

## **BLESSINGS ALWAYS**

December 2, 2020

Association Minister Message

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*ADVENT. ADVENTure.* “A voice says, ‘Cry out!’” *Isaiah 40:6a.* Something is happening: expectation, fear, surprise, anguish, hope, blessing. For many Christians, Advent has begun, a season that leads to birth, something new, something long-expected, hope made real.

Isaiah’s words are about announcement. We continue this Advent journey crying about the pain that is in the world and in our own being. There is fear being with loved ones; there is loneliness not being able to be with loved ones; there is fear of losing someone we love or know. There is both celebration and anguish in our nation following an election that continues to divide citizenry. For many hope is lost because there are cultural and racial disparities, no food, lost employment, and debt is overwhelming. Meanness. Contempt. Acrimony. Hatred. There is crying and no announcement. Where is the hope and where is consolation?

On the first Sunday of Advent, the candle lit symbolized *HOPE*. This coming Sunday’s Advent candle symbolizes *PEACE*. *ADVENT* is defined as “*the coming or arrival, especially of something extremely important.*” Are we so busy or fearful that we might miss the importance of Jesus? Are we cautious and fearful of the *ADVENTure* (to take a risk) for hope, peace love and joy (themes of *ADVENT*)—for God’s way?

“Cry out!” This coming Sunday’s scripture introduces us to the messenger John, the Baptist, who was the voice of change. He announced the *ADVENTure* of promises given and now being fulfilled in Jesus. John, the Baptist, cried out “*proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*” *Mark 1:4.* In the prophetic tradition of the prophet Isaiah, John spoke the words of repentance, changing ways, changing direction and changing thinking to conform to a recovering and affirming outlook on life as God intends it to be. It is an *ADVENTure*—taking risk of claiming God-given abundant living—that unites the divine with humanity and the creation. Hope thrives, peace flourishes, love embraces and joy overflows. Let us be *ADVENTurous* as *ADVENT* leads us to Jesus as our Christ, Lord, and Savior. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*