

GoodMorning!

For those of you on the live stream who may not know me, my name is Connie Duling and I am chair of the diaconate committee. Pastor Bryce and his family is taking a vacation day to celebrate Christmas with his wife's family so I am filling in today. Unfortunately, I don't have friends that give me sermon topics, nor do I have connections with conference or national leaders to enhance my sermon so bear with me. Pastor Bryce will be back next week.

Advent is the beginning of our church year and it ended with the birth of Jesus on Christmas day. We held lovely services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and hopefully you all were able to celebrate Christmas in your homes or with people you love. Many of us had someone missing that had been there before which made our celebrating somewhat

less cheerful but sharing our love of Christ in these services hopefully helped us to remember that our loved ones who have passed on were celebrating with God. Today's scripture has moved on to talk about the circumcision of Jesus. This occurred on the 8th day after his birth. It was the responsibility of Jewish parents to bring the child to the temple for this purpose. This is still the practice today. It is an indicator of starting a child off in the beliefs of the Jewish faith. In addition, the man named Simeon had an important part to play. He met the child and began talking about how Jesus would be the one to cause the rise and fall of many people. And, even though Mary and Joseph were aware of his intended duties in life, they were surprised that Simeon spoke so openly about it. This was the first public speaking of the greatness of Christ and what his future held. Also, the

prophet Anna was present and she began to praise God and speak about the child who was to bring all redemption to Jerusalem. Now, St. Paul's isn't an evangelical church where we preach to people on the street corner or wherever. We do, however, show by example. The many projects that are done, both by the church as a whole and by individuals. Our Feeding the Kids program involves not only St. Paul's but other community churches. We lead by example. I have seen on Facebook a time or two that when it is posted about how many bags of food were given away in the summer that our good work should be considered negated because it is bragging. I have never seen anyone agree with this comment. What we do, we do for the Glory of God and for the children of our community. Publicity is specifically for the purpose of raising awareness so that all may be served

who need it. Some may say that today's scripture is the First for the rest of our lives. Look forward to openly proclaiming our personal religious beliefs, look forward to performing general acts that proclaim the goodness that Christ expects, and look forward to bringing others into the Light of Christ by following our example.