Dec. 17, 2017 Word Accomplishes God’s Purpose Isaiah 55:1-13 (John 4:13-14) Liturgical color: Blue PRAYER OF THE DAY God of restoration, Save us when we find ourselves spiritually thirsty. Help us walk your road with your purpose, strengthened by your living water. Amen. *HYMNS Lo, how a rose e’er blooming ELW 272, H82 81, UMH 216, NCH 127 My song is love unknown ELW 343, H82 458, NCH 222 CHORAL He came down, Marty Haugen*

Announcements Prayers

Healing service today George Bauer (husband of Brenda)

Next week is Advent 4 & Christmas Eve! Marie Higgins

Poinsettia orders & Newsletter deadline today

Youth selling chocolate/candy today?

Thank you!:

* Vespers
* Preschool programs & LUNCH Friday
* Cookie walk bakers, buyers and eaters… $197 raised for world hunger
* Andy for clearing the snows!
* Ron Obrien, Randy Yarnall, Andy Harakel – major plumbing work at the sexton house!
* Brenda – 2018 offering envelopes, directory is on the way (Vespers alone was 3000 sheets of paper to copy and fold; thanks to Yoh/Shartles for collating & folding)
* Giving tree givers, wrappers, deliverers… and carolers!
* 3 new council members (Larry Bashore, Bonnie Thomas &
  + Delores Hauer resigned – Harold Shapell was appointed to fill her term)

**Gospel: John 4: 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."**

Children’s Message: on paper airplane ☺

10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Sunday December 17, 2017 – Advent 3 Children’s Message Paper Airplane

*How this works:* Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Please read the Bible verses below and then write the response to the question.
* ‘Fly the airplane’ back with written responses when requested by pastor on Dec 24th or Dec 31st

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We are at a crossroads… here at our Corner Church… this 3rd week of Advent… the words of the prophets are about to intersect with the Promised Good News of the LORD God! So the sermon today embraces that cross-road intersection… with our readings from the Gospel of John – the road onto which we will turn through winter from Christmas to Easter… from the prophets, the road we’ve been travelling all fall.

Jesus has been travelling all the way North from Judea (the region around Bethlehem closer to the Dead Sea) to Galilee (the region around Nazareth and the sea of Galilee)… it is about noon, in that dry, hilly terrain, and we are told in the 4th chapter of John that Jesus is tired! He is sitting by the well, as his disciples go into town to buy food. A woman comes to the well to draw water and Jesus asks for a drink, he is thirsty.

You know what it’s like after working up a sweat… sitting exhausted, and there is a helper who happens to walk close-by. Ahhh! A simple question; well it was not a question, it was a command: Give me a drink. The woman got to the point with her own questions – why are you talking to me? And you have no bucket.

Such a God-thing to do isn’t it? Talking to the enemy… Samaritans were enemies of the Jews. You know Jewish men and Samaritan men would cross the street rather than walk on the same side of the road together. You know why? Both Jews and Samaritans were followers of God… but they literally worshipped on different mountains, they had 2 different holy sites; so they avoided one another and did not talk… one could easily imagine a healthier way to live.

Jesus talked to the enemy… **and** she was a woman! {gasp!} A man would not talk to a woman if they were not related. **There’s more**… she was not married to the man with whom she was living; and Jesus knew this! What a God-thing to do. Cut through societal norms, talking to a woman living in sin, a Samaritan… Simply to make a basic divine-human connection, ‘I am thirsty, give me a drink.’

The Gospel does not record whether Jesus ever got his drink or not. John’s gospel instead focuses on this as one example of how Isaiah 55 comes to life. The word of God, gushes up to give this outcast woman, new life, a purpose, to be a witness to the mighty acts of God! She runs so fast back to town to share the good news that she leaves her water jar there by Jesus as the well! And this outcast sinner, returns with a crowd… they don’t believe her, but they get watered by the word there at the well, at about noon… now who is thirsty?! Wow, there are a lot of people parched, eager for that draught of Divine in-breaking, yearning for a Messiah to save, to water, to heal the deep brokenness of the world. (Not too different from us, now)

“Just as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth, [making it fruitful…], so shall my word be… it shall not return to me empty…” (Isa 55:12-11)

God has a purpose for each seed of the field and each one of us, a purpose which shall be accomplished with success… but remember from an earlier verse in this same Isaiah passage, the LORD says: “my thoughts are not your thoughts and your ways are not my ways….” (Isa 55:8). For example, this Isaiah passage is probably written to those folks who were in exile, the ones who were supposedly not able to seek the LORD, nor have their prayers heard for 70 years… well, it’s not quite 60 years, and God is working through the enemy king, to release these prisoners, and send them home with a small stipend to rebuild the rubble of their homeland.

It seems that God keeps promises better than threats. God’s thoughts are not our thoughts…. These beautiful words of hope and joy are for those about to make a long, hot, tiring journey. People thirsty for God’s word, parched and yearning for freedom, people whose purpose would be to labor in order to rebuild something from nothing much… people who do not have money, and yet will need to find bread, wine, and milk to nourish their bodies.

Hey, people without money, come acquire what you need! Don’t go cheap… this is not a feast of ramen noodles! It’s good, rich, food… with an invitation “Come to me!” and Listen (God is talking to them again… still, … really, as we’ve heard the last few weeks, God didn’t leave them entirely alone in silence even during the awful exile, the consequences of their sins.)

And just like David was a witness to God’s divine love, leadership and everlasting promise… so too will these people, broken and sinful as they are… these will be witnesses to nations they do not know; and those strangers will RUN to you! (Very undignified.) Seek the LORD, **while** me **may** be found! God is here, let the broken return to Him, the wicked, the unrighteous… so that the LORD may have mercy and abundantly pardon! This is our purpose as a church, witness to the wicked, unrighteous… leave our sins at the feet of our merciful LORD; declare our thirst, and be given the cup of Living water… that leads to Everlasting Life. Why? Not for you, nor me, nor ‘them’… but rather because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel!

Drink deeply of the Word, drink deeply of the Healing, drink deeply of the divine promises and believe more deeply still.

God has a purpose for us, and the LORD’s purpose will succeed through us, to water the earth as surely as rain and snow. Get ready, Advent is the preparation for this great witness. Soon, we too may be leaving our water jars here at the well, and run-out to spread the word!