***Hebrews 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.***

This morning, we kick off Advent with the lighting of the candle of Faith. Faith is the foundation of our walk with Christ. Hebrews 11:6 says *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* Impossible to please Him, not hard… impossible. And Hebrews 11:1 tells us *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* In fact, in John 6:29, we read this, *Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”* The work of God is Faith. Faith without works is dead – James 2:26 - *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* It cannot be doubted that our faith will lead us to works, not as a way to faith, but as an outpouring of faith. The spirit that fills us will overflow from us and we will be known by our fruit.

Verse 23 says - *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*Let us hold fast, meaning to embrace something most precious, the confession of our hope. Romans 10:9 says *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* When we are saved, we claim the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe God raised Him. We profess our need for a Savior, and confess that Jesus is our Savior. In Acts 4:12, Peter, speaking of Jesus, states this - *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.* Peter heard Jesus clearly in John 14:6 *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* We hold this truth firm, and do not waver and do not lean. The world will try to get us to waver and lean, but we hold fast, without wavering, to the One that saved our eternal souls. We can never give Him enough glory and honor for this gift. And God is faithful to believers, keeping every promise, including the Promise that Jesus will come again – Acts 1:11 *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.*” Our God is a Promise Keeper. Our part is Faithful Belief and Humble Obedience.

Verse 24 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.* Let us consider – soberly see the temptations we face, the trials we endure, the way the world is pulling, that we might physically support one another and intercede in prayer spiritually for one another. That we might provoke, excite, and stir up one anotherto love – love of God, love of His people, and love of the lost that, by His Will, may become His people. But, we’re not just stirring up love, but we are also stirring up good works. If the works are described as Good, they must be of God. James 1:17, we read - *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.* As we stir up one another, with full consideration and love of one another, we encourage works and service in one another for honor and glory to God. Jesus, in Matthew 5:16, says *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.* Our good works are a lens to focus others on our Father in Heaven. May they see Jesus crystal clear in us.

Verse 25 *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.* This is actual physical assembling of the people. Do not forsake coming and physically gathering with brothers and sisters in the Faith. 1 Pet 5:8 says *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* Out on the plains of Africa, we know that lions don’t go for the strong standing with the herd but go for the weak standing alone. Likewise, Satan tries to separate and drive wedges, that he might weaken and devour. But, my friends, he cannot do that without our full consent. Don’t give him that consent. We must instead exhort, meaning to call near and implore one another, toward love and good works, as the Day, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ draws nearer and nearer.

This week, let’s grow excited about the Second Coming of Christ! He’s coming again! It may not be today, but tomorrow will be one day closer than it was today. What is our part – confess boldly, believe firmly, support one another strongly, stir one another briskly, assemble frequently, and exhort one another confidently. He said He’ll come and come He will. The only question is how will He find us waiting? Let Him find us Faithfully waiting, expectantly watching, and ready to greet Him the second He knocks.