

Untitled (14)

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Preacher: John Woloszyn

[0:00] It's working. As you all probably know, this is my first time preaching here at Christ for Holy Trinity.

I named one of my other churches. I'm not a new deacon, as you can see, I'm 65 years old.

Everybody has a different style of preaching.

So let me tell you a little about mine so you know what to expect. I tend to go long. Don't get nervous.

I was a Roman Catholic deacon for 20 years, and 15 minutes was long. So I probably will go over 15 minutes.

Deacons are called to preach and teach from up here. So you'll see me do both. You'll see me be interactive at times.

[1:11] I need to know you're out there. I didn't know this. Somebody told me, and I'll put them both under pressure. It was either Caleb or Dave that told me, we can see when you close your eyes and go to sleep.

So we need to know you're out there. So if I ask a question, answer. Or it could be quiet for a while while I wait.

I was also in music ministry for over 40 years. So you may hear parts of songs, and they may not even be church songs. It's just part of my style.

I love to sing. Our music minister knows that. Today I jumped in while we were setting up, because I love the song they were singing. So let's get started for today.

And I'll start by saying, Happy New Year! Right? Happy New Year! And you look at me funny like, Happy New Year! Yeah, in the church year, Bishop Julian reminded us of this, and Bishop Dave reminded us in the newsletter, the church year doesn't start on January 1st.

[2:30] And if you know, there's a lot of government agencies, state agencies, corporations, that start their years on different dates than January 1st.

That's the calendar year. Okay? For the church, it's not easy to say, well, it starts on November 29th, because it doesn't do that either.

You've got to take Christmas, which is always the 25th, and back it up for Sundays. And actually, I don't want to get into all the little other things that are in the middle of there that make it decide what the date is.

This year, it's the 29th of November. So it floats around. It's always the first Sunday of Advent.

Okay, here's my first question for the day.

First Sunday of Advent. What's different? What do we notice when we come in the church that says, oh, it's Advent? Just, what?

[3:36] The color change. The color change. We got blue. Okay, we've been in green for so long. Does anybody get tired of the color green? I don't think my granddaughters have ever asked me what my favorite color is, and I've said green.

Because we use green for a long time. But this is blue. And really, we only see blue for the four weeks of Advent. Okay, what else? Is there anything else?

The wreath. The wreath. The Advent wreath. And Bishop Dave spoiled my homily in his little note, too. The Advent wreath reminds us that it's Advent and that we're moving through this time.

So we have one candle lit, and by the time we're done, we'll have four candles lit. Okay, it helps us to keep track. Where are we going and where have we been?

So you pass the questions. Everybody got a hundred. I gotta start turning these pages under.

[4:39] The word Advent comes really from a loose translation.

It comes from a loose translation of a Latin word, loosely to a medieval English word meaning come. Simple.

Come. Come. But what's coming? Huh? We got no kids here today, so I'll sing my song. You better watch out.

You better not cry. You better not pout. No, it's not Santa Claus. It's not Santa Claus that we wait for in church. It's Christ.

We get ready to celebrate the coming of Christ. Now in scriptures, each year, each year of the church year, we get a different context for the coming of Christ.

[5:52] Last year's Advent scriptures were the most related to the coming of Christ at Christmas. So when Dave, Bishop Dave, asked me to preach the first Sunday of Advent this year, I said, oh, you would.

Because we got a different context this year. In this year's scriptures, he really talks about Christ coming again.

Every year we think and reflect about Christ coming into the world at Christmas.

I personally like John's gospel story of the incarnation. So every year, Advent and Christmas season, I use that in my personal reflection.

A lot of people like St. Luke's gospel because, you know, it's the baby born in the manger and the shepherds out in the field and the angels in the sky.

[7:02] It's the traditional. But I like the incarnation story. God coming down from heaven through Mary into the world. But this year, we need to look very, very closely at Mark's gospel, which is the one we're going to read through Advent.

So let's open our Bibles to Mark chapter 13, verses 24 to 37. And kind of follow along. Jesus is speaking very strongly to his followers about, be on guard, stay awake, keep watch.

Why would Jesus speak to them this way? He's right there! Right?

He's right there! The Messiah's come! If we continue in Scripture, we realize that the Jewish people didn't all see the Messiah in their midst.

They had to be reminded. Jesus told his followers that they would, that he would come, which he had, and he also told them that he would come again.

[8:39] He told them to be on guard, stay alert, and keep watch. Be ready. You won't know the day or the hour.

But then he goes on to tell the lesson of the fig tree. In a lot of ways, I don't know why it fits in there. But the more and more you pray about it, I guess it does.

Two things about the lesson of the fig tree. Lessons like this one and the parables were not unique to Jesus. We hear Jesus tell parables all the time.

So did all the rabbis in his day. So do rabbis today. That's how they teach. is in storytelling, in parables. The same way Jesus did.

So it wasn't, oh, Jesus told parables. Yeah. They considered him a teacher, a rabbi. That would be the way to teach. The second point is, although we won't know the day or the hour, this lesson tells us that there will be signs.

[10:04] That's why we need to watch. Watch. Watch. As an aside, I love the fig tree stories even though I don't eat fresh figs.

My wife is Italian and many of her relatives grow fig trees. It's not easy to grow a fig tree in the northeastern United States.

We don't get the weather for them. I've been trying for 38 years. No success until this year.

I finally have a very large fig tree that had a lot of figs on it this summer. But now's the important part.

It's in the backyard garden. So I had to cover it so that it wouldn't catch the winter winds and the winter snows. And we have a second one that's in a barrel that like a lot of her aunts and uncles, we had to bring it in the house to keep it warm.

[11:28] But like the gospel said, in the spring, we'll look to see if the figs are coming when the limbs get limber.

Right now, actually, you've got to be careful because if you move the one around in the house, you can break the limbs because they're kind of, you think it'll never come back in this condition. But it will.

Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch.
Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch.
Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch. Watch.iling. Thank you.