

DECEMBER 16, 2018
THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



John the Baptist tells the good news.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 3:7-18	One more powerful is coming
Monday	Zephaniah 3:14-20	A song of joy
Tuesday	Philippians 4:4-7	The Lord is near
Wednesday	Isaiah 9:1-7	A child is born
Thursday	Hebrews 13:7-17	Service that pleases God
Friday	Isaiah 11:1-9	The peaceful kingdom
Saturday	Isaiah 12:2-6	Thanksgiving and praise
Sunday	Luke 1:39-55	Mary visits Elizabeth

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

So with many other exhortations, [John the Baptist] proclaimed the good news to the people. **Luke 3:18 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, may the good news of your coming fill our hearts with love for you and compassion for others. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, bless our homes with joy this Advent. As we enjoy your gifts of food, make us ready for the one who is to come. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Joy to the World



CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is some good news you have heard recently?
- John the Baptist tells people to show fairness to others. How is this good news?
- How would you describe the good news of Jesus' birth to others?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Luke 3:7-18.

John the Baptist is no broken reed withering in the wilderness. He gets people's attention with words of condemnation, warning, and confrontation. And it works, or, at least the crowd is riveted for awhile. The people wonder what to do to get their lives in order. Simple: don't abuse your power and wealth; share; be generous. However, these aren't the "how-to" steps to achieving a successful life. They are the fruit of a life that trusts the good news of Jesus coming into our lives. The good news of Jesus changes everything with the power of grace, mercy, and peace. John the Baptist presents it as the life that bears "fruits worthy of repentance" (v. 8). How is the message of John the Baptist good news for you?

Pray: **Righteous God, we thank you that the systems of abuse receive condemnation and we ask that your reign of peace bear fruits of repentance in us, through Christ our Lord, amen.**

SERVICE



In Luke 3:10-14, John the Baptist tells people how to use their power and influence to care for others. Make the gift of service to others one of your Christmas gifts this year. Gift choices of service could include surprising family and friends by doing secret acts of care, visiting someone who is sick, planning an outing for someone who is alone, or helping with chores in your own home.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



The third candle on the Advent wreath is the candle of proclamation and joy. Discuss or think about the joy that Jesus brings to the world. Read Isaiah 9:6-7 and after lighting the first candle of expectation and hope, the second candle of preparation and peace, and the third candle of proclamation and joy on your Advent wreath, say the following:

Leader: **In Zephaniah's song of joy he cries out, "Rejoice and exult with all your heart!" As we light the third candle, let us give thanks for the joy that Jesus brings.**

All: **Thank you, Lord Jesus, for giving us joy. Fill our lives with joy this Advent. Amen.**



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