**Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

Today, we start Advent – Advent is from the Latin word for Coming or Arrival. Advent celebrates the first coming of Jesus, but it’s also about the expectant second coming that He promised. We wait in Faith, looking expectantly for our Savior to return. We know that God kept His first promise – sending His Son – therefore, we have every reason to believe that God is Faithful, and He will fulfill His second Promise, which is to come again and gather us to Him.

Many people can quote the scripture that I’m using this morning. But some have never looked to completely understand it. It says “Now Faith is the substance” and we think about something like silly putty. But Faith is the – hupostasis – literally the setting under – the foundation - Faith is the foundation, the concrete underlying anything we hope for and faith is also the proof of things and deeds we haven’t seen – things God is doing in our life to prepare us for the life He has for us. God is the good Father – He doesn’t give scorpions for eggs, He doesn’t give rocks in place of bread… He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Faith leads us to seek Him diligently. Faith undergirds our entire walk with Jesus.

What happens when our foundation is suspect? Everything built on that foundation becomes suspect. We’re reminded of the house built on rock versus sand. When we can’t get our footing in the mud, we walk cautiously and doubtfully. When the road becomes icy, we drive cautiously or stop altogether. It’s the same when our foundation of faith is faltering… we are doubtful and cautious and, sometimes, we quit altogether. But 1 Corinthians 16:13 encourages us - Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. We must stand fast and believe.

Today, we celebrate the opening of Advent – lighting the candle of Faith. In Christ, we stand fast in Faith. We look with appreciation at the promise God has kept. Jesus, our perfect Savior, the Son become Babe, Babe become Master, Master become Sacrifice, Sacrifice become King and we celebrate the promise that He will come again. We must meet Him in Faith – if you’ve never met Him, come today as we sing and let’s make that right. He’s been calling you – what is your answer?