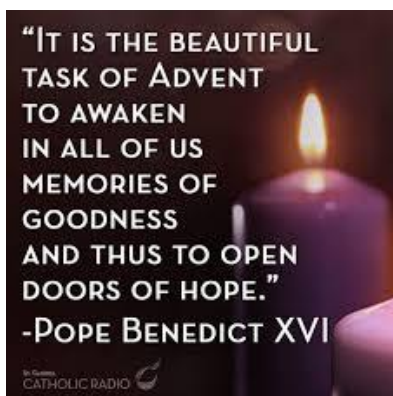


An Advent Lutheran Church Jubilee 2026 Celebration Devotional: Part 1

ADVENT – The Eternal Already—Not Yet



By Pastor Debra Loudin-McCann

(Former Director of Music Ministries at Advent and ministerial daughter of the congregation.)

What to say about the elusive and enigmatic concept of TIME?

Timing is everything?

We can spend time, or waste time, borrow time and take time away.

Time after time, time and time again, time immemorial and biding my time.

Time creeps by and time flies, in the fulness of time and just in the nick of time.

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

It was just their/her/his time. Time's UP!

It's about time, Closing Time, time to shine, and time to call it a day.

Take time out

There is a time to be born and a time to die and a time for every purpose under Heaven.

This is my favorite time of the year – Advent; already Fall and almost Winter,

Halloween. Thanksgiving and Christmas all roll quickly toward the New Year.

The old year is ending, and the mood is a touch melancholy, yet there is a sense of energy moving just below the surface, an excitement that tomorrow will bring something new, a hope that this something new will be something better, something wonderful. We anticipate that something special is coming.

Advent is a time full of Hope, full of expectation, of waiting and possibility.

In the liturgy for Holy Communion we say the words "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." That is the Easter promise, the hope fulfilled. In Advent, I find myself thinking "Christ is coming, Christ is born, Christ is already here." Advent surrounds us with remembrance of what God has done while filling us with wonder for what God yet may do. We live as Advent People. The liturgical calendar helps us celebrate the paradox of **Already—Not Yet** by reminding us that God is both beyond the boundaries of time yet still ever present, ever moving within time for our sake as limited human beings.

We live our lives in a linear fashion – we are born, we grow old, we die. But then – we live again in the eternal life that knows no end. We live no longer in a *time LINE*. We enter instead into God time, the eternal *Wheel of Time* that has no beginning and has no end. Advent is the time when we sense this motion most deeply. We look forward to welcoming the birth of Jesus as a promise fulfilled – Messiah. And we proclaim Him

Emmanuel – God already with us, always present in Water and the Word in Holy Baptism and in the bread and wine of The Eucharist. Yet even as we celebrate his coming into the world, still we pray “*Come, Lord Jesus! Savior of the Nations, Come*” recognizing that all is not yet fulfilled; not yet the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Christ is Coming

Christ is Here

Christ Will Come Again

At this special Jubilee 2026 Anniversary, in the life of this congregation named **Advent**, it is most fitting that we claim this mystery. We look back at all that has been, all that was robed in hope when this church was first planted; when the people prayed “*Come, Lord Jesus! Come and dwell with your people here. Bless this place and these people to be blessing.*” We celebrate all that this community of faithful people has become, rejoicing in the abundance of Fruits of The Spirit already brought forth in worship, teaching, serving, and loving in the history of this community, and right now in this place with these people in this time. And, most importantly of all, we look forward to what is yet to come. Can we even begin to imagine what God might do in this place with these people? How many more lives will be touched by hands of grace inviting, offering, healing, helping? How many new songs will be sung, songs that tell the old, old story? We have celebrated All the Saints who came before us. We have proclaimed that Christ is King, the only King we recognize and serve. And now we look forward to Christ coming again - as the babe in the manger that cradles our hope, as the Savior who pours out God’s love for us on the cross every moment of time, and as the Risen Lord who will walk with us as companion on the Emmaus road of our lives, the road that leads us into revelation one step at a time. Just as God has been with us every step of the journey these past fifty years, God will be with us every step going forward.

God is already there in the future ready to welcome us!



*“O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.
Our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home.
Time, like an ever-flowing stream soon bears us all away
We fly forgotten as a dream that dies at the break of day.”*

(From “O God, Our Help In Ages Past”

By Isaac Watts, English hymnwriter 1719)

We pray: Creator God, Holy One, from everlasting you are God, our dwelling place in all generations. You have been our Guide and our Help in ages past. You are our Hope in years to come. We thank you for this beloved community, Advent Lutheran Church. We celebrate all that has been done here to share the Good news of Jesus Christ and your love for all your children. Now as we turn from remembering the past to looking toward the future, we ask you continue to make your will known. Equip your saints with the Gifts of the Spirit and grant a vision of what you desire for these people in this place. Call, Gather, Enlighten and Sanctify your faithful people, In Jesus’ holy name and for His sake. AMEN

