

Church of the Divine Love
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 11, 2022 10:15 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer before Worship – on insert

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

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Kyrie page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 35:1-10**

Psalm 146:4-9

Second Lesson: **James 5:7-10**

Gradual Hymn #640 – **Watch-man, tell us of the night**

Gospel: **Matthew 11:2-11**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, FormVI page 392

Prayer for Storms and Hurricanes – on insert

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #271, vs. 1,2,4 – **The great forerunner of the morn**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer D	page 372
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 373
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn #76, vs. 1-3,5 – On Jordan's bank	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn#72 – Hark! the glad sound!	

Sermon Sunday December 11, 2022

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:4-9; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another? That doesn't sound like the guy we heard from last week. So, what's happened to John the Baptist? Last week he was a name calling wild man. He stood in the wilderness announcing that the kingdom of heaven had already come near. He demanded that we change our ways, shape up, and respond appropriately to the kingdom's coming. There was no question in his mind, doubt in his heart, or hesitation in his words. He didn't want excuses or explanations he wanted action.

This week, however, John seems rather tame. He doesn't proclaim and he doesn't demand. There's no name calling. The wilderness expanse has given way to the confines of a prison cell. The prophet with a voice is now a prisoner with a question. "Are you the guy or is it someone else?" Despite what his question sounds like John still believes. He still expects the one who is more powerful to come. But how will he know? How do we know? His question is not one of doubt, despair, disillusionment, or disappointment. It is not a lack of belief but a lack of recognition. Recognition is the middle ground, the bridge, between a prophet's voice and a prisoner's question. John's question is the same question with which we often wrestle. How do we recognize the one who is more powerful than us? What does God's Messiah look like in the midst of our life? How do we recognize the kingdom of heaven coming near to us? What does the kingdom look like in the situations and circumstances of our life?

All through Advent the message to us has been to prepare, be watchful, stay awake, get ready, he's coming, the kingdom is here. So, what are we looking for? That is John's question. Am I looking for you

or another? It's not just his question. It's ours too. Think about the many ways in which that question comes up for us. Is she the love of my life or is it another? Is this my career or should I be doing something else? How do I know God's will for my life; is it this or is it that? Did I make the right decision, or should I have chosen differently? Sometimes we say or hear someone else say, Well God has a plan and someday we'll understand. That comment reveals our inability to recognize the kingdom, the Messiah, in the particular situation in which we find ourselves. Those other examples describe our searching to recognize and identify God with us. They reveal our desire to align our lives with the kingdom.

Beneath all those comments and questions, beneath John's question, is the longing to know our selves, to be fully alive, to be made whole, to be complete, to live with meaning and significance. It is not about getting the right answer but about living the right relationship with our selves, with each other, and with God. What does that look like in your life's circumstances? In mine? In John the Baptist's? Maybe there is not a monolithic, one size fits all, answer. Maybe that's why Jesus does not directly answer John's question. Jesus does not say to John, yes, I'm the guy. John will have to decide that for himself. So do we. Jesus rarely provides a direct answer. More often than not he answers a question with another question. What do you hear and see? Look around. Pay attention. Watch and listen. Jesus is not denying us anything. He just won't let himself be historicized, categorized, or localized. The kingdom is larger than its historical coming. The one who is more powerful cannot be confined or limited by time and space. The Messiah brings life not an answer to a question. So instead of giving John a yes or no answer, Jesus describes what to look for, how to recognize the kingdom, how to identify the coming of the one who is more powerful.

The kingdom, the one who is more powerful, the Messiah, come to us in a way that is unique and particular to our life and needs. For the blind the kingdom comes as sight, for the lame as walking, for lepers as cleansing, for the deaf as hearing, for the dead as rising, and for the poor as good news. These are descriptions, however, not limitations or definitions. While there is one kingdom and one Messiah, they come to us in multiple and varied ways according to our situations and circumstances. This means that the kingdom and the one whom John announced come to us in ways that are tangible, practical, and relevant to our lives. If they don't, what difference does it make that they even come? Who cares if the kingdom has come near but it does not affect my life? It does a blind man no good to tell him the kingdom is coming to you and it's all about hearing. The kingdom is meaningless to a crippled person if it is only about sight. So maybe we should stop looking for the Messiah, the one, as if there is only one way, one answer, one expression of God's life and presence among us. Instead, let's start looking for the places in our lives to which Jesus says the kingdom is coming. Let's look for the work Jesus describes happening; new life arising, hope and encouragement being given, and healing taking place. Let's open our eyes to see the fruit of the kingdom and the strength of the one who is more powerful than us.

Have you ever heard a new truth about your life, the soft voice of love, or the silence that speaks of intimacy and presence? Have you heard a cry for justice or help and responded with prayer, action, compassion? Then you know the deaf hear and the kingdom of heaven has come near. How about those times in life when it seems a part of you has died? Maybe it is a relationship, a dream, or a loved one. You feel incomplete, numb, broken. Something is missing. One day you sense a new vitality. There is energy and enthusiasm. Life, though changed and different, has returned. In those times the dead are raised, and the kingdom of heaven has come near. Sometimes it seems as if we have nothing left to give. We are empty. There are no resources or reserves. We cannot do it on our own and we face our own

poverty. We are poor and in need of good news. Someone speaks a word of hope, encouragement, or love. Those are words of good news that reveal the kingdom of heaven has come near.

These and so many more are the moments of our life when we recognize the coming one, when we see and know that the kingdom of heaven has already come near to us, brushed against us, and changed us. These are the moments of our anointing, to share in the life and work of the Messiah, to participate in the kingdom of heaven, to take our place as members of the Body of Christ. They are moments of recognition. We recognize Jesus, the one who is to come, and in him we recognize ourselves.

So, tell me, what do you hear and see? Look at your life and recognize the one who is to come. So, I wonder, where have you imprisoned yourself with expectations of hope or dread? In what ways do you work to rebuild your prison walls? How have you isolated yourself from the love, healing, and life God offers? The door of your cell is locked but only from the inside. Open the door and flee the confines of your expectations. A new world awaits you. What will you see and hear? The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. That would be us. God is always coming to former inmates. **Amen!**

Christmas flower memorial envelopes should be returned

by Sunday, December 18th. Make checks payable to

The Church of the Divine Love Altar Guild. There are extra envelopes at the back of the church.

3 ADVENT	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	
	11:15 AM	VESTRY MEETING	
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)
COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

The Altar Guild will be decorating the church for Christmas after the service. Any help would be appreciated.

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP OFF IN THE KITCHEN

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Jess Berbeck	Anthony Giordano
Coffee Hour	Prossers	Judy Golden

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:

Grace Schinella	Harriet Capers	Bob Curley
John Mulligan	Arlene Goodenough	Celeste
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Gabriel
Barbara Stinson	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony

Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Ciara	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Elodie	Sophia	Carol K.
People of Haiti	Christopher & Family	Julia
Mary & Family	People of Ukraine	Tim
Nathan Treadwell	Richard & Family	Art
Margaret	Victims of Hurricanes	

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

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

Storms and Hurricanes

O God, you rule over all creation, which you have set free to act according to its nature. We know and love your world, which is also a world of randomness and chance. You are Lord of chaos as well as order. We pray to you for people caught in storms and hurricanes. We remember particularly

those whose work is dangerous, police and firefighters,
rescue workers of all kinds. You are known in storm and in
calm, you are Lord of thunders, you moved across the hills
of Judea. You are also a presence in stillness, a voice from
silence. You spoke to Job in the whirlwind and quieted the
Sea of Galilee. Wherever we are, in storm or calm, we know your presence. Call us
sometimes to storm, sometimes to calm, sometimes to wilderness, sometimes to
silence. Call
us always to yourself, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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

