



The Home Advent Wreath

I grew up in a world where everyone was an active Christian, but for my family, it mostly ended right there in the pews of First Presbyterian Church. We didn't "bring Jesus home" with us very much, that is, with one exception. I grew up in a Presbyterian household that celebrated Advent. These were not "liturgical times" in Columbus, Georgia, in the 1960's, and yet, there we were, southern Protestants having a home celebration of Advent. We had a white paper booklet filled, more dog eared by the year, with scriptures, prayers, and the hope of Christmas to come. We lit the first candle for Sunday Dinner (lunch) after church on the first day of Advent. As kids, we were excited because that meant we could light candles! (And we lit that candle for every meal until the next Sunday when we could light another. Our Advent wreath was nothing but the stumps of candles by December 24th). But the words of comfort from that book were spoken with reverence, the prayers, with much more reflection than our usual "hurry up and eat" prayers.

We spoke of topics that were rare for meal time: hope, peace, joy, and love. We lived in a society as well as a family that was short, at times, on all four of these things. But without our little Advent celebration, would we have ever discussed these things at all? Perhaps not.

Whatever this season means to you, I hope you will let it be a time where each week you consider hope, peace, joy, and love in your own life. This Sunday we think of the hope that the coming of the savior will bring. 'Make straight in the desert, a highway for our God.'

Natasha and I have invited the congregation to share your own Advent and Christmas stories for the coming weeks in this spot. Please submit to drwatson@fpcocala.org or nsudderth@fpcocala.org soon.

Christmas Blessings,

This Week's Daily Bible Readings					
<i>Growing with God's Word in Love and Joy</i>			Wednesday	December 5	Isaiah 45:1-25
Sunday	December 2	Luke 21:25-38	Thursday	December 6	Isaiah 48:1-22
Monday	December 3	Daniel 12:1-13	Friday	December 7	Isaiah 49:1-26
Tuesday	December 4	Isaiah 44:1-28	Saturday	December 8	Isaiah 52:1-12