



PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD!

"Prepare the way for the Lord" is a phrase I hear a lot lately. I hear it on the radio, it is the theme of this area's popular Christmas at the Cathedral, and it is the advent theme used by one of my pastor friends in his church. Oh yeahhh, that's what the Advent season is about --- expectant waiting and preparation for the coming of God Incarnate, that is, when God finally came in human flesh as a baby ultimately to die on the cross to free us from sin's grip, that is, JESUS! With all of the crazy running around to shop, to decorate, to finish up end-of-year projects on the job, to travel, it becomes easy to forget the Reason for the Season --- Jesus!

John the Baptist's words in Luke 3:4-6 --- "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation."

"What should we do then?" asked the crowd listening to John the Baptist. "The man with two tunics should share with him who has

By Fred Wilgenburg
none, ..." To the tax collectors, John said, "Don't collect any more than you are required to." To the soldiers concerned about their conduct --- "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely..." In other words, be repentant; get your hearts primed to receive all that God has for you, starting with salvation through Jesus, and then the rest of His Goods will follow.

How is your Advent going, for your own heart, and for the hearts of others, so we can experience Christmas as God has it for us? Starting today --- Monday, December 17, 2012 --- as I'm writing this, I will work more at it at Center of Hope. We see a lot of people right now in our Care Center --- for winter clothes, to warm up with a hot cup of coffee, to use the computer for job searching, to say hello briefly after visiting another ministry within our facility - Sioux Falls Ministry Center. We'll brush up on our greeting, raise the volume of the radio for the Christmas songs playing, and put the Nativity scene and a special note about it in a prominent place --- **today!**

"Kind of late..." you might be

thinking. Yes, we too need this reminder to "prepare the way for the Lord," which ultimately was so "**all mankind will see God's salvation!**" This week will become a big visitation week for us --- to see Byron, Dave, and John, our former neighbors, because they don't get many visitors, and Dawn and Joann in the assisted living house, and Lin who is living alone with cancer, and to see a couple with whom we had kind of a bad rub a few months ago because God calls us to reconcile. That's the desire, too, of Aaron and Brian in their ministries of Restored 2 Life and Sports Night, to explain that partying, and getting caught up in finding enough presents for the kids, and even that 8-5 job isn't all it's built up to be. God --- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all He offers, is Who brings meaning, peace, and joy. And Christmas is the beginning of that story line!

**Merry Christmas
to you all!
We appreciate your
friendship
& support!**

This has been the year of the volunteer for Center of Hope!

We couldn't do it without volunteers, some coming as work groups every few months, others doing 4 hours/week, 8 hours/week, and 3 people putting between 25-40 hours/week. And the variety of giftedness & abilities is amazing! Thank-you, God, for extending the precious time of your fine people to Center of Hope!



Women's CoffeeBreak & Men's Life are now in their 11th year of ministry. This is our longest running program, with continued good attendance (15+ women & 5+ men each week), largely because the leadership is so steady and kind. First Christian Reformed Church of SF has extended their fine people to Center of Hope for all of the years of the Bible studies.



Please help us...

Winter Coats and boots are going out faster than we can keep them in. We are in need of x-large and xx-large and even xxx-large men and women coats and children's coats. Any and all help with this would be greatly appreciated.

As always, we are happy to have you on our mailing list. Please let us know if you would like to be removed from our list or have your newsletter sent electronically.

Our present ministries: Care Center — computers, coffee, chapel, health ministry, Bikes-for-work, Winter clothing, information & referral resource, Mother/baby baskets, a lot of visiting & prayer

- Restored 2 Life Church, CoffeeBreak, Men's Life, Sports Night, Journey Camp for children
- Pastoral Visitation in homes, correctional facilities, & hospitals as our guests are there.

And, we're excited to encounter the future with a new Vision Statement: To embody the life of Jesus Christ in Sioux Falls and beyond. What/Where? Employment Training Program — YES. Expanded Health Ministry — LIKELY. Holiday Clearing-House — YES. Beyond Sioux Falls — YES, and we're prayerfully excited to see how!

MEMORIAL GIFTS

John & Marie Wolbrink, Harrison, SD

Rose Stordahl, Madison, SD

Rick Glammeies, Iowa

Vicky Knutson, Sioux Falls, SD


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