**Is Christmas Coming Again?**

 The Christmas season is upon us. Here at the church, we’re marking Advent – which means we’re in a season of waiting, and hoping, and praying for the Second Coming of Christ. Our job is to be watchful, to anticipate, to prepare. So we’re not singing Christmas hymns, we’re singing Advent hymns. We’re collecting items to give away to our neighbors who will experience the cold weather, but won’t have warm scarves, gloves, and hats – unless we provide them. They may not have toys under their tree for their children – unless we put them there. They might not have anything even *close* to a Christmas banquet, unless we pitch in. oh dear.

 The news around the country is focused on what’s terribly, terribly wrong out there. Citizens in Ferguson, MO are rioting and looting and burning businesses in their own town. The weather along the east coast has already dumped a year’s worth of snow on parts of upstate NY. People have been stranded in airports and bus stations from NC to MA. Time that might have been spent with family has been cut short, if it happens at all. oh dear.

 We have shopping to do, and pies to bake. We have cards to address, and lights to string. We are expected in the homes of friends, wearing a happy face, when we’re already tired and it’s only just begun. We will have family coming in, and there’s cleaning to do, and groceries to buy, and beds to make ready, or there’s driving to do and clothes to pack and presents to wrap before we leave. oh dear.

 So listen to the prophet Isaiah, who knew *positively* 700 years before it happened, that it *would happen!* He was so convinced, that he told the people, all the people, that the Most Powerful God would do as promised and all these lowered shoulders, and all these heavy hearts, and all these empty dreams would VANISH!!!

 Listen to what the prophet said. *“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them, light has shined. For a Child has been born to us. A Son given to us. Authority rests upon his shoulders. And he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”* And why did Isaiah believe this so strongly? Because, he said, *“the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!”* Oh Dear!

 And we know that Isaiah was right. He spoke God’s truth. It did happen. God made it so!

 So spend some time with us this season. Wait with us. Anticipate with us. Prepare with us. The birth of the Prince of Peace will be celebrated once again. It will be a great celebration. You’ll see.

Merry Christmas!

**Candice**