

Church of the divine love

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 8, 2024 10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #56, vs. 3 & 4 – **O come, O come, Emmanuel**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung)

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Malachi 3:1-4**

Canticle 16 – The Song of Zechariah

Second Lesson: **Philippians 1:3-11**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Luke 3:1-6**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer B	page 367
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn #	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer For the Parish	page 817
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn #	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday December 8, 2024

Malachi 3: 1-4; Canticle 16; Philippians 1: 3-11; Luke 3: 1-6.

Beloved in Christ,

Haven't there been times in your life when you'd have given anything for a new life? When you needed a fresh start? When you ached to have your life transformed? Or maybe you've felt your heart break at the pain of the world. Maybe you were touched by the desperation of a woman or child you will never meet. Maybe you've wept over the seemingly endless acts of violence or injustice across the world. In whatever way those things have come up for you that was your longing for the unforeseeable future and the opening of yourself to the possibility of the impossible.

That unforeseeable future is contained in the word of God that came to John's son of Zechariah in the wilderness. It's the promise of Advent. It's the hope in today's gospel (**Luke 3:1-6**). It's at the heart of John's proclaiming a baptism of repentance. And the coming of that future, its advent in our lives, necessarily focuses our attention on the past. What do you see when you look at your past? What are the feelings and thoughts? For some the past is a painful memory, a chain that still binds, a lost chance, a

failing grade. For others the past brings about a smile of gratitude, maybe nostalgia, or even a longing for the good old days. For most of us the past is probably a mixture of the two.

Regardless of how we view our past, regardless of what did or not happen back then, to the degree we are enmeshed, entangled, or enslaved to our past, we can expect the future to look like the past. We repeat the same patterns, tell ourselves the same old stories, and listen to same old voices. And not much changes. Life becomes static and we are stuck in the past trying to live a life that is no longer. John's call for repentance is the call for us to face and deal with our past. While we cannot undo or alter the past, we can break free from it. When God holds sway, the past is dismissed. Where God rules, the past does not rule. That does not mean the past has no consequences for our future. It means that the past does not necessarily have to define us or determine our future. The question behind repentance, therefore, is not about what we have done or left undone, what has happened or not happened to us, but about what has laid claim to our life. The past reveals who and what has laid claim to our life.

In that regard, repentance is not so much about changing from bad to good, wrong to right, sinner to righteous, though there is certainly nothing wrong with any of those. It's about freedom from our past. It's about a change of heart that let's ourselves be laid claim to by another. It's about letting ourselves be laid claim to by something new, something different, something unimaginable and impossible. Maybe that's the difference between John and all those other people named in today's gospel. The word of God did not come to Tiberius, emperor of Rome. It did not come to Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea. It did not come to Herod, ruler of Galilee. It did not come to Philip, ruler of Ituraea and Trachonitis. It did not come to Lysanias, ruler of Abilene. And it did not come to the high priests Annas and Caiaphas. Instead, the word of God came to John's son of Zechariah. The word of God did not come to the palaces and headquarters of the powers that be. It came in the wilderness. It did not come to the emperor, the governor, the rulers, or the high priests. It came to a wild man, a prophet, a voice crying in the wilderness. The word of God laid claim to John's life in a way it did not lay claim on those other lives. Perhaps political power, economic security, and religious certainty had already laid claim to their lives, whereas the powerlessness, insecurity, and uncertainty of the wilderness had laid claim to John's life. Maybe that's the gift, the grace, that the wilderness times of life bring us. And I wonder, which is it for you? What has laid claim to your life? And in what ways has that claim bound you to the past and denied you a new life, a fresh start, a transforming future? Maybe it's fear, anger, disappointment, guilt, regret. Maybe it's loss, despair, or sorrow. Maybe it's busyness, ambition, the need for approval, to be successful. Maybe it's a broken relationship, a broken heart, a harsh and critical voice. There are thousands of claims being made on us.

I don't want us to rehash the past and talk about what we could've or should've done, or how we can improve ourselves. That's not repentance and that's not what John is proclaiming in today's gospel. Those are just more fraudulent claims on our lives. I want us to let the past be our teacher, a voice that calls us into a new life. I want us to face and deal with our past in order to wake up, to break free, and let ourselves be more fully claimed by faith, hope, love; God's faith in us, God's hope for us, God's love of us. What would your life look like if the primary claims on you were faith, hope, and love? What doors would open to you? How would that change your relationships? How might you see and engage the

world and others differently? I don't know what claims your life today. I don't know the stories of your past. But I can tell you this. This repentance, this breaking free from the past, fills the valleys and low places of our lives, brings low the mountains and hill that were previously beyond our reach, straightens the crooked parts of our lives, and smooths the rough ways.

So, every year at this time, the Second Sunday of Advent, the Church asks us to hear John the Baptist. Whether it is from Matthew, Mark, or Luke on this day we hear the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. St. John does not, however, speak of a particular day. He speaks of a particular way, the way of the Lord. He does not speak about getting things ready. Instead, he speaks about getting ourselves ready. While the world announces preparation for a holiday, John announces preparation for a way. John's message interrupts the circumstances of our life. His message disrupts the patterns and habits of our life within our family, social circumstances, business transactions, and consumer activities. John's message is always a message of hope and promise. The word of God comes in every time, place, and circumstance offering a new way, a new life, a new world. John points to that coming by proclaiming a baptism of repentance, echoing the prophet Isaiah: **Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth (Luke 3:4 -5).**

And that is really all that John the Baptist is trying to get us to do today, when he calls on us to prepare the way of the Lord. He is inviting us to repent. To clean up our hearts. And to focus on our relationship with Christ. His call to repent is really a call to turn from all the stress of the season, and simply return to the Lord. It's why we are here, after all. To listen again to the word of God as it comes to us. And to focus ourselves back on what truly matters. And when we do this, we find again the thread that can lead us through the labyrinth of this life. The thread that shows us the way. The way that fills our valleys, and makes low our mountains. The way that helps us to hear the still, small voice. The way that leads us to turn aside to see the burning bush. The way, above all, that leads to a life like no other, the life that is promised to all who desire it, the life that comes from life with Jesus. Let us follow this way always. To the glory of God. **Amen.**

All baptized Christians, regardless of age, are welcome to receive communion in the Episcopal Church.

2 ADVENT	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS
	11:15 AM	VESTRY MEETING
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP CHRISTMAS SALE
3 ADVENT	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Deb Giordano	Jess Berbeck
Coffee	Dana Kenn	Janet Croft

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Sister Eddie	Betty Curley	Jess
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Art
Chris Dickson	John Rocco	Deb P.
John Mulligan	Marjorie Guerrier	Lynette
Manetta Family	Robert Hosey	Ryan
Christopher	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Beverly Noel	Phil Ryder	Warren

Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Donna A.	Kate Jones	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Ciara
Mary & Family	Wendy	Jan
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Michelle & Baby	Joseph	Annie

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disaster. The homeless and food deprived.

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

To add or make changes to prayer list during the week, email Janet Croft at jmc220@optonline.net.

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

