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**News and events:**

**Our Happy Birthday wishes to** Ashley Fisher yesterday, Richard Mayhew tomorrow, and Nathan Dillabough on Friday.

**This afternoon, December 6<sup>th</sup> Country Gospel Hour in Danville - 2pm.** Join "Dave and the Wranglers" for country gospel and bluegrass music on a Christmas theme. The "messy church" children of Danville will be putting on a short play in place of speakers and Christmas cookies, etc. will be served in the hall. **The offerings collected will be contributed to the Deanery Refugee Fund.**

**Next Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, services** are in St. Paul's Bury at 9:30am and in St. Peter's Cookshire at 11:00am Service of the Word led by Layreaders.

**On Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>,** Holy Communion service at 3pm in St. Paul's Rest Home, Bury.

**Saturday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> at 4pm** in St. Luke's Magog there's a Candlelight Ecumenical Bilingual Service.

**December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve services are: St. Paul's Bury at 2pm and St. Peter's Cookshire at 4pm.**  
**On Christmas Day** there is a 10am service at the Wales Home and an 11am service at St. George's in Lennoxville.

**On Sunday, December 27<sup>th</sup>, Christmas I** there is a Deanery service at 10:30am at St. George's in Lennoxville.

**Prayer of the Week:** We remember the terror attacks in Paris, Lebanon, Iraq, and the United States. Our Father, you sent your son into our world as a light in darkness. Help us to remember that darkness is only ever defeated by light. Help us to know that darkness cannot overcome your light. We pray that terrorism may be overcome and violent hearts turned to paths of peace. In the face of hatred we pray that we may show forth love, and in this time of despair we remember our calling to be lights in a darkened world. May the peace of the Lord be with us all. **Amen.**

**Sentence:** Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. All flesh shall see the salvation of God. *Luke 3.4, 6*

**Collect:** Almighty God, who sent your servant John the Baptist to prepare your people to welcome the Messiah, inspire us, the ministers and stewards of your truth, to turn our disobedient hearts to you, that when the Christ shall come again to be our judge, we may stand with confidence before his glory; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

- We pray for God's people throughout the world; for Dennis, our Bishop, for Lynn, our Priest, and for all who are in leadership, both lay and ordained. Grant them the gifts of wisdom and courage as they lead the church. We give thanks for the work accomplished at the meetings of Synod We pray for the Ven. Bruce Myers elected as Coadjutor Bishop.

- In our Diocesan Fellowship of prayer, we pray for the Quebec Diocesan Gazette, for its Editor James Sweeny and members of The Editorial Board: Caroline Mullin, Roy Stinson and Beverly Dame; we pray for our Companion Dioceses, The Diocese of Moray Ross and Caithness in Scotland and Bishop Mark Strange, and the Diocese of Bujumbura in Burundi and Bishop Eraste Bigirimana.

- In the Provincial Prayer Cycle, we pray for the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, and for The Right Rev'd Geoffrey Peddle; in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for The Rt. Rev'd Jacob W Owensby of the diocese of Western Louisiana.

- In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle we pray for Christian faith communities in Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal.

- We pray for our families, friends, and communities; and we ask blessings for Ashley, Richard, and Nathan on their birthdays.

- We pray for healing and comfort all who are sick or suffering in any way, especially for Joan Dougherty, Robert Coleman, and The Ven. Robert Bryan.

- We pray for the people of France and for all those who are living in any country where terrorists' attacks kill and injure people. We pray for the ones who commit the attacks to stop. We pray for a world of peace and justice for all. **Amen.**

**Chuckles: Two priests have a car collision.** Both cars are totally demolished but amazingly neither of the clerics is hurt. After they crawl out of their cars, one priest sees the other priest's collar and says, "So you're a priest too. Just look at our cars. There's nothing left, but we are unhurt. God must have meant that we should meet and be friends for the rest of our days." The second priest replies, "I agree with you completely. This must be a sign from God." The first priest continues, "And look at this. Here's another miracle. My car is completely demolished but this bottle of wine didn't break. Surely God wants us to drink this wine and celebrate our good fortune." So he hands the bottle to the other priest. The priest agrees, takes a few big swigs, and hands the bottle back. The first priest takes the bottle, immediately puts the cap on, and hands it back to the second priest. The priest asks, "Aren't you having any?" The first priest replies, "No...I think I'll wait for the police."

**I used to think I was indecisive,** but now I'm not too sure.

**If everything is coming your way,** then you're in the wrong lane.

Readings for: The Third Sunday of Advent

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (Year C)

**A Reading from the Book of Zephaniah...**<sup>14</sup>Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! <sup>15</sup>The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. <sup>16</sup>On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. <sup>17</sup>The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing<sup>18</sup>as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. <sup>19</sup>I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. <sup>20</sup>At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.  
*Zephaniah 3:14-20*

### **Canticle 3 BAS page 76 (Isaiah 12:2-6)**

**A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians...**<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.  
*Philippians 4:4-7*

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke...**<sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits 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. <sup>9</sup>Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”<sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?”<sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.”<sup>12</sup>Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?”<sup>13</sup>He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.”<sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.” <sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,<sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”<sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. *Luke 3:7-18*

**Short Reflections:** In these final verses from his book, the Prophet Zephaniah gives us a vision of the restoration of the People of God. The Lord has “taken away the judgments against [them];” that is, he has pardoned them and released them. And that is only the beginning. In a particularly striking verse, the prophet evocatively describes how, just as Israel should rejoice in the Lord, the Lord will rejoice over them. And yet, this restoration still remains, for the prophet, a promise to be fulfilled in the future. In a series of first-person declarations, the Lord promises that he “will” save his people, turn their situation around, and make them great among the nations, and all before their very eyes. The passage from the conclusion of St. Paul’s letter to the Church in Philippi is, at the risk of being cliché,

short but sweet. He exhorts those who hear him to rejoice, to be gentle, to worry not, to be in prayer with God, supplicating, but, above all, giving thanks. Paul desires that the Philippians would let the peace of God, which is better than human intellection, wash over them, for it will stand watch over their hearts and minds in Jesus Christ. Why does Paul tell the Philippians to do all of this? The answer is simple: because “the Lord is near.”

I am reminded that John the Baptist is not a “nice” man. He has no problem with calling those who are drawn to him a “brood of vipers” when he questions their level of sincerity. His message is not a soft one. The eschatological ax, he says, is ready to chop down not only the barren trees but also those that do not bear good enough fruit, after which they will be thrown into the fire. Likewise, while the wheat will be gathered safely into the barns, the chaff will be burned with “unquenchable fire.” And, according to John, there is nothing special about being a child of Abraham, a child of the promise. Yet, at the end of this passage, St. Luke calls all of this “good news.” And it really is. After all, the One who will burn the chaff with fire will also baptize the penitent with the Holy Spirit and with fire. This One is none other than the Messiah, whom the people coming to John are awaiting so eagerly that they hope that the Baptist himself might fit the bill. Yes, the Messiah will bring a fire of destruction, but also a fire of purification and renewal. Furthermore, there is time, right now, to repent and bear good fruit. No, John is not a “nice” man. But he is good, and so is the One he proclaims. *Donald J. Griffin*

**On Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> Advent began** and we moved into Year C of the lectionary. During this Year C of the three-year lectionary cycle, we will read through Luke's gospel, hear the stories and proclamations of the prophets, and spend considerable time in the epistles of Galatians, Colossians, I and II Timothy, and II Thessalonians. During August 2016, we'll complete the readings from Hebrews begun toward the end of Year B. While the readings for each Advent in the three-year cycle vary from year to year, the pattern of these readings is always the same. We always begin with the end of all things in mind. Week 1 focuses on the second coming of Christ. Week 2 brings us the story of the ministry and prophetic role of John the Baptist. Week 3 is the message of John the Baptist, which, while a message of judgment, is always counterpoised by the call to rejoice. And week 4 focuses on the role of Mary.

By starting at the end and then unfolding the fulfillment of promises that lead toward it, Advent invites us into a different story of time and history than that of North American culture’s version of December, “Christmastime” which lures us into shopping malls, online retailers, and parties. It lulls us into the drowse of manufactured memories of the perfect bliss of a snowy winter’s day. And it seduces us to break our bank accounts to purchase more and more new things.

Advent could not be more different. Advent forces us to ask whether our marketplace practices can stand before the judgment seat of Christ. It awakes us to the radical disjuncture between God’s dream for creation and the mess we have made of it. It calls us to give our all, not for our own pleasure or that of our dear ones, but in pursuit of God’s mission of making all things new. Yes, there is light in the land of darkness, there are angels and shepherds announcing and celebrating the birth of Jesus but that is only the beginning. That’s Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day comes the announcement that sets the course for the real work and purpose of this season. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.” Christmas Season is an extended time for contemplating the ramifications of the incarnation of God, and both the hope and the significant threat God’s becoming flesh has been and continues to be to the kingdoms of this world and those who rule and defend them.

Advent calls us to wake up— become conscious of what’s really going on and what’s really at stake so that as we come to Christmas, beholding the glory of the only-begotten Son of God, we do so with eyes wide open to the opportunities and pitfalls that lie before those of us who have been made or are preparing to be made the children of God by water and the Holy Spirit. - *Taylor Burton-Edwards*



