

Church of the Divine Love

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 12, 2021

10:15 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#56 – O come, O come, Emmanuel vs.5&6**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Kyrie page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Zephaniah 3:14-20**

Canticle 9 – The First Song of Isaiah

Second Lesson: **Philippians 4:4-7**

Gradual Hymn **#67 – Comfort, comfort ye my people**

Gospel: **Luke 3:7-18**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

Confession of Sin page 360

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#68 – Rejoice! rejoice, believers**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer C	page 369
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 362
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn – #679 – Surely it is God who saves me	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn #481 – Rejoice, the Lord is King!	

Sermon Sunday December 12, 2021

Zephaniah 3: 14-20; Canticles 9; Philippians 4: 4-7; Luke 3: 7-18

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

What then should we do?

Each of us could probably talk about a time in our life when that was our question. I do not mean simply deciding what to do or figuring out what is on the to-do list for the day. The question in today's gospel is more of an existential question, one that strikes at the very core of our being. It comes to us in many different ways.

Sometimes we realize something about ourselves or our life; we recognize a truth and know we need to make a change. Or maybe we recognize a particular behavior or pattern of how we think, act, see, relate to others, ourselves, the world, or God. We do the same thing over and over and nothing seems to change. There is no movement or growth. Perhaps for the first time we acknowledge the reality of addiction. Or maybe we have lived with a deep sense of unhappiness or restlessness. And we are left wondering, what do I do now? Other times, whether or not we want them or are ready, life brings us changes. The loss of a loved one, a divorce, a shattered dream, betrayal of a friend, the last child that grows up and moves out all leave us asking, what do I do now?

Regardless of how it comes about, that question brings us to a crossroads. It is a place of discernment and decision and ultimately a place of repentance. We must begin looking for a new direction for our life. It is the question today's gospel sets before us. It is asked three times, by the crowds, the tax collectors, and the soldiers.

Today's gospel is the continuation of last week's gospel. John the Baptist is in the wilderness proclaiming repentance, echoing the Prophet Isaiah's words "Prepare the way of the Lord," and reminding us that all flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord. If last week's gospel was a call to repentance, then today's

gospel demands action. Repentance requires action. It must become for us a lived reality. The Word of God always seeks from us a response. And that is exactly what John the Baptist demands of those who come to him. “You brood of vipers, you sons of snakes – what are you doing here? Don’t tell me who you are. I don’t care who your family is. Show me who you are. Show me your repentance.” John has challenged them to bear fruits worthy of repentance. His words have left them at the crossroads of repentance. They have heard a new truth in John’s preaching. They have recognized a need to change, and they want to know what to do. It is a legitimate question. Even when we recognize the need and desire to turn our life in a new direction, that whole process can seem so big, so overwhelming, that it seems impossible.

Repentance is not just about us. It is connected to and happens in relationship with God and our neighbor. It always restores, enhances, and gives life. It is not about escaping the circumstances of our life but about engaging those circumstances in a new and different way, God’s way. Repentance opens us to see ourselves and each other as we really are in God. It fills us with the joyful expectation of the one who is more powerful, the Messiah. Powerlessness is the middle ground between fight and flight. We are powerless to fight the world’s situations on our terms and we are powerless to get away from them. That’s a source for much of our fear, anxiety, anger, and frustration. That same powerlessness, however, is our way forward. Our powerlessness opens us to a new and different source of empowerment. Instead of limiting possibilities our powerlessness now creates new possibilities with “the one who is more powerful.” Powerlessness does not mean we have no choices; it means we must make different choices. We may be powerless to change the world, but we can choose to change ourselves. We may be powerless to escape the world, but we can choose to live a different way.

Isn’t that what St. John is telling those who come to him? He doesn’t ask them to change the world but to change themselves. He doesn’t tell them to quit their jobs but to live a different life. The crowds who came to him could not eliminate poverty, but they could share what they have with the cold and hungry. The tax collectors who came to him could not overhaul the tax code, but they could be honest. The soldiers who came to him could not end the Roman occupation, but they could act with integrity and not abuse their power. In each of those situations John focuses on people and relationships. His answers are simple, concrete, practical.

For those who want the world fixed, John’s answers are not very satisfactory. Poverty still remains, unjust economic systems still exist, and power is still abused. But let’s be honest Jesus didn’t really fix the world either. He engaged and gave himself to the world one person, one relationship, and one moment at a time. He loved the world to death and beyond. He showed a different way of being, a different way of living and relating, he offered different priorities and values, and then invited us to participate and follow him. In doing all that he showed us what it means and looks like to be human, to be the dwelling place of God.

On this third Sunday of Advent, as we wait and prepare, we are also called to rejoice. The coming of the Messiah and the Gospel of Jesus Christ are the Good News the angel will speak of when appearing to the shepherds, “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.” This brings us hope even amid our struggles so that when the Christ child arrives at the manger, we can rejoice and sing with gusto, “Joy to the world! The Lord is come.” For now, we pray, stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us. **Amen.**

Masks are required during the service.

Christmas flower memorial envelopes are enclosed.

Please return by Sunday, Dec. 19th. Make checks payable to The Church of the Divine Love Altar Guild.

3 ADVENT

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, II (also on zoom)

11:15 AM VESTRY MEETING

THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE IS OPEN FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

MONDAY

8:00 AM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY

7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY

10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE

8:00 PM AA MEETING

SATURDAY

10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE

4 ADVENT

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

Girard Bishop	Chrissy Neville	Bob Curley
Nathan Treadwell	John Loubengeiger	Del
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Julia
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Robert Sweat
Martinisi Family	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Sylvia
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Laura
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Taylor
Ciara Elodie	Gabriel	Aidan
Christopher & Family	Victims of Natural Disasters	Bernadette
People of Haiti & Missionaries who were Kidnapped		

Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the

spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you,
from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that
with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may
worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,
Lay my life before you,
How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus
and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn
but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So
mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that
all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince
of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions
and glory, now and for ever. Amen

