

**Sunday, November 28, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study – Jeremiah 33:14-16 & Luke 21:25-36  
“Time to Go Home”**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes) In groups of two or three, have participants talk about the last trip they went on and what steps they took to prepare (made a list, checked directions, packed, and so on).

**Jeremiah 33:14-16. Context.** Jeremiah's prophetic career spanned over 40 years which witnessed some of the most critical events in the life of God's people. A few years after the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry, King Josiah had retaken the region of the former northern kingdom that had been under Assyrian control and had proposed a thoroughgoing reform of Israelite religion: suppressing all shrines to foreign gods (a fact of life under foreign domination) suppressing even all Israelite shrines outside Jerusalem, and centralizing worship in the Temple (622 BC). But Josiah was killed (609 BC) as he tried to intervene in the larger contest between Egypt, Assyria and Babylon -- a contest ultimately won by Babylon. Later, when King Zedekiah sought to rebel against Babylonian overlordship, the Babylonian army crushed Jerusalem, looted and burned the Temple, and exiled to Babylon a large portion of the population of the city (587 BC). Jeremiah was content to stay in Jerusalem, but was taken to Egypt with other refugees who feared further reprisals from the Babylonians. The book of Jeremiah is a compilation of the prophet's oracles together with stories of his encounters with Judah's rulers. Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile, Jeremiah's words tend to be words of judgment upon the pride of the people who thought that they, not God, were in control of their destiny. In the wake of the destruction, Jeremiah's words turn to hope and forgiveness for a crushed and broken people. This week's reading reflects the latter perspective, and speaks directly to the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant with David.

**Luke 21:25-36. Context.** This week's reading is the conclusion of Jesus' final teaching, as Luke records it, in the last few days before his crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Like the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, here Jesus warns his disciples of the terrors and chaos that they will experience after his death, and before his coming again. The signs that God's Kingdom is about to be fulfilled include cosmic events that Jesus assures his disciples are to be welcomed, and not feared.

**Read Jeremiah 33:14-16 & Luke 21:25-36**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

**Read Jeremiah 33:14-16 & Luke 21:25-36 again.**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

**Group Dialogue:**

- Have each participant complete the following sentence: “During the holiday season, I usually feel...”
  - Cheerful
  - Confused
  - Sad
  - Hopeful
  - At a loss
  - Other
  
- Have each participant complete the following sentence: “When I think about going home, I usually feel...”
  - Excited
  - Meh
  - Fearful
  - Hopeful
  - Comforted
  - Other
  
- How does Jeremiah envision the coming of the Messiah? What might it mean for the Messiah to execute justice and righteousness?
  
- Advent does not just look backward to the first coming of Christ; it also looks forward to the Second Coming of Christ. Have each participant complete the following sentence: “Thinking about the Second Coming makes me feel...”
  - Excited
  - Curious
  - Fearful
  - Overwhelmed
  - Other
  
- How does looking forward and looking backward during Advent give us the assurance to “stand up and raise your heads” (21:28) as we wait for the Second Coming?
  
- How does paying attention enable us to see the gap between the kingdom of God and what we currently experience? How does paying attention enable us to see signs of the coming kingdom now?

- How do the practices of Advent (praying, waiting, and watching) help us to pay attention and be present to others waiting for the kingdom of God?

### **Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Faithful God, our normal rhythm is rushing. We are thankful for this season of Advent as a reminder to pause, wait, and anticipate your miraculous ways that are often found in unexpected places. May we pay attention this week to signs of your coming kingdom. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.