

The Advent of Our God  
Pastor Erik Gauss  
Cross, Yorkville

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV): Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.

This past Sunday we began a new Church Year and a new season called Advent. Advent means “coming” because we celebrate the fulfillment of this prophecy. The “coming” of the baby, born of a virgin, named Immanuel, meaning, “God with us”. But, it is so much more than that.

There were nearly 600 years between the time that Isaiah was given the prophecy of the virgin and the actual arrival of Immanuel. 600 years of waiting and praying. 600 years of complaining and doubting. 600 hundred years of second-guessing and false alarms. The people of God endured famine, oppression, curses, and blessings in that first Advent of our God.

The people waited so long for the coming of Immanuel that when Jesus first arrived, born of the virgin Mary, the literal “God with us” was not recognized for who He was. Some had given up hope, some had followed false “Immanuels,” but most of the people were simply consumed by their own daily lives. Their focus had wandered from the promises of God to their own personal dreams and desires.

The arrival of Immanuel, the promised Messiah of God, God Himself with us transformed the world. It started local and small with His family, then spread to the 12 and the 72, then throughout Jerusalem, Judea and to the ends of the earth. But now we find ourselves back where we started.

It has been two thousand years since Immanuel paid for the sins of the whole world. The Messiah rose again from the dead and ascended into Heaven. It has been a couple millennia since the Holy Spirit arrived in the hearts and minds of the disciples, and each subsequent disciple through the waters of baptism. It has been too many generations to count since Jesus promised to return and begin a second Advent.

Our current Advent awaits the arrival of Jesus to take all the believers to eternal life in Heaven. But so many have become distracted, consumed with the desires of daily living. We do not want to miss His return.

This Advent we invite you to fix your eyes on Jesus. We await His return by doing His will. We are the tangible presence of God in this world. As God is with us in baptism, we bring God to the world through our flesh, our words, and our love. His flesh, His words, His love at work in the world through us.

While we wait for the second coming of God, the world waits for the church of God to come to them right where they are. They are distracted, consumed with their own needs. But that’s ok. Just as Jesus came meekly as a babe in the manger, He works through our timidity, humility, and fear. God is with us, and nothing can change that. We are God’s presence in the world, and nothing can change that. Nothing that is

except the re-arrival of Immanuel. We wait eagerly for His return and work tirelessly for His will.