

Advent 2019: A Way where there is no way
December 1- January 5



This year our lectionary texts from Isaiah proclaim that God is making a Way through the wilderness.

The late Christian writer and joyful trouble-maker, Rachel Held Evans writes, “The wilderness, by design *disorients*...it is a place of danger and desolation, creeping with wild animals and threatening, rugged parched terrain.”

These ancient texts still echo in the stories of migrants in the wilderness, who lose their way in the desert, who run out of water, and who cry out for God’s justice and rescue. The desert in Arizona is traversed by people risking the dangerous journey into the United States on paths that are not well marked. In contrast, Isaiah describes a path where “no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.”

The migrants are not the only ones in the wilderness; our lectionary texts invite us all to listen for the voice of the prophets calling for repentance and a return to following the true way. Whether the places we feel disoriented and hopeless are individual, collective, national or global, Advent calls us to remember the God who is able to make a way through. This season of wilderness preparation leads us to an unexpected manger where we find a vulnerable human baby and the audacious claim that here on the straw lies the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Consider these questions this advent season: What wilderness do you find yourself in this year? Are the paths you are walking intentional ones? What makes it hard to find the way? Are you hearing an invitation to wake up and try a new path? What might God be inviting you to in this season?

Watch the Assemblyline for information about these events:

Dec 11: Candle making at Steve Shantz’s house 6 or 7pm (wear warm, grubby clothes for candle dipping in the garage)

Dec 14-15: Advent Spiral** (A reflective indoor walk from the Waldorf tradition. Children are invited on Saturday evening, 5:30 or 7pm, and adults during second hour on Sunday)

Dec 21: Longest Night Service, 7pm

Dec 24: Christmas Eve Supper and Play** 6pm (All are welcome for a simple soup supper and a children’s play)

**Sign ups or RSVPS requested

Sunday morning Overview

Dec 1: Waking up to the Way

Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:36-44

Sermon: Bethany Swope; Second Hour: Sermon response and sharing (worship space), Contemplative space/coloring (Multipurpose North)

Dec. 8: Preparing the Way

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

Sermon: Anna Yoder Schlabach; Second hour: Messiah Singalong, Fellowship meal (*Last names A through L- main dish, and M through Z- salad or side dish. Everyone should feel free to bring a dessert*)

Dec. 15: Walking a Holy Path

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10; Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

Sermon: Lisa Koop; Second Hour: Advent Spiral (Multipurpose Space) Coffee will be in the Gathering Space

Dec. 22: Taking an Alternate Route

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

Sermon: Scott Coulter; Second Hour: Hymn Sing, Contemplative space/coloring (Multipurpose North)

Dec. 29: Lessons and Carols

Breakfast potluck at 9:30 followed by worship; No Sunday School (Bring festive finger foods)

Jan. 5: Unable to go back the way we came

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon: Lora Nafziger, Second Hour: Extended Sharing/ Stories of going back new ways

