Outreach Encouragement – Bulletin Insert

by Rev. Ron Mohr (11/24/15)

A questionnaire for the First Sunday in Advent:

- Has God fulfilled His promise to cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David?
- Has God fulfilled His promise to forgive and cleanse His people from all the guilt of their sin?
- Has God fulfilled His promise to save His people?
- Has God fulfilled His promise to give His people a place to dwell securely?
- Has God fulfilled His promise to be our righteousness?

The answers to these and other questions that could be asked based on Jeremiah 33:1-16 are all "Yes!" in Jesus Christ!

Now, another questionnaire:

Are you more likely to say…

a. My congregation is a waste and the pews are desolate.
b. My congregation is filled with the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness.

Are you more likely to…

a. Join the crowd and shout, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!"
b. Heed the warnings of the Pharisees and keep your mouth shut.

Which statement are you more likely to make about your congregation?

a. The Lord is making us increase and abound in love for one another and for all.
b. There are so few of us that we don't know how we can keep our doors open much longer.

Consider your answers to those questions in light of the following facts.

1. Jesus is alive from the dead and has promised to be with you until the end of the age.
2. Jesus is alive in you because of your baptism into His death and your new life through His resurrection.
3. Where Jesus the King has come, there is no stopping the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness. If it doesn't come from God's people it will come from the stones God created. (Luke 19:39-40)
4. Where Jesus, the Branch, springs up through faithful Word and Sacrament Ministry, (that means in YOUR congregation!) His love in action in you will become more and more evident to your neighbours and friends.

Since these are true, let's give our free and joyous response, moved and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

- Bear witness to Jesus, alive from the dead, no matter what the "Pharisees" of our day may say.
- Bear witness to Jesus alive in you, no matter what you think may be "lacking in your faith." (I Thessalonians 9:10)
- Bear witness to Jesus alive in your congregation, no matter the size or the state it appears to be in to you! (Jeremiah 33:10-11)

Then you and your congregation will be seen by the people in your community as the place that God has caused to be for Him "a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it. (Jeremiah 33:9)