prayer:

Sacred One, may we have hearts seasoned enough to receive your coming in that which appears offensive.

Prayer of Dedication

*Dear God,
As we begin our Advent pilgrimage,
grant us the courage to hope.
Hope for your presence,
Hope for your peace,
Hope for your promise.
Amen.*

Hymns

107 Awake, Awake (Haugen)
118 Of the Parent's Heart Begotten
122 Come, O Long Expected

Music Responses

There are Choices (Patterson), v2
136 Jesus, Jesus
116 O Come, O Come Emmanuel v.2

December 14 - Advent 3 (Joy)

Text and Theme

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 and Mark 6:53-56
The Good News is Healing and Sight

Children's Story

*The Give-Away – Ray Buckley
Shine Man – Mary Quattlebaum*

Advent Candle

Reading:

*On this third Sunday of Advent, we light a candle for joy. Joy rarely appears with neon signs and blinding lights, the divine rests as a radiant strand in an intricate tapestry.
(three candles are lit)*

Prayer:

Divine One, may we have eyes focused enough to receive your coming in that which appears ordinary.

Prayer of Dedication

*Dear God,
In the height of our Advent walk,
grant us the courage to experience joy.
Joy in the face of apathy,
Joy in the face of sorrow,
Joy in the face of uncertainty.
Amen.*

Hymns

122 Come, O Long Expected
150 Sing a Different Song
Joy to the World

Music Responses

There are Choices (Patterson)v.3
136 Jesus, Jesus
116 O Come, O Come Emmanuel v.6

December 21- Advent 4 (Love)

Text and Theme

II Sam. 7:1-11 and Mark 10:13-16
The Good News is Power Inversion

Children's Story

*The Last Straw – Fredrick Thury
Legend of the Pointsetta – Tomie dePaola*

Advent Candle

Reading:

*On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light a candle for love. Love surpasses the secure locations we would choose, the holy nests in precarious places and roots in the fragile.
(four candles are lit)*

Prayer:

Holy One, may we have hands gentle enough to receive your coming in that which appears vulnerable.

Prayer of Dedication

*Dear God,
As our Advent pilgrimage draws to completion,
grant us the courage to share your love.
Love for the unexpected challenge,
Love for the vulnerable one.
Love for the presence of God.
Amen.*

Hymns

153 Who Would Think that What was Needed
Once in Royal David's City
What Child is This

Music Responses

There are Choices (Patterson), v4
136 Jesus, Jesus
116 O Come, O Come Emmanuel v. 1,2,6,7