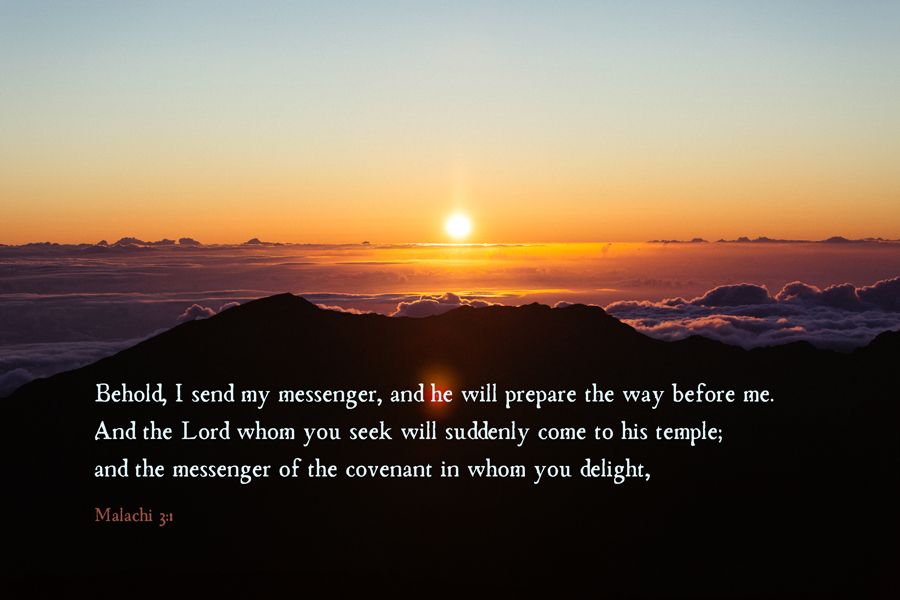
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***This Sunday at St. Luke's Blue Ridge***

***December 15, 2019***

**The Third Sunday**

**in Advent**

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**The Third Sunday in Advent**

The focus of the third Sunday in Advent is the Ministry of the Church. John the Baptist is a guide and example for that Ministry. John was bold, uncompromising and clear in his delivery of the message God gave. His task was to prepare and make ready those who lived on the far side of the cross for the coming of the Messiah. Christian ministers today have a similar task. They are to prepare and make ready people on the near side of the cross for Christ’s Second Advent. Like John the Baptist, they are to be bold, uncompromising and clear in their delivery of God’s message.

The pastoral ministry (made up of those in Holy Orders) is important, but it is not the only ministry in the Church. All baptized people are called to ministry. The looks and type of these ministries will be varied, but all are needed and important. Those in these ministries likewise need to be bold, uncompromising and clear. How about you? Are you doing your part?

# The Collect for the Third Sunday

# in Advent

## O LORD Jesus 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, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

## The Collect for the Season (Advent)

## ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

## THE EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 (J.B. Phillips)

*Trust us, but make no hasty judgments*

**4 1-4**You should look upon us as ministers of Christ, as trustees of the secrets of God. And it is a prime requisite in a trustee that he should prove worthy of his trust. But, as a matter of fact, it matters very little to me what you, or any man, thinks of me—I don’t even value my opinion of myself—but that doesn’t justify me before God. My only true judge is God himself.

**5**The moral of this is that we should make no hasty or premature judgments. When the Lord comes he will bring into the light of day all that at present is hidden in darkness, and he will expose the secret motives of men’s hearts. Then shall God himself give each man his share of praise.

NOTE: St. Paul gives us a partial glimpse of his conception of the “ministers of Christ.” Ministers are to be trustworthy, and they should be trusted. He warns against making hasty judgments of the “stewards of the mysteries of God.” The Lord when he comes will judge “the counsels of the heart” of all men. (William Sydnor)

## THE GOSPEL – St. Matthew 11:2-10 (J.B. Phillips)

*John enquires about Christ: Christ speaks about John*

**2-3**John the Baptist was in prison when he heard what Christ was doing, and he sent a message through his own disciples asking the question, “Are you the one who was to come or are we to look for somebody else?”

**4-6**Jesus gave them this reply, “Go and tell John what you see and her—that blind men are recovering their sight, cripples are walking, lepers being healed, the deaf hearing, the dead being brought to life and the good news is being given to those in need. And happy is the man who never loses faith in me.”

**7-10**As John’s disciples were going away Jesus began talking to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the desert to look at? A reed waving in the breeze? No? Then what was it you went out to see?—a man dressed in fine clothes? But the men who wear fine clothes live in the courts of kings! But what did you really go to see—a prophet? Yes, I tell you, a prophet and far more than a prophet! This is the man of whom the scripture says—‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you’*.*

NOTE: This passage is our Lord’s estimate of John the Baptist. The Old Testament passage he quotes is perhaps even more important as the Master’s description of His own ministry. (See Isa. 35:5-6 and 61:1.) (William Sydnor)

**LECTIONARY READINGS**

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Isaiah 35 (ESV)**

*The Ransomed Shall Return*

**35**The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
    the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;  
**2**it shall blossom abundantly  
    and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
    the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the Lord,  
    the majesty of our God.  
**3**Strengthen the weak hands,  
    and make firm the feeble knees.  
**4**Say to those who have an anxious heart,  
    “Be strong; fear not!  
Behold, your God  
    will come with vengeance,  
with the recompense of God.  
    He will come and save you.”  
**5**Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
    and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
**6**then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
    and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.  
For waters break forth in the wilderness,  
    and streams in the desert;  
**7**the burning sand shall become a pool,  
    and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,  
    the grass shall become reeds and rushes.  
**8**And a highway shall be there,  
    and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;  
the unclean shall not pass over it.  
    It shall belong to those who walk on the way;  
    even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+35+&version=ESVUK#fen-ESVUK-18329a)]  
**9**No lion shall be there,  
    nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
    but the redeemed shall walk there.  
**10**And the ransomed of the Lord shall return  
    and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
    they shall obtain gladness and joy,  
    and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

NOTE: The passage looks forward to the coming day of the Lord when His glory shall be revealed in judgment and salvation. Our Lord was quoting in part from verses 5 and 6 in his description of John Baptist in Today’s Gospel.

**NEW TESTAMENT LESSON – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-23 (J.B. Phillips)**

*Reverence your ministers: regulate the conduct of church members*

**12-13a**We ask you too, my brothers, to get to know those who work so hard among you. They are your spiritual leaders to keep you on the right path. Because of this high task of theirs, hold them in highest honour.

**13b-18**Live together in peace, and our instruction to this end is to reprimand the unruly, encourage the timid, help the weak and be very patient with all men. Be sure that no one repays a bad turn by a bad turn; good should be your objective always, among yourselves and in the world at large. Be happy in your faith at all times. Never stop praying. Be thankful, whatever the circumstances may be. If you follow this advice you will be working out the will of God expressed to you in Jesus Christ.

*Final advice and farewell*

**19-22**Never damp the fire of the Spirit, and never despise what is spoken in the name of the Lord. By all means use your judgement, and hold on to whatever is really good, Steer clear of evil in any form.

**23-24**May the God of peace make you holy through and through. May you be kept in soul and mind and body in spotless integrity until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is utterly faithful and he will finish what he has set out to do.

NOTE: Respect the ministers who labour among you in the Lord. They admonish, exhort, and encourage you to do that which is acceptable to God. (William Sydnor)

Services on the

Third Sunday in Advent

•**8:15 a.m.** *–* Holy Communion (said service)

*A quiet meditative service*

Celebrant: The Rev. Ronald O. Wikander

Preacher: The. Rector

Lector: Pat McConnell

Server: Judy Evans

•**10 a.m.** Morning Prayer and Sermon (choral)

*Classic Anglican morning service with hymns and exposition of Scripture.*

Preacher: The Rector

Officiant: The Rector

Lay Reader: Roger Johnson

Acolyte / Server: Ruth Johnson

Ushers: Jim and Kathryn Noblett

*Holy Communion from the Sacrament reserved from the 8:15 a.m. service is available in the Jennus Chapel immediately following the 10 a.m. service. The service last about 7 minutes*

**PARISH CALENDAR: Dec. 16-20**

Monday:

7:30 a.m. Matins read Jennus Chapel

1:15 p.m. Knitting Group Yellow Room

Tuesday:

7:30 a.m. Matins read Jennus Chapel

Wednesday:

7:30 a.m. Matins read Jennus Chapel

Thursday:

7:30 a.m. Matins read Jennus Chapel

Friday:

7:30 a.m. Matins read Jennus Chapel

Saturday:

11 a.m. Choir practice Church Proper

**NEXT HEALING SERVICE, DEC. 26**

Healing services with Holy Communion are held the second and fourth Thursday of each month.



**CHRISTMAS FLOWERS NEEDED**

Poinsettias are needed for Christmas services. Please see sign-up sheet in narthex or in Thomason Hall. Flowers are $15 a pot and may be given in memory or in honour of someone. You may also call the church office to place an order.

**Christmas by Candlelight**

*A Misty Mountain Christmas*

St. Luke’s Church

7 P.M. -- Friday, December 13

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Cheryl Star, flute, alto flute & piccolo; William Star, oboe &

English horn;

Cara McKinney, clarinet; Randy Wilbur, bassoon; Naomi Joy Nelson, French horn.

**PROGRAMME**

O Come, O Come Emmanuel M. McDonald & S.S. Nelson

Dance Prelude on Marc-Antoine Charpentier

“Bring a Torch, Jeannette Isabella” arr. W. J. Star

Hark the Herald Angels Sing arr. Kenneth Abeling

T’was in the Moon of Wintertime arr. H. Barrie Cabena

The “Huron Carol” & W. J. Star

Quest of the Magi J. H. Hopkins/ J. Ibert

arr. W. J. Star

Minor Alterations No. 2 David Lovrien

Carols from the Dark Side arr. W. J. Star

Walking in a Winter Wonderland Felix Bernard

arr. Dave Brubeck

Riu Riu Chiu Mateo Fleca

A Traditional Spanish Carol arr. W. J. Star

**INTERVAL**

March of the Kings/Pat-a-Pan Paul Ellsworth

Meditation on “I Wonder as I Wander” Tim Rumsey

Go, Tell It on the Mountain Kenneth Abeling

Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind John Rutter

arr. W. J. Star

The Christmas Song Mel Torme & Robert Wells

“Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire” arr. K. Abeling

Silent Night Joel Raney

**2020 STEWARSHIP**

**Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)**

Using a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a great way for people over 70 &1/2 with an IRA and a need to withdraw funds to meet a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), to contribute to St. Luke’s. The money you contribute using a QCD is not included in your adjusted gross income on your tax return which is a better option than listing the donation as a simple charitable contribution. According to the IRS;  
  
*A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is generally a non-taxable distribution made directly by the trustee of your IRA (other than a SEP or SIMPLE IRA) to an organization eligible to receive tax deductible contributions. You must be at least age 70½ when the distribution was made. Also, you must have the same type of acknowledgment of your contribution that you would need to claim a deduction for charitable contribution. See Records To Keep in Pub. 526.*

*The maximum annual exclusion for QCDs is $100,000. Any QCD in excess of the $100,000 exclusion limit is included in income as any other distribution. If you file a joint return, your spouse can also have a QCD and exclude up to $100,000. The amount of the QCD is limited to the amount of the distribution that would otherwise be included in income. If your IRA includes non-deductible contributions, the distribution is first considered to be paid out of otherwise taxable income.*  
  
 If you have questions, you should contact your financial advisor, accountant, or tax preparer.

**‘Ambassadors’ sought to assist visitors**

St. Luke’s is privileged to have visitors at almost every service. The Welcome and Outreach Committee is seeking friendly people to be on duty – in addition to ushers – at the 10 a.m. service to ensure these folk are given a coffee mug and are given the right service (Morning Prayer or Holy Communion) booklets. If you would like to be an ‘ambassador’, please speak to the Rev. Ronald Wikander, Kathryn Noblett or the Rector.



### Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2020

*As stewards of God’s gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke’s Church for 2020 .*

Name *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Weekly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Monthly\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)

*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him to store, as God has prospered him.*

*1 Corinthians 16:2*

### OUR MISSION

*St. Luke’s mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.*

## REMEMBER THE NEEDY

**EVERY TIME YOU COME TO CHURCH**



*Please bring one or more item for the needy -- paper, soap products, tinned and dried food, etc. Leave in*

*Narthex. Items will be distributed through North Georgia*

*Community Action Agency*



**SIGN-UP SHEET FOR 2020 IS AVAILABLE**

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2019. Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

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St. Luke's Church, "The Parish Church of the Mountains," 7 Ewing St., (POB 1821), Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513; Telephone (706) 632-8245; [www.stlukesblueridge.org;](http://www.stlukesblueridge.org/) [stlukes@tds.net](mailto:stlukes@tds.net); brstlukes@gmail.com.