

Devotions – November 30 – December 6, 2014
By Pastor Mike Laakko
United Lutheran Church, Crystal Falls, MI and
Bethany Lutheran Church, Amasa, MI

Sunday, November 30

THE SEASON OF ADVENT

Text: Matthew 11:2-3

“And when John heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

It could be said that I, Mike Laakko, am a person of seasons. It could also be said that my favorite time of the year is the Hunting Season. I look forward and prepare for its coming with great anticipation each year as November rolls around.

The word Advent comes from a Latin verb that means to COME. The Advent season begins on Nov 30th, and ends on Christmas Eve. During Advent we wait and prepare for the “Coming One,” Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Let us pray: Thank you Lord for this Advent Season. Help us to be ready for your coming into our lives each day. Help us to look only to you to direct us in our ministry of daily life. Amen



Monday, December 1

PREPARATION

Text: Proverbs 16:1

“The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.”

I was all into getting ready for the opening day of the Deer hunting rifle season on November 15th. Wood had to be made, the blinds had to be set up, the camp, Beaver Lodge, had to be made ready to receive guests. My heart was really into it but I wasn't always prepared and listening for the answers from the Lord. The answer from the tongue of God was two feet of snow for opening day.

Let us pray: Lord, come into our hearts, come into our minds. Open our ears so we hear and respond to your voice, calling us to worship and honor you as our first priority. Amen



Tuesday, December 2

PREPARE

Text: Isaiah 40:1

“The voice of one crying in wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

The guests had arrived and we loaded it all on the back of my pickup and headed down to the Military Bridge crossing the Ontonagon River to begin the one mile trek out to Beaver Lodge with two sleighs weighted down with 500 pounds each of food, clothes, rifles and other needed supplies. My son Adam’s friend, Budda, drove his car down and we first had to shovel some of that two feet of snow so he could park his car with my truck off the road. Adam and Kyle started off ahead, with Budda and me following. A quarter mile into our haul Budda says, “I know you know where you’re going, but is there a straighter easier highway?” “Hey, don’t worry we can do this!” It took us five hours and two portages to get to Camp.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, thank you for preparing the highway for us each day. Help us always to listen to your voice and stay the course. Amen



Wednesday, December 3

THE RIGHT TIME

Text: Acts 1:7-8

“And Jesus said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

It was 6:30 a.m. on the second day of “The Season,” and I kept trying to wake Adam so he could get into his blind by first light. When I walked out the door, he was still in bed. I shook my head in disgust thinking that he would miss seeing the Monarch of the military, that thirty point buck. He did get into the blind at around 9 a.m. At 11 a.m., not the Monarch but a spike horn appeared and Adam passed the shot. He did get to his stand in time to have an opportunity to harvest a deer, and enjoyed the time of season he was blessed to be a part of.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, thank you for each new day. Help us to honor you by making the most of the time you give us to serve you. Amen



Thursday, December 4

PATIENCE

Text: James 1:4

“But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

One of the most important qualities for being a good hunter is to have the gift of patience. It’s also a great spiritual gift to acquire because God does not operate on human time. I spent four hours the first morning patiently watching for that buck, but enjoyed seeing the blue jays come and go. Later in the afternoon I snuck up on a big doe. Budda lost track of time and stayed in his blind all day watching a doe and fawn. He had left his cell phone at camp. Kyle traded patience watching for deer from the blind for the warmth of the heat from the potbelly stove at camp.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, as I wait for your coming today, give me the patience to listen, to watch and to act upon your word as you reveal it to me. Amen



Friday, December 5

BE WATCHFUL

Text: 2 Timothy 4:5

“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

The season of Advent calls us to be watchful. The same applies even double when you’re out hunting for the Monarch of the Military. I was sitting in my blind in the late afternoon when a big doe came in for a snack of apples. She kept looking anxiously behind her, so I figured a buck was coming. Then she was gone in a flash. However, I had failed my watch because I fell asleep in the cozy blind. The next morning I was watching that same doe and when she bolted out like lightning hit her, I was ready for the eight point buck that followed her.

Let us pray: Dear Lord thank you for watching over us your church each day. When we fall asleep refresh us to follow and serve you in our ministry of daily life. Amen



Saturday, December 6

KEEP AWAKE

Text: Matthew 24:42, 44

Jesus says: “Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming ... Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

I'm glad I was awake the morning that eight point buck appeared like a ghost out of nowhere so unexpectedly giving me a second chance. The Advent season is also about preparing for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of the dawn. We should anticipate his arrival and prepare for it as we would prepare for a new day. “Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.” Romans 13:11-12

Let us pray: Dear Lord, help us to be awake and ready for the blessing of each new day. Cover us all in your armor of light and send us out to, “Let our light so shine before others that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.” Amen

