

*Transforming  
Lives Through  
Jesus Christ*

# ***SWORD POINTS***

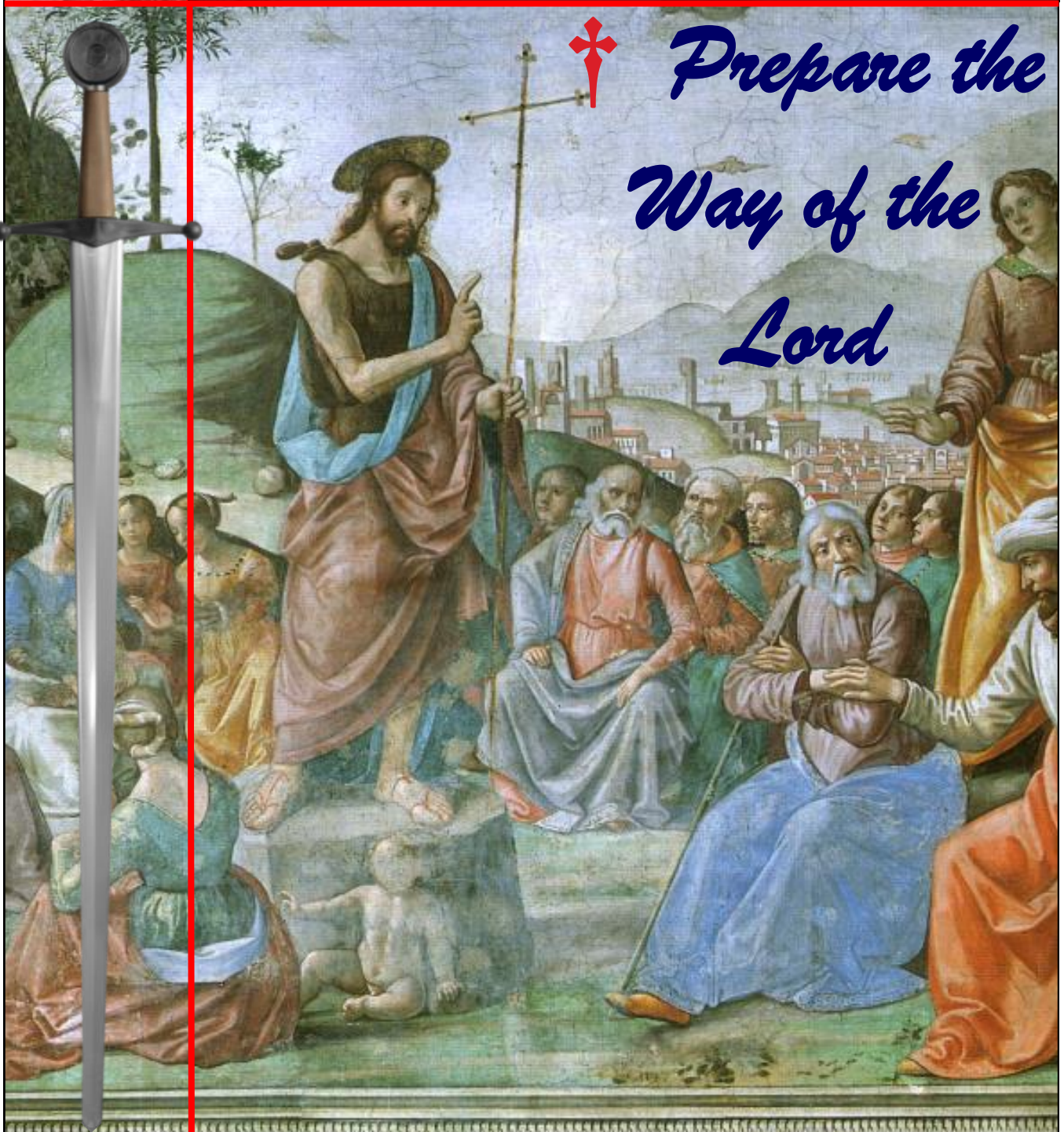
December 4, 2025

[www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com](http://www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com)

(203) 775-9587



***Prepare the  
Way of the  
Lord***





## ✠ Branching Out

Isaiah begins this week's readings with: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." For many of us, not having not grown up with a "Jesse Tree" tradition, the reading would usually zip through our ears with no particular impact until we look deeper into this hint of family history.

There's been a serious uptick in the field of genealogy over the last couple of decades or so with online access to family records and even DNA kits that allow one to explore geographical heritage. Discovering the *branches* of one's family tree is fascinating, even addicting, and can also be frustrating when one limb is missing or the records stop short of fully revealing the information sought. Yet even the smallest detail can add depth and connectedness to the relationship with those who have gone before us. And so it is with the family tree of Jesus.

Jesse was the grandson of Ruth

(of "*whither thou goest, I will go*" fame) and her husband, Boaz. We first hear of Jesse in the Book of Ruth ([Ruth 4:13-18](#)) as the son of their son, Obed. Jesse grows to be a farmer with eight sons ([1 Samuel 16](#)), the youngest of which is David who becomes King of the Israelites. It is through Jesse's family tree that this root, this Branch, flowers into Jesus.

The secular spectacle of christmas (intentional lower "c") has, for so many, replaced the spiritual celebration and worship in Christ's Mass with the frenzy of over-shopping, garish outdoor decorating with clashing colors of lights, and inflated cartoon characters on lawns that go flat in the morning, as a sort of metaphorical anti-climax.

Yet even in this environment Isaiah tells us that this *...root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples...* Paul wants us to abound in hope, and the Gospel of Matthew brings us the very direct and not shy voice of John the Baptist. Jesus is indeed the reason for the season; the reason for our *Christ-mas* - our act of worship of the One we call Messiah, the Anointed Son of God.

New Testament scholar, theologian, and author Marcus Borg tells us that Advent *...is a season of anticipation, yearning and longing for a different kind of life and a different kind of world.* In this second week of Advent, one way to prepare the way of the Lord is by contemplating: What kind of life, what kind of world am I longing for? Where is God, where is Jesus, in my family tree? Am I too far out on a limb or can I decorate my branch with hope, peace, and joyful anticipation?



### About the Cover:

#### The Preaching of the Baptist

by Domenico Ghirlandaio 1449 – 1494

This fresco is part of the series Ghirlandaio made in the Tornabuoni family chapel in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. All works in this series are about the life of John the Baptist.

"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a \_\_\_\_\_ will lead them."

**Isaiah 11:6 NIV**

Fill in the \_\_\_\_\_

## † Lessons and Carols

Our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols will be held on Sunday, December 14 at 5:00 pm. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this beautiful service which consists of Scripture readings about the birth of Jesus interspersed with the singing of traditional carols led by our choir. What a truly wonderful way to prepare your heart, mind, and voice for Christmas!

**Or better yet, if you like to sing, you are welcome to join our special choir for this service.** Rehearsals are on the following Mondays from 7-9 pm: Dec 8; and Thursday, Dec 11. The only prerequisites are as follows: 1) you like to sing Christmas music, and 2) you like to be around people who like to sing Christmas music. No previous participation in the music ministry required! Please contact Kirsten Peterson to join: [kirpeterson@comcast.net](mailto:kirpeterson@comcast.net).



## † This Week at St. Paul's

- |             |            |   |
|-------------|------------|---|
| Thu, Dec 4  | - 9:30 am  | - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room   |
|             | 11:30 am   | - Chronic Pain Support Group, Guild Room  |
|             | 7:30 pm    | - Property Committee, Guild Room  |
|             | 7:30 pm    | - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary  |
| Fri, Dec 5  | -10:00 am  | - Friday Walking Group, Holcolmb Hill Preserve, Newtown                                       |
| Sat, Dec 6  | - 7:30 am  | - <a href="#">John 21:12</a> Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford                        |
|             | 8:00 am    | - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Guild Room  |
| Sun, Dec 7  |            | <b>The 2nd Sunday of Advent</b>   |
|             | - 8:00 am  | - <b>Traditional Holy Communion</b> ( <a href="#">YouTube Live</a> )                          |
|             | 9:30 am    | - Adult Class, Guild Room   |
|             | 10:30 am   | - <b>Contemporary Holy Communion</b> ( <a href="#">YouTube Live</a> )                         |
|             | 10:40 am   | - Sunday School, Classrooms   |
|             | 12:00 pm   | - Q & A w/Bishop Ahrens, Crocker Hall   |
| Mon, Dec 8  | - 7:00 pm  | - Men's Bible Study, Crocker Hall ( <a href="#">YouTube Live</a> )                            |
|             | 7:00 pm    | - Lessons & Carols Rehearsal, Sanctuary   |
| Tues, Dec 9 | - 9:30 am  | - Ladies Tuesday AM Bible Study, Guild Room   |
|             | 7:00 pm    | - Scout Troop #5, Crocker Hall  |
| Wed, Dec 10 | -10:00 am  | - <b>Holy Communion &amp; Healing</b> ( <a href="#">YouTube Live</a> )                        |
|             | 11 to Noon | - Drive-Thru Food Collection #148   |
|             | - 7:00 pm  | - Ladies Evening Zoom Bible Study ( <a href="#">Zoom</a> )                                    |
|             | 7:30 pm    | - Vestry Meeting, Guild Room  |
| Thu, Dec 11 | - 9:30 am  | - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room   |
|             | 7:30 pm    | - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary  |
| Fri, Dec 12 | -10:00 am  | - Friday Walking Group, T.B.A.  |
| Sat, Dec 13 | - 7:30 am  | - <a href="#">John 21:12</a> Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford                        |
|             | 8:00 am    | - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Guild Room  |
|             | 10:00 am   | - Hanging of the Greens, Sanctuary  |
| Sun, Dec 14 |            | <b>The 3rd Sunday of Advent</b>   |
|             | - 8:00 am  | - <b>Traditional Holy Communion</b> ( <a href="#">YouTube Live</a> )                          |
|             | 9:30 am    | - Adult Class, Guild Room   |
|             | 10:30 am   | - <b>Christmas Pageant &amp; Contemporary Holy Communion</b> ( <a href="#">YouTube Live</a> ) |
|             | - 5:00 pm  | - <b>Lessons &amp; Carols</b> ( <a href="#">YouTube Live</a> )                                |

Check our website daily for schedule updates.







## The Priest-in-Charge WEEKLY

Fr. Nate, our Priest-in-Charge is distributing a weekly e-mail to communicate things directly from his desk to yours. **Connection, communication, and care** are among the highest priorities of his new ministry, and he wants to make sure there are regular touch points between us. If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **already receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, you don't have to do anything - you're already included on the list! If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **DO NOT receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, or if you want to opt out, write Fr. Nate at [priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com](mailto:priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com) and let him know.

### † Bishop Ahrens Visitation This Sunday

**This Sunday, December 7th, the Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens, Suffragan Bishop in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, will be with us for her Visitation.** A bishop's visit is always a gift - a chance to connect with the wider diocese and to reflect together on the life and mission of our parish. For us in particular, as a community that has at times had a complicated relationship with the Diocese, it is also an opportunity for healing and reconciliation. By being gracious and generous hosts, we have the chance to display in unmistakable ways the love and grace of God, bearing witness to the unity we share in Christ.

**Bishop Laura will preach and preside at both the 8:00 am and 10:30 am services, and she will also host an open "Q & A" forum in Crocker Hall following the 10:30 a.m. service.**

Please join us.



## † Transforming Saints of God

Thursday, December 4th

### John of Damascus

Priest and Theologian, c. 760

John of Damascus was the son of a Christian government official for the Muslim Caliph of Damascus. At an early age, he succeeded his father in this office, but in about 715, he entered the monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem. There he devoted himself to an ascetic life and to the study of theology.

In the same year that John was ordained as a priest, 726, the Byzantine Emperor Leo the Isaurian published his first edict against the Holy Images, which signaled the formal outbreak of the iconoclastic controversy. The edict forbade the veneration of sacred images, or icons, and ordered their destruction. In 729-730, John wrote three "Apologies (or Treatises) against the Iconoclasts and in Defense of the Holy Images." He argued that such images were not idols, for they represented neither false gods nor even the true God in his divine nature; but only saints, or our Lord as a man. He further distinguished between the respect, or veneration (*proskynesis*), that is properly paid to created beings, and the worship (*latreia*), that is properly given only to God.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council, in 787, decreed that crosses, icons, the book of the gospels, and other sacred objects were to receive reverence or veneration, expressed by salutations, incense, and lights, because the honor paid to them passed on to that which they represented. True worship (*latreia*), however, was due to God alone.

John also wrote a great synthesis of theology, *The Fount of Knowledge*, of which the last part, "On the Orthodox Faith," is best known. To Anglicans, John is perhaps best known as the author of the Easter hymns "Thou hallowed chosen morn of praise" (*The Hymnal* 1982, #198), "Come, ye faithful, raise the strain" (#199; #200), and "The day of resurrection" (#210).



Icon of John of Damascus



## † Socks & Toiletries for the Homeless

As the temperature drops and the seasons change remember homeless people are on their feet all day, and the only pair of socks they own are very likely to be threadbare. Once again, this year we are collecting socks and toiletries for the men's homeless shelter throughout the winter months. Place donations in the bins in the back of the church or Crocker Hall.



## † It Is Too Little

This week's scriptures are meant to be a link between the Baptism of Jesus and the rest of the Church year. They provide sort of a follow-up and meditation on Christ's ritual washing by John. Last week we read part of the Servant Songs from Isaiah. These describe a mysterious person who serves God through his pain. Sunday's selection adds the concept that the Servant's mission is not just to the Jewish people, but for all nations. As much as God loves his Chosen People, this love is only complete when it reaches all people.

## † **A New Day, a New Way**

[Isaiah 11:1-10](#) - [Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19](#) - [Romans 15:4-13](#) - [Matthew 3:1-12](#)

**W**e live like the orphan who has been given the promise of adoption but must wait until the legalities are completed. The adoptive parents have promised to return for us when the adoption is finished. Then we will be taken home and know the reality of being in a family. We may still be at the orphanage now, but it is a new day and life is lived in a new way. Our life has become one of preparation, not just continuing along in the way it has always been.

The word we use for the time between the event that makes a new way possible and that which makes it a present reality is Advent. We live knowing that we have been adopted, but we have not yet been taken home.

The Prophet Isaiah has awakened us to the promise. God's kingdom will be reestablished. Another King David, not just another Davidic King, will come and sit on the throne of the kingdom. This One will be the death-conquering seed that rescues the human family, as promised by God in Genesis 3:15. And he is not just a Savior born, but a monarch reigning. Through his word, reconciliation between God and man, and even among the animals of the earth, will be established. He will be the king of all the world and the nations will submit to him. As a result of all the nations being united under one ruler, war will end.

The promise given through the patriarchs and prophets became the clear articulation of our intense hunger for God. And this hope has been renewed by the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension he has made our reconciliation with God and ultimate peace possible. We are adopted as his children and are considered members of God's family, even today.

But the full consummation of our adoption will not be a reality until Jesus returns for us in glory on the

last day. Meanwhile, we live in Advent. Life is different for us, even though we still live in this world and are subject to the powers and principalities that exist. But it is a new day and we are to live in a new way. The hope of the promise is renewed. We are to live in expectation of the satisfaction of our hunger and of becoming children of God, no longer his enemies.

When we prepare for an event that involves action, we do more than just wait. In our preparation we rehearse the way we should act when the time comes. In the military, troops not only train through simulated wartime scenarios, but they also rehearse for the ceremonies welcoming dignitaries and for troop reviews. Football teams scrimmage offense against defense using the formations and plays of the future opponent. In each case, the people involved live in the moment as they anticipate having to live in the future. God in his word has revealed to us his expectations and the manner in which we are called to live in his presence.

Advent is the time for us to begin to train ourselves to live God's way as his children, so that when Jesus returns to bring us home, we will know how to act in God's house as part of the family.

**Look It Up:** Romans 15:13

**Think About It:** There is no greater source of significance and security than knowing we belong to God eternally. - by The Rev. Dr. Chuck Alley, *The Living Church*, 2025



*Sister Irene of New York Foundling Hospital with children. Sister Irene is among the pioneers of modern adoption, establishing a system to board out children rather than institutionalize them. | Wikipedia*



## ✠ *Art in the Christian Tradition*

### **John the Baptist,**

by Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889),

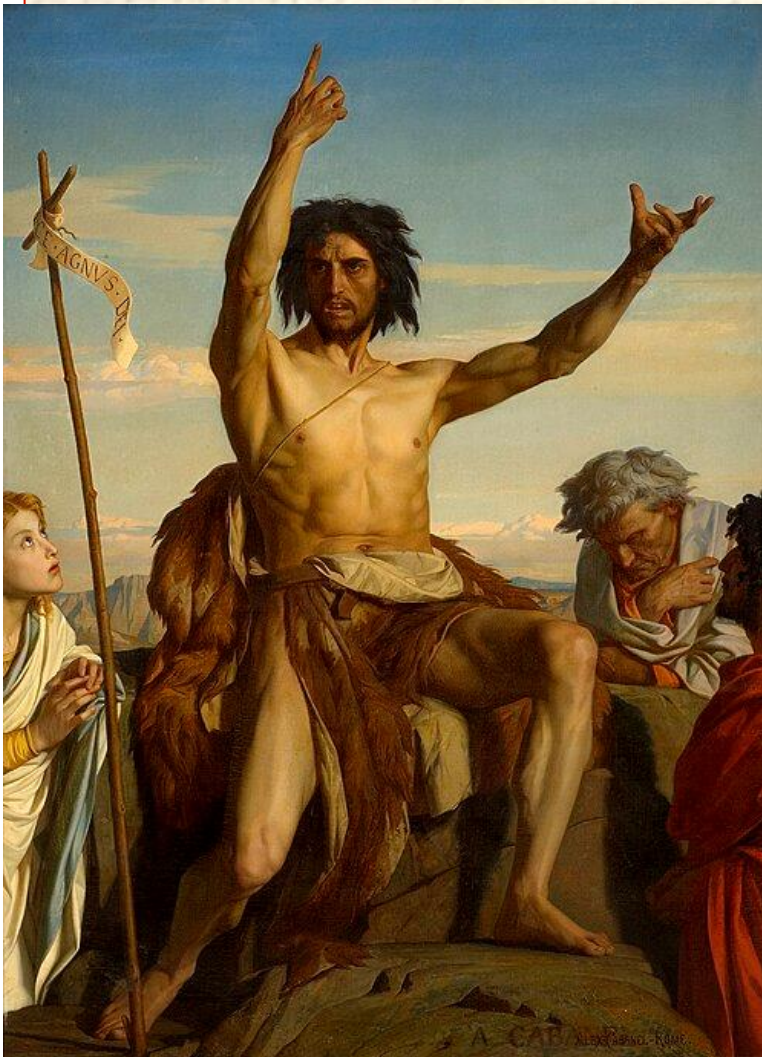
oil on canvas, painted in 1849

Oil on canvas

© Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France

this striking painting of Saint John the Baptist comes from the hand of Alexandre Cabanel, one of the most celebrated French painters of the nineteenth century. Cabanel created this canvas after a trip to Rome, and we can sense the classical influence across the whole work with the idealized figures and the almost sculptural clarity of form. John the Baptist appears as a vigorous, fiery preacher, caught mid-proclamation. John's expression is fierce, almost unsettling. It is very unusual, as he is more often shown as a gentle, serene figure quietly directing us toward Christ. On either side, young and old listeners lean in attentively, as though the very air is alive with his message.

To the left stands his cross-shaped staff with the banner "Agnus Dei" (the Lamb of God) the heart of John's mission. He is the forerunner, the one who points beyond himself to



Christ, the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. Cabanel's John has his mouth slightly open, as though we can almost hear his cry echoing across the desert. Clothed in camel-hair with a leather belt around his waist, he matches perfectly the Gospel's description. His gestures are bold, even dramatic: one arm lifted towards heaven from where the Messiah descends, the other pointing towards the earth He now entered. When Cabanel unveiled this painting in 1849, it was warmly received in Paris, though many viewers were struck by how unusually intense his portrayal of John the Baptist was.

Advent is a season of waiting, longing, and preparing our hearts, and no figure embodies that mission more powerfully than John. Matthew presents him standing in the wilderness,

calling Israel to repentance, to conversion, and to a renewed openness to God. His message is urgent: "Prepare the way of the Lord." By placing John before us now on this Second Sunday of Advent, the Church invites us to do what he urged his listeners to do: to clear away whatever blocks Christ's path into our hearts.



## † Happy St. Nicholas Day

**E**ach year in Advent with the focus on Christmas, St. Nicholas Day, December 6th, somehow seems to sneak by us. Very little is known about the life of Nicholas, except that he suffered torture and imprisonment during the persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. It is possible that he was one of the bishops attending the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325. He was honored as a saint in Constantinople in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian. His veneration became immensely popular in the West after the supposed removal of his body to Bari, Italy, in the late eleventh century. In England almost 400 churches were dedicated to him.

Nicholas is famed as the traditional patron of seafarers and sailors, and, more especially, of children. As a bearer of gifts to children, his name was brought to America by the Dutch colonists in New York, from whom he is popularly known.



## † Salvation Army Kettles Are Coming Soon

**S**t. Paul's Parish has been an ardent participant with the Salvation Army for almost 30 years. Through our town wide efforts, every church, for one weekend, hosts a "Kettle & Bell" to collect donations for the Army, the Social Services Department in our Town, vets those who have "critical and urgent needs" that cannot be met through their regular funding. All funds administered are clearly identified as coming from the Christian Salvation Army.

### MISSION STATEMENT

"The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination."



† Thought for Reflection

- from Fr. John Morrison

ALFRED DELP  
PRIEST AND MARTYR



ADVENT OF THE HEART  
SEASONAL SERMONS AND PRISON WRITINGS

1941-1944

IGNATIUS

*"The One Who Cries in the Wilderness. Woe to an age when the voices of those who cry in the wilderness have fallen silent, shouted by the noise of the day or outlawed or swallowed up in the intoxication of progress, or growing smothered and fainter for fear and cowardice..... May the Advent figure of John, the relentless envoy and prophet in the God's name, be stronger in our wilderness of ruins. For how shall we hear unless someone cries out above the tumult and destruction and delusion?"*

Alfred Delp, *"The Shaking Reality of Advent,"* 1957

**Phishing Scams - Don't fall for them!** Please do not respond to any message from Fr. Nate or St. Paul's by email or any other method of communication that asks you to purchase something (often a gift card) or asks for a "favor." **Delete these messages, do not reply, do not click links in the messages, mark them as Spam or Junk.** If there is any doubt about the veracity of a text or email, contact Fr. Nate by e-mail at ([priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com](mailto:priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com)) or the office ([dszen@yahoo.com](mailto:dszen@yahoo.com)).



## ✠ The Christmas Giving Tree

**DUE DATE**

**SUNDAY**



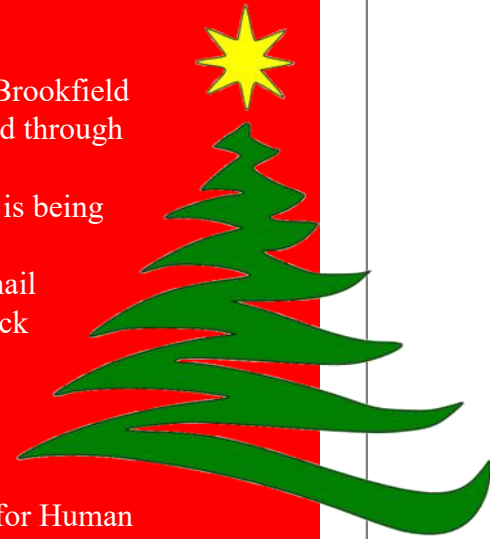
The St. Paul's family is partnering with Brookfield Human Services to help families in need through their Holiday Program.

Like Thanksgiving, the Christmas program is being accomplished through the use of gift cards.

Tags & gift cards should be placed in the "mail box" near the tree in the back of the church. We are relying on everyone to return the gift cards before December 7th.

This will provide time for Human Service to distribute the cards to families, and time for families to shop.

Many will continue to be blessed by your support through the "Giving Tree" program.



# AdventWord

November 30 - December 25, 2025

30	Again	13	Unquenchable
1	Said	14	Honor
2	Tribes	15	Abundantly
3	Quietness	16	Recompense
4	Reveling	17	Highway
5	Gratify	18	Cleansed
6	Day	19	Robes
7	Heed	20	Truly
8	Counsel	21	Deep
9	Equity	22	Declared
10	Encouragement	23	Mother
11	Written	24	Angel
12	Brood	25	Endless

[AdventWord.org](http://AdventWord.org)







## † Ancient Christian Writers

*A reading from a commentary on Isaiah by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (c. 340).*

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God [Isaiah 40:3]. The prophecy makes clear that it is to be fulfilled, not in Jerusalem but in the wilderness. It is there that the glory of the Lord is to appear, and God's salvation is to be made known to all mankind.

It was in the wilderness that God's saving presence was proclaimed by John the Baptist, and there that God's salvation was seen. The words of this prophecy were fulfilled when Christ and his glory were made manifest to all. After his baptism, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove rested on him. Then the Father's voice was heard, bearing witness to the Son: This is my beloved Son, listen to him.

The prophecy meant that God was to come to a deserted place, inaccessible from the beginning. None of the pagans had any knowledge of God, since his holy servants and prophets were kept from approaching them. The voice commands that a way be prepared for the Word of God. The rough and trackless ground is to be made level, so that our God may find a highway when he comes. Prepare the way of the Lord: the way is the preaching of the Gospel, the new message of consolation, ready to bring to all mankind the knowledge of God's saving power.

Climb on a high mountain, bearer of good news to Zion. Lift up your voice in strength, bearer of good news to Jerusalem [Isaiah 40:9]. These words harmonize very well with the meaning of what has gone before. They refer opportunely to the evangelists and proclaim the coming of God to men, after speaking of the voice crying in the wilderness. Mention of the evangelists suitably follows the prophecy on John the Baptist.

What does Zion mean if not the city previously called Jerusalem? This is the mountain referred to in that passage from Scripture: Here is mount Zion, where you dwelt. The Apostle says: You have come to mount Zion. Does not this refer to the company of the apostles, chosen from the former people of the circumcision?

This is the Zion, the Jerusalem, that received God's salvation. It stands aloft on the mountain of God, that is, it is raised high on the only-begotten Word of God. It is commanded to climb the high mountain and announce the word of salvation. Who is the bearer of the good news but the company of the evangelists? What does it mean to bear the good news but to preach to all nations, but first of all to the cities of Judah, the coming of Christ on earth?

† **Vestry Meeting**  
Wednesday, November 12th



**Opening:** Warden Dan Bacon opened the meeting with prayer at 7:40 pm.

**Scripture Reading & Reflection:** Luke 17:11-19 Reflection Question: What is one thing from this reading that challenges you or what jumps out to you?

Lois: When you get an opportunity to testify, do not prepare, for I will give you the words. This is comforting because I am always concerned about saying the right thing when it comes to Scripture.

Diane: Nation will rise against nation.

Bill B: Beware of false idols. Do not be led astray.

Jeff C: None of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.

Bob P: I pray before every meal now, but before I never did. Because of my Christianity, my faith, I have a new appreciation of praying in public.

Mike K: After death, we are saved. Don't waste your time worrying about it.

Dan B: By your endurance you will gain your souls. This is the challenging part of being a Christian, but God is always with you.

Fr. Nate: As believers we do not have to have a muscular faith because it is not about us, but rather of God who is with us.

Bill S: The Lord is really the owner of our salvation and all that we have. I just want to be in the middle of what God is doing. "We are God's workmanship."

Geoff: Are we doing good works?

support a family while finishing school was challenging. My drinking wasn't too bad yet, but as I got older, married, and busy with life, I drifted away from the church, attending only twice a year. I never asked God for help because I didn't believe I was worthy of praying to Him.

I never wanted to become like my father, but I could see myself heading down that same path. Things got so bad that my wife asked me to leave. We remained married but lived separately - for twelve years.

Eventually, I started attending AA. From the very first meeting, the warmth and welcome of the group overwhelmed me in the best way. I wanted to go back the next day. AA worked for me, and it truly is a wonderful program.

Through AA, I learned that healing begins by finding a Higher Power. My spiritual life began to grow quickly, though I admit I was skipping some steps along the way. I started going back to church. One day, I met a young priest who reminded me of Fr. Joe. I eventually made a full confession for the first time in my life, and afterward I felt like my feet weren't even touching the ground.

I was moved to write a letter to my two daughters. The last line I wrote was, "God forgave me, and I hope you can forgive me also." One of my daughters did forgive me, and today we have a good relationship. My other daughter is still estranged, but I'm working to rebuild that relationship. My wife and I were never able to reconcile, and we eventually divorced.

I know now that if I hadn't gotten right with God, I wouldn't have been able to handle anything in my life. Today, with God's will guiding me, I can handle whatever comes my way.

When the young priest eventually left the parish I had been attending, I began looking for a new church home. I was dating Helen, and she encouraged me to visit St. Paul's Church. I went, met Fr. Joe and the wonderful people there, and I came to truly love this church.

## *Vestry Minutes*



### **Testimony:** Bob Picheco

I was born and raised in Connecticut and have lived here all my life. I was raised Roman Catholic and attended church every Sunday, along with Sunday School. My father was a severe alcoholic ... and that created fear in me and strained our relationship. My mother, on the other hand, was an angel who did everything she could to protect our family.

I started drinking and smoking as an early teen. I got married while still in high school, graduating the following year. Trying to

(Continued on page 13)

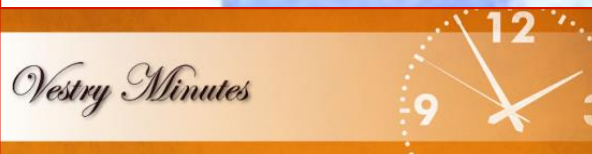


## Vestry Minutes

(Continued from page 12)

**Approval of October Vestry Minutes:** The October Vestry meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Treasurer's Report:** Chuck reported that October's Current Month (C/M) performance shows a surplus of \$6,480. This brings the YTD October with a deficit of \$39,535. Based on the YTD October deficit, Chuck believes the year objective of breakeven is at risk. The Franklin Funds had another solid month. YTD gain is \$188,300 or a 10.3% increase. We are at 90% of payments for 2025 Mission Budget.



### Committee/Ministry Reports:

**JoAnn Hornak: Sunday School** - Julie Astbury needs a teacher for level 1. Currently the classes are being combined. Toys in the nursery are being discarded and new toys are being added. - Joanne S. got the November birthday cards out before her surgery.

**Diane Peterson:** The food drive had a banner month. Her car was filled to the overflow mark, and Brookfield Social Services was so grateful for the generous donations.

**Chuck Allen:** Lessons & Carols will have an extended coffee hour with a great selection of food. There were approximately 80 people attending last year and a larger group is expected this year. We will make sure that we have more than enough food for this year. It is a great event, so please come!

**Bill Schroll:** We did get a wireless connection set up into the nursery so the service can be piped in live for our volunteer helpers. - There is also a new wireless microphone ordered and coming in for Fr. Nate.

**Priest-in-Charge Report:** Fr. Nate: I survived the month of October, and it was packed full! It is good to be back with all of you. - Today I found out that I am medically qualified for being a military chaplain. The downside is that I was transitioned to my third recruiter in this short period of time, and some paperwork was not completed properly. Due to this extenuating

circumstance, it will be taking a little longer to get fully approved.

**Old Business:** Roof Repair Project for St. Paul's Church: Jim Miller is in the process of communicating with 'The Roofer' to update their quote. We are also waiting on one other quotation to replace the slate roof. The Building Committee hopes to have one for the December meeting.

### New Business:

- Fr. Nate requested that St. Paul's Church formalize a resolution designating a portion of his cash salary as a housing allowance for 2026. The resolution is written but is currently waiting on current financial information before presenting it to the Vestry for review. The resolution will be pushed to the December Vestry Meeting.

- **Vestry Member Criteria:** A new procedural document was created over the past months by the Warden's Committee for the purpose of listing the biblical criteria for choosing new Vestry Members each year. This procedural document of the biblical criteria was distributed to the Vestry. There was a discussion regarding the criteria. The document was given approval by the Vestry.

- **Annual Meeting:** The Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 25, 2026. We would like to get the ministry reports in as soon as possible. The Vestry was asked to start to think about preparing their annual meeting reports, due in mid-December. The format of the Annual Meeting was discussed in great detail for the purpose of possibly changing it. Some great suggestions were offered. We will continue the discussion into next month's Vestry Meeting

- **Upcoming Events:** **Bishop Laura** is visiting St. Paul's on December 7th. There will be a Vestry luncheon held with the bishop around 12:30.

- December 14th is the **Christmas Pageant** during the 10:30 service, followed by our **Lessons & Carols** in the evening.

- **Christmas Eve** is a Wednesday and there will be three services, including the healing services and a baptism. It promises to be a blessed time.

**Closing:** The meeting was closed by Dan Bacon, with Fr. Nate offering prayer at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
David William, Clerk



# Take note

by Kirsten Peterson, Organist & Choirmaster

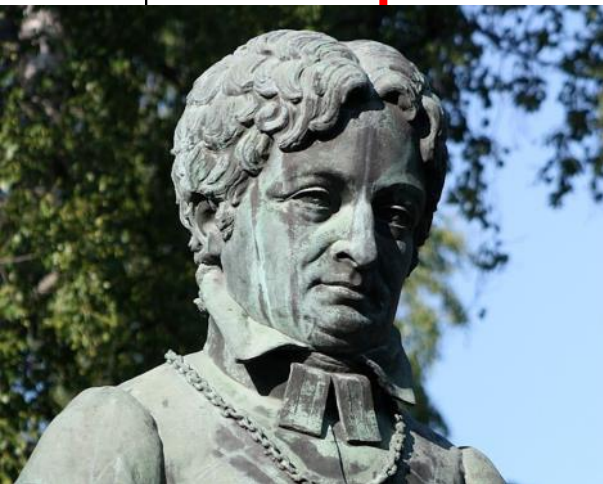
Greetings!

This week finds us at the second Sunday of Advent with our preparations well underway. In the Gospel reading from Luke, we hear these words of the prophet Isaiah:

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: '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; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'

And we will sing several great Advent hymns that reflect this very message, two of which are highlighted below: "Prepare the way, O Zion," and "There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying."

Our opening hymn, "Prepare the Way, O Zion" is a really popular Advent hymn...particularly in Sweden, where it is better known as "Bereden väg för Herran." Frans Mikael Franzén wrote the lyrics in the early 19th century, and over the years, its many verses have been translated by numerous writers. One common translation begins "Prepare the Royal Highway." The tune that it is frequently set to is a Swedish folk melody, or at least a Swedish variant of a German folk melody...it's hard to pinpoint exactly where these melodies come from!...that showed up in the 1697 publication of the *Svenska Psalmboken* (Swedish Psalm book), so it was around a good 100+ years before the



Frans Mikael Franzén

words were!

*Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near! Let every hill and valley a level way appear. Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story. Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.*

*He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above. His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love. Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding. Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.*

*Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace. His tidings of salvation proclaim in every place. All lands will bow before him, their voices will adore him. Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.*

(Continued on page 15)



(Continued from page 14)

## Choir Notes

"There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying" was written by James Lewis Milligan (1876-1961), an English journalist who emigrated to Ontario, Canada, serving briefly as a Methodist pastor. He wrote the words for the founding of the United Church of Canada in 1925. The tune ASCENSION was composed by another English emigre to Canada, Henry Hugh Bancroft (1904-1988).

*There's a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod: Prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God! The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low; make straight all the crooked places where the Lord our God may go!*

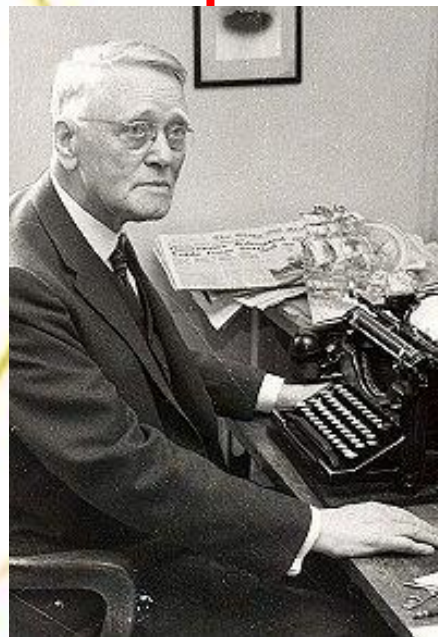
*O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up to the heights and sing! Proclaim to a desolate people the coming of their King. Like the flower of the field they perish, like grass our works decay, the power and pomp of nations shall pass like a dream away*

*but the word of our God endureth, the arm of the Lord is strong; he stands in the midst of nations, and he will right the wrong. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, the lambs he'll gently hold; to pastures of peace he'll lead them, and bring them safe to his fold.*

For your listening pleasure, I've included a calm and peaceful instrumental performance of the opening hymn "Prepare the Way, O Zion." While our hymn version on Sunday is a little more dance-like and upbeat, this is a beautiful rendition to listen to as you meditate on your own Advent preparations.

May we all have a blessed Advent.

Peace and blessings,  
Kirsten



James Lewis Milligan







*Thanksgiving, round 1: picnic dinner at the new church property with our Australian friends and neighbors. Sitting at the property, surrounded by the trees and the beautiful land, we were again struck by how thankful we are for this huge answer to prayers.*

## ✠ Thanksgiving in Cambodia

Hello friends and Supporters!

This past week, I (Becky) got to spend some time re-learning about the first Thanksgiving. Our kids didn't really know much about it, and were putting on a Thanksgiving play with our Australian friends for one of our dinners, so I did a little research. I remembered some from childhood: Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, Squanto, corn. I also learned some new things: the second ship, Sendwell, that got sent back due to a leak!

But more than anything, I was struck by the radical, beautiful act of giving thanks.

The pilgrims who sat around the table that first Thanksgiving had arguably gone through the hardest year of their lives. Almost all of them had lost someone over the winter. All of them were floundering in this new "home," and surely would've died without serious help from the Native Americans. And instead of going around the table, grumbling about what they missed from the Old World, they focused on the bountiful harvest before them. They sat, in community, and intentionally called out the gifts that God had provided to them that year. What a beautiful example for me.

Psalm 50:9, 14 says "But I do not need the bulls from your barns or the goats from your pens... Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God."

So, in the spirit of the first Thanksgiving, I'm choosing to hold all of the painful bits of this past year in one hand, and all the gifts in the other, and thank God for all He has done for us and in us through them both.

We especially want to thank all of you who have given to support the construction of our new building. We're almost ready to start construction in a couple of weeks! More updates to come later. [To support us, go here \(account #235\)](#)

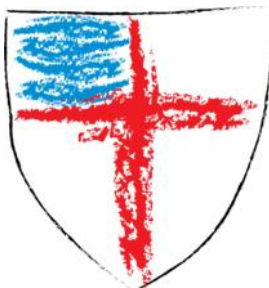
Happy Thanksgiving!

Blessings, The McLaughlins

*Thanksgiving, round 2: Sokha and family came over for a more traditional dinner. Their first Thanksgiving meal! Khmer friends walking alongside us here in Cambodia is another huge answer to prayers, and we are so thankful!*







## † Ih-pis-kuh-puh l / Dik-shuh-ner-ee

(Episcopal Dictionary)



## † Suffragan

/ suhf-ruh-guhn /

**Suffragan** - A suffragan bishop is an assisting bishop who does not automatically succeed a diocesan bishop. A suffragan bishop may be elected bishop or bishop coadjutor. In 1814 James Kemp was consecrated Suffragan Bishop of Maryland, even though the office was not authorized by the Episcopal Church's Constitution. From 1829 until 1910, different General Conventions discussed proposals for electing and consecrating suffragan bishops. The 1910 General Convention enacted "Of Suffragan Bishops." A diocese may elect a suffragan bishop, but no diocese may have more than two suffragan bishops except with the special consent of a General Convention.



**New branches  
from the old roots.  
Isaiah 11:1.**



## ✝ Helping Our Neighbors

Here is an update about St. Paul's ongoing food-related ministries serving our community:

**Drive Thru Food Collection** - occurs every other Wednesday from 11 am - noon. We have now held 147 food drives since April 22, 2020! Last time we delivered food to the Brookfield Social Services & their Food Pantry and the Jericho Partnership in Danbury.

Our next food collection, will be Wednesday, December 10th and will support the Bethel Community Food Pantry, and the Jericho Food Pantry in Danbury.

Thank you all for your ongoing generosity and to the many volunteers who have helped to load the vehicles and deliver food to the pantries.

# Next Drive-Thru Food Collection Wednesday December 10th



*Help us,  
Help others!*

**11 am to Noon**

If you would like to request Altar flowers for a particular Sunday in Memory of a friend or loved one, please fill out the flower chart or envelope located in the back of the church or send an email request to [dszen@yahoo.com](mailto:dszen@yahoo.com) or contact David Szen.





[dszen@yahoo.com](mailto:dszen@yahoo.com)

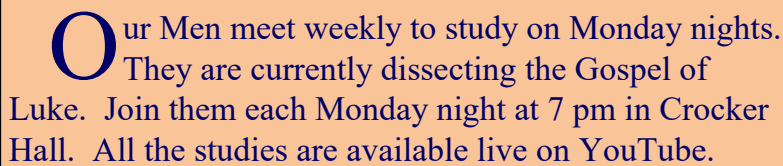


dszen@yahoo.com

*"The spirit of the  
f wisdom and  
the fear of*



what God



## † Women's Wed Evening Bible Study

The Women's Evening Bible Study has started a study on Wednesdays, at 7:00 on Zoom. The topic is Courage: people in the Bible who showed courage in difficult circumstances. We will see how each person met their situation, what role God played, and what we can apply to ourselves now. All women are welcome. For more information contact Kathy Whipple at [kthyw49@gmail.com](mailto:kthyw49@gmail.com).



## † St. Paul's Walking Group!

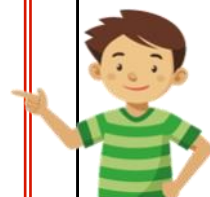
Our St. Paul's walking group is making a great strides! Their next walk will be at the Holcombe Hill Wildlife Preserve, Newtown, tomorrow, Friday, December 5 at 10:00 am. Plan to meet at the parking lot near 55 Great Hill Road (across from Winslow Rd.). I'll check the weather and send out an update e-mail if there are any changes before the meet up time. Ron Switzer ([rjswit@msn.com](mailto:rjswit@msn.com)).



## † Sunday School Info!

**ATTN: PARENTS OF ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS:**

Sunday School classes have resumed. During Advent bring your students into church with you for the lighting of the Advent candles, then they will go directly to their classrooms. Children will be returned to the sanctuary in time for Communion.



## COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Dec 7th	8 am - Heather Melody	10:30 am - Raegan LaBrake
Dec 14th	8 am - Roginski's	10:30 am - Pageant Parents
Dec 21st	8 am - Bennett's	10:30 am - Emily Perry



**COFFEE HOUR  
HOSTS NEEDED**

Contact Mary Allen at  
203-775-6633 or  
[chamla@charter.net](mailto:chamla@charter.net).







# **Saint Paul's Parish Chronic Pain Support Group**

Compassion • Hope • Fellowship

**Next Meeting**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4th**  
**11:30**

St Paul's Parish • The Guild Room  
174 Whisconier Rd. Brookfield, CT

Contact - [chronicpain@saintpaulsbrookfield.com](mailto:chronicpain@saintpaulsbrookfield.com)

\*Pre-registration Required

**\*Meets on the 1st Thursday of every month**

THE NEWTOWN CENTRE OF CLASSICAL BALLET & VOICE

*proudly presents*



# The Nutcracker Suite

*Sunday, December 7th  
Edmond Town Hall*

One performance included in the Holiday Festival general admission ticket  
or buy additional tickets for \$20 at the door. Shows at 12:00 & 2:30 P.M.  
All proceeds benefit Newtown Youth & Family Services.

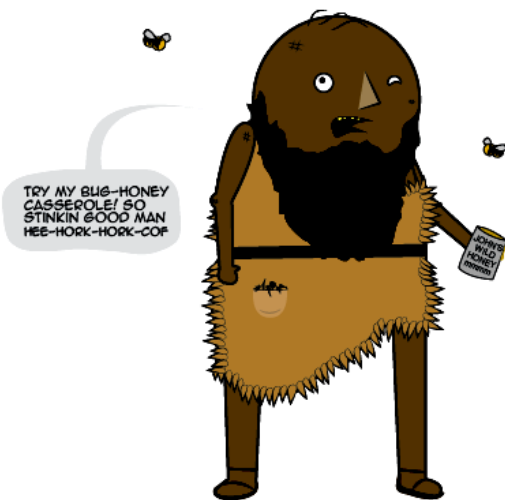
**WWW.NCCBALLETANDVOICE.COM**



## ✠ Transforming Stewardship

“Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” MATTHEW 3:10b

Do you bear good fruit for Christ? Or, do you spend your time, talent and treasure constantly acquiring more toys, clutter and junk. Our time, our talent and our treasure are gifts that God has given us. What we do with them is our stewardship, our gift back to God. What gifts are you planning to give to the Lord during this upcoming Christmas season?



### JOHN THE BAPTIST

LIVED IN THE WILDERNESS

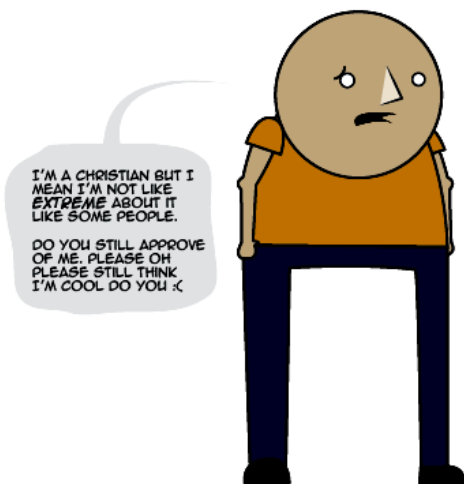
STEADY DIET OF LOCUSTS AND HONEY

WORE CLOTHING MADE OF CAMEL HAIR

YELLED AT RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

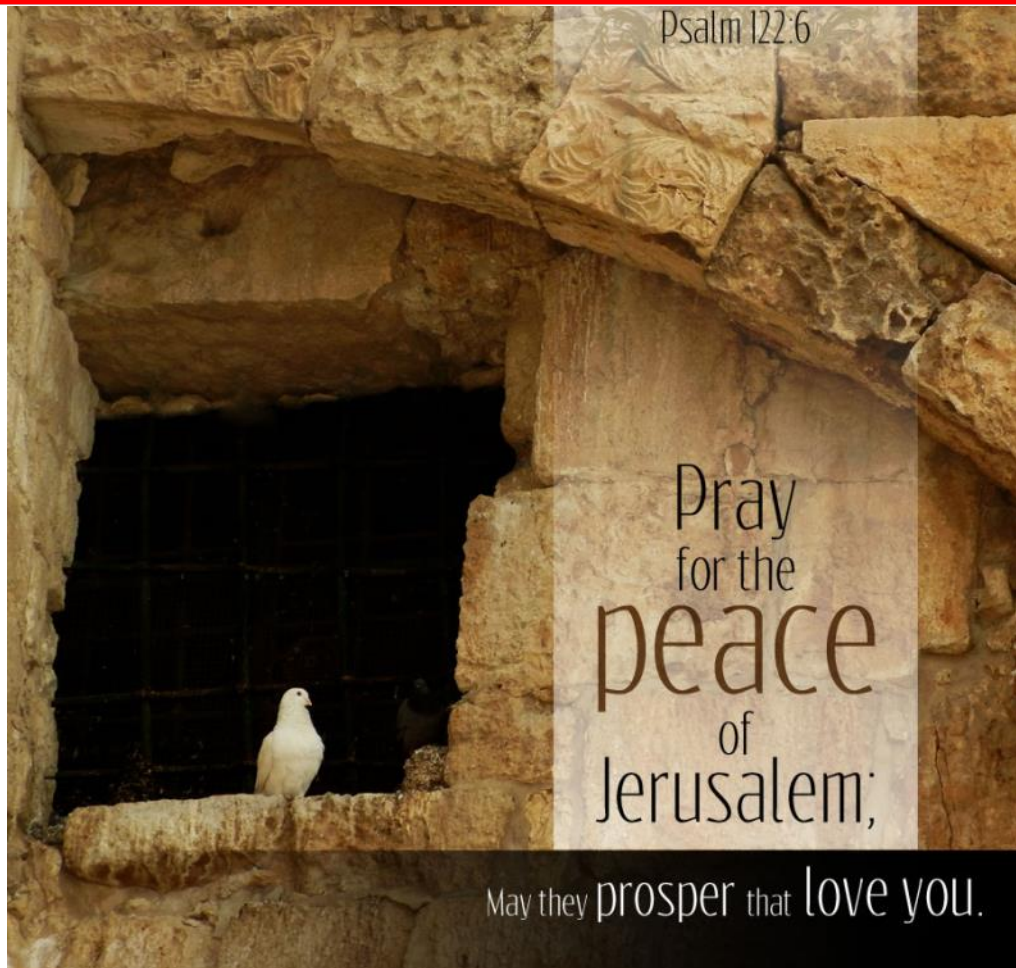
CONSTANTLY TOLD EVERYONE TO REPENT

THE GREATEST PERSON EVER BORN OF A WOMAN, ACCORDING TO JESUS



### US

REALLY DON'T WANT TO BE CALLED 'WEIRD'



## **Take a Hanger** **Fill a Hanger**





## † Wednesday Morning Healing Service

Our mid-week Wednesday morning 10 am Holy Eucharist with healing prayer, now has about 50 worshippers weekly.. With live music and a brief homily, this service is just what you need to sustain you through the week. Come join us and check it out or watch on YouTube Live.

### HOW DO PEOPLE START ATTENDING CHURCH?

- A Friend Invited Me - 86%
- Organized Visitation - 6%
- Invited by the Pastor - 6%
- Advertising - 2%

[churchgrowth.org](http://churchgrowth.org)

## REJOICE!

In God's blessings in your life.

GIVE to your EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



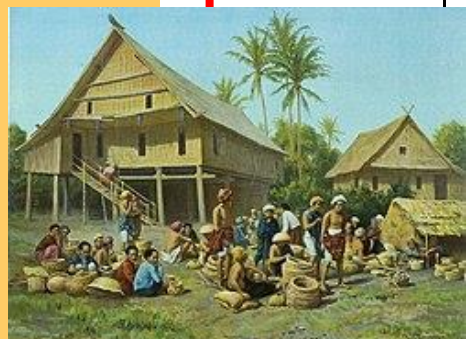
# A THIRD OF US

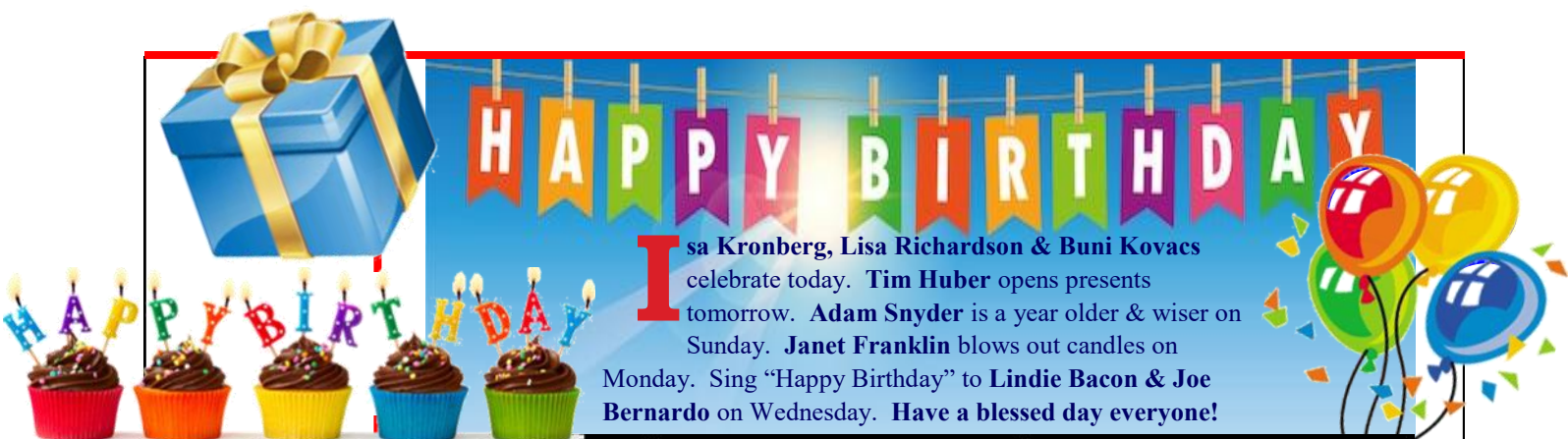
## † Praying for the 1/3 of our world that are still unreached with the Gospel

### Bugis

Country: Indonesia | Population: 5,919,000 | Language: Bugis | Main Religion: Islam | Evangelical: 0.06%

**T**he Bugis are a highly mobile people who are considered the dominant group of South Sulawesi, the third largest island in Indonesia. Most Bugis in the mountains work as farmers growing wet rice and raising livestock, while those along the coast are fishermen or work in port cities. The majority of Bugis fervently adhere to Sunni Islam beliefs and practices, yet many retain some of their traditional beliefs. Bugis believe the first Wednesday and last Thursday of each month are special days that bring good fortune, while Saturdays are bad days that are more likely to bring misfortune. The Bugis place a very high value on both personal honor and communal honor. They work hard to build, maintain, and defend their honor and whenever it is offended, they will consider serious forms of revenge. Pray for God to reveal to them the grace and forgiveness that He offers through Jesus. Ask God to send believers to live and work among the Bugis, and pray that He would open doors for them to share the hope and freedom they've found in Jesus.





**L**isa Kronberg, Lisa Richardson & Buni Kovacs celebrate today. Tim Huber opens presents tomorrow. Adam Snyder is a year older & wiser on Sunday. Janet Franklin blows out candles on Monday. Sing "Happy Birthday" to Lindie Bacon & Joe Bernardo on Wednesday. Have a blessed day everyone!

**RFB**®

*Presents*

## COFFEE WITH JESUS

**Annual  
Tradition**



I had such a wonderful week with family, Jesus.  
It was so good.



It was great to be there, Lisa.  
What was your favorite part?



Ya know, I think it was when my brother prayed over our Thanksgiving meal. We all felt it. That beautiful annual tradition when we just stop and say, "Thanks!"



It's so much more beautiful when it's not just an annual tradition, Lisa, but a daily habit.



©Radio Free Babylon® All rights reserved. There's a feeling we get around Thanksgiving. You can feel that always, but it takes practice. Coffee with Jesus is about prayer. We hope we're encouraging you to be in touch with the King of the Universe. Can you believe the Creator God wants to be your friend? If you can find a moment to pray in the morning (and you can, given all the stuff you devote your mornings to), find a moment for Thanksgiving. It's not just a holiday. It's a way of life.



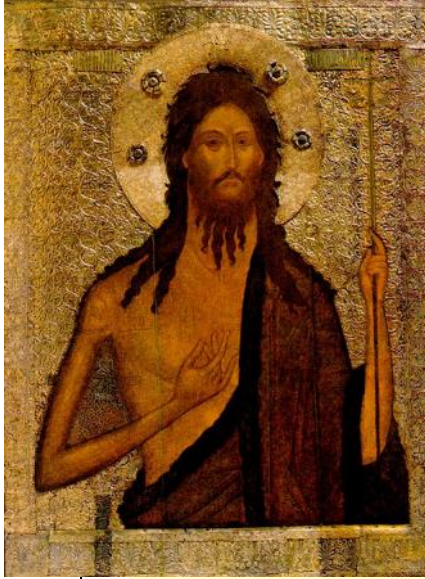
## † No Points for Trying

Matthew 3:1-12

It would appear that the Pharisees and Sadducees should at least get points for trying. Instead John verbally attacks them for being all repentance

and no fruit. But to what end? Granted, the Pharisees and Sadducees, teachers of the law and keepers of the temple, come out together overcoming their natural animosity towards each other and they give up their respective positions of power to be subject to the poor people's prophet, but it's just a weekend excursion for them. The diet of locusts and honey and camel's hair clothes with leather belt identify John as one who has forsaken the world for the wilderness, which is always the place of preparation for Israel. So when the city slickers come slumming he calls them on it. Who warned you to flee? Confession by itself is not worth the words used to say "I'm sorry" unless accompanied by a change of heart and hand. That is John's point. You can't come out to do a wilderness weekend of wailing and then go back to the city of business as usual. To bear fruit worthy of repentance is to live into the

conclusion of confession - the amendment of the sinful life. The One who is coming after will do something more than John and though he will burn the same Pharisees and Sadducees with words like blind guides and brood of vipers and white washed tombs he will gather them in with "Father, forgive them..." And so it is for us. Our confession needs a word of judgment before absolution so that we will not be satisfied with an "I'm sorry" that does not in some measure lead to "I can do better." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.



## † Quilt Drawing

Tickets are being sold each Sunday during coffee hour for these beautiful Christmas quilts. The

tickets will be available after each service and the drawing will be held on Sunday, December 21st between the services. Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20.





**A**s we come to the end of this church year, and look forward to the quiet of Advent and then to the wonderful stories of the Gift of our Savior's birth retold, take some time to reflect on how your life as a disciple and steward has gone this year. Pray for discernment and guidance to "grow your gratitude" and serve God in new ways in the months to come.

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

**Matthew 3:8**



✝ **Good Stewardship Begins At Home: *Our Home***

**P**lease remind all who use our home to be good stewards by turning off lights, closing curtains, turning down thermostats, cleaning up after themselves and locking doors when they are leaving, especially as fuel prices continue to steadily increase.



**Wreaths are available for pickup!**

**Sign up on clipboard \$30 each**

**CHRISTMAS  
WREATH  
SALE**

**Proceeds support Samaritan's  
Purse's Operation Christmas Child**





## † This Sunday's Readings

(Click on the red links for the readings)

### The Kingdom Is Near

#### Isaiah 11:1-10

In our lesson from the Hebrew Bible the prophet foresees a time when God will bring forth a righteous judge and a new spirit of peace in the world. The wise and faithful judge will come from the stump of Jesse - that is, from the line of the great King David, whose father was Jesse. The Spirit of the Lord will be his as he defends the humble and slays the wicked. The new age of peace will extend even to the animal kingdom.

#### Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

The psalm asks that God endow the king with compassionate justice and righteousness, and that his reign may extend over all nations and throughout all generations.

#### Romans 15:4-13

In this reading Paul points to several passages from the Hebrew scriptures to show how God's promise that the Gentile peoples should come to praise God was being fulfilled. The new Roman converts, whom Paul hopes soon to visit, are urged to live in harmony and to recognize the manner in which Christ's ministry has brought these prophecies to fruition. He is the root of Jesse, that is, the promised son of David, on whom their hope is to be set.

#### Matthew 3:1-12

Our gospel lesson tells of the ministry of John the Baptist, his message of repentance and his prophecy of the mighty one to come. John himself is the messenger of preparation foretold by Isaiah. He baptizes with water those who confess their sins and wish to change their ways, but he chastises those who do not show the fruits of repentance. Soon come the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with refining fire.

#### Matthew 3:1-12

This text continues the Advent theme of preparing for the arrival of Jesus. And uses the preaching of John the Baptist to press home that preparation requires internal cleansing and not just straightening up around the house.



### Sermon Shorts

"Sleepers Awake!" To replay all our sermons, audio and videos follow this link for the [Sunday Sermons](#). Check out our [Sermon Archives](#) as well.



## † Your Prayers Are Requested For...

*It is such an intimate time when praying for the health and well being of others and such a privilege. The prophet John the Baptist preached a repentance which would bear fruit in the lives of those who heard him. In penitence and faith, let us offer to God our prayer for and all people, and for...*

.....Ed Licence, Gail Winkley, and other parishioners convalescing in extended care facilities.

.....[Christ Church](#), Bethany; [St. Thomas'](#), Bethel; [Old St. Andrew's](#), Bloomfield.

.....Revival at St. Paul's and the greater Danbury area.

.....Ministries for the unhoused, for parishes that offer temporary or permanent shelter. For Chapel on the Green, New Haven; & Church by the Pond, Hartford. For the Homelessness & Housing Ministry Network.

.....For the Peace of Jerusalem. - *Psalm 122:6*

.....Clayton Ferry, Barbara Hock, Jim Megura, Peter Scalzo, Sr., Peter Scalzo, Jr., Doris, Cathy Latimer, Karen, Beverly Hall, Roger, Cynthia, Valerie, Heidi Pinheiro, Dale Mitchell, Ruth, Blake, Cliff, Evelyn Kirner, Jane Sedor, Jim Beck, Larry Wanzer, Bob Finn, Paul Kovacs, Peter Ruscoe, Larry Coleman, John Crisalli, Erin LaBrake, Walter, Elana and Veronika continued healing.

.....the people of [Ukraine](#); the people of the [Czech Republic](#); the people of [Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#); the bishop, clergy and laity of the Diocese of Rupert's Land - The Anglican Church of Canada; and our sister and brother members of the [Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends \(Quakers\)](#).

.....For all Christians during this Advent season: that we turn from the wastelands of violence and deceit, and dedicate ourselves to promoting faithful, honest, and loving relationships.

.....St. Thomas, Bethel and the [Bethel Community Food Pantry](#), which is the recipient of our food basket collections for the month of December.

.....Our missionaries, Will & Becky McLaughlin and their family, and their ministry in Cambodia; and for all missionaries: that God will inspire the message that they offer, help them to recognize how they can best serve their communities, and sustain them in times of loneliness.

.....For students beginning their exams: that the Spirit will guide their preparations and help them to clearly manifest all that they have learned this semester.

.....[Fairfield County Bank](#), a bank supporter of the Jericho Partnership.

.....[The Absent](#).

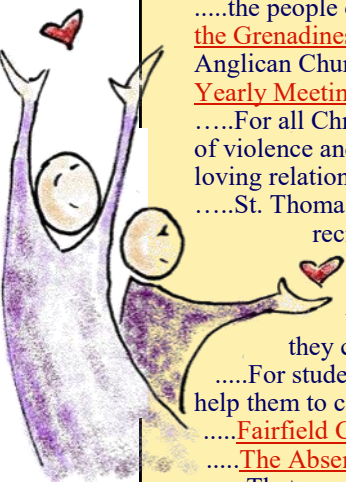
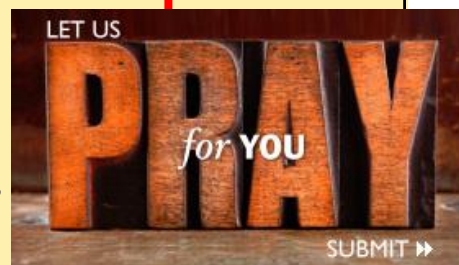
.....That we realize what we do with the gifts God has given us is our gift back to God.

.....For the one third of humanity that does not have access to the gospel, for zealous preachers of the word, that by the Holy Spirit, that they would become strong in their faith, grow in numbers and be a light to those around them.

.....For the kidnapped children from Nigeria: that God will protect them, open a door for their safe return, and help their parents and families during these days of separation.

.....For the anti-trafficking advocates of human trafficking, that they would be equipped with wisdom and compassion and covered in discernment and protections as they endure in this work.

.....[Peace Among the Nations](#).



### What If We Could See Other's Hearts Like God Does?

This impacting and powerful video will make you think twice about how we treat others, especially people we don't know. If we could see them the way God sees them, we would know that everyone is battling something and they deserve our love, compassion and support.





# Just For the Joy of It!

(And Christian Fellowship)

## THE ADVENT POLICE



## Random Fact of the Week!

Did you know .. that before it was good to be the GOAT, it was actually bad to be a goat?

## Emily's Wednesday Joke of the Week

Did you know that Emily used to work at an orange juice factory? She got fired from her job though ... because she couldn't concentrate!



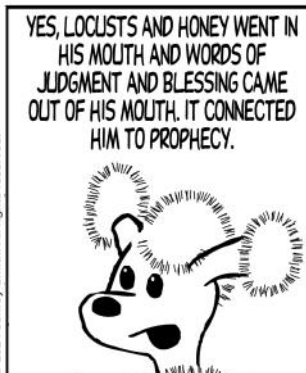
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Watch us on YouTube



Ecclesiasticus 43:27 - We could say more but could never say enough; let the final word be: 'He is the all.' - 30 -