

Waiting for What has Already Come

Advent is about waiting; not so much about waiting for Christmas, for there really is none of that during Advent, no waiting for Christmas. The world cannot wait, and so, to the world, it has been Christmas for quite a while already. Well, there are those who know that there is a thing called "Advent", and call their pre-Christmas Christmas activities "Advent", probably out of a sense that it sounds more Christian.

To the Church of Christ, Advent is indeed a time of preparation for Christmas, and again, the theme of Advent is "waiting", but not so much in the sense that it is Christmas the Church of Christ awaits. The word "Advent" come from the Latin "Adventus Domini", which means the "coming of the Lord". For centuries, His people awaited the coming of the Saviour God had promised to send to His people. And during Advent, the Church of Christ, which is His people now, goes back in time, so to speak, to stand shoulder to shoulder with our fathers in the faith and look to that which was to come; we hear the promises, and we sense what it must have been like to long for their fulfilment. And we rejoice that the promises of a Saviour have now been fulfilled, and that the fulfilment of His promises proved far greater than the fathers expected. God Himself came as Saviour to suffer and die for His people, the Son of God who is Himself God from eternity, to save His people, not only from grief and agony in this life, but from His own wrath and judgement against all evil, not just for a life in worldly wealth and health and happiness, but for His own heavenly life in the fullness of His goodness and His glory. Nobody expected that, although it was hinted at in the promises God had had His Prophets proclaim; even now when we know that it has been fulfilled, it is too good to be believed, and we believe it only because He Himself makes us to.

But while the Church of Christ looks back to how the fathers waited for Him who has now come, she also awaits His coming herself. For He who has come shall come again to judge the living and the dead, and we need to be ready for His coming. Therefore we are reminded to turn to Him anew, ever anew, and draw near to Him, to hear His Word, and take it seriously, and amend our lives accordingly, and acknowledge our faults and failures in doing so, and seek salvation where He has promised that His salvation is to be found, in the Word and worship of His salvation, so that when He comes, we may be found to be in the faith, and see Him coming, not with judgement and damnation, but to take us to Himself for ever in glory.

*Pastor Jais H. Tinglund
Grace Lutheran Church, Greybull/Zion Lutheran Church, Emblem*