

From the Pastor. . .

Those who are in charge of such things tell us that the seasons of Advent and Lent are seasons of self-examination and of preparation, for Christmas and Easter.

I'll agree with the first proposition: we do need seasons of self-examination, to see where we are in our relationship with God. . . to discern if our walk is with Jesus or with someone or something else, to see if we are indeed living by those Christian values of mercy, forgiveness, to see if we are loving our neighbor as ourselves. . . and even if we might be going so far as to love our enemies.

I'm not sure about the other proposition, though: that Lent and Advent are season of preparation. . . because we can never prepare for God's power and grace to burst unexpectedly into our everyday lives. The shepherds were not prepared when the angels announced that God's good news was for folks like them. Bethlehem wasn't prepared, either: Mary and Joseph ended up in a barn, or more probably a cave, somewhere.

And Easter surprised the believers as well. The disciples had run away and the women come to the tomb with no expectation that Jesus is alive: they have come only to prepare a dead body. And in the garden Mary Magdalene is unprepared for Jesus to be alive; she thinks it's the gardener.

And this is the point: God intervenes in our lives unexpectedly and decisively, whether we are ready or not. Many people find themselves in difficult situations this year: illness, job insecurity, mourning. May I invite you to believe that God is still at work in your life. May I invite you to believe in resurrection, new life, new beginnings, new possibilities. . . for this is God's ultimate and gracious word to us.

Ready or not, Christ was born into your life and mine. Ready or not, Christ is raised from the dead and in the power of resurrection in his life is power and promise for ours.

– Eric Lindblade

