



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

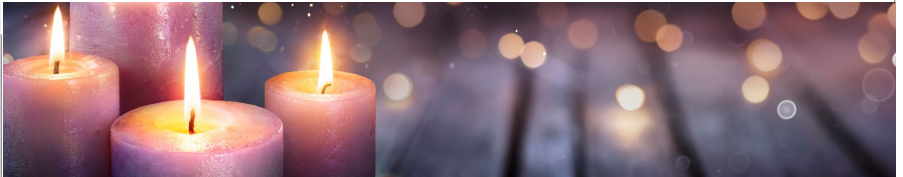
Week of November 27, 2022 (Habakkuk 1:1-7; 2:1-4; 3:3b-6, 17-19)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Patient God, you play a long game; only it is no game to you. Your heart breaks as your world suffers and dies, rife with suffering and cruelty, violence and war. Your heart breaks as you see children hungry and homeless, unloved and unwanted, with no place to call home. Your heart breaks as you see the beauty of the earth ravaged and exploited, torn up for short term gain.

You know that we are slow to learn the lessons of eternity. Slow to catch on to the ancient rhythms of the ages. Slow to see you at work healing and restoring the damage we have done and continue to do.

God, give us your insight to curb our destruction, your compassion to start the work of healing and your patience to persist when our efforts are rejected or seem futile. Teach us that long game, oh Lord. Amen.



Devotions for Life, Advent I

The Story: Habakkuk 1:1-7; 2:1-4; 3:3b-6, 17-19

Context: This week we enter Advent, an often misunderstood season. Advent is the Christian New Year, and in it we wait, hope, and long for the coming of Christ. It works on the two levels of Christ being born into the world as a baby who is God made flesh in 1st Century Palestine over 2,000 years ago, as well as us waiting for Christ's return in our here and now.

We like to think of it as a season of joy, and while traditionally the third Sunday in Advent is the Sunday of joy, Advent is marked more by holding on to hope in dark times, longing for peace in violent times, and waiting for a God who seems to be tarrying to move. While it is perfectly ok to enjoy the cookies, parties, and celebrations, it's also important in Advent to note the condition of the world and remember that this season is a protest against it that current condition.



This is why we get readings like Habakkuk in Advent. It's actually a perfect Advent text. We don't know much about Habakkuk. Its time is unknown, though there is

Advent at Home I:

Advent is here. Jesus is soon to arrive. Though our days get darker, the light we shine in Advent shines brighter.

[light/turn on candle]

Today we light the candle of hope. Hope for more peace, more joy, and more love in the world, in our communities, and in our homes.

Let us Pray: Come, Lord Jesus, come. As we wait for you, we wait with hope for a better and brighter world. Amen.

Compassion & Justice:

This month we are supporting STEP's annual Christmas toy drive. As the Bible calls us to **do justice**, it's important to remember the ways in which STEP is a primary organization in town that does this work to which we are called. One of their biggest fundraisers is their "give to the max campaign", wherein gifts given before November 17th are matched up to \$50,000. If you have the means, make a contribution before then! Head to www.stepslp.org for more info.

reason to believe it was written around the same timespan as Micah and Isaiah. It also has very little specificity in it (other than a vague mentioning of the Chaldeans) which allows it to be applied broadly through space and time. In this, it's a great Advent I text, because its context can become our here and now.

Reading the Story: Another strange thing about this prophetic book, is that there is actually not a lot of prophecy in it. Much of it reads like a Psalm, and as a whole it has a bit of a "Job" feel in that there is a conversation between God and Habakkuk going on. Keep that in mind as you read.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

1. What phrases in this passage stood out to you the most?
2. What is the point of these passages? What is Habakkuk's overall point?
3. Does any of it sound like it could have been written today? What about other times in the world's history?
4. Why is vision important? How are vision and hope connected (if at all)? What do you hope for? How can you visualize what you hope for?
5. What can you do/ do you need to do to take the next step toward what you hope for?
6. Why does God tell Habakkuk to write the vision "on a tablet"?
7. How bleak is the picture painted in verse 3:17? What are the images Habakkuk uses?
8. Why does he still rejoice? What does "exult" mean?
9. What does it mean to have "feet like the feet of a deer"?
10. Where do you need God to show up in your life this Advent season?

