

I-K Lutheran

A Newsletter of the
Indiana-Kentucky Mission Territory

You shall be called, “Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.”

⁶Upon your walls, O Jerusalem,
I have posted sentinels;
all day and all night
they shall never be silent.
You who remind the LORD,
TAKE NO REST,

⁷AND GIVE HIM NO REST
UNTIL HE ESTABLISHES
JERUSALEM
AND MAKES IT RENOWNED
THROUGHOUT THE
EARTH.
PREPARE THE WAY FOR
THE PEOPLE;
BUILD UP, BUILD UP THE
HIGHWAY,
CLEAR IT OF STONES,
LIFT UP AN ENSIGN OVER
THE PEOPLES.

¹¹THE LORD HAS PROCLAIMED
TO THE END OF THE
EARTH:
SAY TO DAUGHTER ZION,
“SEE, YOUR SALVATION
COMES;
HIS REWARD IS WITH HIM,
AND HIS RECOMPENSE
BEFORE HIM.”

¹²THEY SHALL BE CALLED, “THE
HOLY PEOPLE,
THE REDEEMED OF THE
LORD”;
AND YOU SHALL BE CALLED,
“SOUGHT OUT,
A CITY NOT FORSAKEN.”
Isaiah 62:6-12

Isaiah 62:6-12 is one of the suggested readings for Christmas Day. There are no shepherds in Isaiah's proclamation, no star, no angels or magi, no Mary, Joseph or Jesus. There is only promise, the encouragement to hold God to God's promise, and sentinels and ensigns to herald the fulfillment of the promise drawing near. See, your salvation comes! You shall be called, “Sought Out...Not Forsaken”!

We need this promise. Much of the time, the world doesn't look much like the serene scene of mother and child surrounded by adoring creatures that peppers the landscape this time of year. Many days, our experience of the world is a far cry from the “peace on earth and goodwill to all” that wafts from tinny department store speakers and harmonious choir rehearsals alike.

That's why we need Christmas with its lofty dreams and magnificent promises. We need this reminder that God seeks us out, God enters the world, and God peppers it with promise. We are not, and will not be, forsaken. The child in the manger whom we adore this holy season is the seal of the promises of God, the very way in which they come true.

Christmas carols, the ring of bells over slotted red kettles, lovingly wrapped gifts, sermons, readings, meals with family and friends, candles held high and shining from windows are all sentinels that will not keep silent, ensigns of promise: God does not turn away from us! God turns toward us, ever and always. God enters our troubled world to make our struggles, our sorrows, and our sin God's own and offers in their place the gifts of peace and joy and new, abundant, and lasting life.

It's no wonder we sing this season with old Martin Luther:

Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom this sinful world is blest.
You turned not from our needs away;
How can our thanks such love repay? [ELW #268, v. 8]

“You shall be called, ‘Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.’” This is the sure and certain promise of this holy season. It comes swaddled in a straw-strewn manger and is sealed with a cross and an empty tomb: We are not forsaken! Peace on earth; good will to all! God is with us!

+Bishop Bill Gafkjen