

A Weekly Banquet

December 1: Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36
<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts/?y=384&z=a&d=1>

A Banquet

Each week, St. Peter's serves a banquet; of words; God's words. The Gospel Book is carried in procession, lifted high for all to see. Later, a portion is broken off and fed/read to us. Before that, portions of the Old Testament and the New Testament Letters are read. In between, we respond with a Psalm or two. All this is food, not only for thought, but also for the soul. Good news that God still loves us. . .and has things for us to do. A light on our path and assurance of help from the Holy Spirit. We come in famished and go out filled, nourished, and energized for another week.

In Advent

It's a conflicted season. There are the incessant liturgies of the mall and on-line shopping; the drum beat of "black Friday." Also, the liturgies of the stadium; will the Eagles make it? The liturgy of the church year is hardly mentioned; a hobby for the few. And yet, the readings from Scripture tell a different story than the ads and hype of the mall and stadium. We'll hear what God did to bring in a new earth and heaven and finally sing "The hopes and fears of all the years/Are met in thee tonight."

Let's start with Jeremiah 33:14-16. As you read it, what image do you find? What ideas does it stimulate in your imagination? Can you make a drawing to show it? And, what does it have to do with David? What does he add to the picture? What will this Branch do? What will be the result? Because we hear it in Advent, how does that setting guide your thoughts?

The Psalm follows, as a response to the reading from Jeremiah. In today's Psalm, what words express reactions to what we have just heard? Make a list. What do we ask God to do? Make another list. Now, compare your lists to your usual feelings/thoughts as we recite the Psalms from week to week. This will help you to be more engaged in the recitation.

Next, we will hear a reading from one of Paul's letters. If this is the outcome of Jeremiah's promise, are you surprised? Describe the scene that Paul sketches; his relationship to his readers. What words stand out; what does he emphasize? How does it match or fulfill *In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety?*

Sunday mornings at St. Peter's is a time of "face to face," as Paul puts it. We see each other, wave, smile, have conversations, etc. There are some special face to face moments. Think about it: the passing of the peace can sometimes seem a hectic moment, trying to greet a lot of folks. Maybe we should slow down and really look each other in the face more intently as we say "The Lord's Peace!" At the Eucharist, as they give us the bread and wine, Barbara and one of the Eucharistic Ministers look us in the face as they say our names and "the Body/Blood of Christ."

These readings give a start on the way to the birth of The Branch. More to come in following weeks. Stay tuned!

Larry Sibley