

Monday, December 10th, 2012

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Scripture:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; 7 for those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Devotional:

Some congregations celebrate advent with a look towards Easter. Their Christmas tree is chosen for its beauty and trunk. On Jan. 1st, the trunk is saved and formed into the cross for Lent and Easter. The wood of the birth of Jesus, the Christmas manger becomes the cross, the symbol of death, the empty cross the symbol of resurrection. Thessalonians reminds us of these powerful opposites as we seek to live in darkness and light, despair and hope, life and death. Our faith is a transformative faith that moves us through times of darkness and suffering and surprises us with resurrection promises and grace. God's good gifts come to us for we are the named, blessed, children of light. We don't belong to the darkness. Faith comes alive in the relationships we have with God, in Christ and in the communion of believers who encourage and build one another up in the Spirit of grace and love.

Prayer:

Gracious God, thank you for enabling us to serve you while being embraced by your love, strengthened by the support of our families, upheld through the communion of neighbors, and rejuvenated by the birth of hope in your grace. Thank you for trusting us to be your children of light as we bear witness to the peace and security you give us in Christ's birth, death, and

resurrection. May we move through this advent season giving thanks knowing that in life and in death we belong to you. With the angels we sing, alleluia! A-men.