

Daily Readings

These readings allow you to study other passages on the nature of Christ coming into our lives. The Study Guide readings allow you to dig deeper.

Monday, November 29 – Read Isaiah 40: 1-11. In these days of anxiety and faultfinding, we find the prophet Isaiah offering us a new way to live. Don't rush thinking you can do everything alone. Wait upon the Lord and depend on God's strength. What situation in your life needs the strength of God this week? Can you be still and wait on God?

Tuesday, November 30 – Read John 1: 6-8; 19-28. Christmas is a time of light. We put lights on everything we can find. In this passage the gospel writer quotes John the Baptist as he identifies Jesus as light. Light exposes, reveals, and makes public. The darkness of our failure can find healing only in the light. Where does your life need light this week?

Wednesday, December 1 – Read Isaiah 61: 1-4; 8-11. Luke reports in his gospel that Jesus begins his ministry with these words. Who are the oppressed, broken hearted, captives, or prisoners in your life? As you walk the sidewalks, hallways, and board rooms of your life this week, whom do you see?

Thursday, December 2 – Read Matthew 24: 36-44. Jesus is warning His disciples. Our human tendency is taking for granted that which we know best. On our way to work, the buildings we see everyday are almost invisible. The laughter of our children and the beauty of their eyes go unnoticed. Once they were little and now they are grown... where did the years go? We are a people of habit. To every generation, Jesus says, **"Stay awake!"** or we will miss the coming of Christ. Listen for the voice of God today. Radio? Children? Co-workers? Friends? Spouse? Could God be using them to tell us something? Stay awake! Listen! Look!

Friday, December 3 – Read Luke 2: 8-20. Luke includes in his birth narrative the testimony of the shepherds. They are visited by angels who announce the birth of God's Messiah. This is an interesting twist to the value system of our world. The birth of future kings is an event for royalty. Yet, the announcement of God's Son is given to lowest. What does this tell us about God's value system? Can you spend time recognizing and getting to know the lowest? These people were important to Jesus. Are they important to you?

***Invite someone to worship this week. You will be glad you did.
God is doing great things through the ministries of Trietsch.***



STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, November 28, 2010

Glimpse the Divine — Facing the Right Direction (week 1 of 5)

Luke 12:22-34 — The Word from the Bible (New Revised Standard Version)
The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

***"See I am sending my messenger ahead of you, Who will prepare your way;
The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:***

'Prepare the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight,'"

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Scriptural Basis — Mark 1:1-8

Mark begins his gospel with the ministry of John the Baptist. John preaches a message of repentance and forgiveness of sins. ***"Prepare the way of the Lord,"*** says John, quoting prior prophets. The same call comes to us today: Gather round; let us turn our hearts to God that we might truly be prepared for Christ coming. Are YOU?

John the Baptist

John the Baptist, out the prophetic tradition, proclaims the coming of the Messiah. He accepts his role as forerunner. Every detail of his life points toward that grand moment when he will pick a figure out of the crowd and announce, ***"Behold!" The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*** (John 1:29).

Most of us find it difficult to identify with John the Baptist. He cuts directly across the grain of self-interest and the glamour of being Number One that continues to plague us. Think of it. If you were asked to choose the dominant symbol for our generation, what would it be? A flag, a cross, a missile, a television antenna, a dollar sign, a test tube, an oil barrel, a bloated belly, a handgun, an automobile, a peace symbol? My choice would be the sight of a forefinger pointed into the air and accompanied by the chant, "We're Number One."

John the Baptist has all of the opportunities to be Number One. Luke tells us that John is conceived by a miracle, announced by Gabriel, the archangel, and filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb.

Yet, John turns away from self by constantly pointing the way to the divine, **“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord’”** (John 1:23). Jesus alone will be exalted. The role of repentance is not just turning away from something – repentance is turning toward the divine Son of God. When we turn to the Christ, as John the Baptist insists, only then will we experience the Divine.

Baptism of Repentance for the Forgiveness of Sins

Renounce and repent...

Repentance is literally the turning away from one act to participate in another. The word also involves the changing of one’s mind. The baptism of John the Baptist was for purification or forgiveness of sins. This baptism assumed “the turn away” or repentance from what had separated them from God to the life God intended.

Return...

In the Hebrew language, the word repentance also means, “to return.” The Old Testament prophets summoned the people to return time and again. Their emphasis was not just on the changing of the character or actions of a person, but the total transformation of his or her life. This includes every aspect of his or her inner and outer behavior. Just as no amount of extra effort will help the runner headed in the wrong direction until someone convinces the runner to turn around and return.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Do you see what I see?

The baptism of John was a ritual baptism. It only symbolized the change in direction, a change of mind and the returning to God necessary for a right relationship. When we change our minds and direction and return to God we find ourselves ripe for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now we are faced in the right direction. Only now can we see Christ for who He is. Only now can we experience His full love and power. Only now can we enjoy a life in full communion with God. Only now can we see fully *Glimpse the Divine*.

Isaiah 40:1-5 (New International Version) *Today’s Scripture for the Advent Candle Lighting*

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.
A voice of one calling:
“In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Prayer Focus

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our sanctuary. We believe prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God. We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. ***Remember... someone is praying for you.***

The prayers and verses below are to encourage you in your prayers this week.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Hymn #211

O Come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show
and cause us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai’s height
in ancient times once gave the law
in clouds and majesty and awe.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Root of Jesse’s tree,
an ensign of thy people be;
before thee rulers silent fall;
all peoples on thy mercy call.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home.
The captives from their prison free,
and conquer death’s deep misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thy justice here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death’s dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations bind
all peoples in one heart and mind.
From dust though brought us forth to life;
deliver us from earthy strife.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Prayer for Advent

from faithandworship.com

In this season of expectation

We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah
Into the bustle of our lives
and the hard to find moments of solitude

We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah
Into our homes and situations
along with friends and families

We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah
Into our hearts,
and those often hidden parts of our lives

We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah
For beneath the surface of your story
is an inescapable fact

You entered this world
as vulnerable as any one of us
in order to nail that vulnerability to the cross.

Our fears, our insecurities and our sins
all that can separate us from God
exchanged by your Grace for Love.

We cannot comprehend the reasoning
only marvel that Salvation comes to us
through a baby born in a stable,
and reaches out to a world in need.

In this season of anticipation
We prepare to welcome Christ Jesus, Messiah