

## Sermon Guide – The Inn: Housing the Holy Advent 1: Making Room

On the first Sunday of Advent we light the candle of HOPE. We have been talking about hope a lot lately. How has your understanding of hope been impacted during these weeks? How have you experienced hope in the last month or so?

The scripture for today comes from Jeremiah who was an Old Testament prophet known for preaching words of doom and gloom to the people of Israel and Judah. They had turned away from God's ways. The kings and other leaders had turned away, too. So God used Jeremiah to convey messages of punishment to them. They were taken captive by the armies of Babylon – their neighbors to the east. The strongest and most influential of the people were taken away to Babylon as prisoners while the weakest were left to deal with the destruction of Jerusalem. Not much hope there!

But then comes, finally, these words of hope for a future. Jeremiah 33:14-16...

*The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill my gracious promise with the people of Israel and Judah. <sup>15</sup>In those days and at that time, I will raise up a righteous branch from David's line, who will do what is just and right in the land. <sup>16</sup>In those days, Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is what he will be called: The LORD Is Our Righteousness.*

From this side of history, we know the Davidic line of kings comes to an end, leaving us to look at this passage as pointing toward the eventual coming of the Messiah. We understand the Messiah to be Jesus, the Christ Child, born in a manger in Bethlehem 2000+ years ago. He fulfills this prophecy and so many others found in the Old Testament.

Today's theme is "Making Room." Just as Mary and Joseph had to find a space for their baby to be born, we are called to "make room" in our lives for devotion to Jesus and for the practice of our faith in our daily lives.

Making room for something means clearing out other things. What experiences do you have of clearing out?

What things can you clear out of your life – of your heart – in order to make room for others during these Advent and Christmas seasons?