

Advent is upon us. For four weeks we light candles and prepare. Each candle: hope, peace, joy and love, represents a focus of our preparation for Jesus' coming into the world. In the busyness of December, we pause and carry the light of the Christ candle to each candle and turn our minds toward the beginning of the Church year.

It is good to pause and get ready. In between shopping or cooking or holiday connecting, advent invites us to look deeper and open our hearts to God's work in the world. We often think that Lent is the season of reflection for Christian people as we pack December full. Au contraire! As the days grow shorter and the nights grow longer, Advent is a natural season of thinking and really feel the turning of the world and our place in God's creation.

The first focus of Advent is hope. And that seems an obvious place to start our shared reflection.

"Hope is a stubborn determination to do all you can to make it work. And hope is something we can cultivate."

-Jane Goodall

As we enter Advent this year, hope may seem illusive to many of us. What is it anyway? How does it function in our lives? How do some of us exude hope, while it eludes the rest of us?

Jane Goodall declares that hope is a choice. What do you think? Is she right? What might that mean for you? In *The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Time*, Goodall and Doug Abrams turn hope over in their hands and in their conversation. **On Wednesdays at 11:00 am this Advent we will share lunch and join that conversation.** Come share what hope has meant for you and how it has changed for you over time. I wonder if hope is shareable, is it contagious? Can I catch it from you? or can you catch it from me?

Come on, let's see!

May Christ's Peace, Joy and Love be with you this holiday season!

Pr. Jeanie