### Sermon November 27, 2022Matthew 24:36-44

But about that day and hour—no one knows.

Mattthew’s gospel is essentially addressing the end of the world and the Second Coming---which is kind of a weird way to begin the new church year and the first Sunday of Advent. Matthew basically says—you never know. The folks around Noah didn’t know until it was too late. Then Matthew goes on to explain that one farmer will be taken—one woman will be taken. Taken where? I guess we’ll never know. At any rate, we must be alert—so that when God comes, we will be ready. But, ready for what?

It reminds me of that old joke---Uh oh--Jesus is coming—look busy.

I do not think it means you had better straighten up—be nice—not naughty—and stop all that sinning you’re thinking about or already doing. We all have cracks in the walls we use to surround ourselves—which according to Leonard Cohen, is how the light gets in—and I believe that’s how God gets in too.
 So, we have little cracks that allow God to come in. Some little places that no one else knows about but you and God. Our little cracks are okay—God and light can get in—no need to worry.

And we are on an advent journey to Bethlehem—where the light is born.

One wonders why Jesus would tell us about the end of things and then tell us we can’t know anything about it. But we can discern a lot from what he does say.

He reminds us that God is in charge and instead of worrying about getting to heaven, we should not lose sight of the here and now and the gift we have been given in this world and this life. After all, when called God set about creating the world—the heavens, the earth and all its inhabitants, God saw that it was good. And those of us made in God’s image were made to love the place where we are. We were made to take care of the place where we are.
 Care for the place where we are seems especially important now—with climate change causing drought, hurricanes, fires. The problems seem too immense to solve—so the words from Jesus are particularly important now---about that day and hour no one knows.”

Living in the unknown – in what we cannot fathom or plan for – can make us crazy. We want certainty! We want to know how things are going to be! Unfortunately, that’s not what Jesus is offering us. He is offering us an invitation into the world we are already in – an invitation to this planet, to this world, to this time and place.

Ironically, we can prepare ourselves to leave this world by truly living in it, by soaking up every grace-filled moment. This Advent season is one that too often comes and goes without our noticing it. We gather family and friends but often focus on the shopping, or the decorating, or trying to make food that looks like something Martha Stewart made.

And yet--Jesus comes into our lives at an unexpected hour – it might be in a moment you have on Christmas Eve. Maybe you will find Jesus in the flicker of candles at church. Jesus might become known when a child comes home for Christmas. Or when you hear a baby giggling, or a favorite Christmas Carol.
 We don’t know when Jesus could surprise us – but we can be sure that it will be in this world, using what has been ordinary and transforming it into something wonderful. After all, this is the God who comes to us in the most ordinary bread and wine each week, transforming these simple elements into food for our journey.

Allow God in. We can stop being afraid and sad and thirsty and pitiful. Let God love you. We don’t have to love God at first; just allow God to love us and heal us. Pretty soon we may find that we are a little bit grateful for the unearned grace we have received. Pretty soon we may find a need to fall on our knees and offer all we have and all that we are to God in gratitude.

So be prepared—be alert. Allow the cracks, allow the love and the light in, knowing there’s no way of being certain when that will be.

“About that day and hour no one knows,” says Jesus – today, may this be for us an invitation. Jesus is waiting, ready to surprise and delight.

So, let us praise you, O God; let us love; let us grow in love. This is my prayer for our new year, O Christ; and I thank you.

Amen