

11/26/17 BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CHANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE

Pastor Mike Corwin

(This service was set up differently from a normal worship service so I am sending you the various texts that Pastor Mike used throughout.)

CHANGING OF THE COLORS:

We change the color of the clothes today from green, which stands for ordinary time in the church, to blue which shows we are beginning a special time in the church. We use blue because it is symbolic of heavenly love, fidelity, and the unveiling of truth. Blue is traditionally the color assigned to Mary, mother of Jesus. Purple is sometimes used and can still be found in the color of the candles on the advent wreath and other decorations because it is symbolic of royalty and signifies the Kingdom of Jesus over all of creation.

THE MEANING OF ADVENT:

It seems that each year the world moves farther away from the meaning of the Advent season which leads up to the day of Christmas which is the day that begins the season of celebrating the birth of the long awaited Messiah. And that's what this season of Advent is...a season of waiting. But it is so much more than that. Advent is more than setting up Christmas decorations, lighting trees, and shopping for the perfect gift for family and friends. Advent is a season of preparation and hope, anticipation and solemn joy. It's a time to focus on the prophets of the Old Testament and their anticipation of a Messiah. We know that their waiting was not in vain. The Christ child truly was born in a stable to bring God's grace and love to the broken and hurting people then and now. But we are not done anticipating the coming of the Messiah. Advent is from a Latin word which means "COMING" and refers to the coming of the Christ. On Christmas Eve we will celebrate his first coming, but the story and Advent doesn't end there. That baby born in the stable, the Savior of the world, promised the world that he would return. So we know and hope with the same anticipation and joy for the second coming of the Savior. So we mix the joy of the redemption that has already come with the somber awe of the judgement which confronts us. Advent today is not only a time of remembering what Jesus has already done, but also a time of spiritual preparation, recognizing that Christ is still coming in to our hearts by grace to redeem and judge us now. May our hearts be so prepared this Advent.

MESSAGE – HANGING OF THE GREENS

GOD WILL SEND A RIGHTEOUS KING

Jeremiah 23:5-6 (NLT)

⁵ “For the time is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David’s line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. ⁶ And this will be his name: ‘The LORD Is Our Righteousness.’ In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.

In ancient times the cedar was revered as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality and was used for purification. We place this cedar branch as a sign of Christ, who reigns as King for ever, and whose coming, in justice and righteousness, will purify our hearts.

(PLACE CEDAR BRANCH ON ALTAR)

THE PROPHET DECLARES A CHILD WILL BE BORN

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (NLT)

² The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. ⁶ For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen!

Because the needles of pine and fir trees appear not to die each season, the ancients saw them as signs of things that last forever. Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah. Therefore, we hang this wreath of evergreens shaped in a circle, which itself has no end, to signify the eternal reign of Jesus the Christ.

(PLACE WREATH)

THE FOURTH SERVANT SONG

Isaiah 53:1-6 (NLT)

*¹ Who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?
² My servant grew up in the LORD’s presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to*

attract us to him. ³ He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. ⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! ⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.

(READER) For Christians, this passage from Isaiah reflects the sufferings of Jesus, who saved us from our sins by his death on the cross, and by his resurrection from the dead. In ancient times, holly and ivy were considered signs of Christ's passion. Their prickly leaves suggested the crown of thorns, the red berries the blood of the Savior, and the bitter bark the drink offered to Jesus on the cross. As we hang the holly and ivy, let us rejoice in the coming of Jesus, our Savior.

(PLACE HOLLY AND IVY)

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION:

John 1:1-5, 9-14 (NLT)

¹ In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He existed in the beginning with God. ³ God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. ⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created and his life brought light to everyone. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. ¹² But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. ¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

As we prepare for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World, we light the Christmas tree. During this Advent, whenever you see a lighted Christmas tree, let it call to mind the One who brings light to our darkness, healing to our brokenness, and peace to all who receive him.