

## Advent Hospitality

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." - Genesis 1:26 (ESV)*

*"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." - Luke 2:7 (ESV)*

The Season of Advent is a season of **preparation**: we prepare our hearts while we also we prepare our homes to receive and celebrate the joy of Christ the newborn King! Often, in the hustle and bustle of this month, our focus falls on the *familiar - familiar traditions, familiar friends and family, and familiar songs and readings.*

But the story of Advent reminds us to expect the **unexpected** from God... to expect Him to show up in **unfamiliar** ways! No one expected Jesus to come to us in the **manner, form, or time** that he did. But he came, even though we weren't ready to receive Him - literally!... *'there was no place for them in the inn.'* (Luke 2:7b)

Let me invite you to consider an additional way to prepare this Advent. **Each day, prayerfully ask the Lord to help you embrace the unfamiliar... to expect the unexpected.** Ask the Lord to give you eyes see those around you in your *church* who also need to see Him in unexpected and gracious ways, such as the lonely widow(er); the out-of-work single mother; the disabled father of three; the student home from college; the weary pastor.

Ask the Lord to give you eyes to see those around you in your *neighborhood, the checkout line, the classroom, or cubicle* next to you at work. Everyone has a story. Consider giving the gift of time to a neighbor and invite them to share with you their story. It may just open doors to experience the gift of Christ working through you in some unexpected ways, not by what you say, but by your willingness to "provide a inn" of listening, compassion, and care.

On Sunday mornings or other church gatherings this month, let me encourage us to break from our "holy huddles" (our gatherings with *familiar* friends at church), seek out the more *unfamiliar* in our churches - those sitting alone in worship, or those standing alone in the foyer - perhaps invite them to coffee to share their story with you. Ask your pastor if there is a shut-in you could visit this month.

Every person, whether or not they acknowledge Him as Lord (yet), is loved by God and is made in His image (Gen. 1:26). Would you join me in prayerfully asking the Lord to reveal how we can glorify His Advent this season by joyfully embracing the **unfamiliar** around us and expecting to find Him in the **unexpected**?

With a Grateful Heart,




RP Phil & Wendy's visit to Good Shepherd in Buda, TX. Elders Ron & Les with Phil (top). Baptism of Mia Martinez (middle). Heather and Chris Nab. Chris will begin seminary this January! Pray for Good Shepherd Ministries!

### *Prayers and Praises from around the Pacific Region...*

- **Amy Price**, wife of Pr. Jay Price (Word of Life, Marysville) will be having surgery this Thursday, December 1, to remove a brain tumor that is likely benign. The location of the tumor near the carotid artery and optic nerve makes the surgery more complicated. Amy will be having follow-up radiation to destroy what remains of the tumor. Pray for wisdom and care from Amy's medical team, peace for the entire Price family, and for God's glory to be revealed to many through this trial.
- **Loyal Clarke** (Elder, Desert Rose, Tempe, AZ) as he recovers from a heart attack suffered a few weeks ago.
- **Pr. Gregory & Michelle Solberg and Community Church of Joy (Sammamish, WA)** in this is time of transition for the Solbergs and CCOJ as Gregory and Michelle move to Sidney, MT, where Gregory will serve alongside Pr. Mike Hussey. Pray for CCOJ as they pray and plan over their future ministry.
- **Pr. Jim Jensen (Community Church of Joy, Sammamish, WA)** has a new music album, "**Look Up!**" available on iTunes, Amazon, CD Baby and other music providers. Enjoy God's gifts to Pastor Jim through his acoustic guitar playing and lyrics that will leaving you praising the Lord for His goodness and grace every time we 'look up' to Him!
- **Good Shepherd Ministries (Buda, TX) and Victoria Community Church (Fontana, CA)** as they seek the Lord and pray His leading in their pastoral searches; pray also for **Greater Grace (Portland, OR)** seeking a part-time associate pastor; and for **Peace Lutheran Brethren (Olympia, WA)**, seeking a youth ministry leader.

### *Upcoming Events - SAVE THESE DATES...*

- **Rock of Ages Senior Christmas Luncheon - Tuesday, December 6 at Noon.** All seniors from churches in the greater Seattle area are invited! For more information or to RSVP contact Sue Olson at: [rogernsueolson@msn.com](mailto:rogernsueolson@msn.com)
- **Pacific North Women's Gathering** - Community Church of Joy (Sammamish) - Saturday, Jan. 21, 2:00pm-4:30pm.
- **L.E.A.D. Retreat** - Cannon Beach Christian Conference Center - March 3-5 - [www.leadretreat.weebly.com](http://www.leadretreat.weebly.com)
- **Pacific Region Biennial Convention** - Living Word Church - March 24-26 - [www.2017PrConvention.org](http://www.2017PrConvention.org)
- **Pacific South Women's Retreat** - "Sweet Cafe" - Calvary Chapel @ Murrieta Hot Springs, CA - March 31-April 2.

### *Regional Pastor Phil's major whereabouts this December..*

- December 4-5 - House Church visits to Generation (Chandler, AZ) and Desert Rose (Tempe, AZ).
- December 7 - Oregon and SW Washington Pastor's Cluster gathering in Wilsonville, OR
- December 11 - Maple Park Church (Lynnwood, WA)
- December 13 - NW Washington Pastor's Cluster gathering at Hope Church, Everett
- December 16 - Pacific North Regional Executive Board Meeting at Hope Church, Everett
- December 17-18 - Greater Grace Church (Gresham, OR)

### *Staying In Touch with Regional Pastor Phil...*

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