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THE WAY IT WAS
JOHN THE BAPTIST
THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS
December 10 and 11, 2016

*John the Baptist was sent to prepare hearts for the arrival of the Savior.
How are we to fulfill the same calling?*

BELLS AND WELCOME

OPENING HYMN 15, vv. 1-3

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

M In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

M We light three Advent candles, remembering Jesus, the Light of the world. He came to defeat the prince of darkness.

C **We remember Jesus, who came to answer his people's prayers. John proclaimed him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.**

M We hear his call to see the light.

C **We light three Advent candles as a sign of our trust and confidence.**

M Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

C **Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.**

Three Advent candles are lit.

M Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Old Testament Scriptures prophesied the coming and the message of John the Baptist. Isaiah writes: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.

C **Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall be made straight, the rough ways smooth.**

M And all mankind will see God's salvation'" (Isaiah 40:3-5). Let us prepare the way for the Lord in our own hearts today by turning to him in heartfelt repentance:

C **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior, Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

M God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

M The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

RESPONSE HYMN 15, v. 4

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

**Honor, glory, might, dominion
To the Father and the Son
With the everlasting Spirit
While eternal ages run!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your Son, our Savior. Raise up the valleys of our inner guilt. Demolish our mountainous pride.

C **Prepare us not only for the celebration of your first coming, but also for your return on the final great day.**

M Open our hearts as we hear your Word.

C **Melt our hard hearts of stone. Soften and shape them according to your will.**

M We pray through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



FIRST LESSON

Malachi 4:1-6, Bible page 960

The last words of the Old Testament speak of a prophet who will be another Elijah.

ANTHEM (Saturday)

(Sunday 7:45 am)

Go to the Wilderness, Maria Schultz

Comfort and Joy, Lutheran Elementary School Grades K-8

VERSE OF THE DAY (*Sunday 9:15 am*)

C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

These words are writ - ten that we may be - lieve that

Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 3:1-12, Bible page 967
John the Baptist prepares the way.

After the Gospel, the congregation sings:

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY 16, vv. 1-4

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

SERMON

John the Baptist
Pastor Peter Panitzke

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY (*Saturday*)

(*Sunday*)

A Rose, *Woodwinds*
by Valerie A Floeter

The King of Glory Comes, *Handbells*
arr. by Hart Morris

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

M The Lord be with you.



C: And al - so with you.

M Lift up your hearts



C: We lift them up to the Lord.

M Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

M Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He protects and preserves his Church in every age and gives us confidence to lift up our heads and watch for Jesus with joy. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory forever and ever.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.



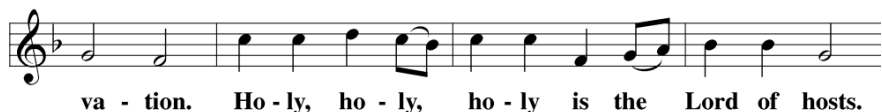
The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.



You are my God, and I will ex - alt you.



I will give you thanks, for you have be - come my sal -



va - tion. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.



The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M The peace of the Lord be with you always.



C: A - men.

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD

C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us your peace. A - men.

The musical score consists of five staves of music in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a final Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SACRAMENT

Please see Communion note on page 7.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS 11
14

**Comfort, Comfort All My People
Arise, O Christian People**



M Merciful Father, we give you thanks and praise that you have fed us with the precious body and blood of your dear Son for the forgiveness of our sin. By your grace fill us with the desire and the power to walk worthy of our holy calling and to reflect your glory in our daily lives; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



BLESSING

M Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRESIDING MINISTER *(Sunday 7:45 am) Pastor David Kuehl*

(Sunday 9:15 am) Pastor Peter Panitzke / Pastor Jeffrey Bonack

ORGANIST *Kathy Bremer*



Our vision is that by every possible means we bring every person in our area of influence closer to Christ through regular worship, small groups, and serving together.

OUR COMMUNION PRACTICE

The Lord's Supper is a fellowship meal. In this meal Jesus expresses his fellowship with us by giving us his body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. In this meal we also express our fellowship with each other, that is, that we are united in a common confession of faith.

We at St. Paul's want everyone to enjoy this fellowship meal. However, we cannot ask someone to express agreement with us until we give that person an opportunity to discover what we teach. That is why we schedule frequent membership classes to provide an overview of our teachings. Following the Promise is held on Tuesday evenings in the Faith Room.

If you are a member of St. Paul's or a member of a WELS or ELS congregation, we invite you to express our common confession by communing with us. You may wish to use the "Personal Preparation for Holy Communion" on page 156 of Christian Worship to examine yourself. Please register your intent to commune as a member or guest by filling out the Connection Card and placing it in the offering plate.

The light colored cups in the center of the individual cup tray contain non-alcoholic wine. Gluten-free wafers are located in the trays on the Communion rail. If you need a gluten-free wafer, please inform an usher as you approach the rail. The first pews in the right center section are reserved for those who have difficulty approaching the Communion rail, and we kindly ask those who desire to be communed privately to use these pews.

Your Ministerial Staff

Office (414) 422-0320

Pastor Jeffrey Bonack	Ext. 119	jbonack@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 422-0501
Mr. Seth Fitzsimmons	Ext. 118	sfzsimmons@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 422-0320
Pastor David Kuehl	Ext. 121	dkuehl@stpaulmuskego.org	(262) 679-1393
Dan Lippert, BA	Ext. 120	dlippert@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 232-4458
Vicar Phil Loescher	Ext. 123	ploescher@stpaulmuskego.org	(262) 305-8769
Dr. Joel Nelson	Ext. 145	jnelson@stpaulmusekgo.org	(414) 422-0320
Pastor Peter Panitzke	Ext. 122	ppanitzke@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 350-1436
Sally Wallner	Ext. 294	swallner@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 422-0320

WEEKLY CALENDAR

For the week of December 12, 2016

MON	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
	7:00 pm	The Story Bible Study (Grace Room)
TUE	9:15 am	Ministerial Team Meeting
	9:30 am	Ladies Bible Study (Grace Room)
	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
	11:30 am	Organization of Wisconsin Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) (Muskego Regency)
	6:30 pm	Handbell Rehearsal (Church Balcony)
	7:00 pm	New Member Bible Study (Faith Room)
WED	3:30 pm	Advent Worship Service
	4:30 pm	Soup Supper to benefit the Ronald McDonald House (Grace Room)
	4:30 pm	Public School Confirmation Instruction Classes
	7:00 pm	Advent Worship Service
THURS	6:30 am	Sunrise Bible Study (Faith Room)
	8:15 am	Lutheran Elementary School Chapel Service (Church)
	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
	5:30 pm	SOEL - School of Early Learning - Christmas Service (Church)
	7:00 pm	The Bridge and Contemporary Band Practice
SAT	8:00 am	Men's Breakfast Bible Study (Grace Room)
	5:00 pm	Traditional Worship Service
SUN	7:45 am	Traditional Worship Service
	9:15 am	Traditional Worship Service
	9:15 am	Grace Room Bible Study
	9:15 am	Kids Club, Boost, and Pulse Youth Ministries
	9:45 am	The Bridge Communion
	10:15 am	The Bridge
	10:45 am	Contemporary Worship Service

CHRISTMAS BREAK

Our youth ministries (Kids Club, Boost and Pulse) and our Sunday morning adult Bible study will not meet on the Sundays of December 25 and January 1.

The church administration office will be open from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm, Monday through Friday, from December 23 through January 2. The office will be closed December 26 and 30 and January 2. Please contact our Ministerial Team directly if a need arises. Their contact information is listed on page 8 of the worship folder.

GIFTS TO GOD

WISH LIST

Often God's people want to give special gifts beyond regular offerings as memorials, gifts in honor of loved ones, or simply because of a passion for some area of ministry. It is with this in mind that we have developed this Wish List, items that are not essential to our ministry immediately, but would greatly benefit our ministry.

If you would like to give toward a wish list item, clearly mark your envelope "Wish List" with the title of the item you would like to donate toward. You can also use our online giving option to give toward a Wish List item.



Item	Est. Cost	Received	Still Needed
Grand Piano	\$42,000		Fully Funded
Ridge Cinema Advertising	\$6,500	\$550	\$5,950
School Window Replacement	\$10,000	\$50	\$9,950
Centennial Gym Safety Mats	\$4,450	\$0	\$4,450
Trinity Gym Floor-to-Ceiling Room Divider	\$11,000	\$0	\$11,000
Garden Homes Lutheran School Library Books	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Seasonal Worship Banners	\$800	\$0	\$800
Living Nativity Supplies	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000

Grand Piano

We are excited to announce that this long-standing Wish List item has been fully funded. A new grand piano that is suitable for our sanctuary will be in place soon!

Ridge Cinema Advertising

Many people go to movies but never go to church. Could you help us reach them with strategically placed ads?

School Window Replacement

Eventually we need to replace the windows in the portion of our school built in 1958. A gift of \$10,000 will enable us to replace the windows in one classroom.

Centennial Gym Safety Mats

The mats covering the exit doors at the west end of the gym and the mats covering the edge of stage are in need of replacing.

Trinity Gym Floor-to-Ceiling Divider

This electrically raised divider will allow us to have two practices taking place at one time and enable us to make the room "smaller" for special functions.

Garden Homes Lutheran School Library Books

We want to build our relationship with this sister school in the inner city. A gift of any size will help them expand their library and say, "We care about you and our city!"

Seasonal Worship Banners

This will allow us to continue to update our banners at the front of the church.

Living Nativity Supplies

With the Living Nativity fresh in your mind, a special gift will help us continue to replace costumes and decorate for the next Living Nativity in 2018.

GIFTS TO GOD

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING TO GOD'S OPPORTUNITY

Last week God gave St. Paul's an opportunity to love those in need: 60 more children needed Christmas gifts! All but six of those tags were picked up Sunday, with volunteers picking up the last ones on Monday. St. Paul's members provided 80 gifts for needy children in our community and 30 gifts for elderly residents at the Muskego Health Care Center. All this is in addition to the gifts that our school is collecting for the Friends of Jesus Toy Drive, providing gifts for families in need in our area and the inner city of Milwaukee, including families in our church body's schools who are suffering through hardships. Amazing generosity produced by an amazing God!

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Give a gift to our teachers by providing additional funds for workshops and courses. Gifts of any size are most welcome! Mark your gift "Teacher Professional Development."

TUITION ASSISTANCE

We don't want cost to prohibit any family from getting a Christian education for their child(ren). Tuition Assistance Funds (PreK, Elementary School, High School) enable us to generously help families who cannot afford tuition. Contributions may be made via the blue offering envelope provided in your envelope packet or online.

2017 PLANS FOR GIVING

If you have not yet returned your 2017 Plan for Giving, please do so by Christmas. Copies are in the Welcome Center. Help St. Paul's be "All In!" to accomplish as much as possible. If plans for giving indicate a 3 to 5% increase in giving, it will allow us to expand our church and school staff to fulfill our mission "to bring every person within our area of influence closer to Christ."

UNITED WAY GIVING

A number of our members are using the United Way campaigns at their place of employment to give. You may be able to designate St. Paul's or some other ministry so that your United Way giving goes directly to a ministry you want to support.

PROVIDE A CHRISTMAS MEAL

Our Food Pantry Team will be distributing food to needy families within our congregation and community the week before Christmas. If you know of a family in need or if your family would benefit from a Christmas food basket, please contact Coordinator Steve Graham at steve0828@hotmail.com or 262-232-0928 or Pastor Kuehl at dkuehl@stpaulmuskego.org or 414-422-0320, ext. 121.

ST. PAUL'S HOMEBOUND

Since many of you like to remember our homebound members with a card, note, or phone call at this time of the year, a list of our 40 shut-in members has been placed at the Welcome Center. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Kuehl or any visitor who serves on our Homebound Visitation Ministry Team. Their names and numbers are included on the roster.

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

FUNERAL

James Boldt was born September 27, 1943 and received his crown of glory on December 6, 2016. Funeral arrangements have been made for December 12, 2016 at St. Paul's. The visitation will be from 4:00 pm until 6:30 pm with the funeral immediately following. A meal will be provided after the funeral.

FLOWERS

The white poinsettia beautifying the altar was given in memory of Ruth Dorn by her family. God took beloved Ruth to her heavenly home 30 years ago.

HOSPITALIZED

Dorothy Bucholtz is in hospice care at St. Ann's Nursing Home, Ruth Kurth at Brenwood Park, and Georgette Meyer at Layton Terrace. Katherine Olson is at St. Francis, Kathy Rasmussen at Lifecare Homes – Midland Terrace, and Payson Vahovick at Children's. Bari Rieth and baby Garret, Karl Sandvick, and Richard Sobczak have been discharged from the hospital.

PRAYERS REQUESTED

Please pray for the following individuals in their time of need: Dawn Brown, David Burkowitz, Jodie Crosby, Sharon Dreyer, Rick Drobka, Shelly Eggert, Namine Eiche, Monica Gawlik, Daniel Holtz, Dan Italiano, Dawn Jahns, Pat Johnson, Jacob Melso, Sandra Merfeld, Sonia Neuberger, Jeanne Steinbrecher, Alissa Thompson, and Wayne Wardin.

LAST WEEK'S ATTENDANCE

1137 people attended last week's worship services. 302 attended the midweek Advent services.

THANK YOU FOR THIS INDESCRIBABLE GIFT!

We thank the over 150 volunteers who made St. Paul's 2016 Living Nativity possible. A total of 1,704 individuals attended the three-night run of 24 individual performances. Since St. Paul's first Living Nativity in 2000, over 27,000 people have experienced this celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ to the world. God-willing, we will present the Living Nativity again in 2018.

SOUP SUPPER UPDATE

God is always good! Thank you to everyone who attended the soup supper on Wednesday, November 30, and gave a free will offering to support our 3rd grade teacher, Mrs. Steinbrecher, who is undergoing cancer treatments. It was a huge success! \$900 was collected in donations that will be used to help defray the cost of Jeanne's medical bills.

Our soup suppers continue this Wednesday between the Advent worship services from 4:30 to 6:30 pm in the Grace Room. The soup supper this Wednesday will be hosted by one of our school parents, Aleah Reuling, to benefit the Ronald McDonald House. Aleah may be contacted at (414) 750-1568.

SCHOOL CHOICE VOTERS' MEETING

A voters' meeting, with the single purpose of voting on our entrance into the School Choice program, is scheduled for Sunday, December 11, at noon in the Grace Room. You will find the resolution that will be presented for adoption and an eight-page information packet at the Welcome Center.

GRACE ROOM BIBLE STUDY - ANGELS AND DEMONS

In a world that seems spiritually apathetic and aimless, we cannot ignore the powerful spiritual forces that are at work. What does the Bible say about these forces and why must we be strong and vigilant? Join Pastor Kuehl for two more Sundays, December 11 and 18, at 9:15 am for the study of Angels and Demons in the Grace Room.

GROWING CLOSER TO CHRIST IN 2017

JANUARY SERMON SERIES – AHA!

Have you ever had one of those moments when something just clicked? Maybe you were angsty over some decision or you didn't know how to solve a problem. And then, just like that, it all became clear. Suddenly you wonder why you didn't see it earlier.

The world we live in has some pretty serious issues with God and the Bible. There are things he does that just don't seem to make sense. It's like, in some ways, God is hiding from us. But every once and a while he pulls back that veil and helps us see and understand something we've never understood before. These are big moments when suddenly God's plan and God's great love become clearer.

In this four-week Epiphany series we'll explore world-changing, life-altering "aha" moments in the lives of a number of God's New Testament followers. It is our prayer that these "aha" moments will also help to bring clarity and understanding to us and to our spiritual journey today.

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'" (John 8:12).



Christmas Eve	Precious	The soul finds its worth
January 8	Prejudice	Valuing people different from us
January 15	Peace	Finding the solutions to guilt and shame
January 22	Purpose	Experiencing a life worth living
January 29	Pleasure	Understanding a joy that nothing can destroy

THE PLACE TO BEGIN: *FOLLOWING THE PROMISE* BIBLE STUDY

Begins Tuesday, January 17, at 7:00 pm

Pastor Panitzke will be teaching this fifteen-week study of the major themes of the Bible. This course is both a Bible introduction study and prepares an individual for membership in the congregation. Register by indicating your interest on the back of your Connection Card today.

GO FARTHER: *FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY*

Financial Peace University is a nine-week DVD-based study providing a biblical approach to personal financial management. The presenter, Dave Ramsey, is a nationally-known speaker who has helped millions get out of debt. We plan to offer this course in the new year. Indicate your interest by marking the back of your Connection Card. One St. Paul's couple shared this comment: "The recommendation of Financial University was a life saver for [our marriage] helping us understand each other." We hope other individuals and couples can experience this blessing!

CONNECT AT ST. PAUL'S

CHRISTMAS FOR TEENS UNDER GOD

Ho-Ho-Hope you come to the first annual TUG Christmas Party! Wear an ugly sweater for a chance to win a gift basket! Bring something silly or that you really just don't want to see lying around your house anymore, wrapped or in a gift bag, and you will get something silly or that somebody else doesn't want to see lying around their house anymore in return! But most importantly, bring your holiday cheer and celebrate the happiest time of year with us - Sunday, December 18, at 6:15 pm at the MUG (Muskego Urban Gathering Place). See you there!

ST. PAUL'S TEEN BASKETBALL LEAGUE TO START

The WELS High School Boys' Basketball League begins in January and continues through the end of February. Historically this means 7-8 league games plus a tournament. League games are Sunday afternoons at various WELS churches. Those desiring to play in the league must be in high school (grades 9-12) and confirmed members of our church body. A player must also be in good standing academically, spiritually, and socially, and cannot be playing on his high school's team.

St. Paul's members, Andrew Lehman, Randy Jacks, Art Flater, and Youth Ministry Assistant Phil Loescher will be the team's coaches/managers. Practice dates and times will be determined and announced soon.

Registration forms are in the Welcome Center and are to be returned by December 25. For more information contact Dr. Nelson at (414) 422-0320, ext. 145, or jnelson@stpaulmuskego.org.

AWAKE AND ALIVE



Awake and Alive is a Christian event ministry for the 18-25-year-old generation in southeast Wisconsin. Awake and Alive exists to encourage this generation in their relationship with Jesus and to bring the healing and hope of Christ to their communities. A winter gathering is planned for Sunday, January 15 at 5:30 pm in the Trinity Café and Gym. More information can be found at awakealive.com.

COFFEE WITH THE SAVIOR

The Tuesday morning Ladies Bible Study meets in the Faith Room at 9:30 am. "Coffee with the Savior" is the study for January, looking at Jesus as our best friend and discovering more about one of God's chosen people, Moses, and what he can teach us about the use of our own spiritual gifts. For more information contact Group Leader Michele Eiche at (414) 202-7522.

JOIN THE BRASS ENSEMBLE

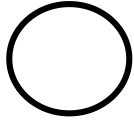
The Brass Ensemble is looking for additional brass players in all sections. The Brass Ensemble is open to adults playing at the high school level or beyond. Rehearsals are Wednesdays from 8:00 to 9:30 pm in the church balcony. Contact Director Jill Mitchell at (262) 895-6163 or jillmitchellwi@yahoo.com for more information.

JOIN THE HANDBELLS

We have a need for 3 more players, 8th grade or older. No experience is necessary. Rehearsals are Tuesdays at 6:30 pm in the balcony. If you are interested, please contact Director Dave Lemke at (262) 679-9537 or dllemke718@gmail.com.

JOIN THE ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild is currently in need of additional members to join their team. If you would enjoy beautifying the church prior to our weekend services, contact Group Leader Pam O' Laughlin at (414) 422-1489.



GroupWork

Bible Study Discussion Starters

Life application materials for us in Connector Groups, home devotions, and other small groups.

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS FOR OTHERS

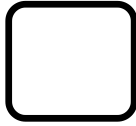
1. What's the toughest thing you've ever had to tell someone? How did they take it? How did you muster up the courage to do it? How did things end up?
2. Read Matthew 3:1-12. Last week we looked at the ministry of Zechariah, a priest of God to the people of Israel. This week we look at the ministry of John the Baptist, Zechariah's son. Compare and contrast these two men's...
 - Work appearance
 - Workplace
 - Ministry purpose
 - Message
 - Impact
3. How did John the Baptist's rugged lifestyle reinforce his revolutionary message about Jesus? How does your lifestyle reconcile with the message about Jesus others learn from you?
4. "Repent!" was John's cry. "I'm sorry!" is a repentant heart's response. How do each of the following passages help you understand the depth of your sin and your need for the coming Messiah?
 - Genesis 8:21 (Begin reading at: "even though...")
 - Psalm 19:12
 - Psalm 19:13
5. "You are my [child] whom I love. With you I am well pleased." How is it that these words spoken about Jesus when John baptized him... (*Discuss each question a little before going to the Bible passages.*)
 - Also apply to you? (See: Galatians 3:26-27)
 - Change everything in your life? (See: 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:22-24)
 - Motivate you to live generously? (See: 2 Corinthians 9:11, Galatians 5:22-23, Colossians 2:6-7)
6. John appeared to question if Jesus was the Messiah. After all, would the true Messiah King leave him to rot in prison?. Compare Matthew 11:2-6 and Isaiah 35:3-6. How did Jesus' answer reassure John? How can Jesus' answer reassure you as you face poor health and even death?

7. PRAY

Oh, then rejoice that through His Son, God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood, your brother is the eternal God.

What harm can sin and death then do? The true God now abides in you.
Let hell and Satan rage and chafe, Christ is your brother – you are safe.

You shall and must at last prevail. God's own you are, you cannot fail.
To God forever sing your praise with joy and gladness all your days. (TLH 103)



NoteSheet

Sermon Outline

Take notes during the sermon to help you remember the main points

The Way It Was: John the Baptist

A Voice in the Wilderness Doing Heart-Work

1. I am God's Voice to Break Hearts

- a. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is here!" (Matthew 3:2)
- b. "You brood of vipers!" (Matthew 3:7)

2. I am God's Voice to Heal Hearts

- a. A baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3)
- b. "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22).

3. I am God's Voice to Instruct Hearts

- a. "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none" (Luke 3:11).
- b. "Be content with your pay" (Luke 3:14).

4. I am God's Voice to Encourage Hearts

- a. "Are you the one who was to come?" (Matthew 11:3)
- b. "Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way" (Isaiah 35:3).

My Next Steps

- **Break your heart:** John called the Pharisees a brood of vipers. Read James 3 to better understand the poison that comes from your own tongue.
- **Heal your heart:** Read Acts 22:3-16 and learn how a murderer found healing for his heart in the waters of baptism.
- **Instruct your heart:** Begin a month-long reading of the book of Proverbs, a chapter per day, to learn practical ways to put God's instruction into practice.
- **Encourage your heart:** Read Isaiah 35 and compare this prophecy with the fulfillment in Jesus' ministry. May "everlasting joy...crown [your] head."
- **Are you a Nazarite?** Read Numbers 6. John the Baptist was to be a life-long Nazarite, dedicated to God's work of changing hearts. How is your dedication to God's heart-work evident to those around you?