

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

The third week of Advent continues the journey with John the Baptist, focussing on his preaching and the call to justice that he proclaimed. It is ironic that this season has become one in which the inequalities and injustices of our world are so starkly revealed. But, this reality also gives us an opportunity to hear John's call more strongly, and to see more clearly how we are to respond.

May our worship this week challenge us to face the great injustices in our world, and the small injustices in our hearts.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Earlier in the chapter, the author has spoken of the failure of Jerusalem and her inhabitants to behave properly towards God. He has destroyed other nations as a warning to them. In spite of this, God will cause Gentiles to turn to his ways: they will serve him by permitting the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem.

Philippians 4:4-7

Paul tried to finish his letter earlier, but certain concerns about the community and its members intruded. In the Greek world, *rejoice* was used much as we say *goodbye*, but here Paul means *rejoice* literally.

Luke 3:7-18

John the Baptist travels throughout the Jordan Valley, preaching return to God's ways and adoption of an ethical way of life under God. Now he warns against being baptised without the intention to carry out its obligations. Those who behave in this way will be condemned at the end of the age.

TEXT OF READINGS

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Zephaniah%203:%2014-20%0Acw%20Psalms%20146:5-10%0APhilippians%204:%204-7%0ALuke%203:%207-18

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O Lord Jesu Christ,
who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger
to prepare thy way before thee;
Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way,
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at thy second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight,

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end.

Collect Two

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
Grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

The bidding is: Lord in your love

The response is: Hear our prayer

Let us pray now to our loving God who always keeps His promises and knows
us and who values us all so very much.

Loving Father, keep your Church faithful in telling the good news, loving,
justice and drawing many to freedom through the joy of your forgiveness.

We pray, Lord for our work and witness for you here at St
_____. Will you bless strengthen and encourage our clergy
_____ and all who minister in so many ways. We ask your special
blessing on.....*name activities*

Lord in your love

Hear our prayer

We pray particularly for the elderly this Christmas time- especially in Care
Homes,
We pray for our ministry in *name homes* – that love and compassion
may be spread abroad to bring comfort and hope.

Lord in your love

Hear our prayer

We pray for our world that there may be integrity in leadership, mercy and
justice for rich and poor, strong and weak; that there may be peace among

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

nations and respect for all. We ask your wisdom for those battling to solve economic problems in the Eurozone; for those seeking new ways ahead- North Africa & Russia for those trying to bring agreement and justice in the climate talks – South Africa and those grappling with the continued violence in Afghanistan.

For our broken, fragile world that you love and seek to redeem.

Lord in your love

Hear our prayer

We pray, Lord, for our community, our families and friends – for their hopes and fears. May the love of Christ be shown in what we do and how we speak. We remember now all those we know in special need – locked in physical and emotional pain; all weighed down with worry or despair. God of Advent hope, will you restore and replenish them, comfort and free them.

Lord in your love

Hear our prayer

Finally, loving Father, we commend to your love those who have died. Loved ones we especially miss at this time – whose memory are treasure. May they, and we in our turn, experience for ever the joy of your eternity.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which our darkness can quench. So as we commend to your everlasting love those who have died we light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ which eternally shines and brings hope. Today we remember.....

You turn our darkness into light; in your light shall we see light.

Merciful Father,
Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Presider or deacon

As we wait for Christ to come in victory, let us make our requests known to God who saves the lame and gathers the outcast.

Deacon or other leader

For the peace of the world, and for our unity in Christ.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For *N* our bishop and all bishops, for the presbyters, for the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

For the church throughout the world and the faithful in every place.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the leaders of the nations and all in authority.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For justice, peace, and freedom among peoples of the earth.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For travellers, for the sick and the suffering, for the hungry and the oppressed, and for those in prison.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the dying and the dead.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

Joining our voices with _____, John the Baptist, and all the saints and angels of God, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Presider

O King of all the nations, only joy of every heart, keystone of the mighty arch who makes us one, come and save the creature you fashioned from clay. Glory to you for ever. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

Father,
we give you thanks for these heavenly gifts.
Kindle us with the fire of your Spirit
that when Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

PRAYERS

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

God of hope,
you call us home from the exile of selfish oppression
to the freedom of justice,

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

the balm of healing,
and the joy of sharing.
Make us strong to join you in your holy work,
as friends of strangers and victims,
companions of those whom others shun,
and as the happiness of those whose hearts are broken.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

O God of the exiles and the lost,
you promise restoration and wholeness
through the power of Jesus Christ.
Give us faith to live joyfully,
sustained by your promises
as we eagerly await the day when they will be fulfilled
for all the world to see,
through the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Brothers and sisters,
as we joyfully await the glorious coming of the Christ,
let us pray for the needs of the church, our community, and the world.
God of joy and exultation,
you strengthen what is weak;
you enrich the poor
and give hope to those who live in fear.
Look upon our needs this day.
Make us grateful for the good news of salvation
and keep us faithful in your service
until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Zephaniah 3:14-20

In 1:1, Zephaniah tells us that he is descended from Hezekiah, most likely the king who ruled Judah 715-687 BCE. This prophet's intimate knowledge of Jerusalem and affairs in the court, and the absence of a theme found in other prophetic books - denunciation of the king - suggest that he was of royal descent. 1:1 also tells us that his ministry began in the reign of King Josiah, the great reformer. But his denunciation of corruption in religious affairs suggests that his prophecies date from before the reforms of 621 BCE. The book predicts doom for Judah for failing to follow God's ways, and adverse judgement on other nations, too; however, the final chapter promises comfort and consolation for those inhabitants of Jerusalem who wait patiently for the Lord and serve God as a community. They will rejoice when God comes into their midst.

Earlier in the chapter, the author has spoken of Jerusalem (her inhabitants) and their crimes: they have failed to listen to God, accept his advice, trust in him and *draw near* (v. [2](#)) to him. He has destroyed other nations as a warning to Jerusalem, but she has ignored it (vv. [6-7](#)). In spite of this, he will cause Gentiles to turn to his ways (v. [9](#)); they will serve him by permitting the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem (v. [10](#)). When God does rise

(“on that day”, v. [11](#), in an ideal future time), he will bring about Jerusalem’s moral recovery by removing the arrogant from their midst (v. [12](#)), leaving as “the remnant” (v. [13](#)), the “humble and lowly” (v. [12](#)), who will be godly; they will live in tranquillity.

Now the author (or perhaps a later editor) invites Jerusalem to rejoice because her salvation is about to happen. God has intervened (v. [15](#)); he dwells with his people; he protects them. In a military image, God will lead Israel’s army. He will encourage her people (v. [16](#)); he will give them victory, rejoice in their return to his ways, make his love for them apparent again, and celebrate in song. As people expected to happen at the end of time, God will destroy Jerusalem’s (and Judah’s) enemies, look after those who suffer, bring the exiles home, and make the city to be honoured by all (v. [19](#)). They will see Judah’s fortunes restored! (v. [20](#)).

Isaiah 12:2-6

This book can be divided into two (and possibly three) parts. Chapters 1 to 39 were written before the exile, from about 740 BC to about 700 BC. These were difficult times for the southern kingdom, Judah: a disastrous war was fought with Syria; the Assyrians conquered Israel, the northern kingdom, in 723 BC, and threatened Judah. Isaiah saw the cause of these events as social injustice, which he condemned, and against which he fought valiantly. Chapters 40 to 66 were written during and after the Exile in Babylon. They are filled with a message of trust and confident hope that God will soon end the Exile. Some scholars consider that Chapters 56 to 66 form a third part of the book, written after the return to the Promised Land. These chapters speak of hope and despair; they berate the people for their sin, for worshipping other gods. Like *Second Isaiah*, this part speaks of the hope that God will soon restore Jerusalem to its former glory and make a new home for all peoples.

This passage is in a similar vein to our reading from Zephaniah. V. [1](#) and v. [4](#) begin “... in that day”; [11:10](#) says “On that day” other nations will note that a king of David’s line (“the root of Jesse”) sits on Israel’s throne; they will ask about him and the divine glory that is with him. “On that day”, says [11:11](#), God will gather the remnant, the remaining faithful, from throughout the world. So the *day* is the end of the era, when the Messiah will come. “You” ([12:1](#)) is singular, so perhaps God instructs a herald of events to come. He will tell the people to give thanks for the end of God’s anger and return to his *comfort*. Perhaps metaphorically, “salvation” in v. [2](#) and v. [3](#) is restoration to the Promised Land: note “wells of salvation”. God’s “strength and ... might” (v. [2](#)) will protect his people. Life-giving water symbolizes God’s saving power. In a second song (vv. [4-6](#)), the people not only give thanks but also proclaim the good news to all nations: that all may know of him and his actions. His people are inhabitants of “Zion” (v. [6](#)), “royal” because God, “the Holy One of Israel” dwells there.

Philippians 4:4-7

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, a prosperous Roman colony in northern Greece, from prison. We do not know whether this imprisonment was in Ephesus or in Rome. It appears that he was held under house arrest. It is possible that the epistle is actually made up of three letters. It contains many personal references, exhorts members of the Philippian church to live the Christian life and to good ethical conduct, introduces Timothy and Epaphroditus as his representatives, and warns against legalists and libertines. Lastly, he thanks the Philippian community for their material support.

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

Paul began the conclusion to the letter back in [3:1a](#). After a digression – to warn against heresy and self-indulgence and to urge devotion to Christ – he tries to finish the letter, but certain concerns intrude. It seems that “Euodia” (v. [2](#)) and “Syntyche”, two workers for Christ, differ in their understanding of what the way of Christ is, and that this is causing disunity in the Philippian community. We do not know to whom Paul refers as his “loyal companion” (v. [3](#)); he is asked to be instrumental in achieving reconciliation.

V. [4](#) is the conventional Greek salutation (like our *goodbye*) but here Paul means “rejoice” literally. May you behave towards others as you should (“gentleness”, v. [5](#)). Paul expects the Second Coming soon: “The Lord is near.” Then v. [6](#): rather than worrying on their own, the Philippians should ask God to help them, through prayer, both in prayers of “supplication” (petition) and of “thanksgiving”. God’s “peace” (v. [7](#)) will protect them against their own failings and external threats. It “surpasses all understanding” either by being beyond the grasp of the human mind or by achieving more than we can conceive.

Luke 3:7-18

Luke has told us that “... the word of God came to John ... in the wilderness. He went into all the region ... proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins ...” (vv. [2-3](#)). Now John the Baptist addresses people in general (“crowds”, v. [7](#)): he calls them “vipers” (poisonous snakes common in Judea), and accuses them of being baptised with no intention of starting a new, ethical, life. If they think that by being baptised they will evade God’s judgement at the end of the era (“wrath to come”, v. [7](#)), they are wrong: they must also turn to godliness. Being Jewish, having “Abraham as our ancestor” (v. [8](#)) is no assurance of salvation, for anyone who responds to God’s gift of love with appropriate behaviour will be part of the renewed Israel. The people have a choice (v. [9](#)): either respond to God’s offer by beginning a new way of living, or face condemnation at the end of time. (Here “fire” symbolizes adverse judgement.) God will fulfil his promises to Abraham in unexpected ways! Luke gives us three examples of behaviour which fit with turning over a new leaf. The “crowds” (v. [10](#)) are probably ordinary people; they should have selfless concern for the disadvantaged. In spite of attempted reforms, “tax collectors” (v. [12](#)) still collected more than prescribed. The “soldiers” (v. [14](#)) were probably Jews in the service of Herod Antipas; they too were despised. John tells them that they should follow the emperor’s guidelines on military conduct. That “What should we do?” is answered here and elsewhere in various ways probably indicates that simply following rules is inadequate: we must ask again and again in openness to God’s will.

At the time, people expected the Messiah to come at any moment (v. [15](#)): perhaps John would restore Israel’s fortunes and God’s power would triumph now. John says that the baptism he offers is vastly inferior to Jesus’ baptism: for Jesus, he is so unworthy that he cannot even do a slave’s task (“untie ...”, v. [16](#)). (In Acts [2:3](#), fire is associated with the Holy Spirit.) V. [17](#) says, in agricultural language, that the godly (“wheat”) will be gathered to Christ but the ungodly (“chaff”) will be destroyed. John preached a message of forgiveness of sins and the advent of a new relationship between people and God.

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

John’s message, which challenges us to live with justice and compassion, is the central focus of this week. The same basic message resonates through all of the passages. In Zephaniah, the song of restoration speaks of God’s restoration and forgiveness, but makes a point of embracing those who are vulnerable and marginalised specifically in the

vision of God's grace. Similarly, Isaiah's message speaks of God's salvation and the rejoicing that comes to those whom God has restored. In Philippians, the believers are called to a life of rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving because of God's nearness, and the assurance is offered that this life brings unspeakable peace. Finally, in the Gospel, John makes it clear that God's coming is not just a joyous event in which we are accepted and forgiven with no cost on our part. Rather, God's people are called to change their lives in accordance with God's saving purpose, essentially becoming agents of God's salvation to one another. This is the message we need to hear this week. Yes, God is always coming to us, bringing salvation and life. But, this coming calls for a response from us in which we commit to lives that share grace and salvation, that empower and restore one another through acts of justice and compassion. If we really believe that God's Reign has come in Christ, we cannot help but recognise the need for this to change and direct our lives.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

Global Application:

It is ironic that the season of God's coming to us has, in the wealthy West, become characterised by inflated prices, increased profit-seeking, rampant consumerism, and individualistic greed and excess, while in other parts of the world – notably Africa – the struggle for survival and for a meaningful place in the world's decision making bodies continues. What might John the Baptist preach to us about this? If we really understood the "upside-down" Reign of God that John proclaimed, and that Jesus embodied, how might that change our approach to, and celebration of, this season? Until Advent and Christmas are times of rejoicing for all people, they are not really season of great joy at all. Until all people have enough – which is not an impossibility – we continue to miss the truth of God's coming. As much as we might celebrate the salvation of God that we receive, we cannot ignore the call to be agents of that salvation to others. This means that, especially at this time, we need to embody the old cliché of thinking globally while acting locally. Where we have plenty, we can share with those who do not have enough. Where we have a voice, we can speak up for those who have been silenced. When we recognise that our citizenship in the Reign of God reaches across the globe, we can make choices about our consumption and ways of living that bring life to others. If, on the other hand, we ignore those in other parts of the world who suffer, we miss the point of God's Reign, and of the Advent season, completely.

Local Application:

Who are the voiceless, excluded ones in your community? Who are the ones that a John the Baptist would call you to serve and include? What practices or ways of living would John challenge you on? What uses of your wealth might he question? Is there a way, this week, that your worship can overflow to the poorer communities and people around you? Can you use this Advent season to develop long term programs or strategies for embodying Christ's coming to the people who most need to hear it in your neighbourhood, and perhaps the world? As we prepare for the season of incarnation, and explore what it means that God's Reign is always coming to us, we need to make this about more than just happy ideas. It is only as God's Reign becomes the focus of our lives that we can really enjoy – and share – the abundant life that Jesus brings. This is not just about giving money, or creating new charities. It's really about building relationships with those who need friends and caring networks more than handouts. It's about realising that we're all connected, and that what dehumanises one, dehumanises us all. Perhaps, this year, instead of using this season as an escape from the world's struggles, we can allow it to draw us more deeply into connectedness and mutual care.

SERMON OUTLINE

Lk 3:7-18 You brood of vipers!

focus on Jn Bpt & his preaching ministry c28AD - in fulfilment of **Isaiah 40.3f**: *A voice of one calling in the desert, "Prepare the way for the Lord."*

1. Preparing the Way: John fulfilled his mission - as was announced to his father Zechariah the priest in the Temple - that he would *make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Lk 1.17)* So now Jn comes - with a forthright, direct, confrontational message - *"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (v7)*

2. Producing the fruit - the kind of lifestyle *-in keeping with repentance*. Show you have changed - don't rely on your Jewish background - historical lineage - *we have Abraham as our father* - we're ok - don't need to change!

But Jn warns them - *the axe is already at the root of the trees (9)* - ready to chop/cut down *every tree that does not produce a good fruit*. Judgement is near - prepare yourselves - produce the fruit of good-living! >> Response - *"What should we do?"* > 3 types of people:-

a) crowd: - share your clothes/food with the needy...

b) tax collectors - be honest - don't cheat...

c) soldiers - don't intimidate/threaten/abuse your position..

The people were impressed - *wondering in their hearts if Jn might possibly be the Messiah (15)*.

3. Promising the Messiah:- *One more powerful than I will come* - the X/Messiah whose way I am preparing. Therefore be ready to receive him - as Messiah & Saviour - Master & Lord - message of Advent/Christmas - Gospel!

By Norman Porteous

SERMON

Have you ever heard the saying, "It's not what you know, it's who you know"? Networking has been an established social function in society for as long as there have been people. We often use our connections to get us into social circles and places we might have difficulty getting into alone.

On television shows and in the media we see people getting things they want because of their family connections or social circles. Most of us have probably done the something like that too. For example, we would rather go to someone we know or to someone recommended than go to a stranger for a haircut or to get our car fixed. That sort of networking is harmless, right?

But when does it cross the line? What about when we find ourselves connected to an individual or a group that demands respect when, in fact, they are driven by arrogance and a misplaced sense of entitlement? Have you ever heard someone say, "Don't you know who I am?" Have you ever witnessed someone being excused from what would normally be inexcusable behavior because of their connections to a family, a community, or even a belief system?

It doesn't just happen on TV; it happens anywhere there are people. And it isn't just a modern day issue.

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

We hear John the Baptist in our gospel today chastising the crowds before him for this very thing. “You brood of vipers!” he accuses.

“Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.”

What vivid imagery! What a dire warning. But most of all, what a reminder of the power of God.

John is telling the crowd and telling us that what our ancestors have done in the past doesn’t matter now. It is what we do in the present that matters. There is an immediacy in John’s declarations. God’s power is being stirred up, and we don’t know what form it is going to take or what the outcome will be. We are powerless before the mystery of God.

Like anyone who feels threatened, the people in the crowd listening to John wanted to avoid judgment, avoid God’s wrath, and avoid pain. They panicked. Human nature hasn’t changed much over the centuries. We still feel the same way in the face of the unknown. We want to control it, we want to analyze it, and we want to have power over it. When we can’t do that, we transmit our anxieties to others who we think we can control and have power over. Exploitation makes us feel better.

It seems as if greed, accumulation of material things, and apathy toward others can create a protective shield around the fearful trembling of our distorted hearts. Like the strange, frightening picture in Oscar Wilde’s story of Dorian Gray, our true selves, our inner selves that should be turning to God, end up atrophied and diseased as we slowly become monsters of our own making, while everything on the outside seems to be going along swimmingly.

“What then should we do?” We ask with the despairing crowds.

John tells us we must bear fruits worthy of repentance. We must turn to God – our hope and our salvation.

This calls us as individuals to decide how we will open our hearts, tearing down our useless shields, to let the love of God, through righteousness and justice, bear our fruits of repentance. It is through righteousness that we restore the relationship between us and God, as well as the relationship between each other; and through justice that we restore our relationship with material things – being good stewards of all that we have.

John, in essence, tells the crowds, the tax collectors, and soldiers that the first step to a restored community as God intended is to redistribute wealth and stop exploitation.

Each individual’s decision is key – it is the idea we have today of thinking globally, but acting locally. Systems don’t change all at once, but through one person at a time. This may be something as small as being honest if a cashier gives you too much change back or going through your closet to give away clothes that another can use. Every small action leads to a larger transformation, not just of ourselves, but of the world around us.

We are to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord. Our hearts are filled with expectation and questioning.

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

We know the answer to the crowd's question of "Who is the Messiah?" because we have heard this gospel story before. Yet, even though we know that God is about to do something new by being with us in the flesh – *Immanuel* "God with us" – and we claim to believe that God is still doing something new – revealing, redeeming, sustaining, and moving in the present time – what are the fruits of our repentance? How are we living our lives with righteousness and justice?

We hear the prophet Zephaniah and the prophet Isaiah proclaiming the goodness of the Lord in our Scriptures today; what hope they hold! "The Lord is in your midst," Zephaniah exults. How then, do our hearts respond? Are we living as if we believe this?

Sometimes it seems that since the gospels were written in a different time and different place, they are not applicable to the world we live in today. What we often forget is that the same God that came among us back then is in our midst now, stirring up power, doing new things. The God of the gospels is the God of the twenty-first century, and He is still calling us to transformation.

If a doctor diagnosed someone with heart disease or diabetes and then gave that person instructions on how to keep it from getting worse, we'd hope that person would follow the doctor's advice. After all, we trust doctors to prescribe the right diet and medication. But if we ignore our doctor's advice and adopted the attitude of "this can't happen to me," then we are just asking for trouble.

So, too, with our spiritual lives. John the Baptist is helping us prepare a way in our hearts for the Lord to come.

This is an exciting time. We do not know how God will stir things up – but we do know that God's work always comes to good. If we don't clear a path, then how will we be able to respond with joy when the Lord is in our midst? How will we be able to hear the call for transformation in our lives and in the community around us if our shields are up?

We have the choice to allow God to come afresh into our lives, giving us new eyes, deeper wisdom, and profound compassion. We have the ability to repent anew and to affirm the covenant made in our baptism, proclaiming the good news to all people. This is no longer our parents' choice, or our grandparents' choice, or our ancestors' choice – we cannot rest on their laurels. The choice is ours. May we choose wisely.

-- *The Rev. Danáe Ashley*

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

["Trust,"](#) Frederick Buechner Sermon Illustrations.

<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-trust>

["Getting There,"](#) Rev. Dr. Robert Baggott, *Day 1*

Luke 33: 7 - 18. God needs not church members, but believers--not talkers, but doers. And when John the Baptist's little riverside congregation hears this alarming word they begin to ask him for more clarification.

http://day1.org/4400-getting_there

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

["Complex darkness."](#) the Rev. Rob Giesemann, *Sermons that Work*, Episcopal Digital Network

Technically, Christmas lasts 12 days. It starts at sundown Christmas Eve and continues until January 6, the Epiphany. In the old days, Christians refrained from Christmas celebration until Christmas Eve. Not even the tree would go up before then, as people respected the holy anticipation of Advent.

However, faith often follows practice, and practice has effectively changed the timing of Advent and Christmas Advent no longer occupies the four weeks before Christmas... The problem is, John the itinerant Baptist does complain. He refuses to let you or anyone else skip Advent. John is shouting at the top of his lungs: "You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee the wrath to come?"

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2012/11/26/3-advent-c-2012/>

["Repent, Ye Saints,"](#) Rev. Dr. Wiley Stephens, *Day 1*
http://day1.org/1611-repent_ye_saints

["Waiting for the Good News,"](#) John R Donahue, SJ, *America*
<http://americamagazine.org/content/the-word/waiting-good-news>

["Elemental Advent,"](#) Sharron R. Blezard, *Stewardship of Life*
<http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/2012/12/elemental-advent/?>

CHILDREN

[Worshiping with Children](#), Advent 3, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown, 2012.
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/year-c-third-sunday-of-advent-december.html>

[On the Chancel Steps](#), children's resources by Frances Woodruff
<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2012/11/13/advent/>

["Come to the Party!"](#) Dianne Deming, *Children's Sermons Today*
<http://childrenssermonstoday.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/come-to-party.html>

[Gathering](#), from the United Church of Canada. Includes sermon seeds, liturgical ideas, "with children," hymn suggestions, choral suggestions etc,
<http://www.united-church.ca/planning/lectionary#gathering>

["Sermon of the Week,"](#) / ["Mensajes para ninos,"](#) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles.
Sermons4Kids.com.
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

[Advent Hymn](#) (*David Beswick*)
[Hallelujah! What A Saviour](#)
[Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee](#)
www.churchnewsireland.org

The Third Sunday of Advent YEAR C December 13, 2015

[O Spirit Of The Living God](#)

[It Came Upon The Midnight Clear](#)

[God Of Justice](#)

[Prepare The Way](#)

[How Long?](#)

[Glory In The Highest](#)