
“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

It’s amazing the shift that happens on campus between the beginning and end of Thanksgiving Break. We leave campus ready to overeat, take naps, spend time with family and friends, travel, and we come back braced for three incredibly intense weeks of classes, papers, and final exams. Aside from school, we all seem to approach the Thanksgiving holiday with a sense of normalcy and expectation. What I mean by that is that we all seem to anticipate exactly what the holiday will bring. We expect to spend Thanksgiving day with close family and friends; we expect to eat turkey, green bean casserole, and pumpkin pie; we expect to think more about and show our gratitude for what God has given us.

As we near the season of Advent, we should approach the time of preparation with less presumption about the season and Christmas, and instead enter Advent with a greater
sense of openness and watchfulness for how the season can change us. Yes, of course we have expectations for the holiday itself with its own set of traditions - both in our churches and our homes. But maybe we should think more purposefully about the season of preparation that is Advent. Let us be changed by the season by being open to change. And let the season allow us to practice openness and watchfulness in our lives and our faith that will extend beyond Advent and Christmas.

Luke’s gospel lesson describes a similar state of watchfulness and openness as he instructs us how to prepare for the “coming of the Son of Man”. What he describes are people who are on the edge of something, and while they will surely get wrapped up in the edge and the journey that takes them there, they also have to tend to their daily needs - the things they need for the journey.

These two ways of living on the edge - both the daily living and the exhilaration of what lies ahead - are perfectly illustrated by recent conversations I’ve had with people on campus.

One of the first things Dr. Hasseler said to me when I asked her to share her perception of Augustana was this: “I feel like Augustana is on the edge of some really monumental things; I’m someone who likes to be at the edge and see what lies ahead.”

So here we have the exhilaration of being at the edge.

Explaining how we approach this edge in our daily lives, Dr. Looney shared the
following remark which some of you may have seen me post on Facebook on election
day: “Even on those really big days, when we’re on the edge of big things, we still get
up, we still get dressed, we still read the newspaper, we still eat our oatmeal.” In short,
we have to equip ourselves to continue the journey and prepare for whatever lies
ahead.

To build on this example, an Augie student feeling the pressure of the end of the
semester recently said, “if only each day had an extra hour when time would stand still
and I could do things like shower, wash my clothes, read a magazine, and brush my
teeth.” Sometimes as students, we get so caught up in the edge that we lose sight of
taking care of ourselves. After all, we have to take care of ourselves on the journey if
we’re going to make it to the edge. And when I say make it to the edge, I don’t simply
mean arrive at the edge exhausted, famished, and ill equipped.

So perhaps we should think of Advent as a journey, an edge of sorts, as we prepare for
the Son of Man to arrive. Along this journey, we have to take care of our equipment -
our mental and physical abilities and our spiritual awareness.

In his poem, “Journey of the Magi,” T.S. Eliot writes of the journey faced by the wise
men on their pilgrimage to see Jesus’ birth. I use the word pilgrimage because the
magi, according to Eliot, went on this journey open to change and indeed were
changed. Along they way, they dealt with stubborn camels, cold weather, foreign cities,
and the need for food and drink. All they while, they moved toward the edge. They
were alert and mindful of themselves and of what they came to see and hear.

In the last stanza, after witnessing the birth of Christ, one of the magi reflects:

“We returned to our places, these Kingdoms, But no longer at ease here, in the old
dispensation, With an alien people clutching their Gods.I should be glad of another
death.” Instead of pure excitement and joy at the birth of Christ, the wise men were
unsettled; their lives had been changed. As Luke instructs us to do, the wise men,
“stood up and raised their heads.” Their openness, watchfulness, and attentiveness to
the journey enriched their lives and challenged them to seek the word of God even after
they left the manger in Bethlehem. Beyond the season of Advent, we find ourselves at
the edge of monumental things in our own lives, and in our communities. Those of us
who are seniors know what it’s like to be at the edge. Sometimes it’s easy to get
wrapped up in those big moments which of course are worthy of celebration. Still, we
have to tend to ourselves, take time to do the things that cultivate our minds, and
sustain our bodies. The same goes for finals and really all of our time as students. As
Pastor Paul noted on Wednesday, sometimes the steepness seems like it’s just too
much; no doubt we are challenged. Both in seeking the edge and taking the journey, our
lives our enriched so long as we remain open, mindful, and watchful.

In this season of Advent and the celebration of Christ’s birth, let us be open to change,
left unsettled at times, be challenged by God’s teachings, and let us savor the present,
allowing us to care for ourselves and others around us.
MORNING WORSHIP
Friday, November 30, 2012
Annual Meeting of the Augustana Association

Prelude "Rejoice, Rejoice Believers" by Kevin Sadowski
Marilyn Schempp, organ

Welcome Pastor Paul Rohde, Campus Pastor

Invocation
L: God, call us to new life.
C: We praise and thank you for your promise.
L: God, call us to community.
C: We praise and thank you that we belong to each other as well as you.
L: God, call us to serve.
C: We praise and thank you for prophetic visions of justice.
L: God, call us to wisdom and learning
C: We praise and thank you for Augustana and faithful teachers.
L: God, call us to faith.
C: We praise and thank you for You, active, alive and calling your world to live. Amen.

Hymn "Rejoice, Rejoice Believers" ELW #244, v. 1, 4

Prayer

Augustana Choir "Gloria" by Jeffrey Rickard
Dr. Paul Nesheim, director

Wade Byre, ‘13

Sermon Thad Titze, ‘13
Major: Government
Hometown: Watertown, SD

Choir "Nunc Dimittis" by Alexander Gretchaninov
Augustana Choir

Prayer

Lord’s Prayer

Benediction

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONCERT! - The best way to spread Christmas Cheer is singing loud for all to hear! The Sioux Falls Arena will be hosting "The Story Tour" on December 3rd, at 7:00! The Story Tour features Casting Crowns lead singer/songwriter Mark Hall, Jeremy Camp, Natalie Grant, Matthew West, Nichole Nordeman, Selah, and Rawrvnt. Contact Ali Ramsley at apramsley11@ole.augie.edu for more information!

COLLEGE RETREAT AT NESODAK - Love camp? Looking for an opportunity to get away? Come to NeSoDak Bible Camp for a retreat designed just for college students, January 19-20. Cost is only $30. Contact Brooke DeJong (bmdejong09@ole.augie.edu) or Jenna Frink (jlfrink12@ole.augie.edu) for more information. Deadline is January 11.

Want to go to FLORIDA for Spring Break? - Pastor Ann will be leading a service-learning trip to Dogwood Acres Presbyterian Camp (near Panama City, FL) March 9-14. We'll be doing work projects at the camp and serving at local shelters and food pantries. We will also spend a day relaxing and exploring St. George Island, rated one of the world's most beautiful beaches! Total cost for the trip is $800. A deposit of $200 is due by December 14 for those interested in going. Contact Pastor Ann (ann.rosendale@augie.edu) for more information.

SPRING BREAK IN SPAIN! Join the Pilgrimage course walking the Camino de Santiago, 110 KM of one of the oldest and most famous Christian pilgrimage routes in Europe. Cost is $2800. See Pastor Paul or Professor Sam Ogdie if you have questions.


CHAPEL SCHEDULE
Sun., 2nd - Morning Worship, 11 am - Pr. Ann
Mon., 3rd - Taize Prayer, 10 am
Tues., 4th - Catholic Mass, 10 am
Wed., 5th - Holy Communion, 10 am - Scott Parsons, Art; Karren Melik-Stepanov, spec. music.
Fri., 7th - Morning Worship, 10 am - Liz Orris, Sr. Spkr.
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