

Coming & Going

[ἔρχομαι ~ er'-khom- ahee]

When Jesus had finished instructing His twelve disciples, He went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to Him, "Are You the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

⁴ And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.

Matthew 11:1-6

Comings and goings: our lives are filled with them. Some of these movements fill our lives with joy, and other times that joy is emptied and is replaced with sorrow.

Bethany Free Lutheran is experiencing once again a time of "comings & goings." With the resignation of Pastor Craig, there is now a deep empty spot in the lives of the people here. And that empty spot will be seen more and more when it is discovered all the things he did here over more than two decades. More than twenty years ago there was joy when Pastor Craig returned to Astoria and resumed ministry together with the people of this fellowship.

In the past the congregation has been filled with joy when pastors have said YES to the call the congregation has extended. And now is a time for waiting and prayer, seeking to discern the heart of God, and asking Him to direct the right pastor to Bethany Free Lutheran for this next season of their life of ministry in and around Astoria.

"New beginnings" are always times of uncertainty, not knowing where the next years would lead, or even how long you would work together in God's kingdom. But you trusted that the Lord would lead you in a way that

would glorify Him and strengthen the ministry in this place.

The Greek word for both COME and GO is the same word. It is used more than 600 times in the New Testament and brings with its meanings the sense of both movement and of revelation.

Students who begin to learn Greek laugh because it is obvious to them that the Greeks just didn't know whether they were coming or going. In truth, it is only the beginning students of the language that struggled with this word.

The Greeks understood that ἔρχομαι showed a movement taking place.

Movement is always taking place. The important questions: What is the direction of that movement? Where are you going?

- ✧ Are we following the example of those humble shepherds on that first Christmas night? Luke writes that *"they came with haste."* Luke 2:16
- ✧ Months later it was the Magi from the East who asked the question, *"Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? ... We have come to worship Him."* Matthew 2:2
- ✧ John the Baptist, while in prison because of his faithful ministry, sends his disciples to ask Jesus, *"Are You the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"* Matthew 11:3
- ✧ Those who greeted Jesus on that Palm Sunday cried out with joyous anticipation: *"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"* Luke 19:38

As we live in this time of comings and goings, my prayer for each of us is that we will find HIS MOVEMENT in our lives, and that movement toward the One who:

- ✧ Came to seek and to save the lost,
- ✧ Came that we might have life and have it in abundance.

A large movement is set before Bethany Free Lutheran in the days ahead, let each of us be filled with confidence in His grace and mercy to lead us to the perfect place... and the right pastor of this time.

Pastor Herb Hoff