

FROM THE DESK OF BISHOP MAAS

ALL FLESH SHALL SEE SALVATION



This is the promise of the scriptures for the 2nd Sunday in Advent, as Rev. Dr. Karoline Lewis pointed out for us at RE: Formation. She spoke of how the work of John the Baptist, the cast of characters present for his preaching and the reorienting power of baptism itself all combine for that powerful message—all flesh shall see salvation. This is what we're waiting for in Advent, this is why we sing and pray that Emmanuel, God-with-us, would come into our midst--so that everyone might see salvation.

We prepare for Christmas in this season, of course, and honor the birth of the Christ-child. But our deepest work as disciples is to proclaim the Good News and to trust its promise that Christ will return and in him, “all flesh shall see salvation.” We can't hope for all flesh to know that salvation, to know of that salvation, if we're not about the work of invitation, of welcome, of reconciliation. Ours is a culture that covertly—and too often overtly—wants to welcome or to be among everyone EXCEPT. That “except” group is different for each of us but we all have it. The gift of Advent is the energetic tone of anticipation for Christ's return and the possibility of our discipleship work—or even just the Christmas spirit—broadening our invitation, our welcome and our fellowship with even those who are our “except” group.

“All flesh shall see salvation.” Ours is the gift and calling of making that promise known, and living as though it's real. For Emmanuel is coming. Prepare the way of the Lord.