

Sermon for 30 November 2025 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

First Sunday of Advent

Scriptures: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalter: 845 (*Response 1*)Psalm 122 ; Romans 13 :11-14 ; Matthew 24 :36-44

Sermon : You've heard all this before. When the times grow dark, somebody says they'll brighten up again.

When God gets disgusted, God starts afresh. That's what Noah and the flood was about.

We've got both sides going, all the time.

Look how far we've come. Yeah, and you can't convince me that all these computers are improving things all that much.

I was just looking at our modern cars, and thinking how complicated their body work is compared to my boyhood. Then you dented a fender, and you took it off and put another one on.

Or, on the other side, look how quickly we got over CoVid.

But wouldn't the world be better off if the United States never entered World War I?

You see the point, don't you?

You're not in position to predict. Beginning again, doing what's right regardless of who's in charge, is fundamental.

Put it another way: God is not giving up on goodness, so don't you, either.

Let us pray: O Jesus, every year we come to a time of starting over. Not that we ever get finished with anything. Just that part of life, part of being us, is standing back and seeing everything we've done and everything that's ever happened is just part of the story, part of what we're dealing with right here, part of taking three deep breaths and waiting.

It's your show, Lord. Sometimes we believers are the last ones to figure that out. Sometimes when we're battling stage four cancer, we suddenly realize this is how some of the great medical discoveries have been made, slogging through time after time in the laboratory and the survival that took us totally by surprise.... and other times when we tried something new in church, or maybe at work, or perhaps with somebody we live with or love, or both, we wake up and see this new angle woke us up to a different way of handling things.

Help us use this season of Advent to think like that; to see violence rarely pays off; to keep gentle with pets and people and other drivers; to keep going, and also to be surprised in a joyful way... Teach us how to keep starting over...In Jesus' name, Amen.