

The Rev. Peggy Shannon '09

Interim Minister, Chartiers Cross Roads Presbyterian Church

Friday, December 10, 2010

Morning Psalms 102; 148

First Reading Isaiah 7:10-25

Second Reading 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

Gospel Luke 22:14-30

Evening Psalms 130; 16

14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' 19 Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. 22 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!' 23 Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this. 24 A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 But he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 'You are those who have stood by me in my trials; 29 and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

How dare the events that lead to Jesus' death distract us from the joy of advent preparations? We do not want our anticipation of the sweet scent of hope and hay from the manger to be jarred by the sour smell of wine and betrayal from the Table.

But is that not how we people of God live? Paradox. We humans have a hard time holding both ends of it together and understanding how it mingles together. Blessing and curse. Judgment and salvation. Promises and reneging. Life and death. The last who will be first.

The good news is that Jesus holds onto both ends with his arms outstretched and is always on the right side of the paradox. Always on the side of life, promises, salvation, blessing. The baby who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords is also the one who sits as host of the table and stoops to serve. First and last.

Prayer: O God, if we could truly comprehend what you have done in your coming and your going, perhaps our preparations would be different. Jar us from our expectations. Amen.