



The Messenger

Newsletter of St. Jacobi and Zion



Sundays after Pentecost/End Times

October/November 2009

Wake up!

The season of End Times will soon be upon us. Reformation is usually the beginning of our End Times observation that concludes around Thanksgiving before we start the new Church Year with Advent as a lead-in to the Christmas season.

Hymn 206 in Christian Worship, “Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying,” is one of my favorite End Times hymns. It uses the pictures that Jesus put forward in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins to stress the importance of being prepared. It does a fantastic job of expressing the overall theme of End Times: be ready!

How ready are you? End Times directs us toward something beyond the here-and-now. We can very easily get lulled to sleep by just going through the motions, shuffling off from one thing to another. How often, though, do we think about how any day—today, even as you read this—could be the moment that Jesus returns to earth? That’s a sobering reminder.

Paul writes to the Romans, **“The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:11b-12)**. If we assume that every day will be like the next, we lose the motivation and fire to make use of what little time we have left. We don’t have long to get our house in order and help others to do the same.

That’s why it’s so important for us to be continually fighting that dreadful fight against sin and its temptation. We don’t know if, having given up on our faith, we will indeed have time to repent on our deathbed. Perhaps a deathbed will come and go in an instant; perhaps it will all end with the last trumpet blast at Jesus’ return and then it will be too late. We need to be ready and alert, aware of our sinfulness and continually taking our sins to Jesus, assured that he has and will continue to forgive us because of his love for us.

The End Times also remind us of how important it is to reach out with the message of the gospel to those who do not know it. You may think to yourself, “That is a job for Pastor, or the elders, or an evangelism committee, or a canvassing group!” We certainly can and do make use of all of those outlets to get the good news of Jesus out to others. But a far more effective means of communicating that love is through personal invitation and contact. You know that your neighbor, or friend, or spouse, or child, or parent, etc. doesn’t know the love of their Savior. So invite them! Don’t let them slumber too long or it may be too late! Invite them to come with you to church, with you to Bible Class or to Sunday School. In that way, they may join all the Church in praising our Savior Jesus until he returns to bring us home to be with him in heaven!

Being ready sounds like work, but it’s really a joy. End Times simply focuses us on the core of our faith, and by extension, the core of God’s love for us. End Times holds Jesus’ cross and empty tomb in front of us and reminds us of his great love for us. So during these last days, you can ask yourself, “Am I awake? Am I ready?” and the answer is always a resounding, “YES!” through Jesus our Savior. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

“Wake, awake, for night is flying,” the watchmen on the heights are crying

“Awake, Jerusalem, arise!”

Midnight hears the welcome voices and at the thrilling cry rejoices:

“O where are all you virgins wise?

The Bridegroom groom comes—awake! Your lamps with gladness take! Alleluia!

With bridal care, yourselves prepare to meet the Bridegroom who is near.” (CW 206:1)

