



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast
December 22, 2024: The Fourth Sunday in Advent
"Our God is a God of Surprises"

*"... he shall be great to the ends of the earth,
and he shall be the one of peace." (Micah 5:4b-5, NRSVUE)*

Peace: the 4th Week of Advent



The fourth week of Advent is symbolized by the "Angel's Candle," which represents *peace*. This candle is a reminder of the message that the angels brought: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14)

In the Old Testament reading in the Revised Common Lectionary for the 4th Sunday in Advent, Micah 5:2-5a, we find the well-known prediction of the coming of the Messiah, and the declaration that "He (the Messiah) shall be the one of peace." Historically, this came at a time in Micah's ministry when Judah was threatened both by internal, political corruption and outside menacing by the Assyrians.

Micah was sent by God to call Judah back to righteousness. Micah specifically denounced the leaders of Judah for oppressing the poor and for using their positions for personal gain. While Micah's message was one of warning of a coming judgement, it was also a message of hope centered on the coming Messiah, who would establish peace on earth.

"Our God is a God of Surprises"

In times where people are either comfortable in their circumstances and quite settled or resigned to dismal living conditions or injustice, they fear their aggressive neighbors, God intervenes and disturbs our world, forcing us to change and begin again, anew. And God's extraordinary work often occurs in the most ordinary places and through unlikely people.

There are two things to note about this point: One, Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, but their ministries were in very different places. Isaiah has been described as an "aristocrat" who preached in the court of Jerusalem ("in the big city"), while Micah was from a little rural town, Moresheth, and described as a prophet to the "common people." And two, we hear from Micah that the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem, a little town barely a dot on the map: "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel." (5:2a)

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, let us hear Micah's message, anticipate the humble circumstances of Jesus' birth, and let us be open to God's surprises!

Prayer box: we pray for the soul of your servants Bill C. and James M. and comfort their grieving families and friends; pray for comfort for Margo; pray healing for Abby, Diane M, Tom N, Mark F, Don L, Holland, Steve, John H, Patti, Susan S, Maggie and Vance; pray for comfort for those suffering from natural disasters, flood and wildfires. And we pray for peace in the Middle East, Ukraine, and Sudan. Amen.